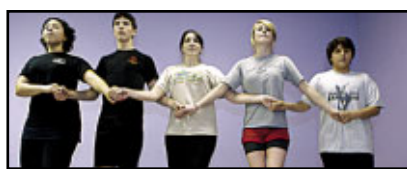


Montessori in demand

Education technique gaining popularity. — Arkansas, 1B



Look, no hands!

Tales abound on how Irish dance style got its start. — ActiveStyle, 1E

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

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In the news

■ **Former President Clinton** met with actor Brad Pitt and hundreds of volunteers in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward for a groundbreaking at the site where a foundation headed by Pitt plans to begin building affordable homes for Hurricane Katrina victims.

■ **Gary Lehman**, who made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* in place of ailing tenor Ben Heppner, will reprise the role at least once, Met officials said, although who will play the role in a matinee that will be broadcast worldwide in high-definition has yet to be announced.

■ **Ralph Archbold**, Philadelphia's best-known portrayer of Benjamin Franklin, and fellow actor Linda Wilde, who's been at his side lately portraying flag-stitcher Betsy Ross, have announced their engagement.

■ **Jaime Lusinchi**, Venezuela's former president, was summoned to appear in court to face claims he is linked to the 1986 killings of nine people in the western town of Yumare, described at the time as a clash with guerrillas but since then portrayed by victims' families as an execution without a fight.

■ **Joe Scola**, owner of Scola's Place restaurant in Gloucester, Mass., drove away a would-be thief by slamming a frozen ham into the perpetrator's face after the man, who had been trying to get away with his arms full of meat from the restaurant freezer, raised a 5-pound log of frozen Italian meat over his head as if to use it as a weapon.

■ **Amanda Rouse**, 15, a Marina High School student who caught a ride on a bus with 40 elementary students after feeling sick at her Seaside, Calif., school, jumped up and applied the brakes on the out-of-control vehicle after the driver fell out of her seat and hit her head, but Rouse still got a Saturday detention for skipping class.

■ **Cardinal Ivan Dias** presided over the consecration of Qatar's first Christian church, the Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, in a ceremony that ended decades of underground worship in the largely Sunni Muslim nation.

■ **Bill Wengert**, a 35-year veteran of Wyoming's Game and Fish Department, said the clipped fin on a 23-inch Mackinaw trout he caught while ice fishing in the Flaming Gorge Reservoir leads him to believe it is among the 12,000 fish he helped stock on April 14, 1983, adding that studying the catch will allow biologists "an opportunity to learn more about fish genetics, age and growth of lake trout in the reservoir."

■ **Benjamin Netanyahu**, Israel's former prime minister, has filed a libel lawsuit in a Tel Aviv court demanding damages from the country's Channel 10 broadcaster over a report that claimed he ran up a huge tab in London while the country was at war with Lebanon in 2006, calling the report inaccurate and politically motivated.

Still set to dance



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MICHAEL WOODS

Sonny Weems (left) and Patrick Beverley of Arkansas watch from the bench as the Razorbacks lose the SEC Tournament final 66-57 to Georgia on Sunday in Atlanta. The Razorbacks received an at-large bid as the No. 9 seed in the East Regional of the NCAA Tournament and will face Indiana on Friday in Raleigh, N.C. *Articles, 1C*

Bear Stearns buyout gets Fed's speedy OK

DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE PRESS SERVICES

JPMorgan Chase said Sunday that it will acquire rival Bear Stearns in a deal valued at \$236.2 million, or \$2 a share, a stunning collapse for one of the world's largest and most venerable investment banks.

The last-minute buyout was aimed at averting a Bear Stearns bankruptcy and a spreading crisis of confidence in the global financial system sparked by the collapse in the subprime mortgage market. Bear Stearns was the most exposed to risky bets on the loans; it is now the first major bank to be undone by that market's collapse.

The Federal Reserve and the U.S. government swiftly approved the all-stock deal, showing the urgency of completing the deal before world markets opened. Early indications, though, pointed to continued fear about the stability of the U.S. market, as the dollar dropped against the euro and yen, gold broke through \$1,015 an ounce, and Asian stocks sank.

"This is going to go down in very historic terms," said Peter Dunay, chief investment strategist for New York-based Meridian Equity Partners. "This is about credit being overextended, and how bad it is for major

financial institutions and for individuals."

The Fed will provide special financing to JPMorgan Chase for the deal, JPMorgan Chase said. The central bank has agreed to fund up to \$30 billion of Bear Stearns' less liquid assets.

At almost the same time as the deal for control of Bear Stearns was announced, the Federal Reserve said it approved a cut in its lending rate to banks to 3.25 percent from 3.50 percent and created another lending facility for big investment banks, available starting today.

"These steps will provide fi- See **ECONOMY**, Page 4A



AP/RICCARDO DE LUCA

Pope Benedict XVI holds his papal staff as he walks in procession before the start of an open-air Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.

McCain to meet with brass in Iraq

Pope: 'Enough with the slaughters'

BY RYAN LENZ
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — Sen. John McCain, the likely Republican presidential nominee, arrived in Baghdad on Sunday for a visit with Iraqi and U.S. diplomatic and military officials.

The trip by McCain, who has linked his political future to U.S. military success in the war, coincided with the 20th anniversary of a horrific chemical weapons attack in northern Iraq and Pope Benedict XVI's Palm Sunday Mass, where the pontiff denounced the 5-year-long Iraq war, saying it had provoked the complete breakup of Iraqi civilian life.

McCain met with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh and planned to meet with Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, according to the U.S. Embassy. Further details of McCain's visit, which had been anticipated, were not being released for security reasons, the embassy said.

Before leaving the United States, McCain, one of the foremost proponents of the

March 2003 U.S.-led invasion, said the trip to the Middle East and Europe was for fact-finding purposes, not a campaign photo opportunity.

But he expressed public worries that militants in Iraq might try to influence the November general election.

"Yes, I worry about it," he said, responding to a question during a campaign appearance in Pennsylvania. "And I know they pay attention, because of the intercepts we have of their communications."

McCain, the senior Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, was accompanied by Sens. Joe Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut, and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., two top supporters of his presidential ambitions.

The week-long trip will take McCain to Israel, Britain and France and include his first meeting with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. He also is expected to meet with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Israeli Prime Minister

See **IRAQ**, Page 2A

Dalai Lama fears cultural genocide as Tibet unrest builds

BY CARA ANNA
AND TINI TRAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TONGREN, China — Protests spread from Tibet into three neighboring provinces Sunday as Tibetans defied a Chinese government crackdown, while the Dalai Lama decried what he called the "cultural genocide" taking place in his homeland.

Demonstrations widened to Tibetan communities in Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu provinces, forcing authorities to mobilize security forces across a broad expanse of western China.

In Tongren, riot police sent to prevent protests heightened tensions when they took up positions outside a monastery. Dozens of monks, defying a di-

rective not to gather in groups, marched to a hill where they set off fireworks and burned incense in what one monk said was a protest, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

In a sign that authorities were preparing for trouble, AP and other foreign journalists were ordered out of the Tibetan parts

of Gansu and Qinghai provinces by police who told them it was for their "safety."

Meanwhile, police in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, searched buildings as a deadline loomed today for people who took part in a violent anti-Chinese uprising last week to surrender or face severe punishment.

Tibet's governor, Champa

Phuntsok, said Monday that 13 civilians were killed and dozens were wounded in violence that broke out in Lhasa on Friday. China's state media said earlier that 10 civilians were killed.

Speaking from India, the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetans, called for an international investigation into China's

See **TIBET**, Page 4A

List for child-care help grows as funds fall short

Federal aid level has been static for 6 years

BY CHARLOTTE TUBBS
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

A shortage of child-care assistance funds has prompted state administrators to place thousands of parents on a waiting list and to consider restricting eligibility.

State officials are also considering not renewing some parents' child-care vouchers as early as June, said Tonya Russell, director of the state agency that administers the child-care assistance program.

No children from low-income families have been added to the program since September, causing a waiting list to grow to nearly 5,000.

The shortage of funds stems from six years without an increase in federal funding and an expansion of state income eligibility standards. In 2007, income eligibility was increased from 60 percent of the median state income, or \$29,000 for a

family of four, to 85 percent of the median state income, or \$41,000 for a family of four.

The U.S. Senate passed a spending plan Friday that proposed a \$440 million increase to the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which funds states' child-care assistance programs.

The House's budget plan did not include such an increase, said Linda Smith, executive director of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

The Virginia organization works with more than 800 state and local child-care resource and referral agencies to ensure that families in every local community have access to high-quality, affordable child care.

Arkansas' voucher program provides assistance for the care of about 13,000 children in Arkansas, including 1,867 children See **VOUCHERS**, Page 2A

3 missing in NYC crane collapse



AP/SETH WENIG

Construction workers search for three people in the rubble of a collapsed crane Sunday in New York. At least four people were killed in Saturday's accident. *Article, 5A*

Drone strike said to target Pakistan site; up to 20 die

BY BASHIRULLAH KHAN
AND LAUREN FRAYER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIRAN SHAH, Pakistan — Missiles that witnesses say came from an unmanned drone flattened a suspected militant safe house Sunday in Pakistan's tribal area along the Afghan border. State television said the strike killed about 20 people.

Witnesses said a drone dropped seven missiles on the sprawling, mud-brick compound about three miles outside Wana, the main town in South Waziristan. Only U.S.-led coalition forces in Afghanistan are known to operate unmanned drones in the region, and they have launched attacks over the Pakistani border before.

Osama bin Laden and other senior al-Qaida and Taliban See **PAKISTAN**, Page 4A

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Partly to mostly cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms. High 70, with southeast winds at 10 to 15 mph.
Tonight Showers and thunderstorms likely. Low 60.



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