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MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009 ■ SECTION B

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TEEN DEAD Body of woman found in East Austin apartment; police investigating case as a suspicious death ■ B2

HOG TRAPPER Milam County man makes it his business to trap, sell troublemaking swine ■ B4

BEN WEAR
GETTING THERE

At the Capitol, transportation issue rolls up late

For something like 135 days, the 81st meeting of the Texas Legislature was not about transportation. One can argue about whether it was really about anything — comparisons with the Seinfeld show "about nothing" were rife last week — but it certainly wasn't transportation.

Until it was.

As you read this in your jammies, state Sen. John Carona very well could be standing on the Senate floor in his suit and jogging shoes filibustering the Texas Department of Transportation sunset bill into oblivion. Or, under the Senate's mysterious and utterly flexible rules and rituals of courtesy, he might have been spared the necessity of beginning the blabathon.

But Carona, furious Sunday that his legislative centerpiece to raise local transportation money was excised from House Bill 300, said that one way or another, he would snuff the bill. Which means that 844 pages of changes to Texas transportation law, including a lot of stuff that the Dallas Republican wanted, would end up as electronic sawdust.

None of this was predictable in March or April, when senators were churning their way through hundreds of smaller-bore transportation bills. After the session-long earthquake over transportation in 2007, when legislators rebelled against what they and their constituents saw as TxDOT's heavy-handed promotion of toll roads, this session seemed positively sleepy on the subject.

Carona and others were out there pushing for more money for transportation, by indexing the statewide gas tax to inflation and ending the use of $1.2 billion in

See WEAR, B3

▶ TECHMONDAY INSIDE: B6-7

Windows win

Microsoft's new operating system is no Vista, Statesman's Omar Gallaga says

HAYS COUNTY ■ COURTS

Trial to begin in baby's death

Defendant told several stories about injuries, police reported

By Andrea Lorenz
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

SAN MARCOS — Less than a year before Richard Perez Jr. would be charged with killing his girlfriend's baby, Perez told mental health workers that he had quit using drugs so he could be a better father for his son and two unborn children.

"He wants to be able to provide for them and to be a good father," wrote Carol White, a social worker for the Schoh Mental Health Center in San Marcos, according to court records.

Richard Perez Jr.

Perez's capital murder trial in the death of 6-month-old Aiden Skyler Perez is scheduled to begin today. Perez, 22, is accused of hitting his girlfriend's son on the head with his hand or an object and then trying to blame the baby's injuries on a car accident.

Linda Icenhauer-Ramirez, one of Perez's attorneys, declined to comment for this story. Perez has been in the Hays County Jail since January 2008 with bail set at $500,000.

See TRIAL, back page

ISABEL PINO

Leticia Barceras' infant son, Aiden Skyler Perez, died from head injuries on Jan. 4, 2008.

AUSTIN

One year later, parents await explanation of Marine's death

Kelly West AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Eric and Julie Oligschlaeger, parents of Cpl. Chad Oligschlaeger, organized a Memorial Day picnic to honor their son, who was found dead in May 2008 on a Marine base in California. The couple had a bench placed in Rattan Creek Park in North Austin in memory of their son.

CENTRAL TEXAS ■ HEALTH

Some kids need extra shots for school this fall

By Juana Summers
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

In the last days of the school year, few students filled seats in the waiting room of the Shots for Tots Clinic in Northeast Austin. But come August, employees say, the clinic will probably be standing-room-only as Central Texas parents rush to meet new immunization requirements before the start of the 2009-10 school year.

In March the state health department, based on federal guidelines, adopted standards that require many students to receive additional vaccinations. County health officials say thousands of Austin-area students need the new shots.

The biggest changes are for students entering kindergarten or the seventh grade. New kindergartners must now receive two doses

See DOSES, B5

New vaccination requirements

Hepatitis A: All entering kindergartners, two doses.

Varicella: All entering kindergarten and seventh-grade students, two doses or a letter from a physician stating that a student has previously had chicken pox or is immune to the disease. $123 a dose.

Tdap: All entering seventh-graders, one dose. Boosters are required if it has been five years since the last tetanus-containing shot. Eighth- to 12th-grade students are required to receive boosters if it has been 10 years since their last tetanus-containing shot.

Meningococcal: All entering seventh-grade students, one dose. $134 a dose.

Source: Austin-Travis County Health and Human Services Department

Larry Kolvoord AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Ed Williamsen, left, teaches an auto technology program at Crockett High School in South Austin that is similar to an auto class that will be introduced in San Marcos for adults this week and to district high schoolers in the fall. Williamsen works with Joshua Paisant, a junior, last month.

CENTRAL TEXAS ■ EDUCATION

San Marcos gears up for ACC course on auto technology

By Andrea Lorenz
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

SAN MARCOS — Austin Community College's newest program is setting up shop this summer in San Marcos.

The program will offer associate degrees and certificates in automotive technology to adults and high school students. The first class of the one- to two-year program meets today, and classes for San Marcos High School students begin in the fall.

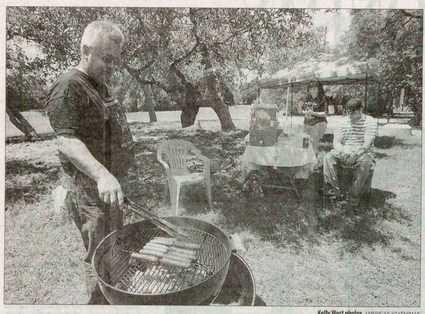
The move is one step in an ongoing push to bring more ACC programs to San Marcos. The San Marcos City Council hopes to bring the area into the college's taxing district and has made that one of its top priorities this year.

Because San Marcos is not part of the taxing district — the last petition effort ended in 2006 with allegations of forgery — students in the evening program will have to pay out-of-district tuition, $142 a credit hour, which is almost three times more than what in-district students pay.

See CLASSES, B4

For more information

San Marcos High School students interested in the ACC automotive technology program should contact Cecily Moore at 512-393-6337 or cecily.moore@sanmarcisd.net. Adults interested in the program should call the ACC San Marcos Center at 512-353-2019 or the Goodnight Center at 512-353-2015.



Kelly West photos AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Eric Oligschlaeger, left, and Julie Oligschlaeger welcomed friends, including Jake Strassner, to a picnic last month. The Oligschlaegers are waiting for the military to finish its investigation into the death of their 21-year-old son, Chad.

DOSES: Officials expect rush for vaccinations in August

Continued from B1

of the hepatitis A vaccine and two doses of the varicella, or chicken pox, vaccine. Seventh-graders need two doses of the varicella; up to two doses of Tdap, a combination of the tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis vaccines; and one dose of meningococcal vaccines.

The policy takes effect Aug. 1. Students who have not started the series of new immunizations by the first day of classes on Aug. 24 will not be allowed to attend school. The rule does not apply to students whose parents register a conscientious objection.

Last week Miriam Pineda took her daughters, Alba, 17, and Marili, 14, to the clinic in the St. Johns neighborhood to beat the rush and keep the girls' shot records current.

Alba, who will be a senior at Del Valle High School in the fall, said: "My school is real strict about it. If you don't have them, they take you out of class."

The new policy makes mandatory the recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Emily Palmer, spokeswoman for the Texas Department of State Health Services. Some Texas school districts already require students to meet these recommendations, but the shots were not previously required for students in Hays and Travis counties.

More than 6,000 incoming seventh-graders in the 15,000-student Austin school district need at least one additional vaccination, said Colleen Christian, a health educator with Austin-Travis County Health and Human Services. About 11,000 students overall are still without one or more vaccines they will need to begin the new school year.

Hays County Personal Health Department officials could not estimate how many students would need new vaccinations as a result of the requirements.

Because so many students need additional vaccines, officials are expecting a rush for these services, especially in August.

"The vaccine is there. It's available," Christian said. The challenge is "just having enough people who are getting them into the kiddos."

The cost of the additional varicella and meningococcal vaccines ranges from $123 to $134 per dose.

Families can get financial assistance through initiatives such as the Texas Vaccines for Children Program, Palmer said. That program provides required immunizations for free to children 18 and younger who lack adequate insurance, are American Indians or Alaska Natives, or are enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program.

palmer@statesman.com; 445-3851

Help for needy families

■ Shots for Tots, which helps eligible children 18 years and younger, is holding a special seventh-grade shot clinic from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the Far South Health Center, 405 W. Stassney Lane. Call 972-5520 for more information or to make an appointment.

■ Texas Vaccines for Children Program provides shots for eligible children 18 and younger, 800-252-9152.

SILENCE: Military didn't heed cries for help, Dad says

Continued from B1

some of Chad's friends gathered at Rattan Creek Park in North Austin near a bench that honors the Marine. A plaque on the bench reads, "If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever."

Chad Oligschlaeger had returned from Iraq in early 2006, unsettled by flashbacks and nightmares. His family said he was taking medication for PTSD after his diagnosis.

But Eric Oligschlaeger alleges that after his son's second tour in Iraq, the military ignored his obvious cries for help. Weeks before his death, his family said, Chad Oligschlaeger was left unsupervised for long periods of time and declined to re-enlist.

First Lt. Curtis Williamson, a Marine Corps spokesman, said last year that the Corps' policies prohibit commanders from discouraging mental health treatment or leaving physically or mentally wounded troops uncared for.

But Eric Oligschlaeger said, "to get help, you have to jump through all sorts of hoops in the military. Troops with real bad PTSD don't have the energy to jump through those hoops."

Eric Oligschlaeger, left, gets a hug from family friend Trey Crockett. Oligschlaeger's son served two tours of duty in Iraq.

The Oligschlaeger family's complaints echo those of veterans' advocates who say that even with new government policies, better treatment and increased public awareness, there are still barriers that separate soldiers and Marines from proper care for conditions that affect mental health, such as PTSD.

Oligschlaeger died at a time when studies showed that more troops were dealing with mental health problems than previously thought. A large independent study published by the RAND Corp.'s Center for Military Health Policy Research in April 2008 found that one-third of service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from a combination of severe depression, PTSD and brain injuries.

More information about the Cpl. Chad Eric Oligschlaeger Foundation is available at www.cplchado.org.

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