

Drill practice



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Matthew De Soto, a member of the Neville High School Junior ROTC in Monroe, La., practices his drills Saturday on Duncan Drill Field. De Soto and other high-school students took part in the 7th Annual Navy Junior ROTC Field Meet, hosted by the A&M Navy/Marine ROTC and the Corps of Cadets.

People in the News

Heston cancels appearance

DENVER (AP) — Charlton Heston has canceled a planned appearance at the kickoff of a campaign for a crackdown on gun crime.

The actor and leader of the NRA had agreed to share the stage with James Brady of Handgun Control at Monday's public-awareness kickoff for Colorado Project Exile, a federal-state crackdown on gun-related crime.

"We were trying to get his schedule cleared up and it looked like that goal had been accomplished a couple of days ago, and other commitments overtook us," NRA spokesperson Bill Powers said late Friday. Brady was President Reagan's press secretary when he was shot during a 1981 assassination attempt on the president and now uses a wheelchair.

Tom Mauser, whose son Daniel was killed in the Columbine High School massacre last year, also signed on to the project.



HESTON

pletely believes in the idea of justice, that good will always prevail," Roberts said.

Couric to televise cancer screening

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — "Today" show host Katie Couric took a camera crew along as she underwent a recent colonoscopy, a screening test for cancer.

The procedure will be shown Monday and Tuesday on the NBC morning show as part of a week-long series on colon cancer.

Couric, 43, who was given a mild sedative for the test, discusses what is happening throughout.

"We're showing it to demonstrate that there's no reason people should be scared," executive producer Jeff Zucker told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for Sunday's editions.

"We try to do it with tremendous sensitivity. We don't show a lot of her colon. We're not going to gross anybody out."

Couric's husband, NBC legal commentator Jay Monahan, died of colon cancer two years ago.

Hanks prepares for Cast Away

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — A

slimmer Tom Hanks is due in Memphis next month to film parts of a movie in which he plays an island castaway, a spokesperson said.

Hanks plays a workaholic Federal Express executive who survives a plane crash and is stranded alone on a small island in the film *Cast Away* a 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks studios production with Robert Zemeckis directing.

While on the remote island, Hanks has to "completely transform himself both physically and emotionally in order to survive his circumstance," Russell said.

The film began production in early 1999 with scenes in Los Angeles and Moscow, but it had to take an eight-month break while Hanks lost more than 40 pounds to give his character a gaunt look when he returned to civilization.



HANKS

Roberts speaks on Southern charm

NEW YORK (AP) — Julia Roberts is proud to be a Southern girl.

The Smyrna, Ga., native told the *New York Daily News* for Sunday's editions that her Southern background "manifests in two ways."

"Good manners and care taking. I say, 'Please, thank you, sir, ma'am.' I think I'm polite, I love to cook dinner, and I keep the toilet scrubbed."

Roberts' new movie, *Erin Brockovich*, opens in theaters Friday. It is based on the true story of a single mother who comes across a case involving a high incidence of cancer in a small town while working as a clerk in a Southern California law office. "Erin is tenacious and com-



ROBERTS

Comedies fall flat at box office

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Less than stellar openings provided little to laugh about for the new comedies that hit the screens this weekend, according to industry estimates Sunday.

The top box office spot was locked up for a third week by *The Whole Nine Yards*, with \$7.3 million in ticket sales.

The top new comedies were *The Next Best Thing*, starring Madonna, which took second place with \$6 million, and *Drowning Mona* with Bette Midler, which took fourth with \$5.9 million.

By comparison, the comedy *Analyze This* opened on the same weekend last year with \$18.4 million.

More than half the films in the top 10 were comedies, and the audience just wasn't large enough to go around, said Paul Dergarabedian of Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.

1. *The Whole Nine Yards*, \$7.3 million.
2. *The Next Best Thing*, \$6 million.
3. *My Dog Skip*, \$5.94 million.
4. *Drowning Mona*, \$5.9 million.
5. (tie) *Pitch Black*, \$5 million.
5. (tie) *Snow Day*, \$5 million.
7. *Reindeer Games*, \$4.8 million.
8. *Wonder Boys*, \$4.2 million.
9. *American Beauty*, \$4.1 million.
10. *The Cider House Rules*, \$4.05 million.

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