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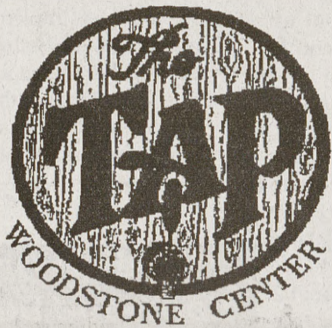
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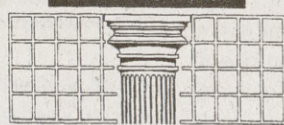
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Double dutch



Ankur Bahl (l to r), Damon Lemmons and Laura Mercer, members of the U.S. Amateur Jump Rope Team, showed their moves at the Huntsville Fourth of July Patriotic Freedom Parade on Tuesday. The team is comprised of people from all over America. The team performs in competitions, workshops and shows across the nation.

**Judge wants ships uncovered
Mystery of Civil War buried 40 feet underground**

MONTGOMERY, La. (AP) — The judge's town car tears along the dirt road, bumping to a halt in the middle of a muddy field. Pine trees rustle in the bluffs. A snowy egret glides along a pond.

The judge's mind is racing back 36 years, to a time when the crackle of musket-fire flew across the meadow and the smell of gunpowder filled the air. A time when the ponderous Red River meandered through this spot, and gunboats struggled to navigate its shallow waters.

Two of the ships are still here — buried 40 feet beneath Mike Wahlder's boots.

"I just want the whiskey and the guns," booms Wahlder, a blustery 65-year-old Social Security judge who lives on a plantation, owns thousands of acres in the area and calls the Civil War wrecks the pride of his "backyard."

Wahlder's eyes twinkle. The truth is no one knows if any whiskey or guns exist, and if they do, it is not clear who would get them: Wahlder, who owns the land, or the U.S. government, which claims the ships.

Over the years, the river changed course around the wrecks and it now flows 150 feet to the west. The boats were covered by sediment, and eventually, by woodland.

The judge would like to dig them up.

Wahlder has no personal ties to these ships. He jokes that his family's only connection to the Civil War is the fact that some of his an-

**"History is romantic.
And I am romantic."**

— Mike Wahlder
Social Security judge

cestors were Confederate deserters.

He loves the smell of history as much as the smell of a challenge. And he is not a man to turn his back on either.

This is a man who, at age 21, spotted a beautiful woman in a travel brochure, tracked her to Israel and married her.

A man who challenged David Duke for the U.S. Senate in 1990, knowing he did not have a hope, but determined to air his opinions regardless.

A man who feeds \$100 bills into the riverboat casino slot-machines in Vicksburg, and sometimes walks away with thousands.

Wahlder's parties at his antique-filled mansion in the woods are legendary. His holdings are too. They include a riverside bluff where a mythical Indian princess named Creola was courted by her soldier lover (Wahlder is so enamored by the tale, he is incorporating a town in her name), a plot where archaeologists dug up a 45 million year old dinosaur fossil, and a portion of a buried 16th century Spanish mission.

"I like dabbling in history," Wahlder says. "History is romantic. And I'm a romantic."

He is also a pragmatic businessman who knows that history can be lucrative, whether it is buying sites that can later be sold to the government, or getting a tax break for protecting history on his land.

Testimony given in Waco trial

WACO (AP) — Federal agents learned how to treat chest wounds and other first aid techniques during training for the 1993 raid on the Branch Davidian complex, federal agent acknowledged Wednesday.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent Gerald Petrilli testified that he and other agents expected only to get into fistfights with sect members on Feb. 19, 1993, when they planned to search the building for illegal weapons and arrested leader David Koresh.

Instead, the raid led to a gun battle in which four agents and six members of the Branch Davidian cult were killed. The sect started a 51-day standoff that ended April 19, 1993, when the cult's compound near Waco burned down, killing about 80 members.

Petrilli was testifying for the government which is defending itself against a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Branch Davidian survivors and relatives seeking \$675 million.

Under cross-examination, Petrilli acknowledged that prior to the raid, some agents were taught by personnel at Fort Hood, a nearby Army post, how to administer field intravenous lines and treat shock and gunfire wounds. He said he was blood type was stenciled on his neck a leg before the raid.

Robert White, a former ATF agent, testified last week that writing an agent's blood type on his body was not standard procedure and was recommended by the military.

The ATF brought tents, medical supplies, portable toilets and water to take care of Davidians who were to be taken into custody, Petrilli said, but never had a chance to use those supplies.

"We never made it to the front door of the structure," he testified. As some agents started approaching the building, he said, "the entire front of the compound erupted in gunfire."

Earlier Wednesday, Jacob Mabbitt, a 27-year-old who left the compound the evening of the raid, recalled helping hide ammunition into gun magazines during the raid. He also remembered seeing boxes of magazines and ammunition stored in a concrete vault in the structure.

News in Brief

Law signed requiring dorm sprinklers

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J. (AP) — Gov. Christie Whitman on Wednesday went to the site of a deadly college fire to sign a law requiring automatic sprinklers in all dormitories.

Three Seton Hall University freshmen were killed and 58 students injured in a blaze at a dormitory Jan. 19. Experts said automatic sprinklers could have extinguished the fire quickly.

Every school must have sprinklers installed within four years. Schools can apply for no-interest, low-interest loans.

The law applies to private and public schools as well as fraternities and sorority houses.

Seton Hall plans to have sprinklers available by fall. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

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THE BATTALION

Beverly Mireles, Editor in Chief

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Volume