

# TRIBUNE-REVIEW



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Worthy of Western Pennsylvania **50¢**  
Four sections • 44 pages

## Food bank patrons won't get a turkey this year

*Some donors have helped hurricane victims or saved cash for gas and heating bills.*

BY PATTI DOBRANSKI  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

A drastic drop in donations to the Westmoreland County Food Bank, mostly connected with the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, will leave

7,000 needy area families without a Thanksgiving turkey.

"We are not financially able to provide turkey vouchers for families for the first time ever. I'd say, for the first time in at least 10 years," said Jennifer Miller, development director for the food bank.

The food bank fell \$55,000 short of the needed funds to purchase and distribute \$10 vouchers to 7,000 eligible families, she said.

"It's very depressing. It was not an easy decision," she said.

Miller was reluctant to pin the blame on Katrina.

"I say 'yes' and 'no' to Katrina. There was a large decrease in donations due to Katrina, but gas prices have also taken a toll on people's ability to give. It's gas prices and gas panic and heating panic," she said.

Ronald Eberhardt, president of the food bank's board of directors, agreed

with Miller's assessment.

"I've been on the board for nine years, and this is the first time we've had to take a serious look at the program. Every time there is a national emergency, the federal funding seems to dry up a little on the local level. The hurricane relief money and donations are going in that direction when they would have typically gone to local organizations," he said.

Uncertainty about the economy is

hurting contributions, Eberhardt said. "There are a lot of question marks. People are apprehensive," he said.

In addition to the lack of turkey vouchers, supplies are so depleted that the warehouse is just half full.

A year ago, the Delmont warehouse had enough food to provide monthly food boxes to 18,000 people across the county. State and federal budget cuts,

SEE FOOD BANK • A7



SEAN STIPP/TRIBUNE-REVIEW

A Latrobe firefighter works at the scene of a fire at 30 E. Brown St. in Blairsville that claimed the life of Dean W. Baker, 81.

## Blairsville fire kills elderly man

*Neighbors tried to save him, but heat and smoke drove them back.*

BY PAUL PEIRCE  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Dan Fluke noticed a deep, orange glow inside the front windows and black smoke already pouring from the eaves of an East Brown Street home in Blairsville about the same moment his son, Dan III, yelled that a

neighbor's house was on fire early Monday.

Fluke, who was getting dressed for work, and his 23-year-old son raced across the street, avoiding downed utility lines, in an attempt to help lifelong neighbor Dean W. Baker escape the flames licking up the front of the two-story, wood-frame house.

"We ran around to the back with another neighbor and I kicked in the door, but there was too much fire. It was too hot and too smoky to go in there," Fluke said.

"Blairsville Patrolman (Don) Isherwood

arrived about the same time and tried to go in, too, but it was too hot, too smoky, too dangerous," Fluke said.

About 15 minutes after the fire was reported at 6:11 a.m., Blairsville volunteer firefighters discovered the body of Baker, 81, on the first floor of his home at 30 E. Brown St. Indiana County Chief Deputy Coroner Mike Baker pronounced the elder Baker, who is no relation, dead at the scene at 7:15 a.m.

SEE FIRE • A7

## Trial may be Iraq watershed

### Iraqis seek closure; Saddam faces justice on Wednesday

*The former dictator could be executed if he is convicted of ordering reprisals.*

BY NANCY A. YOUSSEF  
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

BAGHDAD — Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein will enter a bulletproof cage in the center of an Iraqi courtroom Wednesday for the start of his trial on murder charges.

Unlike the trial in The Hague, Netherlands, of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam will be tried by a court of his countrymen, not an international tribunal.

Saddam — along with seven co-defendants — will be placed in a cage in the middle of the courtroom. To their right will be the defense counsel's table; to the left, the prosecution. In front of the cage will be the bench, a panel of five judges.

It will be a televised national —

and international — spectacle before a public that's thrilled to see the fallen dictator called to account for his alleged crimes but mournful to be reminded of the toll his rule took.

It also promises to be a cathartic moment for American viewers. The United States has fought two wars against Saddam, losing nearly 2,000 soldiers so far in the current conflict and nearly 300 in the Persian Gulf War.

For Iraqis, the trial will be a demarcation line between the old regime and the new and assuage lingering fears that the dictator might rule again. U.S. and Iraqi officials hope that the trial will weaken the insurgency, made up in part of former members of Saddam's Baath Party who remain loyal to him.

Many also hope that the trial will give Iraqis a sense of justice and closure.

Unlike in U.S. courts, all defendants associated with a crime

SEE SADDAM • A6

## National Aviary's newest is indeed a rare bird

*The chick's species was nearly wiped out by snakes in Guam.*

BY ALLISON M. HEINRICH  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

He's cute enough — small and fuzzy, looking like a baby chicken dipped in black ink — but nothing about one of the National Aviary's newest birds is particu-

larly remarkable. Until you hear his family history.

The Guam Rail chick, hatched Oct. 8 at the Pittsburgh bird park, can trace his family tree to a measly 10 ancestors. The rest were eaten by the brown tree snake, which Allied troops accidentally introduced to the Pacific island during World War II.

Thanks to a breeding program, there are now 250 of the

SEE BIRD • A7



JIM YOUNG/REUTERS

Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers (right) meets Monday with Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., in Washington. President Bush continues to face criticism for the nomination of his longtime aide to fill Sandra O'Connor's seat on the court.

## Miers says she's kept abortion views private

*Democrats want to know about a teleconference call.*

FROM WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers assured a Senate Democrat Monday that she's never told anyone how she would rule on abortion rights.

"Nobody knows how I would rule on

Roe v. Wade," Miers said, according to Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Still, Schumer and other Democrats said yesterday that they want to know more about a private teleconference call in which two of Miers' friends reportedly assured religious conservatives that she would vote to overturn the 1973 case that legalized abortion.

SEE MIERS • A6

### MORNING BRIEFING

#### Weather

66-49



Partly sunny and breezy today. Mainly clear tonight. **A14**

#### Scranton makes it official



Former lieutenant governor **Bill Scranton**, son of a former Pennsylvania governor, formally announces his Republican candidacy for governor before a hometown crowd in Scranton. **A7**

#### Nation/World

■ The nation's murder rate declined last year for the first time in four years, dropping to the lowest level in 40 years. Experts say local rather than national trends are mostly responsible. **A3**

■ The driver of a bus that caught fire while carrying nursing-home patients fleeing Hurricane Rita is charged with criminally negligent homicide in the deaths of 23 passengers. **A4**

#### Opinion

■ Time will tell if Iraq's new constitution "stands up" a nation or presages its breakup, says George F. Will. **A13**

#### Local

■ A Fayette County man is ordered to stand trial on charges that he intentionally used a chainsaw to cut the forearms of a man in his Fairchance neighborhood last month. **B1**

■ Franklin Regional students, along with the community, collected 633

gowns and formal dresses that are being sent to D'Iberville, Miss., so that students in the hurricane-damaged district can enjoy a homecoming dance. **B1**

#### Business

■ General Motors has lost billions, so it's shifting more of its health care burden to its autoworkers. **C1**

■ Consumers snap up space heaters, insulation and wood burners as fuel prices spike a fever. **C1**

#### Index

VOL. 117 • NO. 257

Almanac **B5**  
Annie's Mailbox **B5**  
Bridge **B5**  
Business **C1**  
Classified **B3-14**  
Comics **C8**  
Community **B2**

Crossword **B5**  
Editorials **A13**  
Entertainment **C6**  
Financial **C2-4**  
Living **C5,6**  
Lotteries **A14**  
Obituaries **A8,9**  
Sports **D1-8**  
TV **C7**