

# TRIBUNE-REVIEW

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Worthy of Western Pennsylvania 50¢  
Four sections • 48 pages

## Penn-Trafford teachers set strike for Monday

*The union said it would be available to meet over the weekend.*

BY PAUL PATERRA  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The 263 teachers in the Penn-Trafford School District have called a strike, effective Monday.

The Penn-Trafford Education Association indicated its intent in a letter to the school district Thursday afternoon.

A deadline of noon yesterday had been set for the district to meet the union demands concerning salaries and benefits or the teachers would walk off the job, affecting about 4,700 students. The deadline was set after the last negotiating session Tuesday.

Shaun Rinier, president of the Penn-

Trafford Education Association, said the union is willing to negotiate over the weekend in hopes of averting the walk-out.

"I've made a formal request that we will meet any or all of the next three days to possibly avoid the strike," Rinier said. "The union is available for the next three days any time."

Margaret DiNinno, district spokeswoman, said the district could continue

negotiations and was waiting for a response from the union.

"It's with the intention of continuing the process of negotiations and the goal of coming to an agreement between the district and the teachers, ultimately with the intention of keeping kids in school and doing what we're supposed to be doing, educating students," DiNinno said.

The teachers' six-year contract ex-

pired in June. A strike vote was taken in April; 206 of 207 teachers who voted favored a walkout.

Rinier said teachers may strike for 26 days on the first work stoppage, according to state regulations, and may strike twice during the school year.

Salaries and benefits remain the key issues.

SEE STRIKE • A6

## Women handed a new lifesaver

*Herceptin is already improving the quality of life for some in the Pittsburgh area.*

BY ALLISON M. HEINRICH  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

When Nicole Strain was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, she was stricken with fear. Today, she has hope.

Because of advances in cancer treatment — and a new drug that has halved her risk of relapse — the mother of two keeps a positive outlook.

"It's not a death sentence anymore," said Strain, 32, of Carrick. "Here I am, almost a year later, and I feel pretty good."

That wasn't the case for women diagnosed with breast cancer as recently as 15 years ago. But significant medical advances, widespread educational programs and support groups that raise money for continued research allow patients today to think about not how long they might live, but how they will manage their lives.

Thousands of breast cancer patients learned this week there is new hope in conquering the disease.

Herceptin, a drug tested in Pittsburgh that targets only diseased cells in one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer, is the latest in a string of advances in breast cancer treatment. The drug is among new treatments that make the disease one people can survive.

Because cancer cells can break off from a tumor, spread through the bloodstream and grow elsewhere, doctors give patients drugs such as Herceptin to stop cells from growing.

The excitement over advances in breast cancer detection and treatment has changed the way oncologist Dr. Victor Vogel talks with women who enter his office at Magee-Womens Hospital.

"Twenty years ago, I had to tell half the patients they were

SEE LIFESAVER • A6

## Saddam surprises begin

### First witness bedridden; Co-defendant's lawyer kidnapped



Iraqi workers watch as fire billows from an oil pipeline that was sabotaged Thursday near the village of Tari al-Baghl, west of the northern city of Kirkuk.

*Meanwhile, election officials begin audit of constitutional vote.*

BY HAMZA HENDAWI  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — The trial of Saddam Hussein took startling turns Thursday when prosecutors said the first witness would be a bedridden cancer patient who helped run Iraq's feared intelligence agency. In the first setback, a lawyer for one of the dictator's co-defendants was kidnapped.

Iraq's premier, meanwhile, said he was proud the court gave Saddam — whom he called "one of the world's most hardened criminals" — so much freedom to talk at Wednesday's opening session. A defiant Saddam refused to answer the chief judge's questions and said he did not recognize the legitimacy of the proceedings because he was still president.

The prosecution of Saddam and seven of his regime's henchmen in a mass-murder case could be a lengthy process. It is the first of up to a dozen that prosecutors plan to bring to trial against Saddam and his Baath Party inner circle for atrocities during their 23-year rule.

SEE SADDAM • A10

## Bill might mean gun suits will be dismissed

*Bush likely will sign a measure freeing gun makers from blame in shooting cases.*

BY LAURIE KELLMAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — In President Bush's view, the sweeping protections that Congress is giving manufacturers and dealers of firearms shift the debate on guns and crimes back where it belongs.

"Our laws should punish criminals who use guns to commit crimes, not law-abiding manufacturers of lawful products," the president said Thursday, just after the House, by a

vote of 283-144, sent him legislation shielding gun companies from lawsuits by cities and victims of gun crimes.

But some local officials who have brought those suits in response to gang violence and high murder rates liken what lawmakers did to a board game.

"This is a get-out-of-liability-free card," said John Russo, city attorney for Oakland, one of 11 cities and counties in California whose suits against the industry would be dismissed if the bill becomes law.

"If you were to do something that brought harm to somebody else, you would be subject under the laws of your state to

SEE GUN • A6



JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Crews look for the bodies of two brothers Thursday in the San Francisco Bay near Pier 7. The body of a third brother washed up yesterday about a mile from where his mother, Lashaun Harris, 23, is accused of tossing them.

## Dad: 'Oh my God ... Oh my God'

*Crews are searching for the bodies of 2 boys ill mom tossed into the Bay.*

BY LEE ROMNEY AND MONTE MORIN  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

SAN FRANCISCO — The mother accused of drowning her three young boys in the San Francisco Bay told relatives the day of the killings that she would "feed them to the sharks," but family

members did not take the threat seriously, a sister said Thursday.

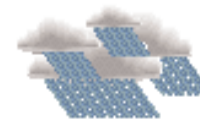
Less than a day after 23-year-old Lashaun Harris allegedly stripped her children naked, hoisted them over a pier safety rail and tossed them into the bay's chilly waters, relatives described Harris as a devoted and loving mother whose life began spiraling out of control when she was diagnosed with a mental illness two years ago.

SEE BOYS • A10

### MORNING BRIEFING

#### Weather

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Intermittent rain and drizzle today. Periods of rain tonight. A16

#### Nation & World

■ High-ranking Syrian officials and their Lebanese allies were involved in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, with suspicion cast even on President Emile Lahoud, a U.N. investigation says. A3

■ Rep. Tom DeLay turned himself in at the sheriff's office and was fingerprinted, photographed and released on \$10,000 bail

on conspiracy and money-laundering charges. A4

■ After meeting with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, President Bush says he's confident of peace in the Mideast. A9

#### Opinion

■ Pennsylvanians deserve transparency in slots. An editorial. A15

#### Local

■ A man convicted of killing a couple in a

collision in Hempfield Township faints when a judge tells him he may be spending the next decade in a state prison. B1

■ Nurses at Mercy Jeannette Hospital vote 89-3 to strike Nov. 2 unless a contract resolution is reached. B1

#### Business

■ American Eagle fights empty nest, eyes buyers who have outgrown hip hoodies with a new line of sportswear for men and women. B10

#### The new carpal tunnel syndrome

Tiny technology is taking its toll on digits. As gadgets grow smaller, they are more likely to injure users' fast-flying fingers. B10



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