

NHL Penguins lose, 3-2, after a shootout with the Islanders C12

STEELERS Will Big Ben return Sunday or will Maddox step in? C3



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Part D options puzzle many

Today is the first day to enroll for Medicare drug benefits, but seniors have 6 months.

BY RICK STOUFFER
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Jack Babson thought his health-insurance coverage through Aetna was better than the new Medicare Part D plan. But he had to satisfy his curiosity.

He compared what he spent in 2004 for prescriptions under the plan offered by Ingersoll-Rand, his employer of 46 years. He found he was right.

"It comes out to almost half the cost with the Ingersoll-Rand plan, compared to the Medicare plan — \$832 to \$1,625," said Babson, 88, of Harmar, who lives at Amber Woods at Harmar Village.

A six-month registration period begins today for the federal government's first prescription drug plan, which is expected to cost \$720 billion over the next decade. But many seniors aren't as fortunate as Babson — they don't know which plan is best for them.

Martha Novak, 87, of O'Hara, who resides at Lighthouse Pointe at Chapel Harbor, remains confused about Medicare Part D after five weeks of watching television advertisements, reading newspaper ads and talking with her pharmacist.

"What do I know about Part D? Nothing much," Novak said. "I know it's supposed to help me, but it's kind of discouraging."

She's not alone. A recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health found 61 percent of seniors, when asked how well they understood the intricacies of Part D, said "not too well" or "not at all." Forty-three percent of those surveyed said they weren't sure if they would enroll in a Part D plan, while 37 percent said they won't enroll.

SEE MEDICARE • A8

Bombers target peacekeepers



TOMAS MUNITA/AP

Afghan police officers secure the area in front of a burning international peacekeeper vehicle Monday after a second suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, and just minutes before a third attempt at the same site. Two suicide attackers rammed cars laden with explosives into NATO peacekeepers in the Afghan capital, killing at least one German soldier and wounding eight other people. Peacekeepers opened fire to thwart a suspected third bombing attempt, killing three.

Bush blasts critics' 'mixed signals'

The president heads to Asia and will attend a summit in South Korea.

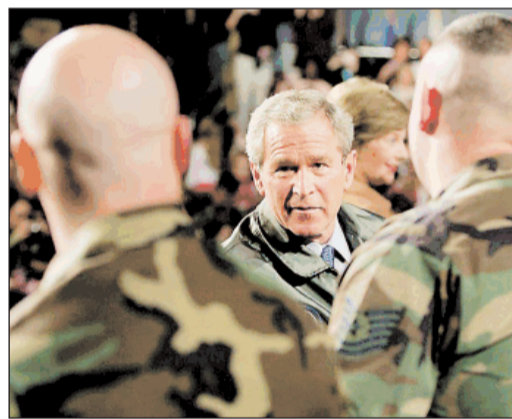
BY TERENCE HUNT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska — President Bush escalated the bitter debate over the Iraq war on Monday, hurling back at Democratic critics the worries they once expressed

that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat to the world. "They spoke the truth then, and they're speaking politics now," Bush charged.

Bush went on the attack after Democrats accused the president of manipulating and withholding some prewar intelligence and misleading Americans about the rationale for war. "Some Democrats who voted

SEE BUSH • A6



CHARLES DHARAPAK/AP

President Bush greets troops Monday after speaking about the war on terror during a stop at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. Bush blasted Iraq war critics yesterday as he headed for Asia, accusing some Democrats of "sending mixed signals to our troops and the enemy."

U.S.-led operation kills 50 insurgents

Iraq's Sunnis seek an end to military activity ahead of the election.

BY ROBERT H. REID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — U.S. and Iraqi troops launched a fresh attack Monday against an insurgent stronghold near the Syrian

border despite calls by Sunni Arab leaders to halt such operations to encourage a big turnout in next month's election. The U.S. command said about 50 insurgents were killed.

Two Marines were killed and at least seven were wounded in the fighting in the border town of Obeidi, according to a New York Times reporter embedded with the Marines. A Marine spokes-

man told The Associated Press that he cannot report casualties until 24 hours after they occur.

In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded near the main gate to the heavily guarded Green Zone, killing two South Africans and wounding three other people. The victims worked for State Department security contractor

SEE OPERATION • A6

■ **Amman terror:** The U.S. military says it arrested and later released an Iraqi whose name matches that of one of the hotel suicide bombers. **A8**

CAPITOL CASH GRAB

House passes pay repeal

Senate to vote on Wednesday

Lawmakers admit errors in a midsummer night raise.

BY MIKE WERESCHAGIN
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

HARRISBURG — The state House on Monday soundly passed a full retreat from the 16 percent to 54 percent pay raise for lawmakers, judges and top state officials.

■ **'Time is ripe':** A group meets to discuss reducing the size of the Legislature. **A8**

After a hourolong debate that included a pledge from the majority leader to return the portion of the raise that he's taken so far and an admission from the minority leader that the increase was a mistake, the House passed a new bill repealing it. After two weeks of battling with the Senate over how to word the pay hike rollback, House Majority Leader Sam Smith, R-Punxsutawney, amended a two-month-old repeal bill that strikes the pay raise legislation passed at 2 a.m. on July 7 and replaces it with the language that had been used since 1995 to set state officials' pay.

The repeal bill passed the House, 197-1, with Democratic Whip Mike Veon, of Beaver County, casting the lone vote against it.

"I am 99.9 percent confident that the language in this amendment returns compensation back to what it was prior to July 7," Smith said. "My belief is that this language is and will be agreeable to the Senate."

Veon voted against the repeal because "it was an issue of consistency," said spokesman Bob Caton. The Senate gave the House's bill its first consideration last night and Senate Majority Leader

SEE PAY RAISE • A8

Is it just me, or is it cold in here? Getting chilled may indeed make you sick

A study challenges medical thought on the common cold.

REUTERS

LONDON — Getting chilly can bring on a cold, British scientists said Monday, overturning medical orthodoxy that says there is no connection between developing the viral infection and a drop in body temperature.

Researchers at Cardiff University's Common Cold Center paid 90 students to sit for 20 minutes with their bare feet in buckets of cold water.

A few days later, the study found that 13 of the students reported cold symptoms compared to five in a control group of 90 students who kept their feet dry in socks and shoes.

"When you dip your feet into cold water, you cause a pronounced constrict-

tion to the blood vessels in the nose," said Ron Eccles, the center's director.

"This is one of the factors we believe that actually can aid the virus by lowering the defenses within the nose and triggering the symptomatic infection," he told the BBC.

Previous studies inoculated patients with the cold virus and then chilled them, but failed to find any link between temperature and catching a cold.

Eccles said his research differed by taking healthy people from the general population and then chilling them.

"We believe that when common colds are circulating in the community, for every person who's actually got a cold there are two or three who are infected but haven't developed symptoms.

"And it's when you chill these people that you can convert a sub-clinical infection or symptom-free infection into a

common cold with symptoms."

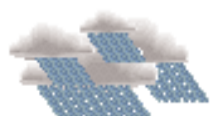
The study, published in the journal Family Practice, found that the trial students developing cold symptoms also reported they suffered significantly more colds each year than those who remained symptom-free.

It said this indicated there may be a group in the population who are more susceptible and may have a "common cold constitution."

MORNING BRIEFING

Weather

66-50



Breezy today with rain tapering off; windy and rainy tonight with a late thunderstorm. **A10**

Nation/World

■ Venezuela and Mexico decide to withdraw ambassadors from each other's countries amid a deepening dispute between leftist President Hugo Chavez and his Mexican counterpart, Vicente Fox. **A3**

Opinion

■ Build a wall along the Mexican border, says Dick Morris. **A9**

City & Region

■ Valerie McDonald Roberts, Allegheny County recorder of deeds, will challenge Catherine Baker Knoll for lieutenant governor in the spring primary. **B1**
■ Cassandra Flewellen, 13, testifies in the first day of her father's homicide trial in the bludgeoning and stabbing death of his wife. **B1**

Business

■ Medrad Inc., one of the region's star growth companies, is expected to jump-start development of the Tech 21 Research Park in Marshall. **D1**
■ Free shipping, from L.L. Bean and other retailers, aims to beat gas prices and a sluggish economy, and add spice to the holiday shopping season. **D1**



Fugitive teen caught

David Ludwig sits in a police vehicle after leading police on a high-speed pursuit, ending in a crash in Belleville, Ind. Ludwig, a Pennsylvania man suspected of killing his girlfriend's parents over a curfew dispute and then abducting the girl, was caught Monday with the girl, Kara Beth Borden, 14. **Story, A4**



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