

Bleak house of cards

Columnist Patrick Buchanan paints a woeful picture: Diplomatically, the U.S. has never been weaker in the Middle East, Israel never more beleaguered, and the Hezbollah-Syria-Iranian axis never stronger.

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Survivor says fire was hell

Man, two boys remain in hospitals

By NICOLE MARSHALL
World Staff Writer

A fire that consumed Tina Miller's home last week, trapping her two children inside, felt like "hell on earth," and the torment continues as her husband and sons remain hospitalized.

Miller said Tuesday that her youngest son, 11-year-old Adam, stopped breathing and had to be resuscitated after firefighters pulled him from the blaze Friday.

He was critically injured in the fire at their home near Third Street and Sheridan Road, but his condition has vastly improved, she said.

"He stopped breathing, and I watched as they did chest compressions on him in my front yard," Miller said.

The boy's lungs were burned by the smoke and intense heat, "but he is doing wonderful now," she said. "He is sitting up and eating chicken nuggets and wanting to go shopping."

"They told me that if they got to him one second later, he would not have made it."

Adam might be released from St. Francis Hospital soon.

But Miller said her husband, Tim Miller, and older son, Anthony, have



Tony Miller



Tim Miller

taken turns for the worse and remain hospitalized in critical condition at Hillcrest Medical Center.

"They said my 14-year-old son had a collapsed lung, and he developed a fever. He has pneumonia, and he is

so unstable they can't even do the skin grafts he needs yet," she said.

"Because his younger brother does not have many burns, I think my older son was trying to save my younger son, which is how his arms were burned so bad from his fingertips to under his arms," Miller said.

Tim Miller, a roofer, also has pneumonia and was burned on his back, shoulders, one hand, both feet and one knee while trying to rescue his children from the burning house.

Going back and forth between the two hospitals is hard for Tina Miller, who recently had neck surgery and was released from a hospital only a week and a half ago.

SEE FIRE A-14

Former judge is denied parole

By ANGEL RIGGS
World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board on Tuesday unanimously rejected an early release for Donald Thompson, a former Creek County district judge.

Thompson, 60, was sentenced to four consecutive one-year prison terms in August for using a sexual device while presiding over trials in Sapulpa.

Special prosecutors Richard Smotherman and Pattye High appeared before the Pardon and Parole Board to protest Thompson's possible parole.



Thompson

Thompson had been offered a plea deal to a misdemeanor charge that did not include prison time, Smotherman told the board during its meeting at Hillside Correctional Center in Oklahoma City.

"This man was offered leniency," said Smotherman, who is the district attorney for Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties.

Thompson's arrogance was unimaginable, said Smotherman, who urged board members to "deny parole not only this time but every time."

He added that the case proved to be the most expensive indecent-exposure case in state history.

"It cost the state well over \$80,000 to prosecute," he said.

Thompson, who did not appear before the board, has maintained his innocence.

His wife, Paula Thompson, and defense attorney Rob Nigh appeared before the board to argue in support of his release.

Nigh pointed to Thompson's "22 years of exemplary service on the bench" and told board members that Thompson "was a stellar member of the community" his entire life.

"For this to happen is an aberration and a demonstration of an illness, if that's what occurred," Nigh said.

Thompson testified during his trial that the sexual device was given to him as a joke by a longtime hunting and fishing buddy, but he denied ever using it during trials.

Smotherman, however, disputed that claim in his address to the board, saying that "there is no doubt that this happened, and it happened multiple times."

An investigator for the Pardon and Parole Board had recommended that Thompson not be granted parole.

The board's investigative report shows that Thompson has been recommended for the first phase of a sex-offender program.

The report also shows that if paroled, Thompson plans to live in Sapulpa with his wife and operate and manage a car wash and rental property he owns.

Typically, if Thompson were granted parole on one sentence, he would begin to serve one of the three remaining sentences.

However, the parole board could have voted to parole him on all four sentences and release him.

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SEE KERR A-11

NEW SPACES MAKE HAPPY FACES



KELLY KERR/Tulsa World

Kerr Elementary School second-grader Delia Robles (left) claps with her classmates during a ceremony Tuesday morning to celebrate a new wing at the school. The addition includes six classrooms and a new library.

Addition equals pluses for Kerr

New wing eases eastside elementary school's need for space amid rapid growth

By ANDREA EGER
World Staff Writer

More kids and books. That's what a new \$1.4 million classroom and library wing is allowing Kerr Elementary School to accommodate.

The school celebrated the addition, funded by a 2001 bond issue, at a Tuesday morning ceremony.

Kerr, at 202 S. 117th East Ave., is one of several schools in east Tulsa that have grappled with a rapid influx of new students during the last five years.

"We are growing, with no signs of plateauing," Principal Scott Griffith said.

A total of 10 portable classrooms had been brought in over the years as student enrollment surged from

about 450 to 600.

The new addition houses five kindergarten classes and one prekindergarten class, as well as two resource rooms for English Language Learners and an instructional facilitator room — and Kerr still had to keep four portable classrooms on its campus.

"We're trying to bring in everybody under one roof, but we're still feeling

crowded," Griffith said. "Right here in this area of east Tulsa, we are really jam-packed."

That descriptor also applied to Kerr's old school library, which consisted of two classrooms linked together.

Library media specialist Deborah Stanley said that facility could not

SEE KERR A-11

Tulsans weigh in on chief search

By P.J. LASSEK
AND BRIAN BARBER
World Staff Writers

Residents who expressed an array of opinions on issues ranging from illegal immigration to understanding cultural differences provided input Tuesday into the selection of Tulsa's next police chief.

Mayor Kathy Taylor sought the opinions to aid her in finding the successor to Chief Dave Been, who will retire next year.

Taylor and Been appeared at meetings at Booker T. Washington, Webster, East Central and Union high schools.

About 90 people participated in the four public forums, and volunteer facilitators from Williams Cos. Inc. collected comments at each site.

Speak up

Residents can e-mail comments to mayor@cityoftulsa.org or mail them to Mayor Kathy Taylor, 200 Civic Center, 11th Floor, Tulsa, OK 74104. Comments also can be called in to the Mayor's Action Center at 596-2100.

Taylor, who has said she intends to hire a new police chief by May 1, said it is vital that she understand what residents think are the important issues "we need to tackle to make Tulsa the safest city possible."

At Washington High School, some speakers said the police chief should be a person who actively promotes diversity and unity among races not only in the community but within the

Police Department. They also advocated a stronger focus on community policing.

"We also need a force that is properly staffed," Anthony Crawford said. "It's a fact that more officers visible drives down crime."

"I'd much rather have public funds go toward something like this than The Channels project," he said. "Core projects like safety should be first."

The Channels project is a proposed \$788 million Arkansas River development that would require \$600 million in public funds.

At Webster, Kay Price said that "no matter what great river development you build, if the city isn't safe, people won't come."

"We need a police chief that will

SEE CHIEF A-11

After mom's stroke, family struggling to remain afloat

By LISA SMITH
World Staff Writer

The family is struggling to pay bills after the 38-year-old mother suffered a stroke in September.

"I had worked the night shift, and I was getting out of bed that next morning when I collapsed on the floor," she said. "I yelled for my husband because I tried to get up and couldn't. He had to lift me off the floor."

"Doctors later told me that a small blood clot passed through and hit the right side of my brain."

According to a letter written Oct. 4 by Dr. Douglas Ensley of Cardiology of Tulsa, the mother "was hospitalized recently with a significant stroke. She

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is making excellent progress and regaining some of the affected functions. However, it may be some time before she has strength and coordination sufficient to return to work."

Tests at the hospital also revealed that the mother had a hole in her heart. She is scheduled for surgery this month to repair the hole.

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