

# The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

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## AT YOUR SERVICE

Fine dining can be so intimidating and stuffy. Four Dallas waiters share what to do — and what to avoid at all costs.

▶ TEXAS LIVING, 1E



## Poker nights

So are ESPN's poker drama series *Tilt* and A&E's reality series *Caesars 24/7* good bets?

▶ ARTS DAY, 8E



### Breezy and warm



High: 73 Low: 57  
5-day outlook, 2B

### SPORTSDAY

#### NFL PLAYOFFS



Minnesota.....31  
Green Bay.....17  
Indianapolis.....49  
Denver.....24

Complete coverage begins on Page 1C

#### Beltran tentatively agrees to Mets deal

Carlos Beltran and the New York Mets have reached a preliminary agreement on a \$119 million, 7-year contract, a lawyer involved in the negotiations says. 8C

#### WORLD

##### Iraq gunbattle kills civilians, policemen

Iraq is no longer sure whether U.S. forces had a role in gunfire that killed two Iraqi policemen and three Iraqi civilians. 9A

##### Sudan, rebels sign pact to end civil war

Sudan's Islamic government signed a peace deal with a Christian rebel group in the south that aims to end one of Africa's longest-running civil wars. 11A

#### BUSINESS

##### Pension cut looms; News offers advice

With her pension likely to be reduced, a former flight attendant's retirement plan needs to shift course. 1D

#### OVERNIGHT

##### People have spoken: '9/11,' 'Passion' win

Controversial films *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *The Passion of the Christ* joined a familiar green ogre to take top honors at the 31st annual People's Choice Awards. 9B

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## In session, it takes three to wrangle

By CHRISTY HOPPE  
Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — When it comes to funding schools and raising taxes, Capitol veterans know when to lean forward: It's when the governor, lieutenant governor and House speaker start singing the praises of the same proposal.

Rick Perry, David Dewhurst and Tom Craddick must reach agreement before they can lead others on these tricky issues this legislative session, which begins Tuesday. And what's clear, at least so far, is that the Big Three don't have their hymnals open to the same song.

"I don't see them on the same page today, unless they're reading

secretly," said Bill Miller, an adviser to top Republicans. "But issues develop and change."

Publicly, all three say they get along well and speak regularly.

But they have differences that reflect their constituencies: Mr. Craddick's limited-government conservatism, Mr. Perry's big-business boosterism and Mr. Dewhurst's big-state solutions.

"Disagreements will arise. I don't think it'll be their undoing," Mr. Miller said.

Mr. Craddick acknowledged that, on an issue such as changing business taxes, there's work to be done.

"That broad concept or belief is there," he said. But "not only does

### STAR PLAYERS

Rich in intrigue and colorful characters, the Texas Legislature is a production like no other. For a look at who could give the most powerful performances, see 12A.



the House not have an agreement among itself, I don't think the Senate has one, and for sure the two houses don't."

Public relations specialist Chuck McDonald, who worked for former Gov. Ann Richards, said it's not unusual for Texas' top leaders to disagree. But they must figure out how to work closely, he said.

"It doesn't mean you have to be buddy or pals," he said. "They all have a responsibility to make sure the schools don't fail."

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## Abbas elected by Palestinians

Choice of anti-violence moderate for president boosts peace hopes

By TOD ROBBERSON  
Staff Writer

JERUSALEM — Proponents of a new Middle East peace process received a jolt of hope Sunday as Palestinians elected Mahmoud Abbas, an anti-violence moderate, as their new president.

Mr. Abbas, a former prime minister and close aide to the late leader Yasser Arafat, won an estimated 66 percent of the vote, according to

exit polls. The election, however, was marred by serious complications that international observers blamed on Israeli obstacles and Palestinian disorganization.

Final results of the election, contested by seven candidates after the Nov. 11 death of Mr. Arafat, are not expected until today. But celebratory gunfire erupted around the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as soon as the exit poll results were released.

Election officials described the turnout as moderate among the 1.1 million eligible Palestinian voters,

See PALESTINIAN Page 11A

## Shattered youth



BARBARA DAVIDSON/Staff Photographer

"I want to move away from here," says Thanucia Navendran, 10, who lost her mother in the tsunami that brutalized Sri Lanka. More than 30,000 there died in the crashing waves that left countless children homeless, hurt or orphaned.

### Sri Lankan children tell of tsunami that fractured families

By LENNOX SAMUELS  
Staff Writer

KALMUNAI, Sri Lanka — She'd been stoic, almost cheerful, at her uncle's house earlier in the day, but as the 10-year-old girl approached the stretch of brown sand, she stopped cold.

"I don't want to see the sea anymore," she pleaded, clutching her elder cousin's arm with both hands.

The poise disappeared and her face crumpled in grief as she

stared, terrified, at the beach where she had played every day for most of her life and at the now-placid water that days before had taken away her mother.

"I want to move away from here," whispered Thanucia Navendran.

Of the more than 150,000 people who lost their lives in the tsunamis that struck this region two weeks ago, about a third were children. But beyond that statistic are thousands more

children who lost cousins, aunts, grandmothers or a parent — or two — in the disaster.

As authorities keep talking about how many billions of dollars have been pledged to countries devastated by the killer wave, more and more adults worry about the children in places like Sri Lanka, where more than 30,000 perished.

Many of those children con-

See CHILDREN Page 10A

### EARTHQUAKE IN ASIA

Helicopter crashes: Ten U.S. servicemen were injured when a U.S. helicopter on a relief operation crashed in a rice paddy in Indonesia near Banda Aceh's airport. Meanwhile, strong aftershocks and security concerns impeded relief workers' efforts. 10A

## Schools' trends linked

Figures suggest charters growing at the expense of DISD enrollment

By KENT FISCHER  
Staff Writer

Falling enrollment threatens to close several small schools in southern Dallas. Local charter schools, however, are growing and show no signs of slowing down.

In fact, evidence suggests the two trends are linked. In southern Dallas, the rise of charters appears to be a significant factor in the Dallas Independent School District's falling enrollment there.

Throughout the 1990s, DISD's enrollments grew by an average of 3,175 students a year. Those gains stalled in 1999 — the first year that local charter schools enrolled large numbers of students.

In 1999, 3,726 students who lived in DISD attended a publicly financed charter instead. By 2003-04, that number had nearly tripled — to 9,307, according to data obtained from the Texas Education Agency. Meanwhile, since 2002, DISD's enrollment dropped by 5,684 students.

"My biggest problem is growth," said Tom Wilson, who runs the Life Charter School on Ann Arbor Avenue in southern Dallas.

Last school year, 632 of Life Charter's 1,100 students lived within DISD's boundaries, according to state records.

Mr. Wilson said that while his school draws students from 13 public school districts, most come from nearby neighborhood schools.

Five DISD schools are within one mile of Life Charter, and all of them have seen their enrollments shrink since the charter school opened, state records show. Two

See FIGURES Page 2A

## Roommates: It's a guy thing

Men more likely than women to share living space, census shows

By PAULA LAVIGNE  
Staff Writer

You can take the boy out of the frat, but can you take the frat out of the boy?

Even beyond their college-age years, men are almost twice as likely to share their pad with a guy as women are to open their doors

to a female roommate, according to a *Dallas Morning News* analysis.

The analysis used 2000 census data to measure households headed by men and women between their mid-20s and mid-60s who had at least one roommate of the same sex. It excluded gay and lesbian couples.

The rate of men choosing to be roommates with men is slightly higher in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where roommates say this pattern is common among their

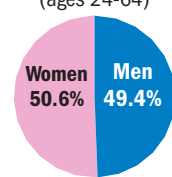
friends.

Men say living together saves money and expands their social circles so they're guaranteed a buddy for watching *Monday Night Football*. Many women who live alone say they enjoy their privacy and rest easy knowing they don't have to worry about someone else messing up the kitchen.

But doesn't that run counter to what we've all been led to believe: Men pride themselves on their hardy individualism, and women go to the bathroom in groups?

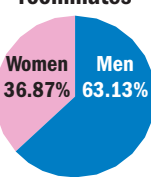
### HEY, ROOMIE

U.S. population (ages 24-64)



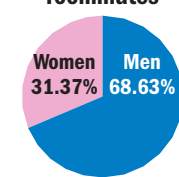
Total: 150 million

Living as roommates



Total: 2.4 million

Dallas-Fort Worth roommates



Total: 56,703

NOTE: Excludes gay and lesbian couples and people living in group quarters. SOURCE: Dallas Morning News analysis of U.S. census data

BETSY BOCK/Staff Artist

Yes, it does, say psychologists who study relationships and gender roles. They say there are, however, some aspects of male behav-

ior that might explain why men are less likely to come home to an

See MONEY Page 2A



