

THE DAILY NEWS



Sunny, breezy
and colder
46° 26" Page 4

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**2 charged
with
growing
marijuana**

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Not too much salt

Still driving around with slush on your car? Experts say the sooner you get



Fred Holt remembered for service to community

School board member, former commissioner, dies after long illness

By SUZANNE ULBRICH

Daily News Staff

Public officials and members of the community are mourning the loss of a faithful servant.

Fred Holt, 69, a member of the Onslow County Board of Education, died at home Sunday after a long illness.

Holt served on the school board from 1992 to 1996 and as an Onslow County commissioner from 2000 to 2004. He was re-elected to a four-year term on the school board in 2008.

Board Chairwoman Margaret Brown said Holt was very dedicated to his work on the board.



Holt

NATION / WORLD

NEWSWATCH

Web site of the day

Wunderground eyes weather for trips

www.Wunderground.com
Use Wunderground.com's Road Trip Planner to detect potential weather delays before you leave the driveway, according to a report in the Los Angeles Times.

What's hot: The Road Trip Planner in the "Travel & Activities" section of Weather Underground shows you what the weather will be like on your upcoming road trip.

Just type in your departure city and up to three destinations with the dates you'll be there and voila! — a map of your trip with weather forecasts for your route pop up. Spot unpleasant conditions (as in "chance of snow") before you encounter them.

This is a must for planning ski trips. Note that the forecast is good for only seven days, but you can check historical weather reports for international locations in its "Trip Planner."

What's not: Maps are so sophisticated these days that one might love to see some added features such as a button that would show nearby hotels or another that would highlight traffic patterns. They are using Google Maps, after all.

News you can use

Dog-e-Minder reminds you to walk, feed dog

McClatchy Newspapers

We're all busy these days, so remembering to feed and walk the dog can be a chore, unless you have the Dog-e-Minder hooked on your pet's collar.

Yes, Virginia, there is a gadget for everything and this one comes from a new company in the other Hollywood here in Florida. The company specializes in designing gadgets for pet owners and I think they came up with something pretty good here. I give it three barks, equivalent to two thumbs up for you non dog-talkers.

What is Dog-e-Minder? With a push of a button, the device, which can be connected to a dog collar or your key chain, will record when you last walked or fed the dog. It's also great for pets on medications, helping you keep track of when you last administered the medicine. I have helped my dog Chico recover from minor surgery and it was tough for our busy family to keep track of when we last cleaned the wound, gave his medicine, etc. Wish we had Dog-e-Minder around.

You may think "Why do I need another gadget to remember to walk the dog?" But I think this gadget is great for couples and families who do have trouble remembering who was supposed to walk the dog and whether the job got done. Regular exercise and proper feeding will help keep your Fido in fit shape for years to come.

Cost: Each device (comes in black, blue, pink and red) is \$19.95 and can be purchased online at www.dogeminder.com. But by now and get a two-for-one deal.

Pace of Afghan offensive slows

Taliban fighters launch counterattacks in stronghold of Marjah

The Associated Press

MARJAH, Afghanistan — Taliban fighters stepped up counterattacks Monday against Marines and Afghan soldiers in the militant stronghold of Marjah, slowing the allied advance to a crawl despite Afghan government claims that the insurgents are broken and on the run.

Taliban fighters appeared to be slipping under cover of darkness into compounds already deemed free of weapons and explosives, then opening fire on the Marines from behind U.S. lines.

Also Monday, NATO said five civilians were accidentally killed and two wounded by an airstrike when they were mistakenly believed to have been planting roadside bombs in Kandahar province, east of the Marjah offensive.

The airstrike happened one day after 12 people, half of them children, were killed by two U.S. missiles that struck a house on the outskirts of Marjah.

Afghan officials said Monday that three Taliban fighters were in the house at the time of the attack.

On the third day of the main attack on Marjah, Afghan commanders spoke optimistically about progress in the town of about 80,000 people, the linchpin of the Taliban logistical and opium poppy



U.S. Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment take cover in an open poppy field during a firefight Monday as Taliban fighters fire on them in the town of Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province.

smuggling network in the militant-influenced south.

Brig. Gen. Sher Mohammad Zazi, commander of Afghan troops in the south, told reporters in nearby Lashkar Gah that there had been "low resistance" in the town, adding "soon we will have Marjah cleared of enemies."

Interior Minister Hanif Atmar said many insurgent fighters had already fled Marjah, possibly heading for Pakistan.

In Marjah, however, there was little sign the Taliban were broken. Instead, small, mobile teams of insurgents repeatedly attacked U.S. and

Afghan troops with rocket, rifle and rocket-propelled grenade fire. Insurgents moved close enough to the main road to fire repeatedly at columns of mine-clearing vehicles.

At midday at least six large gunbattles were raging across the town, and helicopter gunships couldn't cover all the different fighting locations.

Allied officials have reported only two coalition deaths so far — one American and one Briton killed Saturday. There have been no reports of wounded. Afghan officials said at least 27 insurgents have been killed so far in the offensive.

Nonetheless, the harassment tactics and the huge number of roadside bombs, mines and booby traps planted throughout Marjah have succeeded in slowing the movement of allied forces through the town. After day-long skirmishes, some Marine units had barely advanced at all by sundown.

As long as the town remains unstable, NATO officials cannot move to the second phase — restoring Afghan government control and rushing in aid and public services to win over inhabitants who have been living under Taliban rule for years.

Another Democrat decides to bow out

Evan Bayh decision throws open Senate seat from Indiana

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Monday's stunning announcement by Sen. Evan Bayh that he's retiring from a Congress he says he no longer loves makes him the latest to flee Washington as many voters seem furious about the country's economic malaise and poised to take it out on incumbents.

The decision by the Indiana Democrat, who was in strong position to win a third term in November, gives Republicans a formidable chance to capture the seat in his GOP-leaning state. It also compounds the problems facing Senate

Democrats this fall as they cling to their majority in the chamber, where they now hold 59 of the 100 votes.

Bayh joins a growing roster of recent Democratic retirements that includes Rep. Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island and Sens. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota. Yet the congressional casualty list has a decidedly bipartisan flavor, with recent retirement announcements coming from Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., and other GOP House members from Michigan, Indiana, Arkansas and Arizona.

"Whether you're a Republican or a Democrat, you've probably had some very nasty town hall meetings lately, and most normal human beings don't enjoy being yelled at," said Jack Pitney, a political scientist at Claremont-McKenna College in Claremont, Calif. "Democrats stand to lose more than Republicans because they're the in party, but Republicans are catching

some of this too."

Democrats have a 255-178 edge in the House, with two vacancies from Democratic-held seats. But there are 49 Democrats from districts Republican presidential candidate John McCain won in 2008, placing them among the most endangered House Democrats.

With the public upset over job losses, spiraling federal deficits and spending, huge bonuses awarded to executives of bailed-out financial institutions, and Washington's yearlong preoccupation with health care, one need look no further than recent polls to gauge the poisonous political atmosphere facing members of Congress seeking re-election.

In an Associated Press-GfK poll in mid-January, just 32 percent approved of how Congress was handling its job, including just 4 percent strongly approving, though Democrats got higher marks than Republicans. People

were split about evenly over whether they wanted their own members of Congress to be re-elected, an unusually poor showing.

A CBS News/New York Times poll in early February found 81 percent saying it's time to elect new people to Congress, with just 8 percent saying most members deserve re-election.

The departure of Bayh, 54, sent deeper shock waves than most. Telegraphic and on the list of potential running mates for the past two Democratic national tickets, Bayh is known more for the moderate tone of his politics than for any particular legislative achievements, and his parting words had a notably plaintive tenor.

"To put it in words most Hoosiers can understand: I love working for the people of Indiana, I love helping our citizens make the most of their lives, but I do not love Congress," Bayh said in the statement he read in Indianapolis announcing his decision.



Bayh