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Sports



South vs. La Joya

The South Lady Hawks battle La Joya in Game 1 of their best-of-three series.

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Entertainment



Emilio drunk?

Grammy-winning Tejano singer Emilio Navaira was intoxicated when the tour bus he was driving crashed into freeway barrels in suburban Houston in March, according to authorities.

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Treasure trove

The ship was laden with tons of copper ingots, elephant tusks, gold coins — and cannons to fend off pirates, but had nothing to protect it from the fierce weather off a particularly bleak stretch of inhospitable African coast, and it sank 500 years ago. Now it has been found.

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Weather



Killer storms

Violent storms rolling across the nation's midsection unleashed tornadoes, high winds and hail in four states and killed seven people in Arkansas on Friday, including a teenager who died when a tree fell into her bedroom as she slept.

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Mayors take on congressman

City leaders: Suggestion we don't believe there's a border 'juvenile'

The Associated Press McALLEN — South Texas officials who oppose a border fence are stepping up their criticism of a Colorado congressman who favors the divider. The mayors of Brownsville and Eagle Pass said Friday that U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo falsely suggested that they believe there is no border between the two countries. In a letter Friday, Brownsville Mayor Pat Ahumada and Eagle Pass Mayor Chad Foster, who is also chairman of the Texas Border Coalition, called the suggestion "ridiculously juvenile," and noted the Rio Grande is a clear border between the United States and Mexico.

See BORDER ★ A7

PROTEST

Group: Arrest more men who patronize prostitutes



ABOVE: Volunteers join a protest organized by the Men's Resource Center of South Texas in front of the Harlingen police station. The group wants police to target men who patronize prostitutes rather than just arresting women who make a living by selling sex. RIGHT: Emiliano Diaz de Leon, executive director of the Men's Resource Center of South Texas, and Edith Garza, from Pharr, were among the protesters who say police should put more emphasis on arresting male customers or "johns" who patronize the sex workers.

Joe Hermosa/Valley Morning Star



By ALLEN ESSEX allene@valleystar.com 956-430-6239

HARLINGEN — A group of protesters hoisted picket signs Friday in front of the Harlingen police station, decrying the recent arrests of women charged with prostitution whose arrest photos were shown in local news media.

At its peak, seven demonstrators brandished signs outside the police station.

Emiliano Diaz de Leon, executive director of the Men's Resource Center of South Texas, said the male customers, or "johns," should be the targets of police action.

But Harlingen Police Department spokesman Dave Osborne said the women, most of whom had long records of arrests on charges of selling sexual services, were arrested in a sting operation in which male police officers posed as johns.

The department periodically conducts such operations, but sometimes has "reverse stings" in which female officers pose as prostitutes, he said. In those cases, the johns are arrested, he said.

"When we do that, I'll be happy to provide the names and mugshots of the johns (to news media)," Osborne said.

De Leon said there should be more emphasis on

See PROTEST ★ A8

BP agents let some illegals go repeatedly

Law allows some discretion whether to arrest or not

By ALICIA A. CALDWELL The Associated Press

EL PASO — Josefa Gonzalez Loya has sneaked across the Mexican border at least 128 times in the past eight years. And each time, the Border Patrol has been nice enough to give her a lift home.

Gonzalez and a group of other women and children — all Indians from the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca — have no interest in staying in the United States. All they want to do is panhandle outside El Paso businesses, using the children as lures.

At the end of a productive day, they wait for the Border Patrol to come pick them up and drive them back to the border.

Little dramas like this play out day after day, accounting for thousands of arrests but hardly any prosecutions in the past several years.

The Oaxacan immigrants fall under a loophole that gives border agents discretion to keep some adults and children together and out of jail.

"They do qualify for jail and prosecution," Border Patrol spokesman Ramiro Cordero said. "However, we've got to look at the humanitarian factor first if we are going to have to separate the family."

Nearly 500 Oaxacan (pronounced wah-HAH-ken) women and children in colorful serapes have been rounded up since the fiscal year began in October, accounting for thousands of arrests.

The middle-aged Gonzalez and some of the others make a mad dash across the Rio Grande with the help of a guide. Occasionally they get caught trying to slip across,

See DISCRETION ★ A8

Army Pfc. Alfredo Tamayo returned home on a leave from his tour of duty in Iraq and visited C.E. Vail Elementary School in La Feria on Friday. Tamayo spoke with the third-grade classes that sent him letters and care packages.



Clarissa Martinez Valley Morning Star

THE WRITE STUFF

Students finally meet their Army pen pal

By CLARISSA MARTINEZ clarissam@valleystar.com 956-430-6280

LA FERIA — What are the people like in Iraq? What do you eat? What music do you listen to? Are you scared?

Those were some of the questions for Army Pfc. Alfredo Tamayo, of Harlingen, who is home on leave from his tour of duty in Iraq. On Friday, he finally met the third-grade students

who have spent the school year writing letters to him overseas.

The letter writing became a personal project for third-graders in Rhonda Crow's classroom, since several of them have relatives in the service.

"Mostly they just share with him their appreciation of what he does," Crow said.

Crow said the students were eager

See PEN PAL ★ A7

DISCRETION

FROM A1

but evidently they are good at evading the Border Patrol, even though they use the same general area over and over. Sometimes, authorities realize they have arrived when they see the little footprints the diminutive immigrants leave along the banks of the Rio Grande.

Once she makes it across, Gonzalez, who speaks only a language

common among Indians in Oaxaca, catches a bus to a strip mall a few miles away from the border, just far enough into El Paso to evade agents on patrol. There she starts begging for spare change.

Border agents say when she and her entourage are ready to go home, they muster in front of a store. Then they wait, knowing their presence will create enough of a nuisance that agents will come pick them

up. When they do, the beggars' mugshots are taken and their fingerprints checked. Then they are walked back across the border.

"Half the time when you see them, they're ready to go," Cordero said.

Gonzalez has been arrested 128 times. Despite a crackdown on illegal immigration along much of the border, she and most of her tribal members have never been jailed.

Most illegal immigrants cannot count on the goodness of immigration officials' hearts. Unlike the Oaxacans and other Mexicans caught near the border, illegal immigrants arrested in the U.S. interior are routinely separated from their children, with some youngsters placed in foster care while their parents are deported.

Cordero said agents have the authority to "look at the totality of the

circumstances" when deciding if an illegal immigrant should be prosecuted.

"They are coming to beg. They are not trying to further their entry into the United States," Cordero said.

He said it is impossible to say how much each arrest costs the taxpayers.

Gonzalez and her crew seem well-aware of the law. The women all claim the children as their own,

but that would mean women obviously in their 50s and 60s have just had babies. Often the same child is claimed by different women on different days.

ONLINE 

To comment on:
BP agents let some illegals go repeatedly
 visit www.valleystar.com and scroll to the bottom of the story.

PROTEST

FROM A1

arresting prostitutes' male customers.

"We want to see more of that," De Leon said. "We want to see them really go after the johns."

Non-uniformed male police officers have also been solicited by "alternative lifestyle" or gay prostitutes, Osborne said.

De Leon said police are spending too much time, energy and tax money to arrest female prostitutes.

"Without johns, there wouldn't be prostitutes," De Leon said.

"We're not really addressing (the women's) needs to help them get off the streets," he said. "If we wanted to stop those women from having to prostitute themselves, then we really need to figure out what to do to make sure that they get housing, that they have a job, that they have education, that they have food and that they have the ability to take care of their children."

Edith Garza of Pharr said she met De Leon at a recent conference on sexual violence at South Texas College in McAllen and decided to join his group's protest.

Prostitution exploits women, she said. "It's like we're making women commercial. ... You can find them anywhere."

"If you want a certain background or race or whatever, it's like chocolate, strawberry and vanilla. Just pick one and you'll get it."


At times, boyfriends or even fathers have forced women to prostitute themselves in order to earn money for the men to spend, De Leon said.

The purpose of the demonstration was to call attention to the exploitation of women, he said.

He may organize such events in front of bars and strip clubs in the future, De Leon said.

"If we can raise awareness, then we can have conversations with boys and men that it's not OK to treat women as sexual objects," De Leon said.

"We have a responsibility to encourage men not to go to prostitutes, not to go to strip clubs, not to go to Hooters, not to buy porn," he said. "Then we're buying their bodies."

ONLINE 

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Protest
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Who is really guilty of a crime in prostitution cases?

- ★ The prostitute
- ★ The client (the "john")
- ★ Both
- ★ Neither

Make your answer heard through our online poll on valleystar.com

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