

WEATHER

Today: Partly cloudy,
Isolated rain,
High: 80s, Low: 70s.

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Iraqis to check out SE Texas-bred rice

Delegates visit Tuesday

By DAN WALLACH
THE ENTERPRISE

BEAUMONT — A delegation from Iraq — an important trading partner with Southeast Texas farmers before the Persian Gulf War in 1990 — will visit Tuesday to

size up the region's rice. The Beaumont visit is part of a U.S. Rice Producers Association effort to push for resumed trade between the two countries.

The delegation's visit to the Texas A&M University Agriculture Research and Extension Center follows a recent tour by a delega-

RICE, page 6A

Attack in dispute

Iraqis say copter killed wedding guests; U.S. says target was guerrilla safe house

By DEXTER FILKINS and EDWARD WONG
N.Y. TIMES NEWS SERVICE

BAGHDAD, Iraq — About 40 Iraqis were killed Wednesday by U.S. forces in an attack near the volatile border with Syria, U.S. officials said they had fired on a suspected guer-

rilla safe house, but Iraqis said the Americans had strafed civilians at a wedding party.

U.S. military officials said the attack occurred in the open desert on Wednesday evening, about 15 miles from the Syrian border and southwest of the town of Qusaba. In a statement, U.S. officials said they

had called in air support after an American military operation in the area had come under hostile fire.

After the attack, the Americans said they had recovered "numerous weapons," cash and foreign passports.

IRAQ, page 6A

What makes a great photo? Ask a great photographer



Tom Eckert/The Enterprise

Port Arthur resident Frank Cricchio recently won the International Photographic Council/ Professional Photographers Association award for merit

in his profession. Cricchio once owned a photo studio in Port Arthur and has built a reputation as a teacher and leader in photography.

PORT ARTHUR — The aging beggar sitting along the streets of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, evoked images of maternal love and gentleness in Frank Cricchio's mind.

The woman with white hair and a soft smile looked like everyone's grandmother, Cricchio thought

before asking if he could take her photograph.

Cricchio has captured such images of humanity since he was a child in Port Arthur, a grocer's son who picked up a camera at age 11 and became a worldwide leader in color photography.

"When you look at a photograph,

it has to do three things," Cricchio said as if talking to the students he's mentored through the years.

A photograph should get your attention, make an immediate statement and stir a memory or emotion within you.

"Then it becomes a great photograph," he said.

THE WHOLE STORY OF FRANK CRICCHIO IS ON PAGE 1B

Legendary hall has had its last dance

By CHRISTINE RAPPLEYE
THE ENTERPRISE

PORT ARTHUR — Dioris Thibodeaux sat at one of the half dozen bar stools at the empty Rodair Club, remembering Cajun dances of weekends past.

Purple, green and gold Mardi Gras decorations still hang from the ceiling above the bar. Christmas lights line the ceiling and the red tablecloths are still on the tables.

"We have a lot of memories," the 75-year-old Louisiana native said of the club.

Thirty-nine years of memories, to be exact.

RODAIR, page 4A

Rockin' the Rodair: Music to dance to

A short list of bands and performers appearing on various nights at the Rodair, according to information provided to The Enterprise by the club, include:

- ◆ TK, Hulin & Dickie
- ◆ Dickie & The Tornados
- ◆ Mack Manuel and the Lake Charles Ramblers
- ◆ Jason Deleon and Cajun Blend
- ◆ Lisa Cormier and the Sundown Playboys
- ◆ Blackie Frugé, Milton Simmons and Hicks Wagon Wheel Ramblers
- ◆ Jesse Legé and the Southern Ramblers
- ◆ Gary Bertrand and Touch of Cajuns

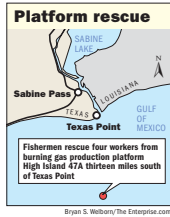
Anglers save crew from burning rig

By BETH GALLASPY
THE ENTERPRISE

Four offshore fishermen detoured Wednesday morning to rescue four workers from a burning natural gas production platform about 18 miles south of Sabine Pass.

"I'm really glad that we were there, glad that we could help them out. Those guys were scared to death," James Harrison, 36, of Fannett said by cell phone as he and his three friends from Winnie headed in from their fishing trip.

The fire burned one worker, and another broke his foot. A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter from Houston flew David Ansel-



mo, 26, of Tomball and Brian Authemense, 52, of Houma, La., to FIRE, page 5A

Pierott will plead insanity

Seldom-used defense is seldom successful — but it was in previous murder case

By JAMIE REID
THE ENTERPRISE

BEAUMONT — Kenneth Pierott, a man who served four months in mental institutions after killing his sister, will again plead innocent by reason of insanity, his lawyers said in court Wednesday.

Pierott, 27, is accused of killing 6-year-old Tre Devin Odems, who died of asphyxiation, according to preliminary autopsy results. The boy was found in an oven April 16 by his mother, who was Pierott's girlfriend.



Kenneth Pierott

Criminal District Judge Layne Walker set the trial for Sept. 13.

Pierott was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1997, months after he killed his sister.

He is again meeting with mental health experts, who will testify about his mental state at the time of Odems' death.

In Texas, a person can be judged insane if he does not know right from wrong during the crime.

Legal statistics show that insanity defenses are seldom used and rarely successful, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

According to a 1991 eight-state study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the insanity defense was used in fewer than 1 percent of criminal cases. Only 26 percent of those insanity pleas were argued successfully, according to the same study.

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