

Today	Thursday	Friday
		
High: 70 Low: 47 Precip: 30%	High: 60 Low: 45 Precip: 50%	High: 60 Low: 45 Precip: 30%

IN BRIEF

Where the buffalo roam is in a suburb of Baltimore

PIKESVILLE, Md. — A herd of buffalo somehow got loose and wandered around an upscale neighborhood Tuesday, disrupting traffic and alarming homeowners before officers managed to corral them in a tennis court.

More than a dozen police cars and a police helicopter were used to herd the roughly 10 animals, authorities said.

"Somehow they figured it out; I've got to give a lot of credit to the creativity of our officers," police spokesman Shawn Vinson said.

The officers used lounge chairs beside the tennis court as shields and formed a human chain to corral the wayward buffalo. One buffalo was seen leaping over one of the tennis nets in an effort to evade capture.

The animals came from a farm in Stevenson, nearly three miles away, Vinson said. They were returned to the farm later in the day.

Residents in Pikesville, a Baltimore suburb, first reported that buffalo were meandering along the road about 7 a.m.

Party differences solidifying on Social Security policies

WASHINGTON, D.C. — From the buttoned-down confines of a Senate hearing room to a boisterous outdoor rally nearby, Democrats took on President Bush and his Social Security proposals with gusto on Tuesday and rebuffed pleas for bipartisanship from

frustrated Republicans.

"If he's going out to push for privatization, let's help him pack," Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois said to cheers from a sun-splashed crowd on the lawn across the street from the Capitol. He was ridiculing Bush's heavily publicized 60-day tour to build support for his proposals.

"Personal accounts unravels the Social Security safety net in a way that makes it hard to find common ground," said Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, one of several Democrats who criticized the president's recommendations at a lengthy Senate Finance Committee hearing.

Terrorist suspect eluded U.S. military, official says

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. forces in Iraq believe they just missed capturing most-wanted terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in a February raid that netted two of his associates, a senior U.S. military official said Tuesday.

The official, who discussed the operation on the condition of anonymity, could provide no details on how Zarqawi escaped. U.S. forces recovered a computer belonging to Zarqawi, the official said, although he did not say how it was obtained.

Iraqi officials announced the Feb. 20 raid at the time but did not say Zarqawi was the target.

At a Pentagon news conference, Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would only say, "we were close," but he declined to elaborate, citing concerns about disclosing operational details.

"I think in general the intelligence is getting better. Having said that, we still don't have Zarqawi," Myers said.

Woman in Wendy's finger case waives extradition

LAS VEGAS — The woman who was arrested after claiming she bit into a human finger in a bowl of Wendy's chili waived extradition Tuesday, telling a judge she was eager to return

to California to face charges.

Anna Ayala, 39, appeared before the same judge who issued a warrant for police to search her home outside Las Vegas on April 6. Records from that raid are sealed.

Outside court, Ayala's lawyer, Frederick Tait Ehler of San Jose, derided charges against his client as baseless.

"Anna says they're ridiculous," Ehler said of the charges of attempted grand larceny. "She's eager to go back to San Jose."

Ayala was arrested late Thursday, and San Jose police on Friday called her claim a hoax. Authorities said the attempted grand theft charge relates to millions in dollars of financial losses Wendy's has suffered since news broke of her claim.

Consumer confidence down, new home sales up

NEW YORK — Consumer confidence declined in April for the third consecutive month, signaling Americans' concerns that economic growth is leveling off. But one area of the economy is still white hot: The government said sales of new homes shot up 12.2 percent last month to the highest level in history.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its Consumer Confidence Index fell 5.3 points to 97.7 for April, down from a revised reading of 103.0 in March. The new reading was slightly lower than the 98.0 forecast by analysts.

The new figure takes the index to its lowest point since last November, when it registered 92.6. The confidence index peaked most recently in January when it registered 105.1.

Stocks, which seesawed after release of the report, were lower in afternoon trading. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 30.94 to 10,211.53. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 2.97 to 1,159.13, and the Nasdaq composite index lost 8.00 to 1,942.78.

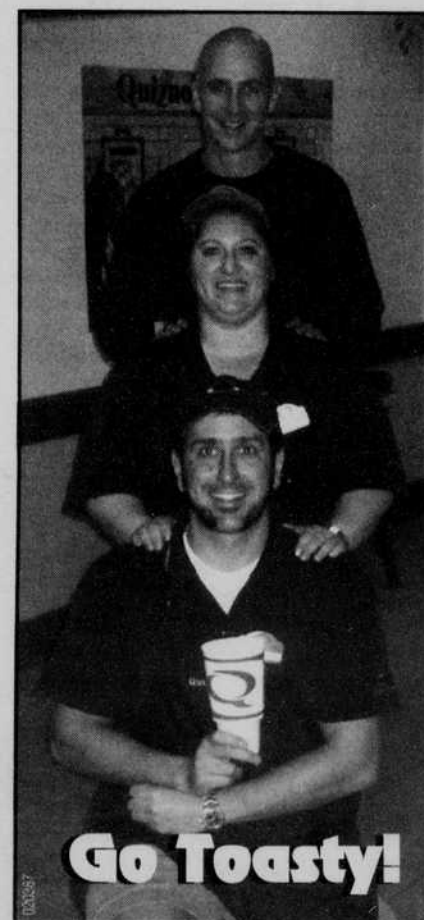
— The Associated Press

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