

MONDAY
MARCH 17, 2008

Ledger-Enquirer

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50 cents

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

1 Team
16 Team
8 Team
9 Team
5 Team
12 Team
4 Team
13 Team

MADNESS IS UPON US

Get your bracket in **Sports, B5**
Compete in our contest and make
your picks online, ledger-enquirer.com

Team 1
Team 16
Team 8
Team 9
Team 5
Team 12
Team 4
Team 13

SEC BASKETBALL

Dogs sweep tournament

More in Sports **B1**



PHYSICAL EDUCATION: PART 1 OF A 2-PART SERIES

Local physicians are frustrated with the number of overweight and obese children. Activity is needed in schools, they say.

Fit to be taught

Teachers: physical education expands beyond fitness and health



Photos by SHANNON SZWARC sszwarc@ledger-enquirer.com

Andrew Webb, 10, ties his shoes before running laps for physical education class at Sherwood Elementary School in Phenix City, Ala. All schools in Alabama are required to offer P.E. courses; Muscogee County just passed a requirement for elementary schools.

Muscogee County recently voted to bring P.E. classes back to elementary schools

By LARRY GIERER
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Local physician Jan McBarron says it's not every now and then she has an obese child come to her practice. "It's every day."

Columbus pediatrician Susan McWhirter often sees children with hypertension and Type 2 diabetes, something practically "unknown" to her practice when she began.

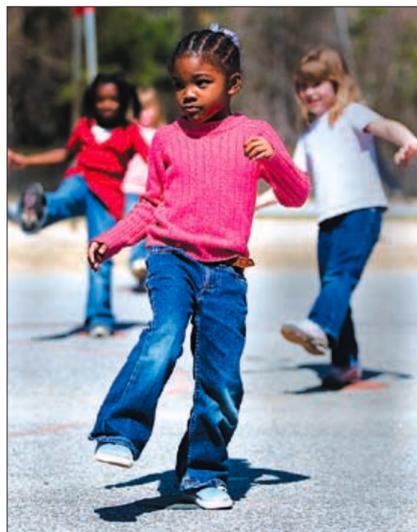
And Brindlea Griffin, director of nutrition for Phenix City Schools, says all she has to do is walk down a school hallway to see "there is a big problem with our children."

That's why all three encourage parents and schools to provide better diets and more physical activity for children and why all three say they are glad to hear the Muscogee County School District plans to bring back physical education classes to elementary schools.

According to an Institute of Medicine report on the PTA Web site, almost one-third of children ages 6-19 are considered overweight and 9 million children over the age of 6 are obese. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Family Services, the problem of overweight children has tripled in the past two decades, and overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

McBarron, McWhirter and Griffin will talk your

See **HEALTH, Page A3**



Nakirra Lias, 5, puts her right leg in while doing the hokey-pokey as part of physical education class at Sherwood Elementary in Phenix City.

P.E. COURSES

Here's where P.E. is offered in the area:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Fort Benning | Elementary schools |
| Phenix City | All schools |
| Russell County | All schools |
| Lee County | All schools |
| Muscogee County | Clubview and Hannah elementaries |

COMING TUESDAY

Parents discuss their role in keeping their children active and healthy, and they offer opinions on Muscogee County's new requirement.

Students pick up academic skills via physical education

By SARA PAUFF
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Today students at Dexter Elementary may be learning about even and odd numbers through a game of tag.

Or they may be practicing their spelling words as part of an obstacle course.

"We focus on academics through physical education," said Pam Koon, the physical education teacher at the Fort Benning school. "Kids learn by doing. We adapt games to fit the lessons."

Besides encouraging students to live healthy lifestyles, teachers and administrators at Fort Benning, Muscogee County and Phenix City schools say regular physical fitness classes teach students valuable skills and help them perform better

See **CLASS, Page A3**

MAJOR LOCAL COMPANIES



Labeled for individual sale

Dolly Madison's parent considers selling companies off separately as it struggles with bankruptcy

BUSINESS, D1

Party on: St. Pat wasn't Irish, either

Here's a bit of a shocker for you: St. Patrick wasn't Irish. That's right. The saint for whom Ireland's most treasured holiday is named was from Great Britain.

It kind of puts a new spin on the word shamrock, doesn't it?

In fact, he was born in the part of Great Britain that was under Roman control at the time (the late 4th century). So if he was puzzled by his nationality, well, it's understandable. Maybe that's why, on St. Patrick's Day, everyone's allowed to claim to be Irish.

Ponder that while you're looking for suitable ways to celebrate the day. There's a 10 a.m. parade at St. Patrick's Catholic Church at 1502 Broad St. in Phenix City, and there are parties here and there tonight — at the Shanty Shack, SoHo Bar & Grill and the 1000 block bars on Broadway.

But what would real Irish folks be doing today?

Breda Gleeson should know. The owner of Scruffy Murphy's is Irish the other 364 days of the year, too. She remembers wearing a shamrock and dressing in green as a youngster



BRAD BARNES

ONLINE

Want more St. Patrick's trivia? Go to ledger-enquirer.com

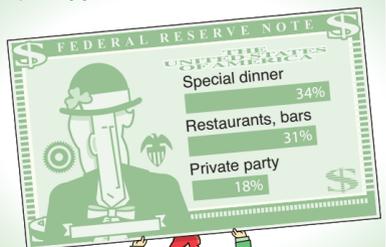
INSIDE

Power-outage blacks out Savannah mid-party, **Local, C4**

See **BARNES, Page A3**

Spending the green

Most Americans said they'd be wearin' the green for St. Patrick's Day; where they said they'd be spending greenbacks to celebrate:



Source: National Retail Federation (U.S.)

Graphic: Pat Carr, Paul Trap © 2008 MCT

Today's Forecast

Mostly sunny and mild.
High: 75.
Overnight low: 49.
WEATHER, B8



INSIDE

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LEGALS	A7, A10	TELEVISION D5

TO DO TODAY

Eat with the Irish

Check out the St. Patrick's Day festivities. Irish pub Scruffy Murphy's, 1037 Broadway, opens at 11 a.m. and will serve traditional Irish food all day. For a full list of tonight's parties, visit reporter Sonya Sorich's nightlife blog, The Walk of Shame, at ledger-enquirer.com.

RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE



Democrats spar over disclosing finances

McCain goes on fact-finding trip to Iraq

STORIES, A4

Rescuers sift through crane debris

Apartment visitor, two construction workers still missing after collapse.

STORY, A5