



CHARITY VOGEL

Among a spate of bad decisions, Spitzer's last one may have been the worst. Page B1

COLLEGE HOOPLA

The NCAA brackets are out! Let the pools begin! Page D1



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John Young from South Buffalo is a dream in green as he toots his horn for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Additional photos on the Picture Page, E10.

Photos by Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News

Next president must handle Iraq on a double track

Campaign rhetoric to confront realities of pullout, aftermath

By JERRY ZREMSKI

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON — Five years after U.S. troops invaded Iraq, America is engaged in two parallel debates about the war.

In the presidential campaign, it is about when the troops will come home.

Among those who are most familiar with Iraq, it is about what will happen if the troops come home too soon.

Those debates are likely to converge in the Oval Office soon after the new president is sworn in Jan. 20, 2009. And even though the three remaining major party candidates now say very different things about Iraq, the one who is elected will face that reality.

"No matter who is president, these are all intelligent people and, at some level, pragmatic people," said Charles Ferguson, a political scientist who directed the Oscar-nominated Iraq documentary "No End in Sight."

"No matter who is sitting in the Oval Office at that point, they will be very sobered and very scared and very tentative about anything they do," he said.

In other words, the campaign comments of Sens. Barack Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton and John McCain could be rendered obsolete by the facts the new president confronts upon taking office.

While the security situation in Iraq has improved since the



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— Charles Ferguson, who directed documentary "No End in Sight."

U.S. troop "surge" of last year, experts said the bottom line remains the same.

Then, as now, Iraq will be a nation shorn of its nationhood, a nation where tribe matters more than flag, where authority is the only thing that prevents centuries-old rivalries from exploding into violence that could claim tens of thousands of more lives.

And the next president will have to decide how fast that authority — the 130,000 to 140,000 U.S. troops likely to remain in Iraq at that point — can be replaced by Iraqi forces without igniting a powder keg.

At this point, the Democrats — Obama and Clinton — and the Republican — McCain — appear to offer very different approaches to that question:

- Obama, who has opposed the war from the start, has said he will bring all of America's

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St. Pat's Parade steps lively

Sisters of Mercy star with anniversary float

By BRIAN MEYER

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

The "walking sisters" lived up to their name Sunday as they joined thousands of participants who marched up Delaware Avenue in the 67th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The Sisters of Mercy entered a striking float. Some nuns sat beneath towering arches of green and white balloons, while others walked the route.

They're celebrating their 150th anniversary in Buffalo. When they arrived in the Old First Ward in 1858, they were



Rince Na Tiarna Irish dancers make their way along Delaware Avenue during Sunday's parade.

dubbed the "walking sisters" because of their frequent house calls to the ill and needy. Some of the estimated 75,000 to 100,000 spectators who lined the curbs from Niagara Square to North Street smiled as they spotted a sign on the nuns' float that read "non-stop trip to heaven."

The weather wasn't exactly heavenly, but it could have been a lot worse. At least there was no snow, and the sun helped take some of the sting out of the wind chill.

Vendors said they weren't selling as many green necklaces, funky antlers or other souvenirs as in some past years. But those who hawked attire had the chilly weather as a business ally.

See **Parade** on Page A2

Paterson ascends today as the Spitzer era ends

By VALERIE BAUMAN

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY — Lt. Gov. David A. Paterson, who is legally blind, will be sworn in today as New York State's 55th governor.

Just a week after the world learned of Gov. Eliot L. Spitzer's involvement as a client in a prostitution ring, Paterson will become the state's first black governor and the nation's first legally blind chief executive to serve more than a few days.

It is not exactly "Take Two" of Spitzer's promised "Day One," but for many New Yorkers, it will be a welcome fresh start after a week of having details of Spitzer's sordid personal activities seep

gradually into the open.

Paterson plans to project confidence and optimism in his inaugural speech, which will relate his own personal struggles to the challenges facing New York and the state's ability to overcome those challenges, a Paterson aide said Sunday.

After acknowledging what a difficult week it has been for the state, Paterson plans to talk about the need for both parties to work together to address pressing issues, including the state budget. The tone of healing and unity could be just what New York needs after a week of scandal-ridden headlines.

See **Paterson** on Page A2

Fed again strives to curtail crisis



Associated Press

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson says he appreciates the actions taken Sunday by the Federal Reserve.

Dramatic move cuts rate, bolsters credit markets

By JEANNINE AVERSA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — In an extraordinarily rare weekend move, the Federal Reserve took bold action Sunday evening to provide cash to financially squeezed Wall Street investment houses, a fresh effort to prevent a spreading credit crisis from sinking the U.S. economy.

The central bank cut its lending rate to financial institutions to 3.25 percent from 3.50 percent, effective immediately, and created another lending facility for big investment banks to secure short-term loans. The new lending facility will be available today to big Wall Street firms.

"These steps will provide financial institutions

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WEATHER

Sunshine, with some clouds. High temperature 39, low 29. Details on Page B10.



Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News

Meghan Cowley cooks hot dogs on Delaware Avenue during the St. Patrick's Day Parade on a chilly Sunday.

INSIDE THE NEWS

Space station robot passes most tests

HOUSTON — The international space station's new handyman robot got its first checkup Sunday, with astronauts and flight controllers testing its electronics, joints and brakes. The Canadian-built robot passed all but one of the tests. *Story on A8.*

My Lai victims remembered

MY LAI, Vietnam — More than a thousand people turned out Sunday to remember the victims of one of the most notorious chapters of the Vietnam War. On March 16, 1968, members of Charlie Company killed as many as 504 villagers. *Story on A4.*

Pope makes plea for peace in Iraq

VATICAN CITY — Denouncing the Iraq war, Pope Benedict XVI issued one of his strongest appeals for peace in Iraq on Sunday, days after the body of the kidnapped Chaldean Catholic archbishop was found near the northern city of Mosul. *Story on A6.*



WEB SAMPLER

While you're celebrating St. Patrick's Day, test your knowledge of Irish slang, culture and history with an interactive quiz at buffalonews.com/webextras.