

# American Press



**Big Dance**

NCAA  
bracket  
Page C4

ALLEN ■ BEAUREGARD ■ CALCASIEU ■ CAMERON ■ JEFF DAVIS

★★★ No. 41,616 4 Sections

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Lake Charles, Louisiana 50 Cents

**THE INFORMER**

*McCain's jet shot down in Oct. 1967*

## 4,000th death soon

Iraq war further out of public eye as casualties climb

**What branch of the service was John McCain in, and what did he do during the Vietnam War that they call him a war hero?**

The Informer can answer the first half of the question, but the second part — about the definition and application of “hero” — is a matter of opinion and falls outside the purview of the column.

On Oct. 26, 1967, the jet piloted by McCain, then a 31-year-old Navy lieutenant commander, was shot down during a bombing run over Hanoi, which McCain described to journalist Ron Steinman as “at that time the most heavily defended place in the history of air warfare.”

“Just as I released the bombs, a surface-to-air missile hit and took off the right wing of my aircraft,” McCain told Steinman for the 1999 book “The Soldiers’ Story: Vietnam in Their Own Words.”

“I automatically ejected because that’s what we’re trained for. According to some observers, my feet barely hit the water. My chute opened because I was going straight down. I broke my arms and hit my knees very badly when I ejected.”

McCain was taken prisoner and spent 5½ years in the infamous Hanoi Hilton prison, where he was interrogated regularly and tortured.

**Law allow five days for certificate filing**

**Does the state set a timeline for the processing of death certificates?**

Under R.S. 40:47, certificates must be filed within five days of death.

“If the place of death ... is not known, the certificate shall be filed with the state registrar within five days after the finding of the body,” the statute reads.

“In any case, a certificate shall be filed prior to interment, cremation, removal, or other disposition of the body. The place where the body is found shall be known as the place of death.”

For more information, call the state’s Vital Records Registry at 504-219-4500 or the Calcasieu Health Unit at 478-6367.

**Spokeswoman offers added information**

The Informer on Wednesday answered a question from a reader whose son-in-law was trying to procure a copy of his transcripts from defunct Lake Charles High.

In the column, Calcasieu school system spokeswoman Charlene Chiasson recommended the reader call the Management Information Services Department.

Chiasson later e-mailed The Informer to offer more information.

“Transcripts are available for all graduates of schools that have closed at no charge. Other graduates should contact the high school from

See **INFORMER**, Page A5

BAGHDAD (AP) — Sometime soon, the U.S. military will suffer the 4,000th death of the war in Iraq.

When the 1,000th American died in September 2004, the insurgency was just gaining steam. The 2,000th death came as Iraq held its first elections in decades, in October 2005. The U.S. announced its 3,000th

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loss on the last day of 2006, at the end of a year rocked by sectarian violence.

The 4,000th death will come with the war further out of the

War nearly vanishes from TV programming  
**PAGE B4**

public eye, and replaced by other topics on the front burner of the U.S. presidential campaigns.

Analysts say the 4,000 dead, while an arbitrary marker, could inject the war debate

back into the campaign season, particularly with the war’s fifth anniversary on Thursday. Or, with overall violence lower in Iraq, the milestone could pass with far less public discussion than in past years.

Last year was the deadliest

See **IRAQ**, Page A5

**‘It’s still** a war that hasn’t involved a draft or an increase in taxes.

This is a war that most Americans continue to feel they don’t have to make sacrifices for.’

**Jon Alterman**  
Middle East strategist

S T . P A T R I C K ’ S D A Y



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**Today, everybody’s Irish**

Parade-goers watch the St. Patrick’s Day spectacle pass through central London on Sunday. March 17 is “the one day of the year everyone is Irish,” said Tod Ardoin, president of the Celtic Nations Heritage Foundation of Louisiana. “It’s a day to celebrate the Irish traditions with our brethren who are Irish. St. Patrick’s Day is just about celebrating the Irish culture even if you don’t normally practice it.”

**LOUISIANA LIFE**

## Bayou culture washes away with coastline

Isolated enclaves hard to rebuild after Katrina

GRAND BAYOU (AP) — When Ruby Ancar talks about her fishing village on the bayou, she says a divine hand has protected her Atakapa-Ishak kinfolk for generations.

**‘We were hanging onto that little village out there, but I think the hurricane took the last wind out of us.’**

**Louis “PU” Thompson**  
Grand Bayou resident, Hurricane Katrina victim

But Grand Bayou is forsaken these days. 30 months after Hurricane Katrina washed over it and dragged one of Louisiana’s last authentic outposts of bayou culture into a world defined by insurers, money lenders, building code enforcers and government auditors.

“We’re facing a greater hurricane now than we did with Katrina, with the bureaucracy,” Ancar, 60, said, gesticulating passionately and flashing a toothy grin as she glided down the bayou in a boat. “The government — that’s our hurricane right now that we’re in.”

Before Katrina, Grand



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A Grand Bayou home lies in disrepair more than two years after Hurricane Katrina. The village, a living museum of Louisiana culture, is facing extinction.

Bayou and its 25-odd families of Atakapa-Ishak American Indians lived in a parallel world, in concert with moon cycles and migrations of shrimp. This living museum, where there are no roads and everyone travels by boat, is facing extinction.

Post-storm government aid has been nearly nonexistent, villagers said, leaving the entire village unable to return to their homes.

“We were hanging onto that little village out there, but I think the hurricane took

See **BAYOU**, Page A5

## Audit: Bush barely makes dent in backlog of information requests

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite ordering improvements more than two years ago, President Bush has barely made a dent in the huge backlog of unanswered requests under the Freedom

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

of Information Act.

At the same time, an audit by the National Security Archive found that Bush has

provided citizens someone to talk to about how long it is going to take to get the government records they want or to

be turned down.

The archive, a private research group at The George Washington University, released its seventh audit Sunday of the 1967 law that gives people the power to

request information from federal government files. The audit of 90 government agencies found mixed results from Bush’s executive order on

See **BACKLOG**, Page A5

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**INSIDE**  
Classified . . . . . D1-D6  
Comics . . . . . C6-C7  
Crossword . . . . . C6  
Deaths . . . . . A2  
Entertainment . . . . . B4  
Expressions . . . . . B1  
Life . . . . . B5  
Metro/State . . . . . B3  
Opinion . . . . . A4  
Our Past . . . . . B5  
Our Schools . . . . . B2  
Sports . . . . . C1-C5

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**ECONOMY**  
Federal Reserve cuts lending rate **PAGE A2**  
JPMorgan Chase buys collapsing rival for \$2 a share in emergency deal **PAGE A6**