

WEEKEND FOOTBALL

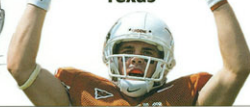
PREP RESULTS

UW vs. OKLAHOMA
WSU vs. IDAHO

SPORTS > D1



1 vs. 2
Ohio State
takes on
Texas



TV's
new
home
shows
for fall

DIGS > 11

The Seattle Times

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 9, 2006

Metro Edition

PARTLY SUNNY
with morning
showers. High 67,
low 50. > LOCAL B8

50¢ King, Pierce, Snohomish, Island, Kitsap
and Thurston counties | 75¢ elsewhere



INDEPENDENT AND LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1896 | seattletimes.com

WASL results show strong gains, puzzling declines across the state

READING, WRITING, MATH | Despite some improvement, about half of the Class of 2008 has yet to pass all three required sections of the exam.

BY LINDA SHAW / Seattle Times staff reporter

Scores on this year's Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) hit some rough patches, with dips in math in the fourth and seventh grades, and a dive in seventh-grade reading so deep it has many educators scratching their heads.

On the positive side, writing scores continued on an upward curve, and last spring's sophomores (now juniors) showed strong gains in reading and writing.

Still, about half of that class, the class of

2008, has yet to pass all three sections of the test — reading, writing and math — required to graduate. For most of them, the problem was math. Of students who passed two of the three subjects, about 92 percent fell short in math.

The math failure rate continues to be so large that even state Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson says she's willing to discuss easing the math requirement for the short term.

"We have to have a thoughtful debate about this," she said.

On Friday, Bergeson released all the scores on the WASL, which is given each spring. For students in grades four, seven and 10, the test covers reading, writing and math. This year, for the first time, the reading and math sections were also given in grades three, five, six and

Please see > WASL, A10

FOR MORE ON THE WASL |



School-by-school breakdowns
of test scores > A8, A9
Details on specific districts > A9

For interactive, updated WASL scores
by district and grade level for schools
in the greater Seattle area, go to
seattletimes.com/schoolguide

Garbage strike could spread

WIDE AREA IN SNOHOMISH,
KING COUNTIES ALREADY HIT

Mechanics, company at odds
over health-care costs

BY KEITH ERVIN / Seattle Times staff reporter

It took no more than 45 disgruntled garbage-truck mechanics to halt waste collection across a large swath of King and Snohomish counties Friday in what is believed to be the area's largest garbage strike.

Supported by their fellow Teamster truck drivers, the mechanics stopped garbage collection in an area encompassing 170,000 households from Redmond to Shoreline and from Mill Creek to Arlington. Pickups were scheduled — but not done — at 34,000 of those homes Friday.

Even as Houston-based Waste Management prepared to bring in substitute drivers from other parts of Washington and Oregon, Teamsters Local 174 threatened to extend the strike Monday to other King County cities, including the northern half of Seattle, as well as Renton and Federal Way.

"Before all is said and done, unless the company comes to its senses, we could see a million people affected by a strike," said Dan Scott, secretary-treasurer of the union, which is battling a possible shift of health-care costs to employees.

Waste Management, the nation's largest garbage company, announced the two sides would resume negotiations Sunday with the help of a federal mediator.

"Let's get back to the table and see if we can settle our differences," said Jerry Hardebeck, the company's director of public-sector services.

Scott said the two sides were discussing a resumption of talks but hadn't completed details. King County Executive Ron Sims welcomed the expected Sunday talks in an e-mailed statement: "We are supportive of efforts by the mediator to get all parties working toward a solution. Resolution will come at the bargaining table so we are

Please see > GARBAGE, A10

Who's affected now — and who might be affected next week > A10

A wild and woolly ride at the fair



ELLEN M. BANNER / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Gracie Long, 6, of Port Angeles, is anything but sheepish as she takes a tumble off her mount Friday in the "Mutton Bustin" event at the Puyallup Fair. Children age 6 or younger and weighing 60 pounds or less try to hang on for at least six seconds. This is the first year for the event at the fair, which opened Friday and runs through Sept. 24. For more information on the fair, go to seattletimes.com/entertainment.

"Greedy opportunists" Vines gain stature among scientists for complexities

BY RICK WEISS
The Washington Post

Amid growing evidence that vines are staging a global botanical coup — taking over more terrain, clambering up more walls and smothering more trees — scientists are redoubling efforts to understand these unusually animated plants.

Their studies don't point to easy cures for overrun gardens or sagging forest canopies. But they are revealing the remarkable array of adaptations that allow the wily plants to infiltrate and dominate new terrain so quickly and with such apparent impunity.

Studies also are addressing such long-standing questions as, "Am I imagining it, or can vines actually sense which direction

Please see > PLANTS, A10

Report: Prewar intelligence doubted al-Qaida link to Iraq

BY JONATHAN WEISMAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A declassified report released Friday by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence revealed that U.S. intelligence analysts were strongly disputing the alleged links between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida while senior Bush administration officials were publicly asserting those links to justify invading Iraq.

Far from aligning himself with al-Qaida and Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Saddam repeatedly rebuffed al-Qaida's overtures and tried to capture al-Zarqawi, the report said.

Tariq Aziz, the detained former deputy prime minister, told the FBI that Saddam "only expressed negative sentiments about [al-Qaida leader Osama] bin Laden."

The report also said exits from the Iraqi National Congress (INC) tried to influence U.S. policy by providing, through defectors,

false information on Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological-weapons capabilities. Even though analysts warned that the group had been penetrated by hostile intelligence services, including Iran's, a 2002 White House directive ordered that U.S. funding for the INC be continued.

The newly declassified intelligence report provided administration critics with fresh ammunition less than two months before midterm elections and in the middle of President Bush's campaign to refocus the public's attention away from Iraq and toward the threat of terrorism.

Senior Senate Democrats seized on the

Please see > IRAQ, A11

FIGURING VIOLENCE: Military alters how it counts dead in Iraq > A11

FRAUD CHARGE: Suit alleges Halliburton contract abuses > A11

Newsline A quick look at today's news

Red Cross: The government said it was fining the agency \$4.2 million for violating blood-safety laws. > A4

9/11: House Republicans and Democrats are feuding over a resolution that was meant to honor the victims. > A5

Afghanistan: A bomb killed 14 Afghans and 2 U.S. soldiers as violence increased in the capital. > A6

Mexico: Actions by top electoral officials and judges are fueling doubts about the real outcome of Mexico's presidential election. > A6

Campaign: Political newcomer Darcy Burner has been raising more money than U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert. > Local B1

Abuse: A former Gonzaga president sexually abused boys and young men in the 1960s, the Jesuits disclosed. > Local B1

Sonics: The new ownership group plans to expand to include about a dozen primary investors with Oklahoma City ties. > Sports D1

Mulaly: A "compelling opportunity" — and a \$2 million salary — await the former Boeing official who will now head Ford. > Business E1

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