

BRIEF
STATE

TERRE HAUTE
St. Mary-of-the-Woods names first lay president

A California college administrator has been picked as the first lay president of St. Mary-of-the-Woods College.

David G. Behrs will replace Sister Joan Lescinski, who said last year that she would step down in June after nine years leading the Roman Catholic liberal arts school for women, the school announced Monday.

Behrs, 47, is vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at the Dominican University of California in San Rafael, Calif. He also has held administrative positions at Lynchburg College, Marymount University, George Mason University School of Law and Pennsylvania State University.

Denise Wilkinson, general superior of the Sisters of Providence, the school's sponsor, said Behrs' experience had prepared him well for his new position, which he will begin July 1.

BRIEFS
WORLD



AP PHOTO

Afghans walk near the site of a suicide attack outside a U.S. military base in eastern Khost province, Afghanistan, on Tuesday.

KABUL, Afghanistan

Bomber kills as many as 10 outside U.S. base

A suicide bomber with explosives strapped to his chest blew himself up in a crowd of laborers waiting outside a U.S. military base in eastern Afghanistan on Tuesday, killing as many as 10 people.

The suicide bomber struck as hundreds of Afghan workers lined up to enter the base, known as Camp Salerno, outside the city of Khost, said provincial Gov. Jamal Arsalah.

Arsalah, who saw the aftermath of the explosion, said 10 men were killed and 14 injured. However, the NATO-led force, which includes the U.S. base, said eight Afghans, including two policemen, were killed and five were wounded. No U.S. or NATO troops were injured in the blast.

SHANGHAI, China

China confirms test of anti-satellite weapon

China has sent men into orbit and launched dozens of satellites, but its test of a satellite-killing weapon is shaking up perceptions about where the Chinese space program is headed.

The test, confirmed by Beijing on Tuesday after nearly a two-week silence, has drawn criticism from the United States and Japan and touched off fears of an arms race in space.

The Chinese test "was an overtly military, very provocative event that cannot be spun any other way," said Rob Hewson, the London-based editor of Jane's Air-Launched Weapons. "So a bald assessment of that is that it's a big fat challenge."

The test is a shot across the bow of U.S. efforts to remain predominant in space and on the ground, where its military is heavily dependent on networks of satellites, particularly the low-altitude imaging intelligence models that help it find and hit targets. Japan, also seen as a regional rival, is similarly vulnerable.

STATE OF THE UNION



AP PHOTO

President Bush, right, shakes hands with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., before his State of the Union address on Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday. Vice President Dick Cheney, left, applauds.

U.S. 'MUST NOT FAIL'

Bush defends Iraq plan to skeptical nation, Congress

By **TERENCE HUNT**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A politically weakened President Bush explored a skeptical Congress Tuesday night to embrace his unpopular plan to send more U.S. troops to Iraq, saying it represents the best hope in a war America must not lose.

"Give it a chance to work," he said. Facing a political showdown with Democrats and Republicans alike, Bush was unyielding on Iraq in his annual State of the Union address. He also sought to revive his troubled presidency with proposals to expand health insurance coverage and to slash gasoline consumption by 20 percent in a decade.

Democrats and even some Republicans scoffed at his Iraq policy.

"We need a new direction," said freshman Sen. Jim Webb, picked by the Democrats to deliver their response to Bush. "The majority of the nation no longer supports the way this war is being fought; nor does the majority of our military," said Webb, a Vietnam veteran opposed to Bush's invasion of Iraq.

Republican Sen. Norm Coleman of Minnesota, also took issue with Bush.

"I can't tell you what the path to success is, but it's not what the president

has put on the table," he said. It was a night of political theater as Bush went before the first Democratic-controlled Congress in a dozen years with his lowest approval ratings in polls.

Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, the first woman to lead the House, sat over Bush's shoulder, next to Vice President Dick Cheney. Reaching out to the Democrats, Bush opened with a tribute to Pelosi and paused to shake her hand. He also asked for prayers for Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson, hospitalized for more than a month after suffering a brain hemorrhage, and Republican Georgia Rep. Charlie Norwood, suffering from cancer.

The speech audience included up to a dozen House and Senate members who have announced they are running for president or are considered possible contenders.

Bush divided his speech between domestic and foreign issues but the war was topic No. 1.

Pelosi set the tone for Democrats. She sat silently and did not applaud as Bush warned of high stakes in Iraq and said American forces must not step back before Baghdad is secure.

With Congress poised to deliver a stinging rebuke on his troop increase, he made a personal plea to lawmakers.

"I have spoken with many of you in

person. I respect you and the arguments you made," Bush said. "We went into this largely united, in our assumptions and in our convictions. And whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure."

"Our country is pursuing a new strategy in Iraq and I ask you to give it a chance to work," Bush said. "And I ask you to support our troops in the field and those on their way."

He said the Iraq war had changed dramatically with the outbreak of sectarian warfare and reprisals.

"This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we are in," the president said. "Every one of us wishes that this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned and our own security at risk."

"Ladies and gentlemen: On this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle," the president said. "So let us find our resolve and turn events toward victory."

Key Republicans have joined Democrats in drafting resolutions of opposition to the plans he announced two weeks ago to send an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq. Bush said his approach had the best chance to succeed, but many lawmakers and a majority of Americans disagreed.

President's proposals address Democrat concerns, remain hard sell

By **TOM RAUM**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

President Bush faces long odds in trying to make headway in this divided-government town with his latest batch of domestic initiatives, even though many appear tailored to address longtime Democratic concerns.

Democrats, now the majority party in Congress, reacted coolly to Bush's effort to regain control of the agenda with a handful of new and recycled State of the Union proposals on health care, energy, education and immigration.

Beyond fresh calls for bipartisanship from both sides, Bush faced skeptical lawmakers and a nation mired in an unpopular war, with the 2008 elections increasing-

ANALYSIS

ly becoming a complicating factor. In his address, he congratulated the new Democratic majority, singled out House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for praise and called for bipartisanship. "Like many before us, we can work through our differences," he said.

Many of the goals he outlined were "the kinds of things Democrats would generally support," said Stephen Wayne, a professor of government at Georgetown University.

But for Bush, it's likely to be a hard sell. Polls suggest he failed to shift public opinion earlier this month when he outlined his plan to increase troop strengths

in Iraq. And Democrats on Tuesday sought to keep attention on Iraq.

"We go into this process with no illusions about the atmosphere in which we're operating in," said White House counselor Dan Bartlett.

Perhaps Bush's best shot at success is immigration overhaul. But then his proposal for a guest-worker program and a path to citizenship always had more support among Democrats than among fellow Republicans. Noting that "convictions run deep" on immigration, Bush urged a "serious, civil and conclusive debate" on the issue.

Bush also proposed reducing gasoline consumption in the U.S. by 20 percent over the next 10 years through tougher fuel economy standards and mandatory production of more ethanol and other alternate fuels.



More 'tweens' get cell phones from parents

By **JOHN REINAN**
MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL STAR TRIBUNE

There's a new rite of passage for American adolescents.

For many "tweens" ages 8 to 12, getting a cell phone has become an early signal of growing independence and a first step toward navigating the adult world.

About 5.3 million U.S. tweens, more than one in four, have cell phones, according to the consulting firm Yankee Group. And the

number is expected to double in the next three years.

The phones aren't for fun, say parents and kids. Instead, they've become a necessary tool in an on-the-go society where families struggle to keep up with a whirl of school, sports and community activities.

"I can go places and get dropped off, and not worry about getting lost," said 12-year-old Chloe Crimmins, a seventh-grader who got a cell phone for Christmas. Her parents decided she needed a phone

after a mix-up when her dad left her at the wrong place and there was no way for her to reach him.

Still, it was a surprise when Chloe unwrapped the box with a Motorola Pebble phone inside.

"I had asked for a phone so many times," she said. "I finally stopped asking because they said 'no' so many times."

Chloe's mother said the phone helps manage the transition from close supervision to independence. All societies have rituals that

Senator pitching property tax relief

Proposal calls for new local taxes

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

A top state senator is proposing changes that could overhaul the way local governments pay for services by shifting more of their property tax burden to the state and giving them new options to raise local income taxes.

OTHER BILLS

All registered voters in affected taxing jurisdictions could take part in a petition process to decide whether school districts or local governments can borrow money for bonded projects under legislation that cleared the Senate 47-1 Tuesday.

Senate Tax Chairman Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, wants the state to assume all kindergarten through 12th-grade general fund expenses and juvenile detention costs, an Indianapolis newspaper reported Tuesday. He also would cut in half the burden property taxpayers carry for child welfare services.

The local tax burdens would be shifted to the state and be covered largely by part of an existing state subsidy distributed each year to local jurisdictions to help keep property tax bills from rising dramatically. Property taxes were expected to rise by an average of about 15 percent statewide this year.

To make up for any shortfalls because of the tax shift, local governments could impose new local option income taxes. Kenley estimates \$300 million in new taxes would have to be raised statewide if his plan is embraced. Maximum increases in the local income taxes would be tied to average cost of living increases.

Local governments would be required to use half of that money for property tax relief. County boards would review all construction projects funded primarily by property taxes, such as school renovations or new government buildings, before they are approved. Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels also supports that idea.

"I want to force local governments to force a reduction of property taxes," Kenley said.

Kenley's plan is not contained in legislation, but he said he was talking with House Democratic leaders in hopes of getting elements of the proposal put in a House bill.

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