

USA Weekend:
Pop star Shakira and her music are hot, hot, hot /inside



Life:
Rock still instrumental in the lives of these boomers /D1



At Home:
Homeowners are putting a new spin on the humble laundry room /F1

HEISMAN TROPHY
Sports:
Southern California's Reggie Bush wins college football's top honor /B1



The Columbian

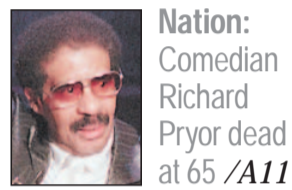
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Guide:

News, A1 - 12



Nation:
Comedian Richard Pryor dead at 65 /A11

World: U.S. stays out of agreement to seek cuts in greenhouse gas /A7

Sports, B1 - 12

Morrison's shot gets Zags past Oklahoma St. /B1

Juan Dixon sets the tone for Blazers /B1

Clark County, C1 - 12



Community events help boost holiday spirits /C1

Camas school maps set for public review /C1

Life, D1 - 11

Travel: A European trip for 2 under \$1,200 /D4

Toys are fun if you get past the packaging /D7

Business, E1 - 7

Columnist Malcolm Berko says housing faces tough times /E2

Boomers face double duty /E3

Weather, D12

■ High: 46 ■ Low: 38



Partly sunny; windy near the gorge.

Index

- At Home F1
- Books D9
- Business E1
- Clark County C1
- Classified E8, F6
- Comics inside
- Crosswords D2, E17
- Letters C10
- Life D1
- Movies D11
- Obituaries C4
- Opinion C9-11
- Regional news C2
- Sports B1
- TV Times inside
- Travel D4

We want to hear from you: See our service directory on A2



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Average number of patrons per show . . . **8,000** '03

Another season of discontent

By **BRETT OPPEGAARD**
Columbian staff writer

Underscoring dwindling concert attendance, sponsors, vendors and box seat holders at The Amphitheater at Clark County are beginning to voice disappointment with the venue after riding out a third slow season.

There were fewer concerts this year at the Ridgefield facility: 10 compared with 16 in 2004. Sponsors and vendors, in turn, only had access to about half as many concertgoers — 58,200 compared with 111,300 in 2004. In its three years of operation, the amphitheater has yet to come close to attaining its original projections of an average of 40 concerts a season and 400,000 fans.

AMPHITHEATER, page A6

Key supporters of The Amphitheater at Clark County frustrated by dismal performance

7,000 '04

5,820 '05



The Columbian files

Election will set course for Iraq future

Success could mean peace; failure, civil war

By **NANCY A. YOUSSEF**
Knight Ridder

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Plastered on the pervasive blast walls that protect buildings on nearly every major thoroughfare in Baghdad are dozens of poster-sized ads in rows, aimed at winning over passing motorists. Some have pictures of smiling politicians, while others show stone-faced religious leaders whose dogma could shape the next government.

Iraqis will head to the polls Thursday for a National Assembly election that could offer a last chance to move a country that's rife with sectarian division and violence toward reconciliation and stability. If all works well, the elections might pave the way toward starting an orderly withdrawal of U.S. troops.

"In the aftermath of the elections, and with the growth that I see in the Iraq security forces, we can begin to reduce the size of the U.S. forces and change the mission more to one of supporting Iraqi forces," the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, told the Arabic press last week.

Khalilzad also said the U.S. government hoped that Iraq's first permanent democratic parliament would be a representative body in which the majority Shiite Muslims and minority Sunni Muslims and Kurds could iron out their differences, erode popular support for rogue militias and Sunni insurgency groups, and unify the country.

Even with Iraq's entrenched violence and ethnic strife, that vision may not be out of reach. Many Sunni groups that boycotted the elections last January — handing the government to the rival Shiites — are running candidates now and urging others to vote. If they win enough seats, they could force Shiite politicians to negotiate and com-

Inside

■ Four U.S. soldiers killed as violence mounts ahead of election. **page A8**

IRAQ, page A5

Photo leads to diagnosis of rare eye cancer in boy

Untreated, retinoblastoma is usually fatal

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) — To most people who viewed it, the Moore family photo album was like any other, filled with pictures of 2-year-old Jake Moore and his baby brother, Jared.

But a month ago, a family friend flipping through the album noticed a tiny detail — Jake's right eye often reflected white light in flash photos, instead of the normal red-eye effect.

"She used to work for an eye doctor," Jake's dad, Jason Moore, told the Coeur d'Alene Press. "She said we needed to have it looked at."

Jake's mom, Shannon Moore, took Jake to an optometrist who confirmed something was wrong. Jake was suffering from retinoblastoma, an eye cancer that affects one out of every 20,000 children, according



Moore family photo/AP

This November photo of Jake Moore shows an unusual white reflection in the boy's right eye.

CANCER, page A5

EUGENE MCCARTHY, 1916 — 2005

Former senator, LBJ challenger dies

By **FREDERIC J. FROMMER**
Associated Press writer

WASHINGTON — Former Minnesota Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, whose insurgent campaign toppled a sitting president in 1968 and forced the Democratic Party to take seriously his message against the Vietnam War, died Saturday. He was 89.

McCarthy died in his sleep at an assisted living home in the Georgetown neighborhood where he had lived for the past few years, said his son, Michael.

Eugene McCarthy challenged President Lyndon B. Johnson for the 1968 Democratic nomination during growing debate over the Vietnam War. The challenge led to



Files/The Associated Press

Eugene McCarthy in 2003.

On page A2

■ A look at McCarthy's life and legacy.

Johnson's withdrawal from the race.

The former college professor, who ran for president five times in all, was in some ways an atypical politician, a man

with a witty, erudite speaking style who wrote poetry in his spare time and was the author of several books.

"He was thoughtful and he was principled and he was compassionate and he had a good sense of humor," his son said.

Helped by his legion of idealistic young volunteers known as "clean-for-Gene kids," McCarthy got 42 percent of the vote in the state's 1968 Democratic primary. That showing embarrassed Johnson into withdrawing from the race and throwing his support to his vice president, Hubert H. Humphrey.

Survivors include daughters Ellen and Margaret, son Michael, and six grandchildren.

Amphitheater:

From page A1

"How can you not be disappointed? The number of shows is fewer than expected, and the caliber of artists is less than (promised)," said John White, owner of Vancouver's JD White Co. and a partner in a 10-seat box. White said he and his group are wavering on whether to commit again to the seats that cost roughly \$17,000 per year, adding that the selection of acts also is a factor. "Megadeth isn't my personal cup of tea," he said, referring to one of the season's least attended shows.

Michael Holt, general manager of The New Phoenix and Last Frontier cardrooms in La Center, said his company has contributed at least \$50,000 per year in exchange for signage and 30 tickets per concert, but that commitment would be even higher with more events. He was promised at least 20 shows per year when he signed the sponsorship deal. Instead he received credits at the end of each season for what wasn't delivered.

"I don't know how a beautiful facility like that is OK with 10 shows per year," Holt said.

Numbers getting worse

When it was open this year, The Amphitheater at Clark County was operating at only 32 percent of capacity, down from 39 in 2004, a year the venue's chief executive officer, Dan Braun, summed up as "a complete disaster. An absolute disaster" in an interview before the 2005 season.

Braun and the rest of the amphitheater staff, including the New York-based company's owners, aren't sharing insights into how the latest season might impact the 18,000-seat facility's future and its business relationships. But sponsorships, box seats and vendor support are crucial components of the equation.

"We're here for the long haul," Braun said in an e-mail. The amphitheater's management declined interview requests by The Columbian, but agreed to answer a few questions in writing. Braun wrote, "We are a private business. We are in business to make money. ... You've asked for a level of detail about a private business. You have the right to ask, and we have the right to decline to answer."

Part of the amphitheater's problems stem from terms in its lease with Clark County that restrict the hours of weeknight shows and how it routes traffic in and out of the facility. The county loosened those constraints this year, but the changes haven't translated into more weeknight events or eliminated the traffic jams that aggravate fans.

The amphitheater also has been hurt by the concert industry's ongoing slump, which some blame on rising ticket prices.

Few big names

But in summer 2005, The Amphitheater at Clark County attracted just three of the world's top 40 tours. That contributed to the local venue's lagging behind in competition with the other two large outdoor facilities in the Northwest.

The Gorge Amphitheatre, near the Central Washington community of George, remains at the top of the list in the Northwest, according to Pollstar, with concerts attracting 180,000 patrons. The White River Amphitheatre in Auburn (near Seattle) drew 96,000. The Ridgefield facility, at 58,200, actually was closer this year in attendance to the Oregon Zoo Amphitheatre (40,000), despite offering five times the capacity and significantly better technical amenities.

Steve and Linda Stoller, owners of the Windermere Crest Realty office in Camas, bought a six-seat box for the venue's first year and an eight-seat box the second. But the couple balked before the start of the 2005 season and dropped out of the program, which cost them \$10,000 in 2003 and \$14,000 in 2004.

"There weren't any strong indications (before the season started) that there would be bands that appeal to us," Steve Stoller said. "As it turned out, it was a wise move."

Most of the acts this year were unable to generate much interest throughout the metropolitan area.

Half of the shows attracted



TROY WAYRYNEN/Columbian files

Half of the 10 concerts this year at The Amphitheater at Clark County drew less than 5,000 people, meaning the lawn area for the 18,000-seat facility was either closed or nearly empty much of the time.

fewer than 5,000 people, including three concerts that represented record lows for the venue: Tori Amos, 2,100, FishFest with Third Day, 2,400, and Gigantour with Megadeth, 2,100.

The top three draws were Coldplay (10,100), Brooks & Dunn (9,600) and James Taylor (8,400). But the Brooks & Dunn show brought in 1,200 fewer people than its concert here last year, and Taylor attracted 1,100 fewer than he did when he performed in Ridgefield in 2003.

Average attendance per concert has dropped from 8,000 people in the debut season to 7,000 in 2004 to 5,820 this year.

Portland venue busy

Across the Columbia River, the Rose Garden arena and Memorial Coliseum meanwhile have been having a rebirth under a new management company, Global Spectrum.

Global Spectrum boosted the Rose Quarter's offerings to nearly 50 shows this year, roughly 20 more than in 2004, including some of the world's top tours, such as The Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney and U2. Most telling in that comparison, though, is the range of artists that played in the Rose Quarter during the amphitheater's season, a list that includes Kenny Chesney, Beck, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Diamond, Santana, Audioslave, Green Day, Sheryl Crow, Foo Fighters and Jimmy Buffett.

Mike Scanlon, general manager of the Rose Quarter, said Global Spectrum's philosophy is to keep its venues as busy as possible as a way to perpetuate more business and keep sponsors, vendors and other supporters engaged.

In late November, for example, no outside promoters wanted to deal with the Jo Dee Messina concert, so Global Spectrum brought it to Portland on its own. The company made a little bit of money on ticket sales, but it also gained revenue through parking fees, concessions and a share of merchandise sales.

"At the end of the day, we did a show," he said. "It's very important to have the lights on every night. The more events you have, the more options (and value) you have (for sponsors, suite holders, vendors)."

There are other benefits as well. He said the full schedule keeps the venue's mostly part-time staff working. "The more we can keep our lights on, the easier it is to retain them," Scanlon explains. "If we can keep them working, then we're not having to spend money on hiring and training."

Scanlon said one of the most important changes Global Spectrum made when taking over the Rose Quarter in January was to hire a six-person public relations and marketing staff. That led to an increase in local exposure to potential supporters as well as better connections regionally and nationally to promoters and record label executives.

"I think we've made the



TROY WAYRYNEN/Columbian files

Low attendance affects more than just music fans, as box seat holders, sponsors and vendors are concerned about the value they are receiving for their investments in the amphitheater.

relationships ... that allow us to cut better deals," he said. "It's all about being in the market every day and knowing the people that you are working with."

The Amphitheater at Clark County, in contrast, had a subsidiary of Texas-based media conglomerate and concert promoter Clear Channel booking its 2005 shows out of Seattle, with a single public relations person commuting to this area for spot service. But after the season, Clear Channel closed the Seattle office. At this point, its Northwest customers, including the White River amphitheater, are being directed from various offices in California. The top local executive, CEO Braun, travels frequently for other ventures, and the owners of the parent company, Q Prime, have not attended any of the Ridgefield shows.

Being careful, conservative

Before the season started, Braun said in an interview that his company would take a cautious approach to booking acts in an effort to avoid the high-priced mistakes of previous years. He also said the facility would try different ideas, including daylong festivals. But both of those, FishFest and Gigantour, attracted fewer than 2,500 people.

County and amphitheater officials have been talking about aspects of the lease that might hurt business. So a few

"It seems kind of silly to have that huge, beautiful facility out there being unused. But as far as policy and government responsibility is concerned ... there's been absolutely no discussion about whether or not we have any sense of responsibility beyond the letter of the contract."

Betty Sue Morris
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

of the shows this year were allowed to start 30 minutes early, and the ratio of sheriff's deputies the amphitheater is bound to hire for security has been adjusted to better fit the crowd profile.

County Commissioner Steve Stuart says local government has complied with virtually every request from the amphitheater to adjust its contract, including allowing traffic onto back roads after shows. Braun declined to say if there is anything else the county can do to help. Stuart says lowering the lease payment or allowing shows to end later at night would be non-negotiable points for him.

The tinkers to this point haven't translated into a fuller season lineup, which has some of the facility's best supporters losing patience.

Don Rhoads, of the Convenience Group, says he and his partners in a 10-seat — \$17,000-per-year — box are done waiting.

"Unless things change drastically, I doubt if we'll renew," Rhoads said. "There's a real disconnect between the corporation and this community, the patrons of this amphitheater. ... When you cannot give tickets away (to friends and people in your company), you have problems, and you have to ask yourself, is this the highest use of my entertainment dollars?"

He added, "We went into this box with the idea that we were going to receive (commensurate) value for what we were paying, and it hasn't been there. I know a lot of the box holders, and I don't know any that are happy (about the situation). ... We're paying money to go to see quality shows, and we're not getting them."

In the late 1990s, when Q Prime came to Clark County promising to build and operate a regional attraction that would bring the world's best musical talent to Southwest

Did you know?

The average ticket price for the top 100 concert tours was \$50.27 at the mid-year point, according to industry analyst Pollstar. When compared with the \$53.55 of mid-2004, this 6.1 percent drop is the first price decline since 1996. During those nine years of inflation, the price of tickets had more than doubled.

Washington, it projected hosting four times as many concerts as it did in 2005.

"I'm disappointed with the number of shows (materializing)," sponsor Holt, of The New Phoenix and Last Frontier cardrooms, said. "I want a healthy relationship between the two of us. But I look at where this is heading, and at this point, it appears they are status quo."

Trying to make money

Braun, in his e-mail response, said, "If we can't get the act, or feel we can't make money on the act, we won't book it. Would we like to do more shows? Yes. However, we are a for-profit business, not a college activities group. We are in business to make a profit and run our business accordingly. ... Obviously, we need to increase the number of shows to bring our operation up to where we would like it to be, but putting on concerts that lose money is not part of our business model."

Braun also emphasized that the amphitheater is paying its rent, abiding by its contract and not asking for any public assistance. Yet the amphitheater is on public land, the Clark County Fairgrounds, and Q Prime created high expectations during the bidding process, when the company was chosen over two other suitors. The low attendance numbers also affect the value of Q Prime's promise to give 50 cents per ticket sold to local charities.

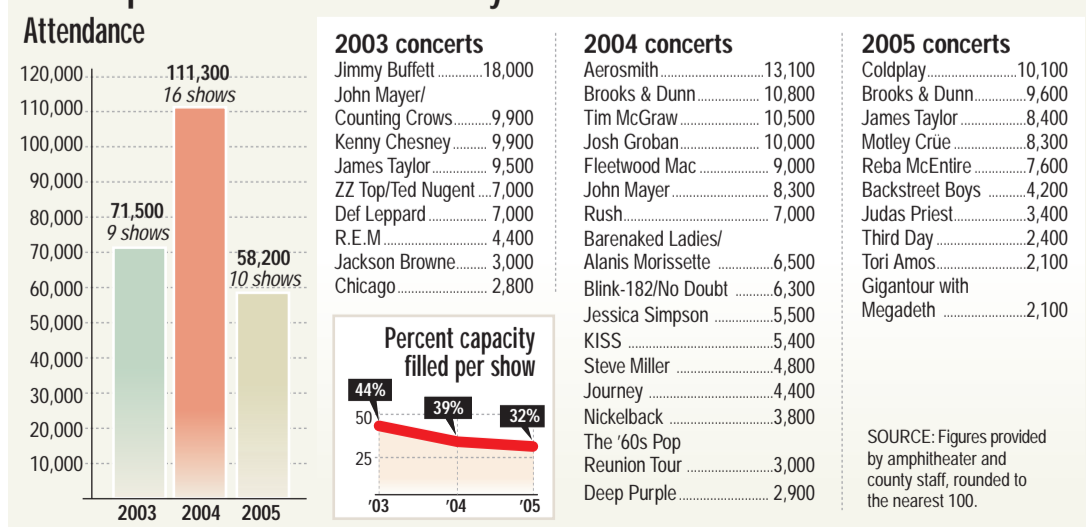
When the county decided to allow the amphitheater on its land, that decision was billed as a way to bring a centerpiece cultural facility to this community. The rent was part of it, but so was the momentous opportunity to enrich the entertainment landscape.

Regardless of those original hopes, County Commissioner Betty Sue Morris says as long as the lease payments are made and the contract is followed, Q Prime is doing what it needs to do from the commission's perspective.

"It seems kind of silly to have that huge, beautiful facility out there being unused," she said. "But as far as policy and government responsibility is concerned ... there's been absolutely no discussion about whether or not we have any sense of responsibility beyond the letter of the contract."

She added, "Do I think I have to make them successful? No. ... That's not on my priority list."

The Amphitheater at Clark County's first three seasons



The Columbian

Iraq elects a parliament

Iraqi voters go to the polls Dec. 15 to elect members of the National Assembly for a four-year term. How the election will work.

Iraq's 18 provinces

National Assembly seats
Seats are allocated by proportional representation

Example
Political party has 100 candidates. If party receives 20% of popular vote, it wins 46 seats (20% of 230) in assembly.

Note: 45 seats allocated under different method.

275-person assembly

SOURCE: Reuters, Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, Center for Strategic & International Studies, AP. Graphic: Tim Goheen, Lee Hulteng, Judy Treible

The vote

- 275 members of National Assembly
- 230 seats elected in the 18 provinces in proportion to number of vote received
- 45 seats awarded to parties that won a benchmark number of votes but failed to win seats at provincial level

Who can vote

- About 14 million Iraqis, including 1.2 million living abroad

Voting process

- 6,200 polling places
- After voter shows ID, finger is marked with indelible ink to prevent multiple voting
- Paper ballots show list of parties, coalitions running in province; voter chooses one
- Iraqis living abroad can vote in 14 countries; Dec. 13-15

Candidates

- About 300 registered political groups, including about 20 coalitions
- By law, one-third of the candidates must be women

Monitoring, security

- More than 70,000 observers have been accredited
- Hundreds of thousands of police, military on hand

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Iraq:

From page A1

promise on legislation, possibly drawing many people who support the insurgency or are sitting on the sidelines into a political process.

Yet the election just as easily could produce a stalemate that drives Iraq's warring ethnic groups farther apart and pushes the nation toward outright civil war and disintegration.

With more than 7,000 candidates running for 275 assembly seats on 400 slates, handicapping the results has proved impossible.

"We are all going to be surprised," said Hassan Bazzaz, a professor of political science and international relations at Baghdad University and a frequent U.S. adviser. "This situation is so complicated."

Electing a prime minister or passing changes to the constitution will require a two-thirds majority in the new assembly. But it's unlikely that any single ethnic group or political party can muster the votes to win that many seats, requiring compromise and coalition in order for the government to function.

Leading the field is the United Iraqi Alliance, the largest Shiite slate, which is expected to win the most seats in part because Shiites make up 60 per-

cent of the country's populace. The alliance holds a majority of seats in the current temporary assembly, which was elected in January to craft a constitution.

Homam al Hamoodi, a member of the alliance slate, said its goal was to win one-third of the seats, enough to block legislation but not enough to impose its views.

Guessing the size and shape of pieces of the puzzle is impossible, as is guessing how they might fit together to form a government.

Opponents of the United Iraqi Alliance also play on sectarian worries by criticizing the current National Assembly for installing leaders who they claim answered to clerics, not ordinary voters.

"I think the Shiites want a theocracy," said Adnan Pachachi, a prominent Sunni politician who served on Iraq's Governing Council before January's election.

The Sunnis have told members of their base that they must vote if they want a voice in government. They've promised a centralized government that controls Iraq's oil wealth — which lies mainly under Shiite and Kurdish lands — and reaches out to neighboring Arab states, most of which are majority Sunni, rather than to Iran, which is mostly Shiite.

While the major parties are religious, there also is a burgeoning secular political faction whose most prominent slate is led by former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite.

Ahmad Chalabi, the onetime favorite among civilian Pentagon leaders to run Iraq, also is running as a secular Shiite at the head of his own slate.

Bazzaz said the secularists could become a decisive swing bloc, depending on how many seats they won.

Allawi, who won 12 percent of the vote in January, "will do a lot better than before," he said.

The highly organized Kurds, also 20 percent of the population, are likely to retain their strength in the new assembly, U.S. and Iraqi political scientists have predicted. But, while they enjoyed a stable alliance with Shiites during the last assembly, they could see their influence pared back in a partnership with a group of smaller parties. That could increase the already intense pressure among Kurds to split off into their own independent nation, a move that would alarm neighboring Turkey, which has its own restive Kurdish population.

Predicting when the results will be known is as difficult as predicting what they'll be. The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq said it didn't know how long it would take to count the votes.

Cancer:

From page A1

to the American Optometric Association.

Without treatment, the cancer is almost always fatal. But early diagnosis and aggressive treatment can boost survival rates to over 90 percent. When Jake's cancer was discovered, he already had two advanced tumors.

"We were terrified about what we were up against," Jason Moore said. "We were a wreck and he was sensing that. We decided to be strong."

Jason and Shannon Moore were left with a tough decision — they had to decide whether to try to save his eye, or have it completely removed.

If doctors tried to save the eye

by freezing the tumors, his vision may still have been damaged and he would have had to undergo chemotherapy and radiation. The Moores chose to have the doctors remove Jake's eye, reducing the chance that the cancer would come back.

The surgery was done at Deaconess Medical Center in Spokane. The doctors think they got all the cancer, Jason Moore said. But the Moores still must wait another several weeks for genetic tests to see if Jake is susceptible to other cancers. The retinoblastoma could also return in the other eye.

"As of now, there's no chemo, but it's hard to breathe easy," Jason Moore said.

So far, Jake seems to be adapting well. He's back home, quick to share toys and show off his dad's elk antlers to visitors. He will have to relearn how to

gauge depth and distance, and will grow up with a prosthetic eye and safety glasses to protect his healthy eye from injury.

"He does grieve for the eye," Jason Moore said. "He knows it's missing and says he's sad. We're still trying to figure out how to explain it to him."

Now when Shannon Moore flips through a photo album, the occasional whitish-green reflection in Jake's eye stands out.

"It seems so obvious when we know what to look for," she said.

Still, Jason Moore said, parents should not rely on photographs. Under an early diagnosis program called InfantSEE, some optometrists conduct free exams to look for retinoblastoma, amblyopia (also known as lazy eye) and nearsightedness. Children between the ages of 6 months and 1 year qualify.

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