

EDUCATION EXTRA ▶ B1

Lunch bunch

The 'social dance' of the high school meal break



BUSINESS ▶ D1

iRivals

New music players are trying to break into iPod's game



WEATHER ▶ B10



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CURSE CRUSHED

Boston sweeps Cardinals for first World Series title in 86 years



Getty Images

The Boston Red Sox start celebrating Wednesday night in St. Louis after finishing off the Cardinals in four straight games to capture the team's first World Series title since 1918 and end the so-called Curse of the Bambino, which began when Babe Ruth left the Sox after the 1919 season. ▶ **More coverage in Sports, C1**

Scientists unearth 'Hobbit' hominid

By Nicholas Wade
NEW YORK TIMES

Once upon a time, but not so long ago, on a tropical island midway between Asia and Australia, there lived a race of little people, whose adults stood just 3 1/2 feet tall. Despite their stature, they were mighty hunters. They made stone tools to spear giant rats, clubbed sleeping dragons and hunted pygmy elephants that roamed their lost world.

Strangest of all, this is no fable. Skeletons of these miniature people have been excavated from a limestone cave on Flores, an island 370 miles east of Bali, Indonesia, by a team of Australian and Indonesian archaeologists.

Reporting their find in today's issue of Nature, they assign the people to a new human species,



Associated Press/Richard Lewis

Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum in London holds the skull of Homo floresiensis, which he says rewrites the story of evolution.

Homo floresiensis. But scientists have nicknamed the new species "Hobbit" after the diminutive folks in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, especially since it is a fundamentally new creature that bears more of a resemblance to fictional, barefoot hobbits than modern humans.

It is "among the most outstanding discoveries in paleoanthropology for half a century," say two anthropologists not associated with the study, Dr. Marta Mirazon Lahr and Dr. Robert Foley of the University of Cambridge, in a commentary in the same issue.

The little Floresians lived on the island until at least 13,000 years ago, and possibly to historic times. ▶ **HOBBIT, back page, A20**

Campaign 2004

Candidates zero in on munitions

Bush and Kerry argue over missing explosives in Iraq.

By Elisabeth Bumiller and Jodi Wilgoren
NEW YORK TIMES

PONTIAC, Mich. - President Bush broke his silence Wednesday on the disappearance of 380 tons of explosives in Iraq, accusing Sen. John Kerry of making "wild charges" about the missing explosives and of "denigrating the actions" of troops in the field. Kerry shot back that while "our troops are doing a heroic job, the president, the commander in chief, is not doing his job."

Bush's comments, his first on the missing explosives since Kerry began charging him with incompetence Monday for failing to secure Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion, reflected concern in the Republican campaign that the issue could be hurting the president only six days before an extraordinarily close election.

The missing explosives were first reported Monday by the New York Times and CBS News. ▶ **CAMPAIGN, page A19**

Key states may hinge on black voters

By James Rosen
BEE WASHINGTON BUREAU

ST. LOUIS - A hint of embarrassment gave way to quiet pride in the voice of Donna Franklin as she waited for a bus at a downtown terminal.

Franklin, a 47-year-old African American woman with a low-wage job at a cheese factory, admitted that she has never voted before. Next week she will cast a ballot for Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic presidential hopeful, in his bid to replace President Bush.

"This time, I'm going for it," Franklin said. "We need a change. Bush just hasn't done a good job. We're going to vote him out of there. I think there will be a lot of people like me who are going to come together for the first time and vote."

From St. Louis and Detroit to Philadelphia and Miami, Africa. ▶ **VOTERS, page A19**

Governor walking fine line for Bush

Schwarzenegger risks hurting bipartisan image back home.

By Margaret Talev
BEE CAPITOL BUREAU

As he prepares to visit the swing state of Ohio on Friday to campaign for President Bush, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is trying to minimize political fallout on his own reputation back in Democrat-dominated California.

In interviews this week with reporters and radio talk show hosts, the Republican governor kept a calculated distance from the more politically conservative Bush, advertising his mixed emotions about advocating for the president even as he praises Bush and calls for his re-election.

On Wednesday, Schwarzenegger told talk show host Eric Hogue on KTKZ (1380 AM) in Sacramento that his involvement has been "a balancing act."

"If I don't campaign for President Bush, the Republicans will be angry," he said. "If I do campaign for President Bush, the Democrats are angry."

Mark Baldassare, director of research for the Public Policy Institute of California, said there's ▶ **GOVERNOR, back page, A20**

MORE COVERAGE

A federal judge in Ohio blocks voter challenges. ▶ **Page A18**

Polling opens early at UC Davis. ▶ **Metro, page B1**

Voters in four counties consider bans on biotech plants. ▶ **Business, page D1**



For more information: For the latest news on the campaign, see: ▶ www.sacbee.com/election

Salvation Army: Bell may toll for a tradition

By Will Evans
BEE STAFF WRITER

The jingling of Salvation Army bell ringers may become a ghost of holidays past.

The "army of compassion" says it is moving in the direction of replacing its red kettle-guarding ground troops - a tradition since 1891 - with "virtual kettles" on the Internet. The charity cites a Target Corp. decision to prohibit bell ringers from its stores this year as part of a trend pushing it online.

"If this is a pattern that begins to force us to remove the bell ringers from stores, it will eventually disappear and we're very con-

cerned about that," said Maj. George Hood, national community relations secretary for the Salvation Army. "It may be that the kettle has to go electronic."

The nonprofit organization has stepped up an Internet marketing campaign for online giving, Hood said.

Signs of a pattern, he said, are a 2001 policy limiting charitable soliciting at Wal-Mart to 14 days a year, and a decision several years ago by a national mall chain to prohibit the Salvation Army from common areas. The numbers of bell ringer volunteers are also declining. Some are actually paid. ▶ **BELLS, page A17**

INSIDE THE BEE NATION ▶ A12

Americans getting bigger and taller

Adults are an inch taller than they were in the early 1960s, on average, and nearly 25 pounds heavier, the government reports.

SCENE ▶ E1

Poetry of life

From his south Sacramento room, Dos Nguyen translates his works and those of 16 other Vietnamese poets into English for an anthology.



Complete index, page A2

As Arafat's health worsens, fears of a power struggle grow

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM - Yasser Arafat's health took a turn for the worse Wednesday, and the crisis exposed how unprepared the Palestinians are for their leader's death, making a chaotic transition period all but inevitable.

Rumors spread Wednesday that Arafat had collapsed and was briefly unconscious. Doctors and aides have described his illness variously as a severe flu, an intestinal infection and gallstones. Earlier this week, doctors said he underwent an endoscopy to examine his digestive tract.

Israeli intelligence officials have speculated that he has stomach or colon can-



Yasser Arafat

cer, which Palestinian officials have denied.

But even before the turn in his health, Arafat, 75, and noticeably weakened after more than two years of confinement to a dank compound, still refused to groom a successor. Rival security chiefs are already battling each other in the streets.

No leader of Arafat's stature and popularity is waiting in the wings, said Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi.

"It's only natural to expect that there would be either a power struggle or there would be a loss of cohesion," she said.

Analysts said it could take years for a ▶ **ARAFAT, page A17**

INSIDE

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stands by his plan to withdraw settlers from the Gaza Strip, while Palestinians react with a mixture of ambivalence and watchfulness. ▶ **Page A17**