

WEEKEND INSIDE TODAY
BRAD PAISLEY'S COMEDIC COUNTRY

GOLF PLUS IN SPORTS, 4D
UNIVERSITY PARK C.C. WILL OPEN TO PUBLIC

NATION, 4A
SIMPSON RELEASED AFTER POSTING BAIL

BRADENTON HERALD

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Megamall gets sweeter for shoppers

TRACKING GROWTH | 276-acre University Town Center will house luxury retailers Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom

By STACEY EIDSON
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SARASOTA — The dynamic duo of luxury retailers Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom will soon make Benderson Development Co.'s University Town Center mall a shopping hot spot.

Benderson announced this week it has struck a deal with Neiman Marcus for the retailer to become an anchor store in the 276-acre megamall project near the intersection of Interstate 75 and University Parkway.

Neiman Marcus will occupy about 80,000 square feet in the

mall alongside Nordstrom's two-level, 138,000-square-foot store. Construction of the entire project is scheduled to begin in spring 2008 and Nordstrom officials say their store is scheduled to open no later than fall 2010.

Ginger Reeder, vice president of corporate commun-

ications for Neiman Marcus, said University Town Center is an ideal location to establish the retailer's eighth branch in Florida and its 45th worldwide. "Florida has been a great market for us and this is a very distinct opportunity to serve a really sophisticated customer

MALL TO 12A

Bradenton.com

Are you excited about these new developments? Will the presence of University Town Center change your shopping habits? Share your thoughts at our Web site.

Troop-rest measure thwarted in Senate

By RENEE SCHOOF
 McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — In another defeat for Democrats trying to change President Bush's Iraq policy, the Senate on Wednesday blocked legislation requiring that members of the active-duty military must spend at least as much time in the United States as they've spent in Iraq or Afghanistan before they can be sent back to the war zones again.

Democrats plan several more bills in the next few weeks to try to speed troop withdrawals, but the one on "dwell time" was considered their best chance to get the 60 votes needed under Senate rules to shut off debate. It fell four votes short: 56-44.

A weaker "sense of the Senate" version that would've endorsed the policy as a desirable goal without mandating it also fell short, 55-45.

American soldiers generally now are deployed to Iraq for 15 months and get 12 months back in the United States, which includes time away from home spent training for their next missions.

Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., a former Navy secretary and a decorated Vietnam veteran, proposed the amendment. He said it would "put a safety net under our troops" while the debate on Iraq goes on.

"Somebody needs to referee this mess to restore balance in their lives, so they can have a life," he said at a news conference before the vote.

"Somebody has to speak up for the rifleman," put in Sen.

TROOPS TO 12A

HEY, BRADENTON! IT'S TIME TO 'GET DOWN'

WHAT | Get Down Downtown, a monthly street festival **WHEN** | 6 to 10 p.m. today
WHERE | Along 12th Street West in Bradenton, between Manatee and Third avenues west



Robert Wooding, owner of the Lost Kangaroo Pub, sets out tables in preparation for patrons Wednesday morning. He is one of several merchants, including B'Towne Coffee Company, **below**, gearing up for Get Down Downtown.

Back in the groove

By MELANIE MARQUEZ
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BRADENTON — More downtown businesses are getting involved with Get Down Downtown, a monthly street festival that resumes tonight after taking a summer break and going through a change in leadership.

Under the Old Main Street Merchants, visitors to 12th Street West

between Manatee Avenue West and Third Avenue West will find a mostly unchanged festival, with this month's band, Skyway Jumpers, playing a free concert and food and drinks for sale.

"It's a model that works," said Mike Gold, owner of the B'Towne Coffee Company. "We're not looking to make major changes, just make it more family-oriented and get the community

DOWNTOWN TO 12A



Nation's housing picture darkens

Construction of new homes falls to slowest pace in 12 years

HERALD STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Construction of new homes in the United States fell in August to the slowest pace in 12 years as troubles in the housing industry continued to intensify.

The Commerce Department reported Wednesday that construction of new homes fell by 2.6 percent in August to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.331 million units.

Jim Lee, building director for Manatee County, said that through the end of July, 874 permits had been issued for single-family homes since the start of the fiscal year.

That compares to 2,219 single-family permits issued during the same period a year earlier, a decline of 60.1 percent.

The fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

Overall, the number of building permits issued in Manatee County was down, but not as dramatically as the single-family permits.

Last year, 15,452 permits were issued, compared to 12,666 this year thus far, Lee said.

"People are people putting in pools, lanais and additions with the situation with housing prices and the property tax. The vast majority of the permits are for existing development," Lee said.

The housing industry is experiencing its steepest downturn in 16 years with analysts forecasting weak prices and further declines in sales for months to come, given rising mortgage defaults that are dumping even more homes on an already glutted market.

— *East Manatee Editor James A. Jones Jr. contributed to this report.*

More coverage
 Analysts warn that the risk of a recession is still high, **3A**

Dan Rather files \$70 million lawsuit against CBS



Rather

By SAMUEL MAULL
 Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dan Rather filed a \$70 million lawsuit against CBS and his former bosses Wednesday, claiming they made him a "scapegoat" for a discredited story about President Bush's military service during the Vietnam War.

The 75-year-old Rather, whose final months were clouded by controversy over the story, said the actions of the defendants damaged his reputation and cost him significant financial loss.

The lawsuit, filed in state Supreme Court in Manhattan, claims the network intentionally botched the aftermath of the story about

Bush's time in the Texas Air National Guard and had Rather take the fall to "pacify" the White House. He was removed from his job at "CBS Evening News" in March 2005.

Besides CBS Corp., the suit names former CBS parent company Viacom Inc., CBS President and CEO Leslie Moonves, Viacom

chairman Sumner Redstone, and Andrew Heyward, former president of CBS News. The suit seeks \$20 million in compensatory damages and \$50 million in punitive damages.

"These complaints are old news, and this lawsuit is without

RATHER TO 12A

INSIDE BUSINESS, 1B
Port hope: Rail=growth

Port Manatee officials are excited about a proposed CSX railroad terminal in Winter Haven that would improve the flow of container shipments.

SPORTS, 1D
Garcia calls some shots

Bucs quarterback Jeff Garcia has taken a firm grip on the reins of the team's offense; he has even overruled head coach Jon Gruden on occasion.

TODAY'S FORECAST, 14A
High 86, Low 75
 Scattered showers

Today's artist:
Alexis Furrow, 2nd Grade, Blackburn Elementary School