

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

2012 OLYMPICS | A new star is born



DAVID EULITT | THE STAR
Gabielle Douglas hugged her coach Liang Chow after clinching the gold medal in the individual all-around.

Gold makes her just 'Gabby'

With latest performance she's a breakout star and a household name.

SAM MELLINGER



COMMENTARY

LONDON | The face you're going to see everywhere now features a smile that can win over a crowd and an exuberance they might put on a Wheaties box. This is the best female gymnast in the world: a 16-year-old from Virginia who left her family to pursue a dream in West Des Moines, Iowa.

INSIDE American swimmer Anthony Ervin goes for a gold medal today, 12 years after the last time he got one. | B1

borne routines that have people calling her "The Flying Squirrel!"

They screamed *Go Gabby!* before her final event even started, dancing and clapping in the stands as an arena shared one of the Olympics' great moments: thousands of fans and an exceptional girl, all fully aware that the gold medal is hers, all fully embracing a floor routine that essentially turned into a victory lap.

Douglas joins her idols as the

SEE GABBY | A16

FYI AT THE MOVIES

"Total Recall" (★★★), starring Jessica Biel and Colin Farrell, manages what few remakes can: It's actually better than the original. | D1



TODAY'S WEATHER: LOW 74, HIGH 103. MOSTLY SUNNY. | B16

\$1.00

THE REV. SHAWN RATIGAN | Priest admits taking pornographic photos of girls

FIVE GUILTY PLEAS



Prosecution will recommend "a virtual life sentence." Families of five girls say they're satisfied with ex-pastor's pleas.

By TONY RIZZO and JUDY L. THOMAS
The Kansas City Star

As a priest, he absolved others of their sins in the anonymity of the confessional.

Thursday afternoon, the Rev. Shawn Ratigan stood in the very public forum of a federal courtroom and confessed to some of his own.

Ratigan, 46, pleaded guilty to using five girls to produce or attempt to produce child pornography over several years while serving as pastor to congregations in the Northland and St. Joseph.

Each count carries a maximum sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison.

"When a defendant who wears a religious collar, who has the trust of the community, engages in conduct of this nature, his crimes are more devastating and more reprehensible," said David M. Ketchmark, acting U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri. "With today's guilty pleas ... there's an assurance that he will face stiff mandatory penalties and that he won't have an opportunity to harm another child."

SEE RATIGAN | A12

WHAT'S NEXT

■ The Rev. Shawn Ratigan also faces three felony counts of possessing child pornography in Clay County.

■ Bishop Robert Finn and the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph face trial in Jackson County on misdemeanor criminal counts alleging they failed to follow Missouri law mandating that clergy report suspected child abuse. The trial is scheduled to begin Sept. 24.

■ Ratigan also faces four civil lawsuits involving the child pornography allegations. Those lawsuits include Finn and the diocese as defendants, alleging that they were aware of Ratigan's behavior but failed to act.

FILE PHOTO BY KEITH MYERS | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

KC-bound Megabus crashes, killing one

Dozens more were hurt after a tire blowout sent the bus into a concrete bridge pillar in Illinois.

By MATT CAMPBELL
The Kansas City Star and JIM SALTER
The Associated Press

There were only four seats facing the back of the Megabus that crashed into a bridge pillar Thursday, and Zaq Hall of Kansas City is thankful he was sitting in one of them.

The force pressed the 25-year-old's back into the seat cushion, and he didn't get the whiplash effect that struck most of the other passengers

on the double-decker bus.

"I remember the screams from upstairs," Hall said. "It was horrible."

A woman who was sitting on the upper level, directly above the driver, was killed, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. More than three dozen injured people were taken to hospitals.

The dead woman was identified as Aditi R. Avhad, 24, a native of India who was headed to Columbia, where she was a dental graduate student at the University of Missouri, according to the Post-Dispatch.

SEE CRASH | A16



PHOTO COURTESY OF KSDK-TV | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Emergency crews worked the scene of a bus crash on Interstate 55 near Litchfield, Ill., on Thursday. The Megabus carrying 81 passengers was on its way to Kansas City.

Candidates have an eye on judge selection

Some in Kansas would like to see the governor have a greater say, but others like system as is.

By BRAD COOPER
The Kansas City Star

The survey question for Kansas Senate candidate Gary Mason was straightforward.

"What, if any, changes would you like to see made to the state's abortion laws?"

His straightforward answer: Change the courts.

"I think we need more bal-

ance in the state court," Mason said in an interview. "If we had better balance, we would probably see better results."

In answering the abortion question from The Wichita Eagle, Mason said he supported a bill handing over state appeals court appointments to the governor with confirmation from the Kansas Senate.

Mason, a Wichita Republican, is among dozens of can-

SEE ELECTION | A12