

# WAYCROSS JOURNAL-HERALD

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## Tragedy Compels A Blackshear Mom To Become An Activist She Will Discuss Prescription Drug Legislation On CNN

**BLACKSHEAR** — The personal tragedy that invaded Theresa Wheeler's world in February, the prescription drug overdose death of her 28-year-old daughter, has led to her activism for a cause.

Wheeler is working to promote legislation that would make e-drug monitoring the law in Georgia. She will make her case on national television tonight.

"Georgia is one of just 10 or 11 states that doesn't have a database," Wheeler said Tuesday. Without one, she said, "legitimate physicians" are not able to monitor patients that she calls "doctor shoppers," abusers of pharmaceutical medications who visit multiple doctors to obtain as many prescriptions as they can get their hands on so they can feed their addictions.

Most states have databases in place, and they have proven to be extremely effective in combatting the problem — and saving lives.

In Georgia, she said, "doctors have no easy way of finding out whether their patients are going to other physicians and getting prescriptions for the same medicines."

She said attempts to pass an e-drug monitoring law in Georgia recently failed.

"Maybe in the next legislative (see CNN, page 9)

## Teen Girl Survives Yemeni Jet Crash

**MORONI, Comoros (AP)** — A teenage girl who is the only known survivor of a Yemeni jet crash is conscious in the hospital in the Comoros with bruises on her face and a gauze bandage on her elbow.

An Associated Press reporter saw the 14-year-old in a hospital in Comoros when the country's vice president visited her Wednesday. A nurse who treated the girl said she was "doing well."

The girl's father told French radio that his daughter could barely swim but managed to hang on long enough for rescuers to find her in the Indian Ocean.

A Yemenia Airbus 310 jet carrying 153 people crashed into the Indian Ocean early Tuesday as it attempted to land in the dark amid howling winds. France's transport minister says one of the black boxes has already been found, but there is no word on other survivors.



Democrat Al Franken, with his wife Franni at his side, speaks to the media outside their home in Minneapolis Tuesday after the state Supreme Court ruled he won election to the U.S. Senate.

## Democrat Franken Wins Minnesota Senate Seat

**ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)** — Al Franken refused his rival's calls for an election night concession last November, choosing instead to begin vote counting and courtroom haggling that stretched almost eight months and ultimately landed him a seat in the U.S. Senate.

Franken's victory over Republican Norm Coleman gives Democrats 60 Senate seats, the critical number needed to overcome Republican filibusters. When Franken is seated,

which could come as early as next week, his party will have a majority not reached on either side of the aisle in some three decades.

Coleman conceded the election hours after a unanimous state Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that Franken — who moved into politics with books poking fun at conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh — should be certified the winner. In doing so, Coleman pulled the plug on a bitter election that was decided by 312 votes

out of almost 2.9 million cast.

"When you win an election this close, you know not one bit of effort went to waste," Franken told reporters outside his downtown Minneapolis town house, accompanied by his wife. "The way I see it, I'm not going to Washington to be the 60th Democratic senator, I'm going to Washington to be the second senator from Minnesota."

Coleman could have carried his (see FRANKEN, page 3)

## Iraq Cleric Is Hopeful About U.S. Pullback

**BAGHDAD (AP)** — A Shiite cleric whose followers have been blamed in some of Iraq's worst violence gave a cautious welcome Wednesday to the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from cities.

Muqtada al-Sadr said he was "filled with hope" but expressed concern that some Americans will remain in urban areas.

The U.S. military was required to pull back combat troops from cities by Tuesday as part of a security pact that calls for a full withdrawal of American forces by the end of 2011.

But some 130,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq and the military says a small number of them will stay in cities as trainers and advisers at the request of the Iraqi government.

The military also has said it will continue to provide intelligence, air power, medical and logistical assistance to Iraq's fledgling, 650,000-member security force. U.S. troops will go back into cities on missions only if requested by the Iraqis.

The anti-U.S. cleric sought to cast the move as a victory for those who have opposed the American presence in Iraq.

"If it is a real withdrawal, then it is a medal of honor and a bright page in the history of honest Iraqi resistance that has been giving everything for the sake of liberating and serving its people and land," he said in a statement posted on his Web page.

But al-Sadr, who is believed to be in Iran, said the decision to keep some U.S. troops in cities shows the government and the U.S. "are not serious" about the timelines.

"If the occupation forces breach the claimed withdrawal even with the government's cover, then the people have the right to express their opinion by peaceful means and the right of self-defense in a (see IRAQ, page 10)

## Fire Damages Fred Voigt Road Home



Photo By JOHN CADY

Flames are flashing out of a window at 2963 Fred Voigt Road Tuesday as firefighters battle a residential blaze Tuesday evening. Ware County firefighters were very busy during the afternoon and

evening Tuesday. They also answered a call to a barn in the Pebble Hill community that was destroyed by fire. See the story on page 2.

## Honduras Coup Leader Says Zelaya Won't Return

**TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP)** — Honduras' interim leader warned that the only way his predecessor will return to office is through a foreign invasion — though a potential showdown was postponed Wednesday when the ousted president delayed plans to return.

A defiant Roberto Micheletti said in an interview with The Associated Press late Tuesday that "no one can make me resign," defying the United Nations, the OAS, the Obama administration and other leaders that have condemned the military coup that overthrew President Manuel Zelaya.

The U.N. General Assembly voted by acclamation Tuesday to demand Zelaya's immediate restoration, and the Organization of American States said Wednesday that coup leaders have three days to restore Zelaya to power before Honduras risks being suspended from the group.

That period for negotiation prompted Zelaya to announce he was putting off his plans to return home on Thursday until the weekend.

Micheletti vowed Zelaya would be arrested if he returns, even though the presidents of Argentina and Ecuador have signed on to accompany him along with the heads of the Organization of American States and the U.N. General Assembly.

Zelaya "has already committed crimes against the constitution and the law," said Micheletti, a member of Zelaya's Liberal Party who was named interim leader by Congress following the coup. "He can no longer return to the presidency of the republic unless a president from another Latin American country comes (see HONDURAS, page 10)

## Mississippi Is Still The Fattest But Alabama Is Closing In

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Mississippi's still king of cellulite, but an ominous tide is rolling toward the Medicare doctors in neighboring Alabama: obese baby boomers.

It's time for the nation's annual obesity rankings and, outside of fairly lean Colorado, there's little good news. Obesity rates among adults rose in 23 states over the past year and didn't decline any-

where, says a new report from the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

And while the nation has long been bracing for a surge in Medicare as the boomers start turning 65, the new report makes clear that fat, not just age, will fuel much of those bills. In every state, the rate of obesity is higher among 55- to 64-year-olds — the

oldest boomers — than among today's 65-and-beyond.

That translates into a coming jump of obese Medicare patients that ranges from 5.2 percent in New York to a high of 16.3 percent in Alabama, the report concluded. In Alabama, nearly 39 percent of the oldest boomers are obese.

Health economists once made the harsh financial calculation

that the obese would save money by dying sooner, notes Jeff Levi, executive director of the Trust, a nonprofit public health group.

But more recent research instead suggests they live nearly as long but are much sicker for longer, requiring such costly interventions as knee replacements and diabetes care and dialysis. Studies show Medicare spends anywhere from \$1,400 to \$6,000

more annually on health care for an obese senior than for the non-obese.

"There isn't a magic bullet. We don't have a pill for it," said Levi, whose group is pushing for health reform legislation to include community-level programs that help people make healthier choices — like building sidewalks so people can walk their (see FATTEST, page 10)

**Hot!**

Not Much Rain In Sight  
**Hi 95/72 Lo**  
—page 3—

See Sammy Dixon, Joey Lee, Robert Justice, George Freeman, James Waters or Steve Waters III

**watersford.com**

Car dealers come and go, but one thing remains the same, Waters Ford in Blackshear, serving you since 1946. We build relationships!!

**Ministry Manifest**

Anyone who has been downtown much has seen the First Baptist Church building (in today's top of page 1 photo). The staff and members desire that the church's ministry be just as visible, as they seek to bring salvation, hope and comfort to residents of the community.

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