

# The Dallas Morning News

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Texas' Leading Newspaper

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## Spiritual toll

Going into debt at holidays can exact a heavy price on Christian families, advisers say.

RELIGION, 1G



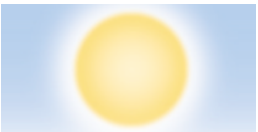
## SMART COOKIES



The Dallas Morning News Holiday Cookie Contest showcases the creations of some of North Texas' best bakers.

TEXAS LIVING, 1E

Sunny, mild



High: 65 Low: 43  
5-day outlook, 2B

### TEXAS

#### Mexican's case goes to high court

The U.S. Supreme Court entered a global debate over how foreigners are prosecuted, agreeing to hear the case of a Mexican man on Texas' death row. 4A

### NATION

#### Test predicts chemo success

A genetic profiling test on the market accurately predicts which breast cancer patients will benefit from chemotherapy. 19A

Also: Fewer teens are engaging in sexual activity than in the past, the government reported. 19A

### METRO

#### Woman sought after officer slain

After a Little Elm policeman was found shot to death, officers searched for a woman believed to be the last person seen with him. 1B

### SPORTSDAY

#### Can OU's White make it a twofer?

Oklahoma quarterback Jason White will find out today in New York if he becomes the second two-time Heisman Trophy winner. 1C

### COMING SUNDAY



#### Dallas has hope in south

Dallas is staking its future on the southern sector that it neglected for decades. First of five parts: Looking South/Dallas at the Tipping Point.

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## 'He has no idea what he's in for'

Spotlight shines brighter as Julius Jones races toward stardom

By BARRY HORN  
Staff Writer

IRVING — The wide-eyed kid in flip-flops tiptoed into the makeshift Valley Ranch TV studio Thursday afternoon and quietly waited to be recognized.

"Nice to meet you," Michael Irvin said, extending his right hand.

"I always wanted to meet you," responded Julius Jones, barely audible, staring straight at the floor.

"Like your shoes," the kid said, finally breaking the silence, having taken in Irvin's \$700 electric blue alligator Slick Exotics.

Niceties completed, Irvin, who travels around the country interviewing top NFL players for ESPN, fired questions at Jones, who travels through and around

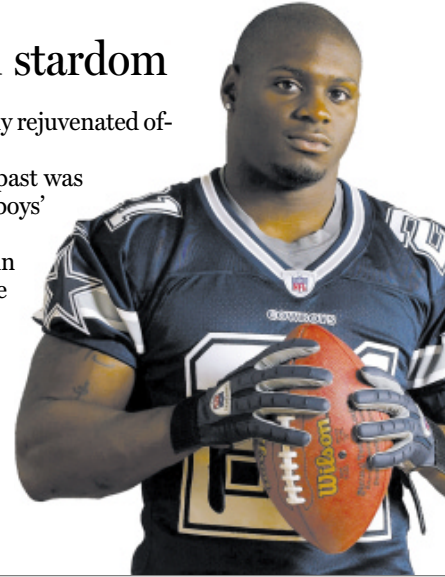
NFL defenses for the Cowboys' suddenly rejuvenated offense.

And so a ghost of Cowboys' glories past was introduced to the latest hope of Cowboys' glories future.

"You can see he's a humble kid," Irvin said after Jones scrambled out of the studio. "That's a good thing."

"But he has no idea what he's in for."

Exactly what 23-year-old Julius Jones is in for depends on how far his powerful legs can carry the Cowboys. Coming out of the starting blocks rel-



See JONES Page 2A

## Bush's security choice derailed

Immigration status of Kerik nanny questioned

From Wire Reports

WASHINGTON — Former New York Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik abruptly withdrew as President Bush's nominee to be homeland security secretary Friday night, saying questions have arisen about the immigration status of a woman he employed as a housekeeper and nanny.

Mr. Kerik issued a statement saying he had come to learn the former employee may not have been in the United States legally.



Bernard Kerik

"In the course of completing documents required for Senate confirmation, I uncovered information that now leads me to question the immigration status of a person who had been in my employ as a housekeeper and nanny," he said. "It has also been brought

See HOMELAND Page 22A



JUAN GARCIA/Staff Photographer

Alexis Gaona, 10, is one of nine fifth-graders at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School, which can't meet expenses. Below: A 1949 photo of first-graders is a snapshot of more prosperous times at the school near Love Field.

## Do they have a prayer?

Urban Catholic schools struggle to survive as suburban ones prosper

By KENT FISCHER  
Staff Writer

Like a fading old matriarch, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School is slipping away.

The school near Love Field is on financial life support. Tuition covers only half of its expenses. Enrollment is perilously low; there are but nine fifth-graders.

The 58-year-old school, in what is now a poor Hispanic neighborhood, remains open primarily because of benefac-

tors who have fortified its budget with \$365,000 over the last two years.

But even that's not enough.

This school year, Our Lady of Perpetual Help faces a \$267,000 deficit — almost 25 percent of its budget. School supporters say it's the fourth year of six-figure deficits at the school. Health insurance premiums from last year remain unpaid. There's no money for textbooks or office supplies.

"We've scaled down [spending] to almost nothing, and there's still no way in the world we can make it" without more supplemental funding, said interim principal Frank Romero. "And that's the God's truth."

If Our Lady were an isolated case, its story would be little more than a sad tale about the demise of a neighborhood institution. But across the country, Catholic schools, especially inner-city ones, are closing at a pace that has many church leaders fretting over the future

See URBAN Page 28A



## 'It's a miracle that she's alive'

Blast destroys Grand Prairie home but only sings grandmother, 82

By JASON TRAHAN  
Staff Writer

GRAND PRAIRIE — Investigators don't know why Monte Alspaugh's home exploded Friday morning, but they do know one thing.

"It's a miracle that she's alive," Grand Prairie Assistant Fire Chief Mike Sieg said.

At 8:10 a.m., Ms. Alspaugh, an 82-year-old grandmother who has

lived at 706 Macgregor Drive for 51 years, was thrown into the bushes near her doorstep by the blast.

Hearing the blast, neighbor Robert Amaro, an Army reservist who recently served 18 months in Iraq, bolted from his bed and rushed out the door.

"I kept yelling for her," said Mr. Amaro, 29. "She said, 'Here I am!'"

He scooped her up and dashed to another neighbor's house. "She kept asking about her Christmas presents," he said. "She was closing her eyes, but I wouldn't let her. I kept talking."

A neighbor's video camera caught images of the burning, buckled walls. Thick, black smoke poured from the roof, which fell almost intact on the debris.

"If he had not done that, not acted, I don't know how she could have avoided serious injury," Chief Sieg said of Mr. Amaro.

Friday afternoon, Ms. Alspaugh's son, Alan Alspaugh, took a break from salvaging family photos to walk across the street and shake Mr. Amaro's hand.

"It's unbelievable," he said. He had just visited his spry mother — an avid bowler — in the hospital.

"She's got some singed hair and



RON BASELICE/Staff Photographer

An explosion leveled the Grand Prairie home where Monte Alspaugh has lived for 51 years. The cause was unknown.

has a sore big toe, but that's it." Officials with Atmos Energy are investigating but had found no

sign of gas leaks Friday.

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