

COLLEGE FOOTBALL IN SPORTS ■ C1

UT'S KENNEDY
HEADING TO
COLORADO?

CEDRIC GOLDEN IN SPORTS ■ C1

WISCONSIN
ASSISTANT A
RISING STAR



NEW YEAR'S IN FOOD & LIFE ■ D1

MAKE A BIG
DEAL OUT
OF TINY BITES

TRAVIS COUNTY ■ SLAYING

Deadly shooting a tragic mistake?

Man said to be intruder was ill, may have been confused, relative says

By Claudia Grisales and Michael Corcoran

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

A shooting that left an Austin musician dead and another man seriously injured might have been the result of a tragic misunderstanding and not an attempted burglary, friends and relatives of both men said Tuesday.

Keith Landers, also a musician, lives behind the house on Rock Way Drive in southwestern Travis County where drummer Bill Maddox, 57, was fatally shot Monday morning.



Bill Maddox
Drummer died after struggle with intruder.

Landers, who, under the name Johnny Dee, fronts the popular party band Johnny Dee and the Rocket 88s, said he talked with Maddox's widow, Rhonda, on Monday and disputed that burglary was the motive for the shooting, as authorities initially said.

"It wasn't a robbery," said Landers, Bill Maddox's best friend since elementary school in Abilene, where the two men grew up. "It was a paranoid schizophrenic off his medicine who believed that he was trying to get into his safe house."

The shooting has rocked the quiet Scenic Brook neighborhood where the two men involved in the incident lived and has left a close circle of friends and family in mourning. The two men did not know each other, according to authorities.

On Tuesday, the man injured in the shooting, John Debrecht, 63, remained in critical condition at University Medical Center Brack-

See **SHOOTING**, A6

TRAVIS COUNTY ■ DEVELOPMENT

Lot bought for courthouse

County might ask voters for up to \$300 million in bonds for construction

By Marty Toohey

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Shortly after 9 this morning, the ink will dry on Travis County's \$21.75 million purchase of a long-vacant

downtown block from the Austin Museum of Art.

The purchase sets up a likely bond election in November for \$200 million to \$300 million to build a civil and family courthouse on the property. County officials envision a 17-story building just south of Republic Square Park that they say will be an aesthetic and cultural asset to downtown.

But the deal is being criticized by

some developers and downtown residents who say it's not the best use of that land on the edge of a burgeoning 24-hour district.

"I'm skeptical as to whether the design and mix of uses — or lack thereof — in that particular development would make it compatible with surrounding development," which includes condominiums, shops, restaurants and music venues, said Roger L. Cauvin, who lives downtown

and is on the city's Citizens Advisory Task Force for the citywide comprehensive plan. "The fewer dead blocks, the better."

The sale was finalized Tuesday, the last day county officials could have raised objections before closing.

"This was the most feasible and affordable property we were able to find" downtown, said County Judge

See **PROPERTY**, A6

BASTROP ■ AT WORK

One-woman sign shop has the word on Texas parks



Larry Kolvoord photos AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Martha E. Gonzalez, sign maker for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, has spent more than 20 years creating markers for state parks. She uses a router and jig table to cut lettering into pressure-treated pine planks.

From Big Bend to the Piney Woods, Gonzalez's work points the way

By Pam LeBlanc

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

BASTROP — Martha E. Gonzalez emerges from a puff of sawdust and runs a finger along the letters she has just carved into a long pine plank.

From a cozy wood shop in the pines at Bastrop State Park, Gonzalez nearly single-handedly churns out the brown-and-yellow signs that populate every state park, wildlife management area and fishery across Texas.

The sign directing you to a campsite? That is Gonzalez's.

The one alerting you about loose livestock? She made that one, too.

Same with the ones welcoming you to a park, reminding you to keep your pet on a leash and warning you to stay off the dam.

Gonzalez, 51, wears the green and khaki uniform of a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employee. She started as a seasonal clerk at Bastrop State Park in the mid-1980s.



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She joined the sign shop in 1989 and became its manager four years later. Today, she's its sole employee and only its third manager.

"I am the sign shop," she says.

The wood shop is housed in a cavernous old warehouse built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. It originally was used as a mill to make furniture. Later it became sign-making headquarters. Today, its wooden floors are dented and stained; an old lathe and shaper, 75 years old,

stand along one wall.

Over the years, Gonzalez has made thousands of signs here. Last summer alone, she churned out more than 600.

"I love the way the wood feels in my hands, and the smell. And working in this building," Gonzalez says.

She cuts the pressure-treated lumber to length with a radial arm saw, planes it, uses a router to carve the

See **SIGNS**, A7

NATION ■ LAW ENFORCEMENT

Deaths in line of duty surge 37% this year

Texas again leads U.S. in number of officers killed, with 11% of total

By Greg Bluestein

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two officers in a remote Alaska town were ambushed as they chatted on a street. A California officer and deputy were killed by an arson suspect with a high-powered rifle as they tried to serve a warrant. Two other officers doing anti-drug work were gunned down by men along a busy Arkansas highway.

These so-called cluster killings of more than one officer helped make 2010 a particularly deadly year for law enforcement officers. Deaths in the line of duty jumped 37 percent to about 160 from 117 the year before, according to numbers as of Tuesday afternoon compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a nonprofit group that tracks such deaths.

Officer deaths this year were spread across more than 30 states and Puerto Rico. Texas had the most, with 18 such deaths reported, including Cedar Park police officer Leonard Reed, 41, who died Aug. 18 after he crashed his motorcycle on Arrow Point Drive near RM 1431 during training.

Texas has led the nation in officer deaths for the past several years. The state had 10 law enforcement officers killed last year, 14 officer deaths in 2008 and 22 deaths in 2007.

The next highest numbers of officer deaths this year were in California with 11 killed, Illinois with 10, Florida with nine and Georgia with seven.

The two law enforcement agencies with the most deaths were the California Highway Patrol and the Chicago Police Department, each with five.

There was a spike in shooting deaths this year. Fifty-nine federal,

See **POLICE**, A4

NATION ■ POSTAGE

In 2011, all new first-class stamps are 'forever'

By Douglass K. Daniel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Rummaging around for 1- and 2-cent postage stamps when postal rates go up is heading the way of the Pony Express. Beginning in January, all new stamps good for 1 ounce of first-class mail will be marked as "forever."

The move is designed to help customers cope with postage increases, a U.S. Postal Service official told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The of-

ficial requested anonymity to discuss a policy that hasn't been announced formally.

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe plans to announce the new policy Jan. 14, the official said.

"I think that's a great idea," Sean Swilling, a research analyst for commercial property, said inside a downtown Washington post office during a mail run. "For me, a guy who uses snail mail regularly, it's a hassle to get 1- or 2-cent stamps. Streamline things — that would be perfect."

When the Postal Service unveiled its first-class commemorative stamps for 2011 on Tuesday, all were marked "forever" instead of the current rate of 44 cents.

The initial first-class stamp under the new policy will be the Lunar New Year's Year of the Rabbit stamp, to be issued Jan. 22. It will be followed by new stamps commemorating Kansas' statehood on Jan. 29 and, in February, the centennial of former President

See **STAMPS**, A9

NATION ■ WEATHER



Mary Altaffer ASSOCIATED PRESS

White mess is no dream

Frustration snowballs in New York and other parts of the U.S. as winter storms complicate life for people trying to travel by land and by air. **Story**, A3.