

Sunday Standard-Examiner

Serving the Top of Utah since 1888

April 15, 2007 \$1.50

Antiques Roadshow

Northern Utahns find valuable items/1D



WSU powwow

Native American culture honored/1C

More than \$117.00 in coupons
INSIDE for subscribers

Sports

Another tie
Real Salt Lake still unbeaten and winless after a 0-0 home match with Columbus Crew 1B

Top of Utah
All cleaned up
21st Street Pond will soon be Ogden City's 1C

Editorial
Highly taxed and lowly taxed

Business
A better Web?
Researchers feel they can improve the 1969-invented Internet 1E

INSIDE

Coming Monday
Libraries are trying to change with the times.

Weather

59
40
Couple of showers/3C

April 15, 2007
Vol. 120, No. 105

Books.....4D Life.....1-6D
Brides.....5D Obituaries....6-7B
Business.....1-6E Sports.....1-8B
Classifieds. 1-14F Theaters.....5E
Editorials.....6-7A Top of Utah...1-4C
Horoscopes.....3D Travel.....7D
Job Finder.....1F TV/TV Xtra....2-3D

To subscribe: 625-4400
For news: 625-4224
To advertise: 625-4345

Property woes

Letters sent about legal issues of Web-bought land

BY TRENT TOONE

Standard-Examiner staff
ttoone@standard.net

BRIGHAM CITY — Land purchased on the Internet in Box Elder County's west desert is being illegally subdivided and county officials may take legal action. More than 250 letters were sent

from the Box Elder County Planner's office this week to property owners in the county's west desert, advising them of the situation. Before they are done, as many as 3,200 letters could be mailed.

According to county records, land that has been zoned for a minimum of 160 acres is being sold over the Internet, mostly

on eBay, in parcels as small as a quarter acre, which violates state and county codes. Records and maps also indicate there is no access to the property.

The letter notifies the deed holders of the dilemma and gives them 10 business days to contact

See LAND/8A

Box Elder County Internet land sales

Passport facts

- Plan 10-12 weeks for standard processing and 2-4 weeks for expedited processing.
- Passport costs: For ages 16 and older, passport application fee is \$67. The execution fee is \$30. The total is \$97.

For younger than 16, the application fee is \$52. The execution fee is \$30. The total is \$82.

Expedited service is an additional \$60 per application, and does not include mailing fees.

- The National Passport Information Center at (877) 487-2778 remains open for limited weekend hours to make emergency arrangements for travelers departing in seven days or less. Business hours have also been extended, and it is now staffed Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. until midnight, Eastern Time.

For more information or to track passports, go to www.travel.state.gov

— U.S. Department of State

Going somewhere?

Get yours early



ROBERT JOHNSON/Standard-Examiner

Sales associate Kathy Kennington (right) swears in Pam Nielson, of Layton, to get her passport at the post office on Fairfield Road in Layton on Friday. Because of the high demand for passports, with tighter travel regulations, the office is taking appointments rather than having customers wait in line.

BY LORETTA PARK
Standard-Examiner Davis Bureau
lpark@standard.net

LAYTON — Valree Lowe knows what some of her clients are going through as she waits for her children's passport applications to be approved.

Lowe, manager of Morris Murdock Travel Agency in Ogden, said some of her clients have become panicky as they have not seen their passports, and their departure dates for

vacation are drawing closer.

"If you're planning a trip, you need to start on (the application) as soon as possible," said Lowe, who is taking her children on a cruise in May.

She still doesn't have their passports.

Passports are not yet required for anyone traveling by boat or vehicle into Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean, but they are required to fly into those areas. Lowe, like other travel agents, is recommending her clients get their passports

anyway if they're traveling there.

"You cannot fly back into the country if there is an emergency and most people don't want to take that chance," Lowe said.

Passport services across the country have seen an almost 50 percent increase in applications during the first three months of this year because of the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

See PASSPORTS/4A

Myrtle spurge worries botanists

BY BRYCE PETERSEN JR.
Standard-Examiner staff
bpetersen@standard.net

UINTAH — On a drive through the upscale neighborhoods on the benches east of South Ogden and Uintah, Michael Duncan botanist for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, stopped at a home, beautifully landscaped with large rocks and a healthy dose of yellow myrtle spurge flowers.

"Here's where the problem starts," Duncan said. "Unwittingly. It's a pretty plant, it really looks nice in these rock gardens. ... They're doing what I do at my house; they're trying to make their yard nice and neat."

Myrtle spurge, also known as donkey tail spurge, also was thriving in a gully just east of the property, with nothing but open space between it and Strawberry Peak 4,000 feet above.

Euphorbia myrsinites is one of 20 plants designated as noxious weeds by Wasatch-Cache National Forest and targeted for eradication. But the plant isn't on Utah's official state list yet.

Duncan is worried that the hardy plant, which comes from the Mediterranean and is not eaten by local bugs, will drive out native plants that are preferred by deer and are better at controlling erosion.

"It comes from a more arid environment than we have here, and in this environment it really does well," Duncan said. "It be-

See WEED/8A

Voucher battle gets national attention

BY BROCK VERGAKIS
The Associated Press

A bitter, intensely local fight has erupted in Utah over whether public money should be used to send children to private schools, turning ordinarily quiet neighborhoods into hotbeds of political activism.

Parents have been walking door-to-door, from soccer games to baseball games, hoping to persuade their friends and strangers that Utah is either helping children by giving them money to attend private schools or hurting them by taking away money that could be spent on all the state's children.

It's a debate that will likely play out in neighborhoods nationwide as voucher proponents use Utah's new school voucher program as an example to get legislation passed elsewhere. That's exactly what national voucher groups and their donors had

in mind when Utah and its conservative Legislature were targeted with more than \$500,000 in campaign donations last year.

Utah has the nation's broadest school voucher program, which allows parents between \$500 and \$3,000 for their children to attend a private school. It passed in the state House by one vote.

"This is the camel's nose under the tent," said Patrick Byrne, CEO of Overstock.com. He gave \$70,000 to the local pro-voucher group Parents for Choice in Education. "If it takes hold here and proceeds here, it will have a demonstrative effect that no other states can afford to ignore."

Byrne is Parents for Choice in Education's largest donor from Utah. Nearly half the money the group spent on legislative campaigns came from an Alexandria, Va.-based political action group called All Children Matter that has its headquarter-



Debbie Smart loads boxes filled with signed school voucher petitions into her truck for delivery to the Utah County clerk at the Utah Education Association's headquarters in Murray.

DOUGLAS PIZAC Associated Press

See VOUCHERS/8A

Storm heads east after piling snow on the Plains

BY GEORGE WALSH
The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — The Northeast on Saturday braced for a hard-blowing nor'easter that could bring severe coastal flooding, power outages and more than a foot of snow in some places.

As the system blew across the Plains, the unusually violent spring storm rattled Gulf states with violent thunderstorms, waked Texas with at least two tornadoes and was blamed for five deaths.

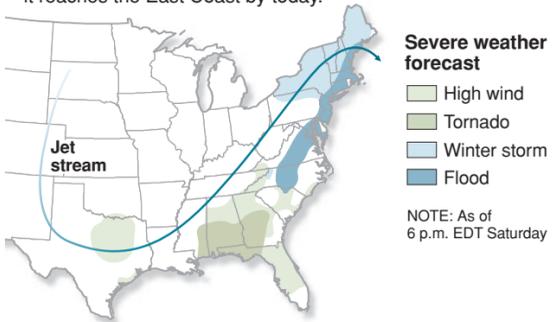
"This is very odd for this time of year," National Weather Service meteorologist John Koch said Saturday in New York. "This is something that you would expect to see more in the middle of winter."

A tornado Friday night tore roofs off houses and destroyed porches and garages in Haltom City, Texas. About a dozen tractor-trailer rigs were blown onto their sides.

"I felt my house start shaking like the wind and I ran in here and grabbed my little girl," Amanda Rymer, 21,

Deadly storm expected to strengthen

The storm that blew across the Plains Friday and Saturday was responsible for many deaths and was forecast to strengthen when it reaches the East Coast by today.



SOURCES: Weather Underground; National Weather Service AP

said. "As soon as I moved her, the roof fell in right where she was standing."

A second tornado that night in Benbrook, southwest of Fort Worth, caused minor damage, according to the National Weather Service. More wind damage to power lines, trees and roofs was reported to the east in Dallas and Rockwall counties, but mete-

orologists had yet to confirm Saturday whether tornadoes formed there.

One man was killed in Fort Worth by a pile of lumber that fell on him from his truck during Friday's storm, and a police officer in Irving died when his patrol car slid on wet pavement and struck a utility pole, authorities said. Three people were killed

in Kansas in traffic accidents on highways covered with ice and slush, police said.

Snow stopped falling by Saturday afternoon in eastern Kansas, where some schools and businesses closed Friday as blowing snow created whiteout conditions. Up to 15 inches of snow fell in southwestern Kansas.

By Saturday afternoon, the system was spreading rain from Louisiana to Virginia and across much of the Ohio Valley. Lines of strong thunderstorms rolled across Louisiana and Mississippi into northern Alabama, and the National Weather Service posted tornado warnings for wide areas of Mississippi and some parts of Alabama. By Saturday night the storm reached western South Carolina, where minor wind damage was reported.

The weather system was forecast to strengthen when it reaches the East Coast on Sunday and form a nor'easter, a storm that follows the coast northward, with northeasterly wind driving waves and

heavy rain.

A flood watch was posted for the New York City region, as the weather service forecast 2 to 4 inches of rain Sunday with winds gusting to 50 mph. Snow and sleet were possible inland, Koch said.

Officials warned that coastal Long Island could see some of its worst flooding since a winter storm that wreaked havoc on the island in late 1992. New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer said some low-lying areas may need to be evacuated, and deployed 3,200 members of the National Guard to areas predicted to be in the storm's path.

Farther north, the National Weather Service said there could be as much as 20 inches of snow possible at higher elevations in the Adirondacks and several inches of rain in the Hudson Valley by the time the storm passes late Monday and Tuesday.

New Jersey was ready for whatever may fall — snow or rain. About 250 trucks were ready to plow and spread salt on state highways as needed.



First Blush



Peach Peel



Floridian Sun



Farmstand Egg



Delhi Bazaar



Dragon Fruit



Star Gazer



Russian Velvet



Smoky Ember



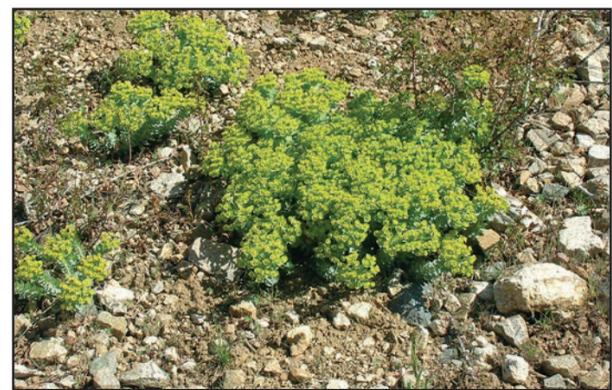
Earth Glaze



Chocolate Cherry



Midnight Fire



Myrtle spurge

Weed

From 1A

comes the bully of the neighborhood."

The agency plans to target the plants with herbicide this summer — simply pulling the plants, which can send roots several feet deep, doesn't always work — but Duncan said a key will be convincing landowners to keep it out of their flower gardens.

"We're still at a point where we can stop it," he said.

Barney Barnett said he chose not to stock myrtle spurge when he bought Myrtle Bay Gardens 19 years ago because of its milky white sap that can irritate the skin. But he has noticed the plants on the shelves of local nurseries in the recent past.

"There's nothing that says you can't (sell it)," Barnett said. "And people are still asking for it; that's the main problem."

Since myrtle spurge isn't one of the 18 plants designated as noxious by the Utah Department of Agriculture, selling, buying and planting myrtle spurge is still legal.

That could change soon in Salt Lake County and southern Davis County, since the Salt Lake County Weed Control and the Bonneville Weed Management Association, which includes the southern part of Davis County, are in the process of designating myrtle spurge a noxious weed.

Vouchers

From 1A

ters in Grand Rapids, Mich.

All Children Matter donated \$240,000 to Parents for Choice in Education in 2006 and about \$250,000 during the 2004 campaign cycle, finance reports in Utah show.

Utah was one of 10 states that All Children Matter has targeted to affect state elections, spending about \$8 million nationwide in the 2003-04 election cycle. It is an organization dedicated to supporting candidates who favor charter schools and voucher programs.

It's largely financed by heirs to the Wal-Mart fortune and the founders of Amway, according to finance reports in Virginia.

In 2004, Jim Walton and John Walton, children of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, each donated more than \$3 million to All Children Matter, the reports showed.

In 2006, the estate of John Walton donated another \$4.1 million, the re-

ports showed.

"It's certainly not a grass-roots operation. These are heavy hitters," said Rich Robinson, director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, a nonpartisan organization that tracks campaign spending.

Another large donor to All Children Matter is the DeVos family, which founded Amway, a household and nutritional products company, campaign finance reports show.

Dick DeVos is a former CEO of the company and an unsuccessful candidate for governor of Michigan. He has advocated school voucher programs for years and led a ballot initiative that would have allowed vouchers, which was defeated by voters there.

Between 1999 and 2005, DeVos and his relatives spent more than \$7 million funding voucher political action committees, including more than \$430,000 to All Children Matter, according to records kept by the Michigan Campaign Finance Network.

Messages left by The Associated Press for DeVos, All Children Matter Executive Director Greg Brock and at Wal-Mart headquarters were not re-

turned.

Nancy Pomeroy, spokeswoman for Parents for Choice in Education, makes no apologies about where her group's funding comes from — which also includes the Utah Association of Realtors and EnergySolutions, operator of the country's largest and only privately owned radioactive-waste dump.

Pomeroy said vouchers' primary opponent, the Utah Education Association, also receives money from out-of-state interests through the National Education Association.

"I think those who live in fat, honking glass houses should not be lobbying stones. Vouchers have come up for the better part of a decade and been shot down by big bucks coming out of state from the NEA. Look at what their agenda is — to kill vouchers," she said.

However, nearly all the UEA's political contributions came from individual donors from Utah and most of those were for less than \$100, though the NEA donated \$25,000 to the UEA in 2002, state campaign finance reports show.

In the past five years, the UEA has spent about \$1 million in campaign expenditures. Parents for Choice in Education has spent about \$900,000. It spent no money on campaigns in 2001.

The UEA is Utah's largest teachers union and was one of several education groups that opposed the voucher effort. It, along with other groups, is now trying to get enough votes to repeal the program via referendum.

Marilyn Kofford, education commissioner for the Utah Parent Teacher Association, said getting the law repealed will be a tough battle. She also compares the struggle to that of David and Goliath, the Bible's Philistine giant killed by a rock from David's sling-shot.

"We fought it for 10 years, and we were successful for 10 years. Then they brought in their big money and helped some of the legislators win," she said. "We are not wealthy people. We are basic, good middle of the road citizens. Somewhere we're going to have to find the resources, but there's no way we will ever raise as much as they do. They will probably outspend us 10-to-1, big time."

Land

From 1A

the county with a response. If landowners don't respond within that time, a "notice of noncompliance" will be recorded against their parcel in the recorder's office.

"We've been looking into it, trying to figure out the best way to address the situation," said Stephen Hadfield, Box Elder County attorney. "It is a criminal violation to do that, to subdivide without going through the right process. So we are looking into potential

prosecutions there.

"We're not just assuming," Hadfield said. "It's been fairly obvious it's been improperly subdivided, but we're giving people a chance to call and say this is the situation." That information will become part of the ongoing investigation, he said.

Most of the parcels are near Lucin, a ghost town nestled about 50 miles southwest of Park Valley, which is a 90-minute drive from Tremonton. It's unlikely that the Internet buyers have seen their property in person.

It's not like the land can be used for anything anyway, said Box Elder County

Planner Kevin Hamilton. It has been zoned primarily for grazing and other agricultural purposes, and in some cases, recreational use. That is, if they can find it.

"The nearest legal access could be miles away," Hamilton said. "There is no guarantee of access to the property without trespassing on the property of others. We are also concerned for the safety of people going into very remote areas. People are buying land we don't know if they can get to."

The land was originally zoned for a minimum of 160 acres because there is no development potential, county

officials have said in the past. One of the few ways, perhaps the only way, owners could locate their property is with the assistance of sophisticated survey equipment.

Parcels are still being offered for sale on eBay. Prices currently range from \$25 for a quarter of an acre to \$15,000 for 160 acres. Along with the listings are pictures of prominent spots in the county, but no photos of the actual property offered for sale.

A plat map-abstract search revealed that Larry Madsen, of Bluffdale, is listed as the previous owner on hundreds of the parcels involved. Madsen could not be reached for

comment.

Box Elder County Recorder LuAnn Adams said the county figured out what was going on a few years ago when thousands of deeds began arriving at her office.

"They are original documents, properly signed and notarized," Adams said. "Once recorded and taken into the back room, that's when we discovered the problem."

The letters started flowing out on Tuesday and by Friday afternoon, Hamilton said, many landowners had responded. He declined to comment on or characterize the responses.

Whatever wall color you choose, you'll need some green.

RATES AS LOW AS
6.49% APR*
10/30 KEY BALLOON LOAN
FIXED RATE FOR THE LIFE OF THE LOAN

When remodeling, you'll have to find the right color, but Key can find you the right home equity loan. By finding the perfect one, you can add value to your home, or even buy a new one. Plus, there are fixed monthly payments, a 24-hour approval process, no closing costs* and you can close in as little as two days. Visit your local KeyBank branch, call 1-888-KEY-1234 or visit key.com/homeequity to learn more.



KeyBank



*Subject to credit approval. 6.49% APR (as of 04/16/2007) results in 119 monthly payments of \$6.31 per \$1,000 with a final payment of \$853.86 per \$1,000. KeyBank Package Relationship with automatic payment deduction and a minimum loan amount of \$20,000 is required to obtain stated rate. Offer is available for financing to a maximum 85% combined loan to value. Actual APR is based on the application date, credit qualifications, ownership, loan amount and is subject to change without notice. Promotional offer only available for new accounts. Refinancing of an existing KeyBank loan or line of credit is prohibited. If you pay off your loan within 36 months, a \$350 (\$450 in New York) prepayment penalty will apply. All fees will be waived on loan amounts up to \$250,000. For loans above \$500,000, title insurance may be required (cost ranges from \$12.50 to \$2,859). New York loans over \$250,000 pay mortgage tax. If your line terminates for any reason within 36 months, a \$350 (\$450 in New York) early termination fee will apply. Please refer to specific checking account disclosures for details. KeyBank is Member FDIC. © 2007 KeyCorp.