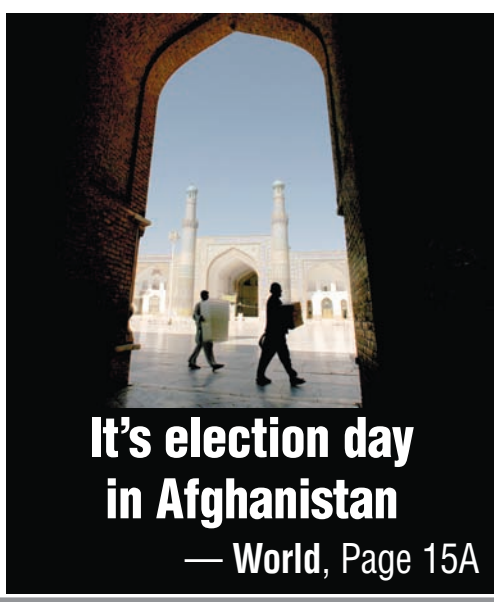




Peas top chart toppers

— People, Page 6A

CASA GRANDE Dispatch



It's election day in Afghanistan

— World, Page 15A

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Treasurer: Arizona's 'credit cards maxed out'

Legislature must pass budget this week or state won't be able to borrow to pay bills, Martin says

By JACQUES BILLEAUD
Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Arizona Treasurer Dean Martin said Wednesday that the state must enact a new state budget by the end of the week or it will lose the flexibility to borrow money from banks to continue paying its bills.

The state was \$386 million in the red as of Wednesday and has been making up for it by borrowing money from some of the 1,800 state government funds. But Mar-

tin said the state will lose its flexibility to make internal loans when the figure hits the \$500 million mark. Then it will need to borrow money from banks, but they're not willing to lend to the state until its budget is balanced.

Although Arizona isn't projected to reach its internal-loan limit until Oct. 15, Martin said the budget must get enacted this week to give the state the six to eight weeks needed to set up bank loans.

— Arizona, Page 16A



Christine Baker/The Patriot-News

Sen. Arlen Specter, D-Pa., right, watches as a participant attending a town hall meeting in Lebanon, Pa., is restrained by another participant. In this season of searing political heat, these types of incidents have raised divisive questions of their own.

Summer of intense discontent But not here

Health care reform forum participants at clinic in Casa Grande told to submit questions in writing, take signs and protest 'out on the sidewalk'

By MELISSA ST. AUDE
Staff Writer

With questions ranging from concerns about tort reform, single-payer systems, cost and taxes, nearly 60 people turned out Tuesday evening for a discussion on national health care reform at Sun Life Family Health Center in Casa Grande.

One of eight meetings statewide designed to focus on the needs of rural Arizonans, the forum was hosted by Arizonans for Health Reform Task Force along with Rep. Barbara McGuire of Keamy, Sen. Rebecca Rios of Apache Junction and Assistant House Democratic Leader Kyrsten Sinema of Phoenix. Sinema is one of 32 state legislators serving on the White House Health Reform Task Force.

"Our intent is to have a civil discourse," Sinema said at the start of the meeting. "If someone wants to protest or hold up a sign, we ask that you do it out on the sidewalk."

As a member of the White House task force, Sinema said her job was to gather information and answer questions. The

— Forum, Page 16A

Special now not so special

President Barack Obama accuses special interests of fighting to block his health care overhaul. Yet Obama has spent months assembling an all-star lineup of special interests to help carry out his effort to change the health care system.

Uninformed opinions

The judgment is harsh in a new poll that finds Americans worried about the government taking over health care, cutting off treatment to the elderly and giving coverage to illegal immigrants. Harsh, but not based on the facts.

— Nation, Page 3A

Debate turns toward rage, hate

By DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK — The images are striking: One congressman's office defaced by a swastika, other congressmen heckled at public meetings, videos and placards likening Barack Obama to Hitler, private citizens with guns joining anti-Obama protests.

Outside one meeting hosted by Sen. Ben Cardin, a Maryland Democrat, authorities detained a man with a sign reading, "Death To Obama, Death To Michelle And Her Two Stupid Kids."

In this season of searing political heat generated by the health care debate, these incidents have raised divisive questions of their own. Are they simply the latest twists in a long tradition of vigorous, public engagement or evidence of some new, alarming brand of political virulence?

— Debate, Page 16A

Medal overdue, but she'll wear it with pride

By MELISSA ST. AUDE
Staff Writer

Gerri Nyman didn't realize she was making history when she joined the newly formed Women Airforce Service Pilots in 1942. She simply wanted to fly, and the program promised a lot of hours in the air.

Now, 67 years later, Nyman is one of 1,102 WASP pilots to be honored with a Congressional Gold Medal, the high-

est civilian honor Congress can bestow, to recognize their role in World War II.

To Nyman, a Casa Grande resident, the belated honor is bittersweet.

"It's sad that there are maybe fewer than 300 of us left and many are infirm," Nyman said. "I'm happy we're getting the medal. I do feel that we deserve it."

Nicknamed "flygirls,"

— Medal, Page 16A



Submitted photo

DAYBREAK | WHAT YOU EAT

Fortified treats likely still junk food

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP Medical Writer

MILWAUKEE — From heart-friendly margarines to sugary cereals that strengthen bones, once-demonized foods are being spiked with nutrients to give them a healthier glow — and consumers are biting, even on some that are little more than dressed-up junk food.

A report released Thursday finds that even in a weak economy, peo-

ple will pay a premium for products seen as preventing a health problem or providing a good alternative to sodas and empty-calorie snacks. The report is from research firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

These products include winners and sinners: juices that supply kids with needed calcium, but also candy disguised as granola bars with just a smidgeon of much-ballyhooded nutrients.

The industry calls these products "nutraceuticals" or "functional

foods." Critics say they could lead people to consume too much of certain nutrients, plus too many calories and fats.

New York University food scientist Marion Nestle calls them "calorie distractors."

"Functional foods are about marketing, not health," she said. "They delude people into thinking that these things are healthy," and they often eat more than is wise, she said.

Her shame list includes a candy

bar pumped with caffeine and B vitamins, marketed as an "energy boost," and fattening ice creams enriched with calcium and helpful bacteria called probiotics.

Other nutrition experts worry about too much of a good thing. The studies are far from definitive, but some suggest that too much of vitamins A, C, E and folic acid can be risky for some people.

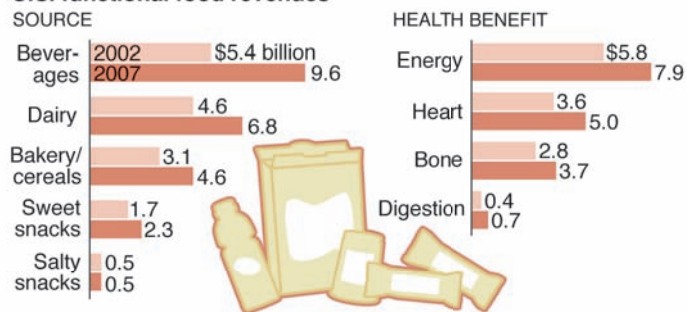
Folic acid, for example, is

— Fortified, Page 16A

Nutrient-spiked foods gaining revenue

So-called functional foods with vitamins and nutrients are a growing market and are pitched as healthier alternatives to sodas and empty-calorie snacks.

U.S. functional food revenues



SOURCE: Pricewaterhouse Coopers

AP



Medal

Continued from Page 1A

WASPs delivered military aircraft to posts across the country during WWII and were the first women in the nation's history to fly warplanes. In two years, the female pilots flew 60 million miles in every type of aircraft in the Army fleet, including fighters and bombers, according to Wings Across America, an organization dedicated to preserving the memory of the program.

Nyman was 20 years old and in search of a flying instructor job when she met Jacqueline Cochran, a leading female pilot who had suggested to military officials that given the same training as male pilots, women would be equally capable of flying warplanes stateside. Although it was not considered an official military program, WASP was started in 1942 to relieve Army pilots for combat duty.

"Jacqueline showed me a letter from a military official who said he didn't think any of us would last," Nyman said. "I think they wanted us to fail."

From the beginning, the obstacles sometimes seemed impossible to overcome, according to Nyman. The women were required to pay for their own transportation to training in Houston and had to find housing.

Nyman remembers the food on base as barely edible.

"We actually spent most of our pay on food," she said.

The training planes provided for the first class were not up to military standards, including a small fleet of wooden "bamboo bombers" that were infested with termites.

"One girl was in an accident in one of those bamboo bombers and when she crashed, the plane fell apart and all the termites came out," Nyman said. "The food, the training planes, the housing were all just ways of the Army showing us that they didn't take us seriously. They didn't expect us to stick around so they weren't going to invest in our training."

Whether it was a love of flying, patriotism or sheer determination, most trainees, including Nyman, stuck it out and graduated from the first WASP class and went on to deliver military planes. Other classes would follow.

In the two years that the program was active, 25,000 young women applied and 1,830 were accepted.

The WASP program was disbanded in 1944, just before the end of the war. Nyman was recovering from a plane accident at the time.

"Suddenly it was over," Nyman said. "We still weren't recognized as military and we had no benefits. And we had lost a lot of girls."

According to Wings Across America, 38 WASP pilots and trainees were killed flying in the program. They received no recognition, honors or benefits. Unlike with other military deaths, their coffins could not be covered with an American flag. Often, classmates and friends took up collections to help pay for burials.

When the program was disbanded, the women were required to pay their own way back home. Most of the women went on to new chapters in their lives. Nyman married her husband, Van, and the two relocated to Oregon, where Geri gave flying lessons to young naval pilots.

Records of the program were deemed classified and were sealed. Historians were not given access to the files and as the decades went by, the WASP program began to fade from memory. But in 1977, at the urging of WASP supporters, Congress passed a law giving the pilots veteran status. The women were awarded medals and given permission to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery as enlisted military.

"I think they thought that would shut us up," Nyman said.

Earlier this year, a bill to honor the female pilots with a Congressional Gold Medal was introduced and passed by both the House and the Senate. It was signed into law by President Barack Obama on July 1. A ceremony to award the pilots with their medal is being planned.

At 90, Nyman still fits into the uniform she wore as a young WASP pilot and she plans to wear it in Washington when she receives her medal. She believes that younger generations need to know about the WASP program and the role the women played in WWII history.

"People need to know the story. They need to know why we are getting these medals," Nyman said. "I don't want people thinking that Congress is handing out gold medals to just anyone."

Nyman is one of several WASP pilots currently living in Arizona. Others reside in Apache Junction, Phoenix, Tucson and other communities.

Arizona is broke, state treasurer says

Continued from Page 1A

"It's like living paycheck to paycheck with your credit cards also being maxed out. That's basically where the state is right now," said Martin, a Republican.

The GOP-led Legislature has approved a budget-balancing package but hasn't yet sent it to Gov. Jan Brewer. The package doesn't include Brewer's proposal to ask voters to approve a sales tax increase, and the Republican vetoed key parts of a similar budget package last month because the tax proposal was missing.

Legislative leaders declined to specify when they would send the package to the governor, and the governor's office has declined to say whether she would sign it.

Brewer spokesman Paul Sensenman said the state isn't in danger of running out of money to pay its bills, but the cash flow predicament could become more of a problem later.

Eileen Klein, Brewer's budget director, said it's not a certainty that the state would have to take out loans to improve its cash flow. The state could avoid such

borrowing through the use of federal stimulus money and the enactment of a state budget.

"We remain hopeful that we will have the sales tax," Klein said.

If the state can no longer make internal loans and bank loans aren't already set up, Martin said the state will have to consider issuing IOUs and making late payments on the debts that it owes.

California last month started issuing \$1.95 billion worth of IOUs to state vendors and taxpayers owed refunds while the legislature worked to plug a \$24 billion budget deficit. Officials said last week that they could stop the practice because California's revised budget would allow the state to get short-term loans to pay daily expenses.

Brewer's office said Arizona IOUs are a possibility, but such discussions are premature because the state must first consider other options, such as borrowing from banks.

The state's cash flow problems prompted some legislators to complain about the state spend-

ing \$100 million more than it did at the same point last year.

"Every day this state is in danger of actually starting to bounce checks," Sen. Thayer Verschoor, a Gilbert Republican, told his colleagues Tuesday.

Despite efforts to cut state spending, the state has incurred more expenses this fiscal year because more people are on the state's Medicaid program, the state's prison population has risen, and the number of students at schools continues to grow, Sensenman said.

Meanwhile, the state has less tax revenue than in the past. Brewer's answer is the sales tax increase.

Senate President Bob Burns, a Republican from Peoria, said he doesn't know how to get enough votes to refer the sales tax hike to voters. The referendum fell two votes short of passage in the Senate.

"I don't see how we get that," Burns said. "We have tried numerous ways to put together a bill that had the referral on it, and we have been unsuccessful in doing that."

Fortified foods may be unhealthy

Continued from Page 1A

"uncharted territory" because so many foods now are fortified with it, said Tufts University nutrition expert Alice Lichtenstein. "We don't actually know how high you can go" and be safe, she said.

Americans have a big appetite for these products.

Functional foods account for more than \$27 billion in sales a year — about 5 percent of the U.S. food market, the Pricewaterhouse report says. Estimates of future growth range from 8.5 to 20 percent per year, far more than the 1 to 4 percent forecast for the food industry as a whole.

Fiber, for digestive health, has been a big draw. In 2007, General Mills expanded its Fiber One brand into bars with appealing flavors such as Oat & Caramel and Chocolate Mocha. Sales exceeded \$100 million in the first year.

In 2004, the company added whole grain to its entire Big G cereal line — 50 to 60 brands. Kathy Wiemer, a company dietician, argues that a cereal such as Lucky Charms, made from whole grain oats and containing less sugar than many yogurts, is a healthy breakfast choice.

"There are some misperceptions around foods that contain sugar," she said. "And we know that consumers are far below the recommended intakes" for fibers and whole grains.

Among beverages, vitamin-enhanced versions of Tropicana Pure Premium juices now account for 40 percent of Tropicana sales and the share is growing, said Dave DeCecco, a spokesman for Tropicana's maker, PepsiCo Inc. A kids' version has added vitamins A, C, D and E plus folic acid, potassium and calcium.

Coca-Cola Inc. makes an enhanced Minute Maid orange juice with a host of vitamins plus zinc, and an apple juice marketed for kids with multiple vitamins and calcium. Kraft Foods Inc. sells a version of Capri Sun drinks with added antioxidant vitamins.

Soft drinks, including vitamin waters and sports beverages, now claim a third of the nutraceutical market, according to the Pricewaterhouse report. They have gained as carbonated soft drink sales have declined.

Dairy products, led by yogurts such as Yoplait and Dannon's Activia line, accounted for nearly \$7 billion in sales in 2007, just behind the beverage category, the Pricewaterhouse report says.

However, "plus" products can have minuses, such as sweetened "silly beverages that

cost \$2 and \$3 apiece with added ginkgo or caffeine or chromium, a supposed appetite suppressant," said David Schardt, senior nutritionist for the consumer group Center for Science in the Public Interest.

"It's really a junk food dressed up to look prettier than it is," he said. "People are going to be deceived into thinking a lot of these products are especially healthy for them when there's little evidence they are. There's more hype to these products than there is reality."

Some consumers agree. Ahna Devere, shopping at a grocery store in suburban Milwaukee, shook her head at milk with added DHA/omega-3 fatty acid. The label said it "helps support a healthy brain."

"I sometimes think it's overkill," she said. "I try to avoid as many additives as possible, and when it says 'doctor-recommended,' you know damned well you don't need it."

The federal Food and Drug Administration is paying more attention to health claims on functional foods. The FDA recently sent General Mills a letter saying that Cheerios was being "promoted for conditions that cause it to be a drug" — lowering cholesterol 4 percent in six weeks.

General Mills says it is working with the FDA, that its fiber health claim "has been FDA-approved for 12 years," and that the cholesterol claim has been on Cheerios boxes for more than two years.

Several nutrition scientists say they hope the agency will go after hyped claims of foods and ingredients that can "boost immunity" — a vague concept with little hard science to back it up, Schardt said.

Omega-3 fatty acids also are drawing more attention. The ones that some studies have linked to heart benefits are derived from marine sources, such as fish oil, but many foods touting omega-3 use plant sources, Lichtenstein said.

The biggest worry is that adding a nutrient will give "a health halo" to foods and lead to overconsumption, she said.

"The biggest problem we have in the United States is overnutrition — too much calories," Lichtenstein said.

Brian Wansink, a food marketing expert at Cornell University, sees another risk. Health benefits come from eating the entire food, not just a single nutrient inside it, he said.

"People are sort of losing the point of why they're eating certain foods," Wansink said. With functional foods, "we end up eating it like it is medicine, so we end up eating too much of it."

Debate shifts to anger, hate

Continued from Page 1A

"Hate, if it ever truly threatened to leave the political stage, is most definitely back, larger and nastier than ever," University of Missouri journalism professor Charles Davis wrote this week in his local paper, the Columbia Daily Tribune. He urged the media to put a spotlight on the hate, rather than ignore it.

To some political veterans, the phenomenon is unprecedented.

"There is more anger in America today than at any time I can remember," said Sen. Arlen Specter, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, after one of a series of town hall meetings at which he was jeered.

Many conservatives agree that the depth of anger is unusual, but insist that it is understandable as well — with the health care issue overlapping with worries about the economy.

"People are frustrated — they don't want to be lied to," said Mat Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based Christian legal group. "Rather than just listening, they want to be heard, and they feel Washington isn't listening to them."

Another conservative activist, the Rev. Patrick Mahoney of the Christian Defense Coalition, said he was dismayed by the recent surfacing of threats against political leaders. But he noted that venomous rhetoric was nothing new in U.S. politics and recalled that former President George W. Bush had been called a terrorist and war criminal by some of his critics.

"You'll find on both ends of the divide — the political left and political right — the more extreme elements have completely different ideological viewpoints, but they are identical on imagery," Mahoney said. "They use Nazi, Hitler, terrorist."

Beyond the extremists, Mahoney said he was impressed by the backgrounds of the angry citizens appearing at recent town hall meetings. Unlike many left-of-center protesters, he said, "these are people who normally stay home and don't get involved."

One such political newcomer is Rick Smith, a 38-year-old North Carolina store owner who in the past thought protests were pointless. But recently he joined rallies and pickets targeting Kay Hagan, a first-term Democratic senator.

"I hope the freshmen have their eyes open to what's going on out here — to see that they need to represent the people that put them in office," Smith said.

At some of the meetings, politicians and their critics have engaged in substantive dialogue over health care policy and other issues. At other times, the exchanges have been curt.

"On what planet do you spend most of your time?" Democratic Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts asked a woman at a meeting Tuesday when she held up a poster depicting Obama with a Hitler-

style mustache.

Andrew Kohut, who oversees public opinion surveys as president of the Pew Research Center, says the health care debate has fueled intense anti-government sentiment in some quarters.

"I also think the conservatives are frustrated politically — they don't feel they have a leader," Kohut said. "They're worried about a government takeover of health care and feeling not so empowered with a strong Democratic Congress. All these things lead to a summer of intense points of view."

Kohut expressed doubt that racism was a major factor behind the hostility toward Obama, but others disagree.

African-American congressman David Scott, whose Smyrna, Ga., office outside Atlanta was defaced with a spray-painted swastika, said he also has received mail in recent days using racial slurs.

"We have got to make sure that the symbol of the swastika does not win, that the racial hatred that's bubbling up does not win this debate," Scott said. "That's what is bubbling up with all of this. There's so much hatred out there for President Obama."

For many of Obama's supporters, a new source of apprehension has surfaced in the form of private citizens showing up with guns outside venues where the president was speaking.

In Arizona, about a dozen people carried guns Monday outside the convention center where Obama addressed the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And last week during Obama's health care town hall in Portsmouth, N.H., a man stood outside with a pistol strapped to his leg, carrying a sign reading, "It is time to water the tree of liberty."

That's part of a longer quote from Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that the tree should be watered periodically "with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

The Secret Service said the armed men were in compliance with state laws, and were neither trying to enter the meeting hall nor get near Obama's motorcade route. Nonetheless, their appearance raised concern in the liberal blogosphere that the trend could lead to violence.

"It just takes one wacko with a gun to cause a huge problem at one of these events — if not trying to kill Obama then to kill others," wrote Kansas City Star columnist Yael T. Abouhalkah.

Matthew Spalding, director of the conservative Heritage Foundation's Center for American Studies, said Democratic leaders should not dismiss the surge of anger as an extremist-fringe phenomenon.

"There are components of liberalism that try to paint the whole thing as right-wing paranoia," he said. "That would be a large political mistake. There's a sense that our country is at a great turning point, and there's widespread confusion and concern about where we're going."

Forum

Continued from Page 1A

comments will be included in a report that will be forwarded to the White House in September.

McGuire, who along with Rios are Democrats representing most of Pinal County, addressed the group, saying "this moment in time is a turning point" and that people with good health "have potential."

"America is about potential," McGuire said.

Rios said the forum was a special opportunity.

"We're here not to talk to you but to hear your ideas," she said.

Early in the meeting, Sinema asked Casa Grande resident Lydia Mercer to share her health care story. Mercer said that after she retired, she went from paying \$60 per month for her rheumatoid arthritis medication under her insurance plan to \$679 in January and February under Medicare and up to \$1,800 later in the year. She said that she does not qualify for year-round federal prescription assistance so she can only afford to buy her medicine in January and February and must stretch out a two-month supply for the entire year.

"Her story explains why there is an effort to reform health care," Sinema said.

She gave an overview of the two main health care proposals being discussed by national lawmakers — House Bill 3200 and a white paper offered by the Senate Finance Committee that is not yet written as legislation. Both proposals include mandates that all people buy insurance, require employers with more than \$500,000 in payroll to provide health care for workers and offer either a health insurance exchange or co-op to enable people to buy lower-cost insurance. Both proposals would also ban health insurance companies from discriminating on illness or pre-existing conditions.

"These are the two proposals that are moving," Sinema said.

Forum attendees were invited to write down their questions and concerns, which were later answered

To learn more

For those who were unable to attend the health care reform forum, or for those who still have questions, a variety of Web sites offer insight and information about health care reform proposals.

■ The Arizonans for Health Reform Task Force, www.azhealthreform.com, features information from state Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Phoenix, one of 32 state legislators to serve on the president's White House Health Reform Task Force.

■ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains a Web site at www.healthreform.gov to offer information, reports and news about health reform efforts.

■ Legislative information, committee reports, resolutions and bills, including HR3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009, are available to the public at the Library of Congress Web site, www.Thomas.gov. A white paper done by the Senate Finance Committee is available at www.finance.senate.gov.

■ Organizations, including the American Medical Association, www.ama-assn.org, the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org, and AARP, www.aarp.org, offer information about their views on reform on their Web sites.

■ The Kaiser Family Foundation, www.kff.org, offers information about the costs of reform, types of financing measures being considered and how a plan is likely to be financed.

by Sinema. Residents' questions and comments ran the spectrum, with some calling for a single-payer health care system and others advocating less government involvement in health care issues.

Sinema said that a single-payer system does not have much support and is "off the table" as a reform solution.

Forum attendees were polite and courteous with no yelling or shouting at Sinema as she answered questions.

Tropicana Orange Juice, Honey Nut Cheerios and vitaminwater are arranged for a studio photograph on Wednesday in New York. Food and beverage makers increasingly are spiking their products with vitamins and other nutrients.



Mark Lennihan/Associated Press