

SPORTS, D1, D6-7

CRUSHING LOSS

Bears can't overcome Dallas offense, lose 4 players to injuries in 34-10 defeat.



YOUR FAMILY, C6

DINO DELIGHTS

Burpee Museum has multitude of rare prehistoric finds.

Iranian president claims nation not building nuclear bomb. WORLD, A2

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No subsidies? No problem

New Zealand's 17-year success story without them touted to Illinois farmers on visit

SECOND OF TWO PARTS

BY BRUCE RUSHTON
OF GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

SPRINGFIELD — No one believes Congress will pull the plug on farm subsidies.

But what would happen if lawmakers did end handouts that began nearly 75 years ago during the Great Depression?

Mostly good things, if New

Zealand is any example.

New Zealand once subsidized agriculture, mainly dairy farmers and cattle and sheep ranchers, believing that government money was needed to prop up farmers who had to compete against counterparts from other nations that also had generous subsidies.

Faced with an economic crisis, however, New Zealand went

cold turkey in 1984, ending subsidies with almost no warning. It remains the only industrialized nation in the world that has completely abandoned farm subsidies.

At first, doom-and-gloom predictions appeared accurate. Farmers organized protests as land values plummeted. Some went out of business. Unemployment rose, and rural business owners suffered as farmers stopped spending money. But hard times didn't last.

Within a few years, New Zealand's rural economy rebounded.

Land prices now are higher than ever — an acre of prime farmland costs more in New Zealand than in the United States. Agriculture today accounts for 19 percent of New Zealand's gross domestic product, the value of all goods and services produced in a country. That's an increase of 5 percent since subsidies ended.

"You would find very few people in New Zealand now who would want to go back to a subsidy system," said Brian Chamberlin, former head of

INSIDE STORY

► University of Illinois likely to be getting less from feds in subsidies with new rental arrangements school has with farmers. **Page A5**

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Umholtz reaches legal record

Tazewell prosecutor has held office longer than anyone in county's history

BY KEVIN SAMPIER
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

PEKIN — For Stewart Umholtz, finding a definition for his job as the county's top prosecutor is as simple as reading the writing on the wall: "The duty of a prosecutor is to seek justice, not merely to convict."

Umholtz has that phrase printed on the glass outside his office in the Tazewell County Courthouse. He marked the start of his 13th year on the job on Saturday, making him the longest-serving state's attorney in county history.

"I got a lot of interesting comments when I first put that up there," said Umholtz, who was appointed to the post in 1995 and then voted into office in 1996.

The Republican has faced only two challengers during that time; one in the 1996 primary and another later that year in the general election.

He jokingly explains his longevity with a saying he's used many times over the years.

"I like to tell people that I have successfully communicated the undesirability of my office," he said, adding that he hopes his retention has been because of a job well done.

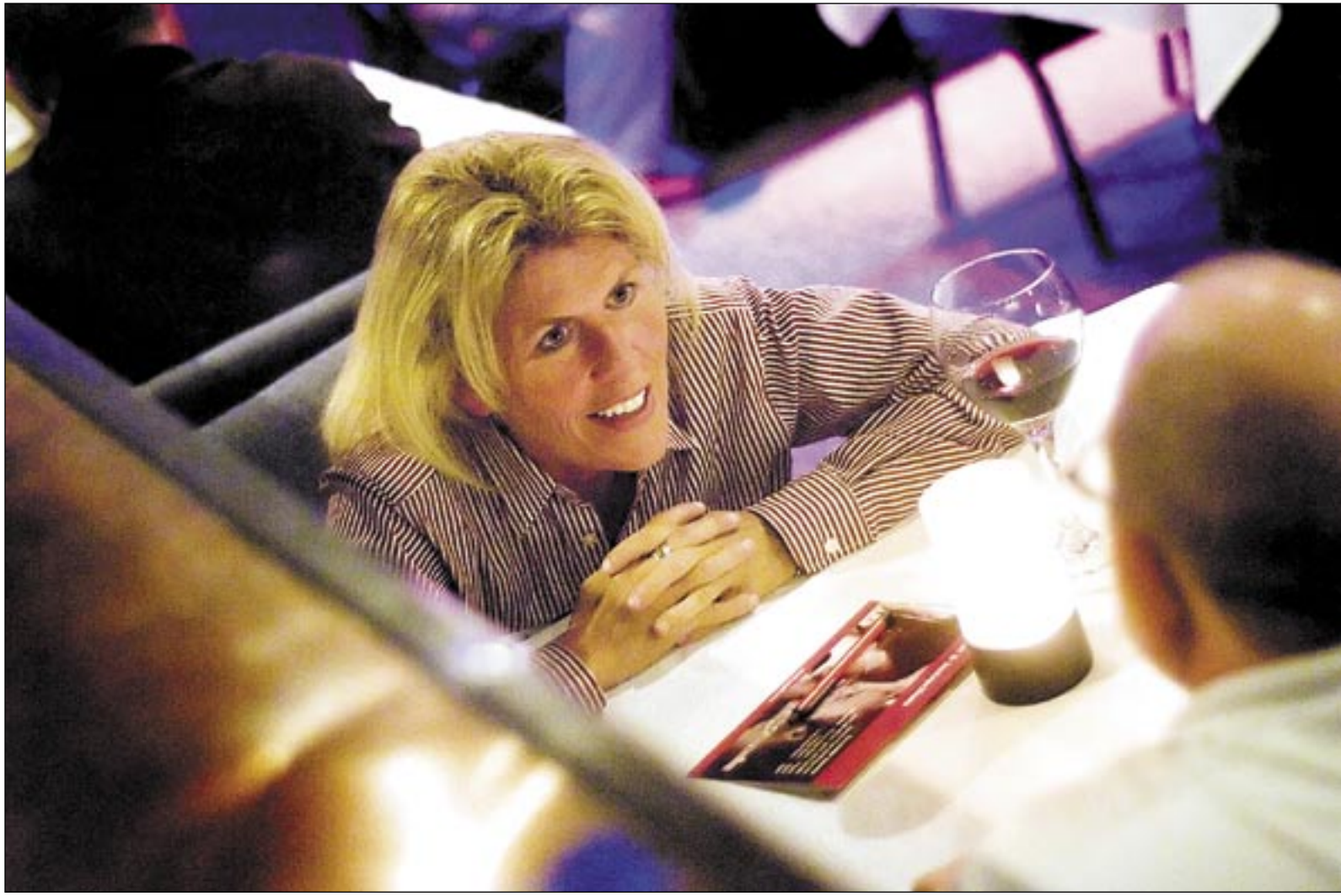
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STEWART UMHOLTZ

Getting to know you

Trish Miller of Bloomington chats with a partner during a cupid.com pre-dating event at CopperWorks Restaurant on Monday evening. Pre-dating, or "speed dating," events are typically hosted once a month at Peoria bars or restaurants. "I've been having a ball," Miller laughed, explaining that she doesn't know of any equivalent event in her area. "Online dating is so brutal, and I've only done it a week!"



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Area singles race against the clock to determine if prospective mates are worth a real date

PEORIA

A nna Paxton says she knows in 90 seconds. It takes Karen Fuller three dates.

And www.cupid.com pre-dating events held across the country give participants six minutes for sparks to fly — or fizzle — with members of the opposite sex.

"Ninety seconds is enough time," said Paxton of Bloomington, who attended her first pre-dating event on Sept. 17 at CopperWorks Restaurant. "I just think you know. Chemistry's everything."

Paxton, 48, came to find friends and fun, and to check it off her life-to-do list.

"It's up there with bungee jumping," she said.

And though spending six minutes apiece with 10 strangers didn't produce the same stomach-churning effect as free falling, Paxton was equally anxious.

"I was very nervous because I met somebody (prior to the event starting) and was like, 'Ugh'" she said.

Pre-dating, known in some quarters as "speed dating," all but eliminates the awkwardness of a lengthy blind date gone bad, said event coordinator Priscilla Slaughter.

"If it doesn't go well, you're only

Please see **DATING**, Page A7



Nestled in the bar area of CopperWorks Restaurant, 20 singles are given 6 minutes apiece to learn about the other person before switching partners.

Story by **JACQUELINE KOCH** ♦ Photographs by **ADAM GERIK** ♦ of the Journal Star

Drivers not getting the message

Survey: Most condemn text-messaging on the road, yet do it anyway

BY GINA KIM
OF MCCLATCHY/TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. — There are those things you shouldn't do, but you do them anyway. You leave your contact lenses in overnight. You eat that last piece of pie. You text-message while driving.

And even if you know that driving while distracted is dangerous, you tell yourself that you're a good driver.

You know where all the letters are on your phone or Blackberry, so you barely have to look away from the road. Plus, it's just a quick message you need to send off.



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