

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

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STAR

COLOR WHEEL RODEO STUD

Your eyes, hands, hair and veins should set the tone for your wardrobe's color palette.

STORY ON PAGE E1



EVA LONGORIA PARKER

PREVIEW

Country star Jason Aldean has stayed true to his off-the-wall, rebel sound — and it has brought him all the way to a RodeoHouston debut.

STORY ON PAGE F8

UNDER VEIL OF SECRECY, DRUG KINGPIN SENTENCED

THE SENTENCE

Osiel Cardenas Guillen's punishment, handed down in a Houston courtroom sealed to the public:

- 25 years in prison
- Forfeiture of \$50 million



■ Hearing for feared cartel leader closed to public without explanation

By DANE SCHILLER and JACQUEE PETCHEL HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Behind armed guards and locked doors — in a secret hearing of judicial privacy not even given to some 9/11 terrorists or East Coast mafias — Osiel Cardenas Guillen, one of the most feared drug lords in history, was sentenced to 25 years in prison Wednesday.

In a Houston courtroom sealed to the public, he also was ordered to forfeit \$50 million, a small slice of his estimated earnings. Cardenas surrendered at least \$23 million in cash seizures quietly made by federal agents over the past year.

Cardenas, a 42-year-old native of the border city of Matamoros, Mexico, moved tons of cocaine and made millions of dollars as he ruled the Gulf Cartel drug empire with a viciousness and hands-on style seldom before seen, authorities said.

“Osiel Cardenas Guillen Please see **CARDENAS**, Page A7

INVESTIGATION INTO RECALLS

Along with cars, a reputation to repair



CHARLES DHARAPAK: ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAN OF THE HOUR: Toyota's president, Akio Toyoda, told the House panel Wednesday that the company was addressing its vehicles' problems. Another Toyota official said the company knew of sticking pedals a year before the U.S. accidents began.

■ Head of Toyota continues to offer apologies at panel, where secretary of transportation is more defensive

By MICHELINE MAYNARD NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — Akio Toyoda, the president of Toyota, was billed as the main attraction at a House hearing on Wednesday into the company's recalls of millions of cars — recalls for which he profusely apologized and took personal responsibility.

But the transportation secretary, Raymond LaHood, offered more surprises in testimony that was sometimes heated, including many occasions when he was unable or declined to answer detailed questions about his department's dealings with the auto company.

Both men spent hours before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, one of three congressional panels investigating the recall of more than 6 million vehicles and the delay in responding to problems of sudden acceleration.

Toyoda, with a translator to his right and the company's chief operating officer for North America, Yoshimi Inaba, on his left, spoke in a calm, detached manner.

CULTURE CLASH The differences between the U.S. and Japan were clear in Wednesday's hearings. **PAGE D4**

INSIDE

Business . . . **D1** ; Horoscopes **E6**
Comics . . . **E6** ; Lottery . . . **A2**
Crossword . . . **E5** ; Markets . . . **D5**
Directory . . . **A2** ; Movies . . . **F21**
Editorials . . . **B8** ; Obituaries . . . **B5**



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WE RECYCLE

CAMPAIGN 2010

'Tea party' is seeking to bag GOP with grass-roots tactics

■ Securing Texas precinct posts is the first step

By R.G. RATCLIFFE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

AUSTIN — Taking a page from the playbook of social conservatives, the “tea party” movement is trying to change the Republican Party of Texas

from the ground up.

Tea party activists in the major cities and suburbs across Texas have been recruiting and training candidates for precinct chairs as the building blocks to shift the emphasis of the state GOP from social issues to fiscal restraint by the federal government and individual freedom.

“It's going to shock the

world,” said Austin Tea Party activist Dean Wright.

Social conservatives used similar tactics in 1994 to take control of the state party from the business-oriented party members who sometimes were called “country club Republicans.” The social conservatives set a faith-based agenda.

Former state Republican Please see **PARTY**, Page A8

SPORTS

WINTER OLYMPICS

BREAKING THE ICE IN CANADA



SMILEY N. POOL: CHRONICLE

HOCKEY Jamie Langenbrunner (15) celebrates with Zach Parise after Parise scored to help the U.S. beat Switzerland 2-0 in the quarterfinals. The U.S. is one win away from the gold-medal game. **PAGE C1**

» **FIGURE SKATING** Riveting storylines dominate tonight's women's figure skating long program. **PAGE C8**

» **SPEEDSKATING** Unpredictable event sees South Korean women disqualified, Apolo Ohno with an inside spot. **PAGE C9**

» **ALPINE SKIING** Lindsey Vonn's crash on the slopes creates an even bigger headache for her teammate. **PAGE C8**

FULL COVERAGE ON PAGES C1, C8-11

After tied runoff, dice decide candidates' fate

■ Sealy's newest elected official had highest roll

By PEGGY O'HARE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Sometimes life is a little gamble. That was the case for two Sealy City Council candidates who rolled dice Wednesday to decide who would become the small town's newest elected official.

An overflow crowd packed the council chambers to watch candidates Wyn McCready and Mark Stolarski — who tied in a runoff Saturday — literally cast dice to see who would ascend to the throne of council member, Place 1.

Stolarski captured the seat by rolling the higher number. “I picked up a lot of speed at the end” of the campaign, Stolarski said. “Fortunately, that speed carried through to the dice roll.”

Texas election laws call for lots to be cast if a runoff election is tied.

“We could flip a coin, I could deal five cards, we could throw dominos out there, we could pull names out of a hat — but in each of those instances, somebody else's hands are doing the drawing and the work,” said Mayor Nick Tirey. “By throwing dice ... they roll their fate.”

The roll of the dice captured attention in the Austin County town of 6,428 residents 50 miles west of Houston.

“I think people understand now, when you say one vote can make a difference, it truly could have,” Tirey said. “It's really a shame, all the hard work by two strong candidates, that it comes down to rolling the dice.”

KHOU (Channel 11) contributed to the origination of this story.

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