

Illinois Edition

GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS
IN EVERYDAY

Drama

Philip Seymour Hoffman
Best actor | "Capote"



Musical

Reese Witherspoon
Best actress | "Walk the Line"



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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TOP NEWS

COUNTY TO ENTER CYBERSPACE

St. Clair County plans to launch a Web site in March, becoming the last major government entity in the St. Louis region to become a part of the World Wide Web.

METRO | D1

LOCAL NEWS

KING HOLIDAY

African-Americans must continue working toward social change, speakers at an Edwardsville church say at a ceremony to remember the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

METRO | D1

RABIES SHOTS

A 9-year-old Swansea girl begins receiving anti-rabies shots. She was bitten by a dog last week, and the search for it was unsuccessful.

METRO | D1

ELSEWHERE

ARID OKLAHOMA

Drought is a hardship to cattle ranchers. Their livestock drink from shrinking ponds and graze in bare, dusty wheatfields.

NATION | A2

2 NATIONS ON BOARD

China and Russia join the United States and its European allies in pressing Iran on its nuclear program.

WORLD | A7

CHANGE IN LIBERIA

Africa's first female head of state takes office in the war-battered nation.

WORLD | A8

PENSION PICTURE

Some experts say impending changes in how companies keep their books could speed their moves away from guaranteed pensions and retiree health plans.

BUSINESS | B1

SPORTS

MU BEATS KU

Missouri guard Thomas Gardner scores 40 points to lead the Tigers to an 89-86 overtime victory over Kansas.

SPORTS | C1

ONLINE



YOUR 5 CENTS WORTH

Is that guy on the new nickel Thomas Jefferson or Will Ferrell? You never can tell what opinions you'll get in our Letters to the Editor blog at STLtoday.com/letters.

To Pluto and beyond

Weather permitting, the New Horizons mission will launch today from Florida.

1 Launch
12:24 p.m. today
New Horizons will be the fastest object launched from Earth, passing the moon's orbit in nine hours.

2 Jupiter slingshot
February 2007
Jupiter's gravity field will accelerate the probe toward Pluto, trimming three years from its voyage.

3 Hibernation
2007 to 2014
New Horizons will "sleep" from Jupiter to Pluto, radioing an "all-OK" signal to Earth once a week.

4 Fly-by
July 2015
New Horizons will snap pictures 6,200 miles from Pluto's surface, 40 times closer than the moon is to Earth. The pictures, radioed to Earth at the speed of light, will take four hours and 15 minutes to arrive.

The probe will be powered by a single radioactive source putting out 200 watts, enough for two light bulbs. It is about the size of a piano.

9 years from now ...

A look at Pluto

By Eric Hand
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

William McKinnon will wait nearly a decade to gaze into the farthest reaches of the solar system. Weather permitting, today NASA will launch a mission to Pluto and the Kuiper Belt that lies beyond. McKinnon, a 51-year-old Washington University geophysicist, is on the science team of this New Horizons mission. By the time Pluto looms in the camera lens, McKinnon's kids will have finished high school. "If I'm too old to work, they can analyze the data for me," said McKinnon, who will examine the geology of Pluto and its moon, Charon.

That could provide clues to the origin of Earth and its moon, which some scientists think formed after a primordial impact. On Monday, NASA spokesman Bruce Buckingham said there was an 80 percent chance of a 12:24 p.m. St. Louis time liftoff at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Sitting atop an Atlas V rocket, the piano-sized probe will be the fastest object launched from Earth. It will pass the moon's orbit in nine hours, a distance that took Apollo missions three days. In one year, it will catapult past Jupiter, using its gravity to trim the mission's voyage by three years.

A tiny mystery

More is unknown about Pluto and its moon, Charon, than is known. The enhanced photo above of Pluto is the best the Hubble Space Telescope can do. Pluto and Charon are together smaller than the United States.

PLEASE SEE **PLUTO** | A4

Kuiper Belt

Scientists suspect hundreds of thousands of Kuiper Belt objects orbit the sun as far as 5 billion miles away. About 1,000 of the icy bodies have been discovered — some larger than Pluto — since the early 1990s.

2016-2020
New Horizons will zoom past Pluto and into the Kuiper Belt, perhaps finding clues to the composition of the early solar system.

SOURCE: NASA | Post-Dispatch

▶ A space capsule sent to collect comet dust returned to Earth, its precious cargo intact. A4

They can fell 200 to 300 trees a year, and their dams can interfere with drainage plans to cause flooding. Madison County has hired a trapper to reduce their numbers. What to do with the beaver population.

Beavers, like kids, are cute — and destructive, too

By Terry Hillig
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

PONTOON BEACH • Charles E. Luehmann thought beavers were kind of cute when they began to take up residence on his farm in the late 1980s. After a few years, though, they didn't look so good. Now, he just

wants them gone and does not care greatly how that is accomplished. "I sort of enjoyed watching them," he said. "Then my trees started disappearing." Beavers need the trees to build the dams where they live. And the dams, Luehmann said, back up water and kill the trees that the beavers

haven't felled themselves. Luehmann, 76, is a Nameoki Township trustee whose ancestors have lived in the area since before the Civil War. He has a farm of about 210 acres northeast of Horseshoe Lake.

PLEASE SEE **BEAVERS** | A6

NEWSTRACKER | UPDATES ON CONTINUING STORIES

- LOBBYIST FALLOUT** In Georgia, Ralph Reed's ties to Abramoff raise questions. **Nation | A3**
- AFGHAN VIOLENCE** Two suicide bombers strike, killing at least two dozen people. **World | A7**
- ALITO NOMINATION** Senate Judiciary Committee will vote Jan. 24 on high court nominee.
- BIRD FLU** 12-year-old Turkish girl hastily buried by torchlight was infected with H5N1 strain.
- PAKISTAN ATTACK** Nation's ruling party demands apology for airstrike that killed 17.

