

THE SUNDAY PAPER

WEST SALEM TO PLAY FOR TITLE
SPORTS, D-1

Meet the big voice behind a little chicken
ET CETERA, C-4

STILL DRAWING THE CROWDS
TRAVEL, C-10

MORE FOOTBALL: EAGLES WIN | BADGERS LOSE | PACKERS PREPARE FOR VICK / SPORTS, D-1

LA CROSSE Tribune

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SPECIAL REPORT
WISCONSIN'S HPY HNTG
Deer hunt 2005: Into the woods
OUTDOORS EXTRA, C-1/3

‘WHAD’YA KNOW?’
If you’re Michael Feldman, quite a lot, actually
Michael Feldman brings his “Whad’ya Know?” public radio show to La Crosse on Saturday for the first time since 1992. Here are a few moments from the show.
“There will be no mention of Muslims, terrorists or French Island. Nothing,” Feldman said. “My mother wouldn’t stand for it.”
The second rule for the “Whad’ya Know?” Quiz as read by Mary of Green Valley, Wis.: “My mother is always complaining about ‘knowing.’”
“Concave and convex in La Crosse means, ‘local man attempts to slip key into sports,’” Feldman said.
Feldman asking Hokah essayist Aggie Tappery about the second time she met her future husband. “A proper date this time?” “We probably were a little improper.”
Feldman on avoiding a Jesus of Life attraction. The Say “I’m from Outstate.”
REPORTER CHRIS BALDUS’ ACCOUNT OF THE LIVE BROADCAST IS ON B-1

THE BATTLE OVER the pill
... NO, NOT THAT PILL, BUT THE CONTROVERSY SOUNDS FAMILIAR
Students torn over plan to ban UW system from dispensing emergency contraceptives
By KATE SCHOTT
La Crosse Tribune
Had her father’s mother had access to emergency contraception, Hannah Appleton says she might not be here.
Proposed legislation in the Wisconsin Legislature would ban health clinics from advertising the availability of prescribing or dispensing emergency contraception to students. The measure already has passed the Assembly.
Appleton, a UW-La Crosse sophomore and member of the College Republicans, and a few friends are hoping to start a petition in support of the bill.
They face some stiff opposition on campus: A student petition opposed to the measure drew 1,500 signatures in two days.
“It is the No. 1 item on our plates,” said UW-La Crosse student
See THE PILL, A-2

How it started
An advertising campaign in March by UW-Madison University Health Services encouraged students to “be prepared” by carrying emergency contraceptives during spring break. To help you plan ahead, University Health Services can provide a prescription for EC over the phone without an appointment, the ad text read.
Minden has received some help from WEA, Truist, which provides her health insurance. She spends a lot of money on drugs for heart and other medical problems. Her husband, Lloyd, is a military veteran and has a good drug plan.
“WEA Truist pointed out that my drug are in 50 plans, but it’s not easy choosing one plan,” Minden said.
See DRUGS, A-9

MEDICARE AND DRUGS
Seniors find confusion on the way to savings; experts say don’t panic
By TERRY BRIDGES
La Crosse Tribune
Marian Minden was a long-time schoolteacher and former member of the Onalaska School Board.
Yet even she admits having trouble wading through Medicare’s new prescription drug coverage plans for seniors.
“I’ve been so frustrated, trying to choose a plan,” Minden said. “My husband and I went crazy on the computer, trying to find my drugs in the plans.”
Starting Tuesday, people 65 and older can sign up for the first nationwide prescription drug coverage, part of the biggest change in the federal health care program in 40 years.
Seniors lobbied for years for some kind of drug coverage. But now that they have it, early reports indicate they often end up “frustrated, confused and angry” trying to pick the right plan, said Larry White of the La Crosse County Aging Unit.
“They want to know why the government is doing this to them,” said White, the agency’s elderly benefits specialist. “They’re scared to death with all the mail.”
For at least a month, seniors have been targeted by companies offering various Medicare drug plans. In Wisconsin alone, seniors had 68 options — 17 insurance companies offering 45 plans, and eight HMOs offering another 23 plans.
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“WEA Truist pointed out that my drug are in 50 plans, but it’s not easy choosing one plan,” Minden said.
See DRUGS, A-9

What to do now
List all of your prescription drugs.
List what you currently pay for your prescriptions.
List names, addresses, phone numbers of your pharmacies.
Talk to family members about choosing the best plan for you.
Save letters from your employer group health plan, Medicare Supplement Insurance Plan, Medicare Advantage coordinating care plan, Medical Assistance program, “Medicare A You 2006 Handbook” and Wisconsin SeniorCare.
Make sure your drugs and pharmacies are included in your plan.
Important dates
Monday: Last day to receive letters from employer group health plans and Medicare plans.
Tuesday: Enrollment for Medicare prescription drug plan begins.
Jan. 1, 2006: Medicare prescription drug coverage begins.
May 15, 2006: Initial enrollment for Medicare drug plan ends.
More tips inside
How to make the right choice for your needs.
What to ask to help you choose the right plan.
What if you already have drug coverage?
What are your alternatives?
PAGE A-8

Woman’s death latest legal run-in for Avery clan
By TODD RICHMOND and CARIE ANTINGER
The Associated Press
WHITELAW, Wis. — The Avery family and the police don’t mix. Never have.
Friday night, just hours after prosecutors announced Steven Avery would face a murder charge in the death of a Hibert woman, his older brother, Chuck, peeped the trunk of his family’s car. He said he wanted to make sure Manitowish County Sheriff’s deputies hadn’t planted more trouble for them.
“We’re really on edge,” he said outside his brother’s farmhouse as darkness fell.
Steven Avery spent 18 years in prison for a rape he didn’t commit before DNA evidence exonerated him. He filed a \$36 million wrongful conviction lawsuit against Manitowish County.
But now that same DNA science that got him out of prison could send him back. Searchers found 25-year-old freelance photographer Teresa Halbach’s sport utility vehicle in the Avery family’s junkyard, and prosecutors say DNA now proves Avery’s blood is in the vehicle. He could face a charge of first-degree intentional homicide as early as Monday.
Avery’s family says he’s being framed to stop his lawsuit and four deputies could cart him away next.
“The only thing I can think they are trying to railroad me again and see if they can get away with it this time,” Steven Avery, 41, said before he was arrested.
Manitowish County District Attorney Ken Krutz says that blood is in the vehicle. He
See AVERY, A-8

Prosecutors plan to charge Steven Avery with killing a 25-year-old woman whose vehicle was found near his home, Manitowish County District Attorney Ken Krutz said Friday. Krutz said DNA testing showed blood in Teresa Halbach’s sport utility vehicle was Avery’s.

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Throwing a party for the holidays? Don’t stress it
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FROM THE COVER

www.lacrosstribune.com

Medicare prescription drug coverage Part D

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Everyone on Medicare can get coverage. No one can be denied for health or income reasons.
- The program is voluntary. You don't have to sign up, but if you want coverage later, you might have to pay a penalty. You might not need a Medicare plan if you already have good coverage.
- There is a single Medicare drug plan. To get coverage, you must enroll in private drug plans Medicare has approved. Coverage will depend on your plan.
- In 2006, most plans will have a premium of about \$32 and offer an array of cost-sharing options. Under the standard plan, you pay the first \$250 of drug costs each year, and the plan pays 75 percent of the next \$2,400. Once you have paid \$3,600 out of pocket, the standard plan will cover 95 percent of your costs.
- You can sign up with a plan starting Tuesday through May 15.

- Your drug coverage will start Jan. 1 if you sign up by Dec. 31. If you sign up later, your coverage will begin on the first day of the month after the month you sign up.
- If you sign up after May 15, the cost during the month you sign up will be about 62 percent of coverage.
- You might qualify for a reduced premium or cost-sharing discount. For more information, call 1-800-422-6277 or go online to www.medicare.gov.
- If your needs change, you may need to change your plan. Each year will have an open period for reviewing plan choices for the coming year.
- If you receive health plan drug coverage, you can decide whether to keep existing coverage or switch to another plan. But make sure you don't lose your other health care coverage.

SOURCE: Medicare and AARP



Larry White, a benefits specialist with the La Crosse County Aging Unit, speaks Tuesday about new Medicare laws to an audience of mostly senior citizens at Gundersen Lutheran's Rasmus Center.

Too much information — making a choice

- If you have drug coverage, reassess your plan. Is a Medicare plan better?
- Check the Medicare plans to ensure your drugs are covered.
- Check the pharmacy in the plans. Is your pharmacy listed? Or nearby?
- See whether it pays to enroll in Wisconsin SeniorCare. Most will do better in Wisconsin SeniorCare. The SeniorCare fee is \$100-\$200.
- Look at familiar companies offering drug plans.
- If you are insured through an employer or union group plan, ask the following questions: Are I better off just keeping my coverage? If I drop my prescription drug coverage, will that affect other health care coverage? Will I be eligible to re-enroll?

Need help? Here's where to turn

La Crosse County Aging Unit: (608) 785-9700. County residents can meet with a prescriber. Prescription Drug Help Line: 1-888-456-5211. Wisconsin SeniorCare Help Line: 1-800-657-2038. Medicare: 1-800-633-6227. Define: Go to www.medicare.gov to compare costs and coverage. Publications: "Medicare Advantage — Questions and Answers" and "Wisconsin Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare (2005)" are available by writing to: GPO Publications, P.O. Box 7873, Madison, WI 53707-7873, calling 1-800-236-6817 or going online at oas.sam.gov.

If you have drug coverage

- What type of coverage do I have now?
- Is my current coverage at least as good as the Medicare plan?
- Will my coverage change when Medicare prescription drug plans become available in 2006?
- How will my coverage work with Medicare drug plans?
- Will my coverage supplement or will it take the place of a Medicare prescription drug plan?

SeniorCare

Elderly benefits specialists recommend Wisconsin residents age 65 and older check to see whether they would benefit from Wisconsin SeniorCare, which for most low-income people would be a better prescription drug plan than any Medicare plan.

Income limits

- Level 1: \$1 or below: \$15.22 per person or \$20.52 per couple annually — no deductible, \$5 co-pay for generics and \$15 co-pay for brand names.
- Level 2: \$15.23 to \$18,140 per person and \$20,529 to \$25,800 per couple annually — \$500 deductible per person, then \$5 co-pay for generics and \$15 co-pay for brand names.
- Level 3: \$18.14 to \$22,968 per person and \$25,801 to \$30,792 per couple annually — \$600 deductible per person, then \$5 co-pay for generics and \$15 co-pay for brand names.
- Level 4: \$22,969 to higher per person and \$30,793 to higher per couple. This is called a "spenddown." There is no discount during the spenddown. After the spenddown, you must meet an \$800 deductible per person, then \$5 co-pay for generics, \$15 co-pay for brand names.

Fee: \$30 per person annually. Contact: Call the SeniorCare Customer Service Hot line at 1-800-657-2038, or visit the SeniorCare Web site at www.wisconsin.seniorcare.com.

DRUGS

From A-1

available through private drug plans approved by the federal government. At least two drug plans must be offered in every region nationwide. Most plans will be offered by insurance companies or health maintenance organizations. Comparative plan information — including a drug list, covered cost-sharing requirements and drug prices — is available on the Medicare Web site at www.medicare.gov. White said most people should save about 50 percent on prescription drugs. "There's a potential for a lot of savings, but it's so overwhelming that people can't see the benefits," White said. Many seniors have been in a hurry because they think they have to decide by Tuesday, said White. But that's not the first day of enrollment; they have until May 15 to make a choice. Seniors who want coverage to start Jan. 1, however, need to sign up before Dec. 31. "Decide what best for you, take a little time, and then it's a choice for one year," White advised. "The main thing is for seniors to get on Medicare drug coverage. Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage will be made

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don't just a plan now could be penalized in the future if they want to enroll in a plan. That's what Carol Scholze of La Crosse, one of more than 11,000 La Crosse County residents on Medicare, is looking at the plan. Scholze takes no medication and doesn't really need drug coverage, but she said she might need it someday. Her husband, Alfred, already has good drug coverage as a Medicare enrollee. "I'm confused about what I should do, but I don't want to pay a penalty someday," Scholze said. Scholze has health insurance through Health Traditions 65-plus plan at Franciscan Skemp and will be looking at options offered by the plan. Franciscan Skemp has partners, such as United Healthcare, in offering a Medicare drug plan. At age 88, Agnes Stankov of Onondaga takes two drugs for high blood pressure and one for a headache. Senior health insurance with Gundersen Lutheran's Senior Preferred Medicare HMO plan. "I don't think any lawyer in the world is going to look at the case in the same way today as they did a month ago," Gaska said. "But technically, legally, nothing has changed." They also discovered hand-cuffs, leg irons, postmortem material and what the search warrants described as "sexual devices" — and a woman's shaved head and teeth. "Sheriff's deputies drew DNA samples from Steven, Clark, Earl, their parents, their sister, Ruth, and her two adult sons. They arrested Steven on Wednesday after they discovered two guns in his trailer. Convicted felon, sheriff allowed to possess firearms in Wilbur, Wis. Detectives are still questioning the men of the Avery family. Check believes any one of them could get behind the sign, given their histories and his brother's lawsuit. After all, \$36 million could be at stake. "We don't have anything to do with it," Clark said.

AVERY

From A-1

about. A judge appointed him to handle the case because he's from another jurisdiction, he said, adding DNA analysis has confirmed a link to Halbach's vehicle is Avery's. "Kratz said he's tired of advising conspiracy theories. Flouting evidence would mean someone is running around with bits of Avery's DNA, looking for a crime scene to splinter it over," Kratz said. "It is not possible the evidence is tainted evidence or was in any way planted by the Manitowish County law enforcement agency or any law enforcement agency. For that matter," Kratz said. The Avery family has run Avery's Auto Salvage in the farm fields outside Malott, a hamlet of 1,400 people 25 miles southeast of Green Bay, since the 1850s. The three property, surrounded by farms and fences, has more than 1,000 vehicles, two mobile homes and two houses. Some neighbors say the family is helpful. "If you asked for a favor, you would get it from all of them," said Jim Gaska, 61, who lived on a farm near the Avery's until 2002. Others were more guarded, saying they still have to be wary of the Avery's. Harold Stahl, 88, of Malott, said he had to deal with the family when he was a law truck driver. "They are an odd lot," Stahl said. The brothers have been in and out of trouble with the law in Manitowish County for years. According to court documents: ■ Chuck, 51, was charged with second-degree sexual assault in 1986, but a jury acquitted him in 1988. In 1996, he pleaded guilty to misdemeanor disorderly conduct and got 12 months probation. His probation was revoked on months later, and he was sentenced to 60 days in jail. In 1998, his former wife accused him of sexually assaulting her and wrapping a phone cord around her neck. A charge of third-degree sexual assault was ultimately dismissed in 2003. ■ Earl, 55, pleaded no con-

Avery's \$36 million civil case up in air

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test to battery and fourth-degree sexual assault and get three years of probation on each charge in 1986. He pleaded no contest to a charge of battery and attacked his wife. He got 18 months' probation and was ordered to attend counseling. ■ Steven was convicted in 1981 of felony burglary. He got 18 months' probation, which he revoked in 1982 after he was charged with another burglary. He was arrested on a car and throwing it from a highway. In 1983 he was convicted of sexually assaulting a 36-year-old woman on a Lake Michigan beach. A judge sentenced him to 32 years in prison. In 2003, he was freed after serving 18 years, after DNA samples proved another man committed the rape. A state Department of Justice investigation cleared Manitowish County authorities of any ethical violations in Avery's conviction, but state lawmakers used his case in push legislation designed to reduce wrongful convictions and Avery's lawsuit is pending. Meanwhile, life on the outside has been a struggle. Avery is engaged to be married, but he doesn't have much money. He has lived in an ex-shanty and struggled to rebuild his life with his five children. Inland Johnson, an Avery family friend, let Steven move into a trailer Johnson owns that sits next to the junkyard. "They were always nice to me," Johnson said. Steven did some dumb things as a young man, but he's not stupid enough to murder someone on his own property, Johnson said. "It just sounds too phony to me. The whole set-up sounds ridiculous," Johnson said. According to investigators, Halbach pulled into the Avery junkyard on a chilly, rainy Wednesday afternoon. Aunt Trude Magarone sent her to take pictures of a man who Avery hoped to sell. "One of them had her signs. Owners of her family and friends, combined farms, came and didn't bother looking at any sign of her. On Nov. 3, a worker at the Avery junkyard let them search the grounds. They found Halbach's green Toyota Rav4. According to

search warrants, it was hidden by branches and onto parts. Investigators found blood on the ignition and in the rear cargo area, blood on a door to Steven's trailer and in Steven's bathroom. "They also discovered hand-cuffs, leg irons, postmortem material and what the search warrants described as "sexual devices" — and a woman's shaved head and teeth. "Sheriff's deputies drew DNA samples from Steven, Clark, Earl, their parents, their sister, Ruth, and her two adult sons. They arrested Steven on Wednesday after they discovered two guns in his trailer. Convicted felon, sheriff allowed to possess firearms in Wilbur, Wis. Detectives are still questioning the men of the Avery family. Check believes any one of them could get behind the sign, given their histories and his brother's lawsuit. After all, \$36 million could be at stake. "We don't have anything to do with it," Clark said.

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