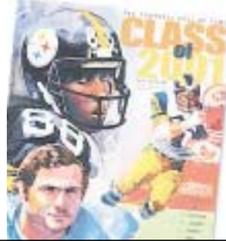


### TODAY'S BEST

#### Pigskin glory

As Pro Football Hall of Fame festivities kick off, read profiles of this year's seven inductees, with a look at their presenters.



Related coverage on Page E1. **Special section**

#### B&W fires up

As utilities look again to coal to generate electricity, they're also looking to Babcock & Wilcox to supply boilers, scrubbers and related products.

**Business**  
**B1**

#### Reunion time

High school reunions don't have to be scary. Just ask the Tallmadge High School Class of 1958, whose members have so much fun that they get together every month.



**Premier**  
**C1**

#### Risky trek

His Stow church group had to be rescued from a glacial mountain ridge in Alaska, but leader Paul Miller still believes that wilderness experiences are valuable. And many in his group agree.

**Local**  
**E1**

#### Who gets in?

There are few certainties in life, and one of baseball's certainties — how inductees for the Baseball Hall of Fame are chosen — is looking less certain.



**Sports**  
**D1**

#### Today's weather

Rain

74° High 58° Low

NewsChannel 5 Forecast, Page E2

#### Inside

Books C5	S. Hoffman A15	Music C3
Classified E10-44	Horoscope E27	People C1
Community F1	Jobs E10	Premier C2
Crosswords C2	Jumble E28	Travel G1
Deaths E8,9	Ann Landers C7	Terry Pluto D4
Editorial A14	Local E1	Sports D1
Dave Barry C4	Lottery A2, E2	Videos C4
Diane Evans B1	Movies C7	Weddings F2

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# A grand finale



Derby race cars battle for the finish line in this view from the Goodyear Blimp yesterday at the start of the All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron.

## 6 champs crowned at Derby Downs

By Paula Schleis and Angeliqe Soenarie  
Beacon Journal staff writers

Call him "The Natural." James Rogers' four siblings confessed on his behalf that he hadn't really invested all that much time in Soap Box Derby racing this year.



The Rochester, N.Y., family then admitted arriving in Akron without a single tool — and only swung by a local store to pick up a screwdriver when race officials suggested they have at least that on hand. To top off that show of confidence, Joey, Tony, Nicole and Bryce — several years of derby racing experience among them — critiqued their brother's performance during earlier heats and proclaimed him unbeatable.



All-American Soap Box Derby champs are (from left): Michael Flynn of Detroit; James Rogers of Rochester West, N.Y.; and Chad Eyerly of San Bernardino, Calif.

They were right. James, winner of yesterday's Super Stock Division, was one of six kids crowned world champions at the 64th All-American Soap Box Derby.

Joining him in a ceremony at the finish line, along with pairs of proud parents wearing smiles that seemed too big to be possible, were Stock Division world champion Chad Eyerly of San Bernardino, Calif., and Masters Division world champion Michael Flynn

Please see **Derby, A11**

## Watching dads at Derby Downs nearly as fun as watching race

By Reginald Fields  
Beacon Journal staff writer

It's finally race day at Derby Downs and squatting at the starting line yesterday, Keith Wicker raised his sunglasses, closed his eyes and mumbled a silent prayer.

Winning at the All-American Soap Box Derby is that important.

"I'm excited, pretty excited," said Wicker, of Murray, Ky. "Tickled to death to be here."

But Wicker wasn't one of the racers. His daughter, Shauna, was.

For the parents — typically the fathers — the anxiety that ties stomachs into knots is greater for them than it is for the children racing.

"I get more nervous than a pregnant nun in this stuff," said Steve Manna, of Rochester, N.Y., right after his daughter, Kaylin, lost her race. "I was telling her to relax and have

Please see **Parents, A12**

#### INSIDE

• Complete derby results from every heat run yesterday can be found on page **A10**.

• David Giffels sends his farewells to the 2001 derby racers. **Page E1**

• Former winners take trip down memory hill. **Page A12**

• Notebook of Derby Day 2001. **Page A11**

#### Ohio.com

Go to <http://www.ohio.com/specials/2001/derby/> for all of the Akron Beacon Journal's coverage of the All-American Soap Box Derby from this week.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell (right) attends a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan in Beijing, during a visit meant to mend ties hurt by the detention of U.S.-based scholars and the collision of a U.S. spy plane and Chinese fighter.



Associated Press

## Powell upbeat on China visit

Both sides positive despite clash over spy plane

By Michael Dorgan  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

**BEIJING:** The Bush administration's frosty relations with China seemed to melt yesterday during a visit here by Secretary of State Colin Powell that ended with both sides pledging to move forward by focusing on common inter-

ests rather than differences.

"President Bush believes, and I believe of course, that a constructive relationship between the United States and China is in the interest of the American and Chinese peoples, in the interest of our allies and friends in Asia, and in the world's interest," Pow-

ell told reporters after a series of meetings with top leaders, including President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji. "And I look forward to working with my Chinese colleagues to broaden and deepen the areas of our cooperation."

Powell was the highest-ranking member of the

Please see **China, A7**

## Outlook isn't fair for county fairs

Once a summer must, the annual gatherings must now compete, face an uncertain future

By Craig Webb  
Beacon Journal staff writer

**MEDINA:** A large, stately shade tree stretches over the desolate midway at the Medina County Fairgrounds.

Fair Board President Dave Bertram looks up at the hulking tree and speculates that it has probably witnessed each of the county's 155 fairs.

As workers scurried about last week preparing the sprawling grounds for tomorrow's opening of the fair, Bertram wonders whether the tree will see as many more.

As with the tree, which has large cracks in its bark, time is taking its toll on county fairs.

The fair was once the highlight of a county's social cal-

endar, the old-timers will tell you. Businesses would close for the week. Farmers would leave their fields, and families would spend their days and nights at the fairgrounds socializing and participating in friendly competitions.

Times have changed.

Fairs are now forced to compete with other entertainment venues luring their customers away.

Gone are the days when some of the fastest and scariest amusement rides were found at the fair. Large amusement parks in Ohio now offer thrill rides that catapult riders at mind-numbing

Please see **Fairs, A7**