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looks at
summer
fun

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THIS WEEK: ISOLATED
THUNDERSTORMS WITH
HIGHS IN THE MID '90S.

High Court reaffirms prayer ban

BY RICHARD CARELLI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — In a crushing defeat for school-prayer supporters, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that praying in public schools must be private. By a 6-3 vote Monday, the court barred officials from letting students lead stadium crowds in prayer before football games.

The court's sweeping language in a Texas case could extend far beyond school sports events — eventually affecting graduation ceremonies, moments of silence and more.

The ruling said a school district's policy of allowing such student-led prayers violated the constitutionally required separation of government and religion.

Champions of a strict church-state separation exulted.

"The court's decision signals a reaffirmation of the appropriate role of religion in public schools — one in which private religious expression is constitutionally protected but officially sanctioned religious observances are not," said David Harris of the American Jewish Committee.

Opponents were aggrieved.

"The government's 'benign neutrality' toward religion in this country is now nothing short of malevolent hostility," said Jan LaRue of the conservative Family Research Council.

Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court: "Nothing in the Constitution ... prohibits any public school student from voluntarily praying at any time before, during or after the school-day. But the religious liberty protected by the Constitution is abridged when the state affirmatively sponsors the particular religious practice of prayer."

As the latest word on a politically volatile issue that has bedeviled the nation's highest court for 40 years, the ruling offered a ringing endorsement of a landmark 1962 decision that outlawed organized, officially spon-

PRAYER. SEE PAGE 3

Resolution won't affect local Baptists

BY JOHN HUIETT
NEWS EDITOR

Although the Southern Baptist Convention last week passed a resolution barring women from serving as pastors, representatives from two Columbia churches claim the resolution will have no local effect.

Citing New Testament Scripture saying men should be the leaders of both the home and the church, the convention on June 14 declared adherence to the biblical principal.

Shortly after the resolution passed at the convention's annual conference, held this year in Orlando, Fla., President James Merritt told MSNBC that the state of current culture is irrelevant to the convention, saying his job is simply to "tell you what the word of God says and preach it."

However, Merritt admitted the resolution doesn't necessarily apply to all Southern Baptists, the world's largest Protestant denomination.

"We don't speak for all Baptist groups, and we don't speak for all Baptists," Merritt said.

Lanette James confirms that.

For the past seven years, James has been the minister of education to children and head of downtown ministries for Columbia's First Baptist Church, the city's largest Southern Baptist church with more than 3,000 members.

"The national convention has no binding authority over our church," James said.

James said the church has four female ministers but no women in the position of senior pastor. Nor would they ever, she said, not because the national convention forbids it, but because it's biblically sound.

"Our church agrees with that [Southern Baptist Convention] decision," James said. "But we don't believe that women shouldn't be ministers at all."

And she assured that the women on the First Baptist staff aren't looked down on by their male counterparts.

"We are respected," James said. "Our opinion counts."

Roger Orman, administrative pastor for North Trenholm Baptist Church, agrees with James but takes it a step further.

"The Southern Baptist Convention has no governing mandating authority over a local church — none," Orman said. "Every church is autonomous. A local church ordains someone, not the convention. A local church hires and fires pastors, not the convention. We owe the convention nothing other than our voluntary participation."

Orman added that North Trenholm Baptist, with membership totaling around 2,300, would never adopt a practice sim-

ply because the Convention passed it as a resolution.

"If they decided they wanted to paint Orlando green, we'd say, 'Great. Go for it. But we're not giving you any paint,'" Orman said.

The resolution comes at a time when the Southern Baptist Convention has already spent a fair amount of time in headlines in recent years.

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SEAN RAYFORD PHOTOGRAPHER

USC's Baptist Student Center is a group that operates autonomous of the Southern Baptist Convention, as do all local Baptist churches.

LOST AND FOUND



SEAN RAYFORD PHOTOGRAPHER

Stray pets, such as these kittens pictured at Columbia's Humane Society, generate as many as 45 phone calls a week to animal and pest control centers in the Columbia area. Columbia Animal Control will pickup and transport strays. They can be reached at 776-7387.

USC attractive to many strays

BY JAIRUS DAYTON
STAFF WRITER

Many neighborhoods in the downtown Columbia area have had a host of new residents moving in, but they're not college students or relocating families.

Instead, stray dogs and cats have been running free, generating as many as 45 phone calls a week from concerned neighborhood residents to pest and animal control centers.

Twenty or more of these calls are coming from USC alone. This has proved to be disturbing news for some pet lovers at USC.

"It is really upsetting to see homeless animals wandering around the campus," medical technology sophomore Sheena Tatum said. "Not only is it unsanitary, but it also makes the city look bad. We have enough problems

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