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**ANDREW CUTRANO/POST-DISPATCH**  
 Mike Ruggieri carries his daughter, Julia Ruggieri, 5, on Saturday as they leave a service at St. Raphael the Archangel School at 6000 Jamieson Avenue. She suffered a broken neck in Friday's hayride accident. Her mother and Mike's wife, Amy Ruggieri, was hospitalized with a broken back.

## Government bets that technology will show agents didn't fire in Waco

Experts debate whether videotape displays gunfire

By WILLIAM H. FREYVOGEL  
 Of the Post-Dispatch  
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GREENBELT, Md. — The Justice Department will rely on a high-tech computer program used to detect battlefield sniper fire to prove that government agents did not fire during the 1993 assault in Waco, Texas.

Special counsel John C. Danforth has been scrutinizing infrared videotape of the assault, which some experts say shows government agents firing into the compound as it is enveloped in flames on the day about 80 Branch Davidians died inside.

Danforth's investigators were in Washington on Friday watching an original version of the videotape, an FBI spokesman said. Earlier this month, Danforth interviewed the two key investigators who say flashes on the tape are government gunfire.

But Norris J. Krone Jr., president of Maryland Advanced Development Laboratory, says that detecting gunfire on an infrared tape requires more than the naked eye. His firm developed the technology, which uses a computer program to identify gunfire in an infrared scene.

The firm determined that the flashes are too long in duration to be small-arms fire, backing the FBI's long-held contention that no government agent fired a shot at the compound during the assault. Krone said experts from his lab have been hired to testify to their findings in the wrongful death suit filed against the government by the Branch Davidians.

Krone's lab cannot say what the

## Graham's failing health may signal the end of an era

New preachers see change in American Christianity

By PATRICIA RICE  
 Post-Dispatch Religion Writer

Anyone who has watched Billy Graham preach at the Trans World Dome the past few days can see that he is totally committed to preaching the Gospel. He won't quit as long as he can talk, he said.

He's signed up for a four-day crusade in Nashville, Tenn., next spring. He will lead a 10-day conference for about 10,000 invited evangelists in Amsterdam next summer.

Even so, in three weeks he will face 81 candles on his birthday cake. He is challenged by Parkinson's disease and what his wife, Ruth, calls his list of health problems.

The obvious question is: Who will be the next Billy Graham? Graham says his son Franklin Graham, 47, will take over as the main preacher for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The Minneapolis-based, nonprofit company produces movies, videos, radio programs, crusades, magazines and online publications on its \$81 million annual budget. The younger Graham is its vice president.

Not everyone agrees with America's best-known evangelist.

"Basically no one is going to replace Billy Graham, because that time is past," said Randy Bahner, an American evangelical movement expert at Barnard College in New York.

Graham became a household name when many households got only one or two television channels. "Father Knows Best" was a favorite television show from 1954 to 1963, and the world pretended that all of America was like actor Robert Young's fictional family. Graham's delayed-breakfast crusades were an occasion in many homes.

See Graham, A14

## Investigators comb hayride crash site as friends, family mourn death of girl

MISSOURI ROOTS, NATIONAL DREAMS  
 INSIDE THIS SECTION



John Ashcroft Richard Gephardt

## What do these two men have in common? Everything but politics.

WASHINGTON — The parallels are striking: two men born near the start of World War II, just 15 months apart, who grew up in relatively modest Missouri circumstances — Richard Gephardt in St. Louis, John Ashcroft

## Wagon sped up while carrying Girl Scouts, their mothers during outing

11 children, 9 adults are hurt

By WILLIAM C. LIWTEKA  
 AND TIM ROWDEN  
 Of the Post-Dispatch

Stephanie Marie Melton was enjoying a hayride Friday night at the Rocking J Ranch in northern Jefferson County with other Girl Scouts and their mothers when her wagon suddenly began to pick up speed.

"It started going real fast. I thought it was a joke at first," said Stephanie, 13, who was sitting on the front row. "Then the driver was turning his tires different ways, and my friend Rachel fell back. I could feel myself flying. My glasses fell off."

When Stephanie regained consciousness, she could hear people screaming and Rachel "was just laying there."

Stephanie's friend, Rachel McManomy, 12, died in the accident, which happened at 7:52 p.m. Friday.

Eleven children and nine adults were injured. The victims were

treated at five area hospitals. Eight were admitted with serious injuries, authorities said. Kathy Knopp, 37, of south St. Louis was the most seriously injured. She was in critical condition Saturday night at St. John's Mercy Medical Center in Creve Coeur.

Stephanie was one of the lucky ones. She had bruises to her forehead, shoulder and leg.

Her mother, Theresa Melton, 38, was listed in satisfactory condition Saturday evening with a broken pelvis at St. Anthony's Medical Center in South County.

Every fire department and ambulance crew in Jefferson County worked at the chaotic scene.

Ambulance crews from as far away as Ballwin helped out. The hilly terrain prevented helicopters from landing close to the crash.

Victims had to be carried on stretchers to the helicopters.

LI. Mark Tulopstake of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department gave this account of the accident:

See Accident, A13

Dangerous Trailers.Org & Dangerous Hayrides.Org The Forgotten Dead Number 3 And 22 Injured St. Louis Post Dispatch St. Louis Missouri 17 October 1999 Part One

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