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The Seattle Times  
**Sunday**  
Seattle Post-Intelligencer

APRIL 18, 2004  
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**TODAY'S WEATHER**  
Partly cloudy, then chance of showers.  
High 54; low 43. | **B 6**

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**The somber task of honoring the fallen**  
*'Everyone salutes with such emotion and intensity and respect . . .  
So far this month, almost every night we send them home'*



TAMI SILICIO

**Flag-draped coffins** are secured inside a cargo plane on April 7 at Kuwait International Airport. Military and civilian crews take great care with the remains of U.S. military personnel killed in Iraq. Soldiers form an honor guard and say a prayer as, almost nightly, coffins are loaded for the trip home.

**Military, civilians join in heartfelt rituals**

BY HAL BERNTON / Seattle Times staff reporter  
The aluminum boxes, in ordered rows, are bound by clean white straps on freshly scrubbed pallets. American flags are draped evenly over the boxes. Uniformed honor guards form on either side of the pallets as they move from the tarmac to the entryways of the cargo planes. There are prayers, salutes and hands on hearts. Then the caskets are carefully placed in cargo holds for a flight to Germany.  
In recent weeks, military and civilian contract crews have loaded scores of these caskets onto planes departing the U.S. military area of Kuwait International Airport, south of Kuwait City. And the rituals are repeated over and over again.

"The way everyone salutes with such emotion and intensity and respect. The families would be proud to see their sons and daughters saluted like that," says Tami Silicio, a contract employee from the Seattle area who works the night shift at the cargo terminal.  
For U.S. troops, April has been the worst month of this war, with at least 94 service members killed by hostile fire.  
"So far this month, almost every night we send them home," Silicio said. ". . . It's tough. Very tough."  
The remains arrive at the Kuwait airport ac-

PLEASE SEE **Fallen** ON A 21

**5 Marines killed in fierce fighting near Syrian border**

SEATTLE TIMES NEWS SERVICES  
BAGHDAD, Iraq — Five Marines were killed and scores of insurgents slain in a fierce 14-hour battle yesterday between Marines and mujahedeen fighters who slipped into Husaybah, a town 180 miles northeast of Baghdad near the Syrian border, a St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter embedded with the Marines reported.  
According to Marines, an estimated 300 Iraqis believed to have come west from the Fallujah and Ramadi area launched an assault against the Americans around 8 a.m. local time,

PLEASE SEE **Iraq** ON A 20

**Despite continued violence, many Iraqis are enjoying economic recovery: They're shopping.** A 22

**Gregoire's staff shaped 'independent' investigation of her office**

Records reveal bulk of blame in bungled case was shifted

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BY RALPH THOMAS AND MIKE CARTER  
Seattle Times staff reporters  
A review billed as an independent investigation of Attorney General Christine Gregoire's office in 2000 was rewritten to downplay broad management problems at the urging of Gregoire's top deputies.

Internal documents show the investigation — begun after Gregoire's staff missed a deadline to appeal a record \$17.8 million verdict against the state — was redirected to focus more blame on one attorney who later was forced to resign.  
E-mails, a legal invoice and notes from phone conversations show Gregoire's aides were in almost daily contact with investigator Susan Barnes, a private attorney who had earlier worked as a federal prosecutor. The aides, reviewing Barnes' drafts, suggested making her recommendations "more positive" and asked with respect to one criticism: "Can you give us any leeway here?"  
Documents also reveal how concerned Gregoire's senior aides were about media coverage and political fallout. "Insane to write something before the election," say notes from a conversation in September 2000, when Barnes was helping craft a follow-up report for the state. That report, indeed, was not published until January 2001.  
Other notes indicate that Gregoire's deputies and Barnes discussed "disposing of our drafts."  
Gregoire on Friday denied her office interfered with the investigation or destroyed records. "I find these allegations ridiculous," she said.



Christine Gregoire

**A recap of the case and key players.** A 12

PLEASE SEE **Gregoire** ON A 12

**Israeli airstrike kills newest Hamas leader**

Strike followed Palestinian bombing

BY LAURA KING AND FAYED ABU SHAMMALEH  
Los Angeles Times  
GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli helicopter gunships incinerated a car carrying Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi yesterday, killing the firebrand militant and two bodyguards less than a month after his predecessor, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, met the same fate.  
The Israeli airstrike came four hours after a Palestinian suicide bombing killed an Israeli border policeman at the main crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel. It was three days after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's triumphal visit to Washington, during which President Bush endorsed the Israeli leader's plan to withdraw troops and Jewish settlers from



Abdel Aziz Rantisi

PLEASE SEE **Hamas** ON A 25

**Practical geniuses of technology**

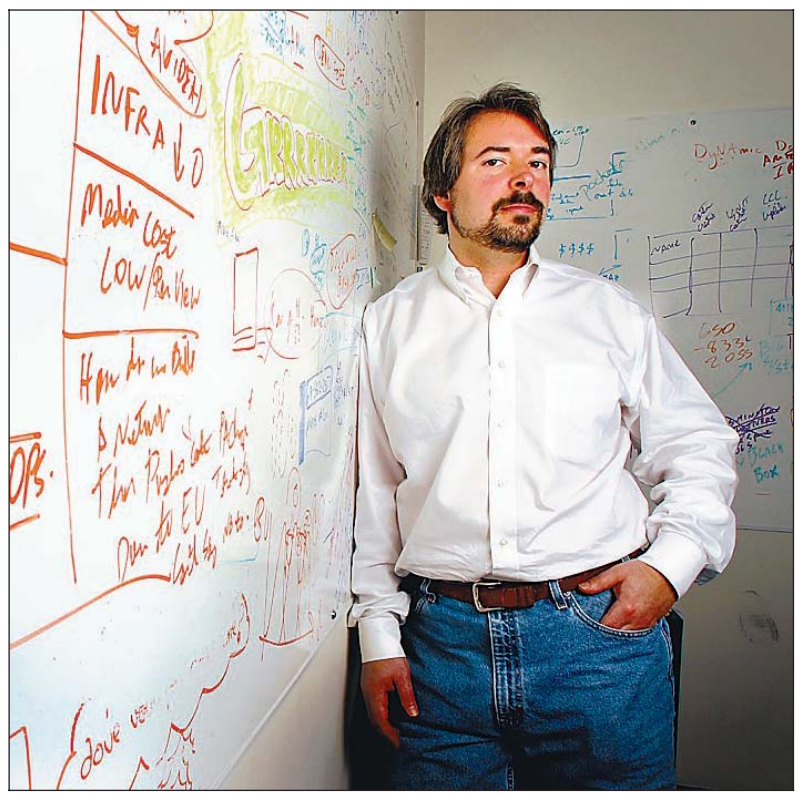
In a field full of brain power, some individuals stand out because of their unique ability, insight or approach. Working mostly out of the spotlight, these six people have used their brilliance to unravel mysteries, solve problems and improve the way we live.

**The quiet prodigy: Alan Lippman**

BY MONICA SOTO OUCHI  
Seattle Times technology reporter  
If Alan Lippman felt uncomfortable at first, no one could blame him. There he was, this wide-eyed, brown-haired kid taking his first university course, an astronomy class that met at night.  
"I remember just feeling very young and out of place for this dark campus," Lippman recalls of his first days at the University of Washington. He was 11 at the time.  
Lippman, now 36, is profoundly gifted by any measure: He graduated

from Garfield High School at 11, earned a college degree three years later, and finished his Ph.D. in applied mathematics by the time he was old enough to vote.  
His most well-known contribution, though, is helping transform the Internet into a three-dimensional medium — one that included sound.  
Lippman, the first chief engineer of RealNetworks, is among the beautiful minds of technology, the men and women who generate the ideas

PLEASE SEE **Geniuses** ON A 17



JOHN LOK / THE SEATTLE TIMES

**Alan Lippman** went to college at age 11. In the 1990s at RealNetworks, he helped do the math behind Internet sound and video.

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