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The Belkin Laptop Cooling Stand manages to both look good and offer effective cooling, despite having only a single fan.

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## HOUSTON CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

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### AROUND THE WORLD

From wire reports

#### BRAZIL

Catholic numbers stable, study says

SAO PAULO - A steep decline in the number of Brazilian Catholics may be stabilizing after decades of losses, according to a survey released just days before Pope Benedict XVI's arrival in the world's largest Roman Catholic country. The percentage of Catholics stayed about the same from 2000 to 2003, reversing a trend in which millions of Brazilians abandoned the faith, according to an analysis of government statistics released Wednesday by the Getulio Vargas Foundation. The pope is scheduled to arrive in Brazil next Wednesday.

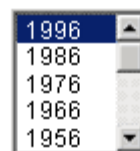
#### NORTH KOREA

Soju will soon hit U.S. market

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA - A traditional North Korean liquor that is clear and tastes smoother and sweeter than vodka is expected to hit the U.S. market as early as next month, a news report said Thursday. A New York-based Korean-American trader is importing the traditional Korean liquor called soju from communist North Korea for the first time, Yonhap news agency reported, citing the importer, Park Il U. The report said the U.S. government has approved the import and the first shipment of Pyongyang Soju left North Korea last month. The liquor is expected to arrive in the U.S. this month and could be in American stores next month, the report said.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

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## Nominees named for book prize

LONDON - An account of life inside Baghdad's Green Zone and a book about the life and death of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh were among six titles nominated Thursday for Britain's richest nonfiction book prize. Imperial Life in the Emerald City by the Washington Post's Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Ian Buruma's Murder in Amsterdam were on the short list for the \$60,000 Samuel Johnson Prize for Nonfiction. The winner will be announced on June 18 in London. Chandrasekaran's book paints a vivid and at times surreal picture of life among U.S. administrators in war-torn Iraq. Dutch-born journalist Buruma tells the story of provocative film director van Gogh, who was killed in an Amsterdam street by a Muslim fundamentalist in 2004.

## IRAN

### Ex-negotiator may face new charges

TEHRAN - The Iranian state-run news agency reported Thursday that the country's former nuclear negotiator, Hossein Mousavian, who was arrested Monday, could face espionage charges. Iran did not officially release any details about the specific charges against Mousavian, an ally of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's predecessor and key rival. But the semiofficial Fars news agency - which is deemed close to the elite Revolutionary Guards - reported the possible action against Mousavian. He was a member of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team until 2005. Before that, Mousavian served as Iran's ambassador to Germany. He was a close ally of former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

## JAPAN

### Magicians sue TV broadcasters

TOKYO - A group of Japanese magicians sued TV broadcasters on Tuesday for revealing closely guarded secrets behind a series of coin tricks, a news report said. Forty-nine magicians are seeking \$16,000 in damages from Nippon Television Network Corp. and TV Asahi Corp. for airing shows last year that revealed how magicians perform the tricks involving coins.

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