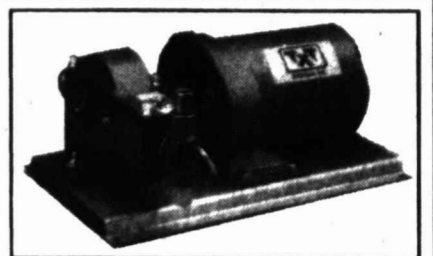




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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2003

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**WEATHER WEATHER**

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**58**        **32**

**LOCAL**

**CEUs, steak on menu for Fall Producers**

The Fall Producers Meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 11, at the Armstrong County Activities Building. Five CEUs will be offered and a steak lunch served. The program begins at 8:30 a.m. To RSVP, call the Armstrong County Extension Office at 806-226-3021 by Dec. 9.

**DEATHS**

- Ione Bruce Booth**, 91, homemaker.
- James Lynn Colville**, 82, construction executive.
- Herman Earl 'H.E.' Crocker, Jr.**, 80, pilot.
- Mable Alice Johnson**, 93, teacher.
- Helen Purdy Maxey**, 82, Sunday School teacher, elder.
- Nellie Mae Newton**, 95, former business owner.

**INSIDE...**

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- Sports** .....5

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**One person seeks co. attorney job**

*Asst. DA Josh Seabourn turns in only application to Gray County Judge*

BY MARILYN POWERS  
 STAFF WRITER

One application has been received for the unexpired term of county attorney, according to Gray County Judge Richard Peet.

Josh Seabourn, part-time assistant district attorney, has applied for the position to be vacated by Todd Alvey on Dec. 31. Alvey's term of office will run through Dec. 31, 2004.

Applications were accepted through Dec. 1 for the county position. County

commissioners plan to go into executive session during their regular meeting on Monday, Dec. 15, to interview Seabourn and decide whether or not to appoint him to the post.

If for any reason Seabourn's application is rejected, Peet said, the commission has the option of contracting out the county attorney's work or working with the district attorney's office.

"Since I've gone to work for the district attorney, I've discovered how much I enjoy being a prosecutor and

being on that side of things. I think I have something to contribute to the community," Seabourn said.

Seabourn, 28, grew up in Pampa, having moved here with his family when he was 5 years old. He graduated from Pampa High School in 1993. He attended Oklahoma University, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in history in 1998 and a juris doctor degree in 2001.

He returned to Pampa immediately after receiving his law degree in May 2001, and was employed by Pampa

attorney John Warner.

Seabourn's work for Warner has included criminal cases, probate work, wills and trusts, real estate, and family law.

On April 1, Seabourn was hired as a part-time assistant for 31st District Attorney Richard Roach in Pampa.

Case intake, in which new cases are reviewed, and research before and during trials top Seabourn's list of duties at the district attorney's office. He also interviews witnesses and has presented

(See JOB, Page 3)



(Pampa News photo by Marilyn Powers)

Olivia Portillo of Bob Clements Inc. inspects a coat before placing it in the perc dry cleaning machine. The cost of perc solvent will increase from \$10 per gallon to \$25 per gallon on Jan. 1, 2004, thanks to a new law passed by the Texas legislature.

**Cost of business going up with new solvent tax**

BY MARILYN POWERS  
 STAFF WRITER

New taxes, fees and equipment regulations will mean higher costs of staying in business for Texas dry cleaners beginning Jan. 1, 2004.

Texas House Bill No. 1366, which was passed by the state house and senate last May, imposes new sales taxes on dry cleaning solvents and new annual registration fees. The new law also requires each dry cleaning machine to be placed in a containment structure, or drip pan, so that any leak, spill or other release of solvent from the machine will be caught by the pan.

Ron Hadley of Utility Oil, 501 W. Brown, sells solvent and will be responsible for collecting the new taxes. Two commonly used types of solvent, he said, are perchloroethylene and petroleum-based.

Perchloroethylene, or perc, solvent currently sells for about \$10 per gallon, but a \$15-per-gallon tax will be added to that cost on January 1. Petroleum-based solvent, which is sold by Utility Oil, costs \$3.05 per gallon and will have

a \$5-per-gallon tax added on January 1.

The taxing entity which will receive the taxes paid on the solvents is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Hadley said.

"The purpose of the tax is to help with cleanup of dry cleaning solvents in the environment," he said.

Each owner of a dry cleaning business must register annually with the state. The registration fee for a dry cleaner whose gross annual receipts is \$100,000 or less will be \$250. Those with gross annual receipts of over \$100,000 must pay \$2,500. In addition, a dry cleaner with drop stations, where customers in other neighborhoods or towns can drop off and pick up items that are transported to the dry cleaner for cleaning, must pay \$1,000 per drop station.

The annual fees and taxes will cause some cleaners to close their drop stations, or even close altogether, said Pampa dry cleaners owner Neil Fulton of Bob Clements Inc.

"Closing a drop station hurts all our neighboring towns," Fulton said. "Instead of drop-

(See SOLVENT, Page 3)

**Wind gust lifts pickup, trailer; two are killed**

DALHART - Investigating officers blame a strong gust of wind for a head-on collision Tuesday afternoon that claimed the lives of a Dalhart couple and seriously injured two travelers from Wisconsin.

Vernon Jay Ellis, 56, and his wife Violet Wade Ellis, 50, both died at the scene of the collision, 5.5 miles southwest of Dalhart on U.S. Highway 54, according to Texas Department of Public Safety reports.

Vernon P. Stoughtenger, 64, of La Valle, Wis., and Rayna R. Stoughtenger, 64, also of La Valle, were taken to Northwest Texas Hospital in Amarillo for treatment of injuries they suffered in the crash.

Both were listed in stable condition, according to the

DPS report released this morning.

The wreck occurred about 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, when an apparent "extremely high gust of wind" lifted a 2001 Chevrolet pickup pulling a travel trailer driven by Mr. Stoughtenger off the highway and into the path of a 1994 Ford pickup driven by Mr. Ellis, DPS officials said.

The Ellis pickup was traveling northeast and the Stoughtenger vehicles were headed southwest when the wind gust hit. The left front of the Chevrolet struck the left front of the Ford and the travel trailer landed on top of the Ford. The Chevrolet then rolled onto its side, facing northeast, according to the report.

All victims were wearing seat belts, DPS officials said.

**Scientists: Government overzealous in pursuit of plague researcher**

BY BETSY BLANEY  
 ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LUBBOCK (AP) — The researcher acquitted of most of the serious charges he faced after reporting plague samples missing from his lab was a victim of an overzealous prosecution, several scientists said.

Thomas C. Butler was convicted Monday on 47 of the 69 charges stemming from a federal investigation into his work with the deadly bacteria. He was acquitted on charges of lying to the FBI, smuggling plague samples into the United States and illegally transporting samples.

"There's a lesson in there for the Justice Department," Steven Aftergood of the

Federation of American Scientists said Tuesday. "They overreached. The jury's verdict suggests clearly that the government was overzealous in this case."

Peter Agre, this year's Nobel Prize winner for chemistry who has worked with Butler and has known him for more than 25 years, also said the Texas Tech University professor was unfairly targeted.

"They are determined to find him guilty of something," said Agre, who is contributing some of the money he won from the Nobel prize to Butler's defense. "He's not a criminal. He's not a dangerous or reckless person."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Dick Baker vehemently

(See PLAGUE, Page 3)

**SHOP PAMPA AND WIN...**

Two drawings of \$500 each in Pampa Bucks. For every \$10 of purchases get a drawing ticket from "Participating" merchants November 28th - December 6th. Drawings ... December 6th • 2:00 & 5:00  
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## November safety awards



(Courtesy photo)

Charles Oakley, Environmental Safety Manager, presents Dave Stidham, Plant Manager, with the November Safety Award for Cooper Energy Services.



(Courtesy photo)

Dave Stidham, Plant Manager, presents John Hall, Senior Service Manager, with the November Safety Award for Cooper Energy Services.



(Courtesy photo)

John Hall, Senior Service Manager, presents Neil Gardner, Head of Shipping and Receiving, with the November Safety Award for Cooper Energy Services.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

## JOB

cases to the grand jury and participated in trying cases in court.

Seaborn said he has not done civil work such as forfeitures and seizures, or appeal cases, at the district attorney's office.

Seaborn's parents are Danny and Sherry Seaborn of Pampa. His mother is a Pampa native, and his grandparents are also Pampa residents.

## SOLVENT

ping off clothes to be sent to the cleaners in another town, customers must now bring them to the facility themselves."

Fulton, who along with his wife Mary has owned Bob Clements Inc. for six years, explained that some dry cleaners don't have to pay the annual registration fee if their gross receipts are under \$100,000 and they rent, rather than own, the facility. If a drop station is not owned by the dry cleaner, their fee is \$250 rather than \$1,000, he said.

Fulton, who employs 10 workers, uses both petroleum-based and perc solvents. He uses 20 gallons of petroleum-based solvent per week and 15

gallons of perc solvent every two months, he said.

"We're the only cleaners in the Texas Panhandle with both machines, one for each type of solvent," Fulton said.

The drip pans required by the new law will cost \$6,000 to \$8,000 per machine, Fulton estimates.

"Some cleaners have gone out of business. Dry cleaners in Shamrock, Canadian and Amarillo have shut down already. The Canadian laundry has shut down directly because of this new law," Fulton said. Others are closing their drop stations, he said.

The new law was enacted in reaction to two cases of illegal dumping of dry cleaning solvent, Fulton said.

"One in Houston was dump-

ing sludge behind his building, onto the ground. The water table there is only six to eight feet down. One in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area was dumping it down the drain," he said.

Sludge is the material filtered out of dry cleaning solvent that comes off of the materials being cleaned, including food particles, lint and dirt. The sludge at Bob Clements Inc. is picked up every six weeks by a company and taken to a hazardous waste site in Amarillo, at a fee of about \$200 per pickup for the Pampa dry cleaners.

"None of our neighboring

states have this law, as far as we know. California does not have this law, either," Fulton said.

Dry cleaning customers can expect some increases in the cost of having their clothing cleaned as a result of the new fees, taxes and requirements.

"We haven't gotten a price increase figured out yet, but there has to be an increase. We will have to make a small increase in prices, probably on a per-item basis," Fulton said. "Some cleaners are charging an environmental surcharge on each ticket, usually \$1 or so."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

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## PLAGUE

denied that contention.

"This was not a post 9-11 overreaction," he said. "This was not an overzealous prosecution. The defendant was charged with and convicted under statutes that have long been on the books that are there to protect the public."

Butler, 62, could be sentenced to 240 years in prison, though he faces fewer years under federal sentencing guidelines. He also faces fines up to \$11.7 million. Sentencing probably will take place in mid-February.

Defense attorney Jonathan Turley said the convictions would be appealed.

On Jan. 14, Butler reported 30 vials of plague bacteria missing and possibly stolen. That report sparked a bioterrorism scare in west Texas, during which the director of the FBI and President Bush were apprised of the situation. Butler later admitted to accidentally destroying the vials.

Only three of the counts on which he was convicted stemmed from the original 15-count indictment. In September, prosecutors added 54 counts alleging he had illegal shadow contracts with pharmaceutical companies with which he also had clinical studies contracts. He was convicted of 44 of those counts.

Baker said the three convictions from the first indictment

were the most serious.

Butler was convicted of exporting plague samples to Tanzania without required paperwork from the Department of Commerce, which carries a 10-year sentence. He also was convicted of mislabeling the package the samples were shipped in and illegally transporting hazardous materials.

Referring to the samples sent to Tanzania, Agre said: "No one was harmed and it wasn't an issue of bioterrorism."



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22 shopping  
days to Christmas

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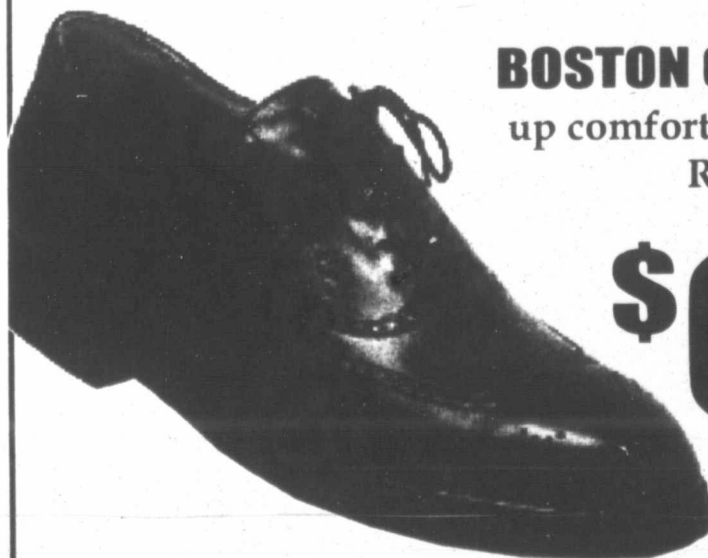
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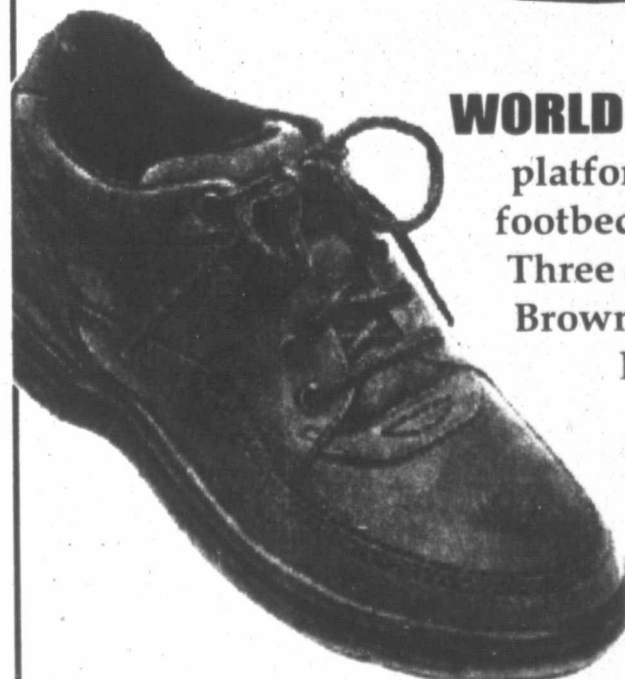


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## PET OF THE WEEK

**Freckles...** This 3 year old male Chihuahua is current on vaccinations. Freckles prefers being an only dog. He is very happy and active pet.

**Winter is coming ... prepare your pet for the cold!**

For information about these pets or any other contact the Animal Shelter at 669-5775 or come by their location at Hobart Street Park.

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WEDNESDAY • December 3, 2003

## DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

### Teens Who Threaten Suicide Sometimes Do More Than Talk

**DEAR ABBY:** My son, "Sean," is only 13, but he will be attending his best friend's funeral. "Frank" died by his own hand. Apparently he had told many of his friends that he was going to kill himself, but no one took him seriously.

I am writing in the hope that my letter will alert children and adults that children and adolescents sometimes mean it when they threaten suicide. I pray parents will instruct their children to *always* tell an adult if one of their friends talks about suicide. I have done that now, but unfortunately it is too late to help Frank.

GRIEF-STRICKEN IN MARYLAND

**DEAR GRIEF-STRICKEN:** Please extend my deepest sympathy to the parents of your son's friend. And thank you for giving me the chance to point out that threats of suicide, and repeated comments about suicide, can be symptoms of serious illness and should be taken seriously. Many young people are reluctant to "rat" on their friends, but when it comes to talk of suicide, experts say that keeping a secret can result in losing a friend. Skilled professional help is needed for intervention.

Professional counseling should also be made available to the survivors of the suicide — and that includes family members and friends — to help them cope with their own feelings of guilt and depression.

**DEAR ABBY:** Two years ago, I retired from my teaching job so I could travel with my husband, "Bill," on his international business trips. At the time, Bill earned a very high salary. Since then, Bill has been laid off and has taken an early retirement. He now putters around the house, painting the shutters, working in the yard and thoroughly enjoying himself.

This is not the life I expected, and I am becoming increasingly depressed. I was never much of a

housewife and wouldn't have left my job had I known this would be the outcome. I have a part-time job in a dress shop, but it's hardly a challenging career. I want to travel. I want to have fun.

We have a net worth in excess of \$1 million, but Bill has always been concerned about our finances and wants to manage them so that we can set up college funds for our grandchildren, leave a substantial amount to our children, and budget \$7,500 a year for vacations, including trips to visit family. This doesn't leave much.

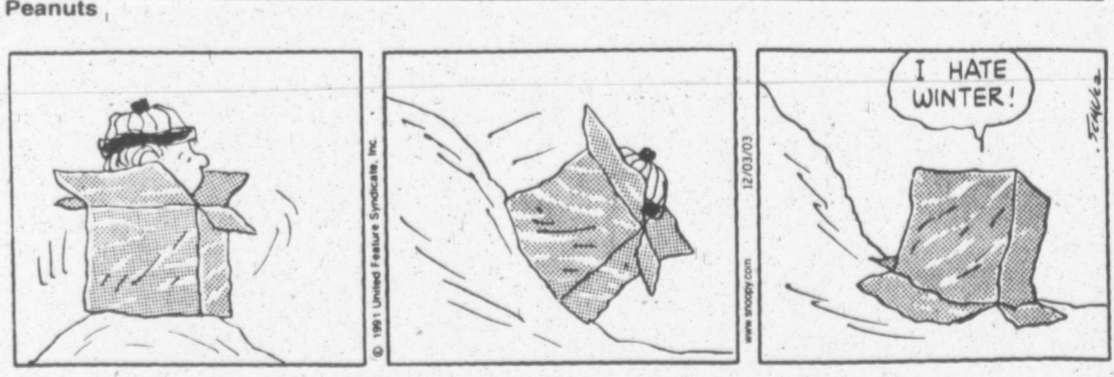
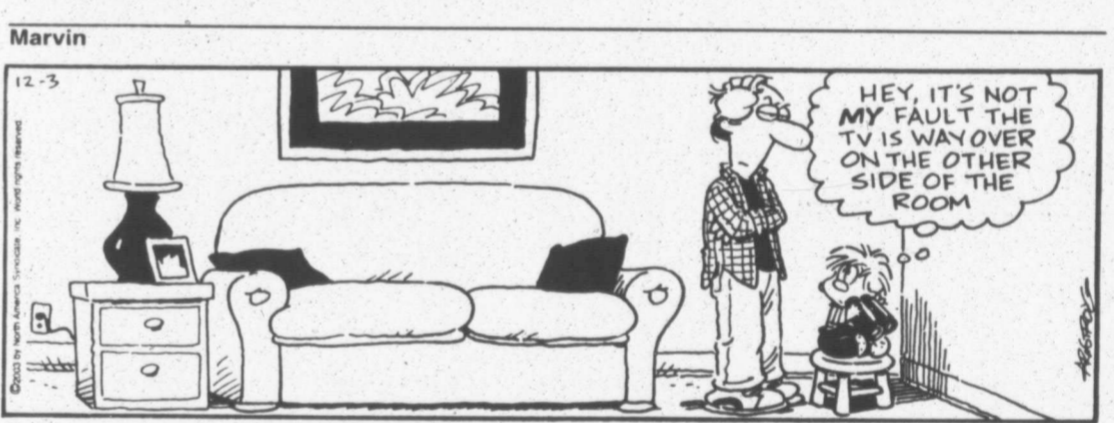
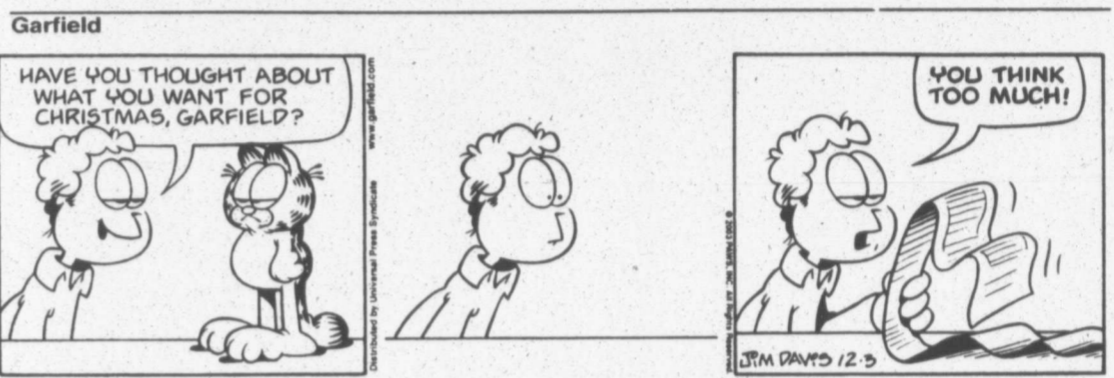
If I tell my husband how I feel it will hurt him terribly. What should I do?

RELUCTANTLY RETIRED IN ILLINOIS

**DEAR RETIRED:** Before you become more depressed, have a frank talk with your husband. Explain that you were not prepared for his early retirement. It may be time for you to return to teaching on a part-time basis or to find another job that will enable you to earn the kind of money you need to travel more extensively. If your husband doesn't want to go, there are travel clubs and tours for "singles." You and Bill also need to reach a meeting of the minds about how money should be allocated. If you can't manage to agree, then the two of you should seek professional counseling. Please, don't put it off. Disagreements about money have destroyed marriages.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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#### Crossword Puzzle

#### CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 45 Relaxing places

1 Cuts down

5 Strand

11 Canyon answer

12 Moon mission

13 Dry

14 Sex

15 Young seal

16 Arizona native

17 Dove's goal

19 Bankroll

22 Calculator button

24 Chutzpah

26 Reactor parts

27 April forecast

28 Touches on

30 A bit drunk

31 Jazz variety

32 Move stealthily

34 Big pipe

35 Flightless bird

38 Handles the party

41 First name

42 Right away

43 Jolt

44 Spree



Yesterday's answer

19 Finished

20 Rara —

21 Refuse

22 Beach crawler

23 Timber

25 Buffalo's wolf

29 Uncommon

30 Good rating

33 Stair part

34 Fix

36 Doll cry

37 Diamond workers

38 Truck

39 Had part

40 Shipping dinner

41 Sit-up amount

42 Shipping amount

43 Sit-up amount

44 Spree

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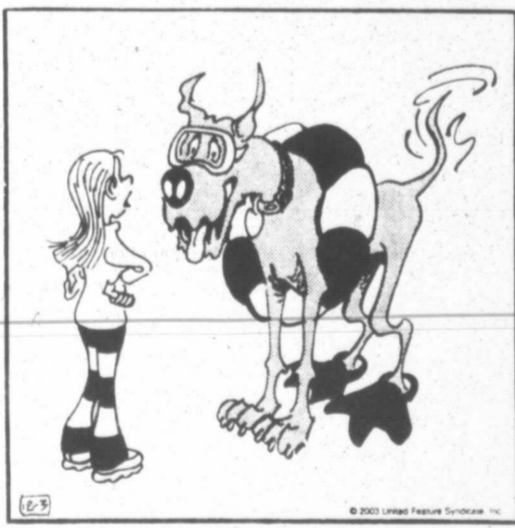
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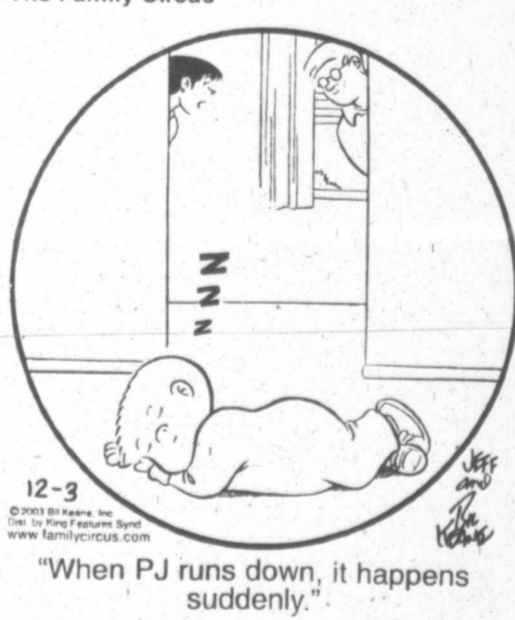
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#### Marmaduke



#### The Family Circus



#### Flo & Friends



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## European space officials show off Mars pictures

DARMSTADT, Germany (AP) — European space officials on Wednesday showed off the first pictures of Mars sent back by the Mars Express spacecraft as it heads for a Christmas rendezvous with the Red Planet.

The blurry pictures, taken from 3.36 million miles away, show little more than part of a polar ice cap. Instead, the images prove the spacecraft's German-made high-resolution camera is in working order before it begins orbiting Mars and snapping pictures close up.

The camera test, performed Monday, was one of many checks and rehearsals ahead of a sequence of intricate navigational maneuvers starting Dec. 19. That's when Mars Express will turn loose its British-built Beagle 2 lander toward the Martian surface on a mission to probe for signs of extraterrestrial life.

Mars Express will then steer away from a collision with the planet and on Dec. 25 will fire its main engine for about 30 minutes to put it into Martian orbit.

"We will have to carry out some very precise navigational operations," Gael Winters, the European Space Agency's director for technical operations and support, said at the agency's mission control center in Darmstadt in western Germany. "You will understand there is a certain level

of tension in the center."

Previous attempts to find signs of life have been inconclusive. Of 34 unmanned American, Soviet and Russian missions to Mars since 1960, two-thirds ended in failure. In 1976, twin U.S. Viking landers searched for life but sent back inconclusive results.

Beagle 2 is not the only space craft heading to Mars. Two American Mars rover craft are due to arrive in January, and Japan's trouble-plagued Nozomi orbiter, launched in 1998, continues on its way despite technical problems.

The Mars Explorer, which cost about \$345 million, is an attempt to demonstrate that Europe can have an effective space exploration program.

The spacecraft, launched June 2 atop a Russian Soyuz-Fregat rocket from Kazakhstan, has weathered solar eruptions that bombarded it with high-energy particles last month, temporarily disrupting its computers.

In another hitch, solar panels are only generating about 70 percent of the electricity they were supposed to, but officials said that was not expected to derail the mission either.

Flight operations director Michael McKay said controllers have been using computer simulations to rehearse how to deal with potential obstacles.

## Israelis not happy with Powell over accord visit

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel reacted with disappointment Wednesday after U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell confirmed he will meet with organizers of an informal Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty.

The comments by Zalman Shoval, an adviser to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, was the latest expression of Israel's stiff opposition to the meeting, seen as a U.S. gesture toward the "Geneva Accord" that Sharon has denounced.

On Tuesday, Israel's vice premier said it would be "mistake" if Powell goes forward with the meeting.

Shoval, a former ambassador to Washington, conceded that Israel cannot prevent Powell from meeting with Geneva Accord's Palestinian and Israeli authors, but said the effort would be counterproductive.

"I think the decision that Secretary Powell must make is ... what the American interests are," Shoval said in a phone interview from Italy.

"America wants to promote the 'road map' and those people in Geneva ... want to go in a different path," he added. "Therefore I think it won't be very helpful."

The Geneva Accord outlines concessions by Israel that Sharon's government has opposed in the past — including removing most settlements from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and dividing sovereignty in Jerusalem, claimed by both sides as their capital. The accord also severely limits any return of Palestinian refugees to lands in Israel, which has brought condemnations from some Palestinian leaders.

The "road map" is a formal

U.S.-backed peace plan that Israel and the Palestinians have accepted in principle as a basis for negotiations. The road map, which envisions an independent Palestinian state by 2005, leaves open to negotiation the specific issues addressed in the Geneva pact.

The White House on

Wednesday said Powell was free to meet with the Geneva authors but underlined its commitment to the road map.

"The path forward toward peace in the Middle East is the road map," spokesman Scott McClellan said, adding that "The secretary of state will make determinations about

who he meets with."

U.S. gestures toward the Geneva plan have been seen as an implicit criticism of Sharon's hard-line stance toward the Palestinians. Powell on Tuesday confirmed he would meet with the Geneva accord's authors on Friday.

## Parade treats



(Courtesy photo)

Students from Community Christian School sample some home-cooked treats. Homemade cinnamon rolls and chili will be sold by the school before and during the annual Christmas parade slated to get under way this year at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6 in downtown Pampa. Above: Ashlei Taylor, Samantha Kelly, Scott Kelly, Colin Hampton and Bobby Haley.

## People in the News ... Rehn ex-manager suing for cut

By The Associated Press  
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Something borrowed, something blue — and a lawsuit, too, for bride-to-be Trista Rehn of ABC's "Bachelorette."

Rehn's former manager,

Kevin Allyn, is suing for a cut of the \$1 million fee he said he negotiated from ABC to air her wedding to Ryan Sutter, "Entertainment Tonight" reported Tuesday.

The lawsuit contending he's

owed 20 percent of the fee, \$200,000, was filed Nov. 19 in Superior Court, the news magazine reported. A call to ABC seeking comment from Rehn wasn't immediately returned Tuesday.

## Pennsylvania priest found guilty of assault, endangerment for pulling gun on church official

LEBANON, Pa. (AP) — A Serbian Orthodox priest accused of pulling a gun on the council president of the church where he had presided for 15 years has been convicted of assault and reckless endangerment.

A jury found the Rev. Filip

Velisavljevic innocent of charges of terroristic threats and unlawful restraint stemming from a fight that both men testified was over who would control church business.

Velisavljevic, who was relieved of his pastoral duties after the Dec. 9, 2002, argu-

ment at the Church of the Holy Resurrection of Christ in Lebanon, showed no emotion as the verdict was read Tuesday. He faces six months to two years in jail on each of the two charges; sentencing was set for Feb. 2.

Velisavljevic, 55, declined

to comment after the verdict.

"I think there's a whole lot going on that hasn't been brought out," said his lawyer, Patrick M. Reb.

Reb said that there was a power struggle in the church and that the church board had asked his client to resign.

Council members have said the dispute was fueled by tension between older, American-born members and younger immigrants who joined more recently.

Velisavljevic testified during the trial that he pulled the gun to protect himself after

church council president Frederick Pantelich cornered him in a church office and became threatening, including hefting a stool above his head.

The gun went off during a struggle, they testified. The bullet apparently grazed the priest's foot.

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