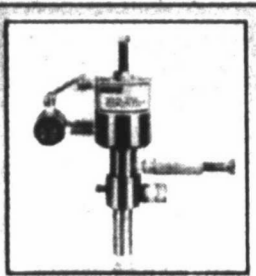


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THE Pampa

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2004

NEWS

Vol. 99 No. 867 • Pampa, Texas
 50 cents Daily • Sunday \$1



WEATHER

HIGH 48
LOW 22

DEATHS

Bobby Ray Helm, 70, services pending.
 Barbara Jo Ann Koenig-Hurt, 59, services pending.
 Jewell Belle McCurley, 90, garment factory worker.
 Dixie Lou Coffey Sims, 78, services pending.

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Election draws record number

By MARILYN POWERS
 STAFF WRITER

John Spearman Jr. and Kim Flowers win positions on local water board

A record number of 804 voters turned out Saturday to elect Kim Flowers of Miami and John R. Spearman Jr. of Pampa to the Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District board of directors.

The 804 ballots include 19 mail-in ballots and 425 cast in early voting, which was held Jan. 21 through Feb. 3.

"This only shows how important water issues are becoming to the general public. At the last contested election held in 1992, there were only 186 total votes cast from four different precincts," said PGWCD General Manager C.E. Williams.

PGWCD Precinct 3 incumbent Spearman received 508 votes, while his challenger, Stephen Smith of Pampa, earned 113. Precinct 3 is comprised of the northern one-third of

Gray County, the southwest corner of Roberts County, and the northwest one-eighth of Wheeler County.

Flowers won the Precinct 7 seat with 120 votes. Robert A. Clark, the incumbent, garnered 63 votes. Precinct 7 is composed of all of Roberts County except for the southwest corner.

The water district's board of directors will canvass the ballots at their Feb. 16 meeting and then swear in the election winners to four-year terms.

County OKs insurance attorneys in Tulia suit

By MARILYN POWERS
 STAFF WRITER

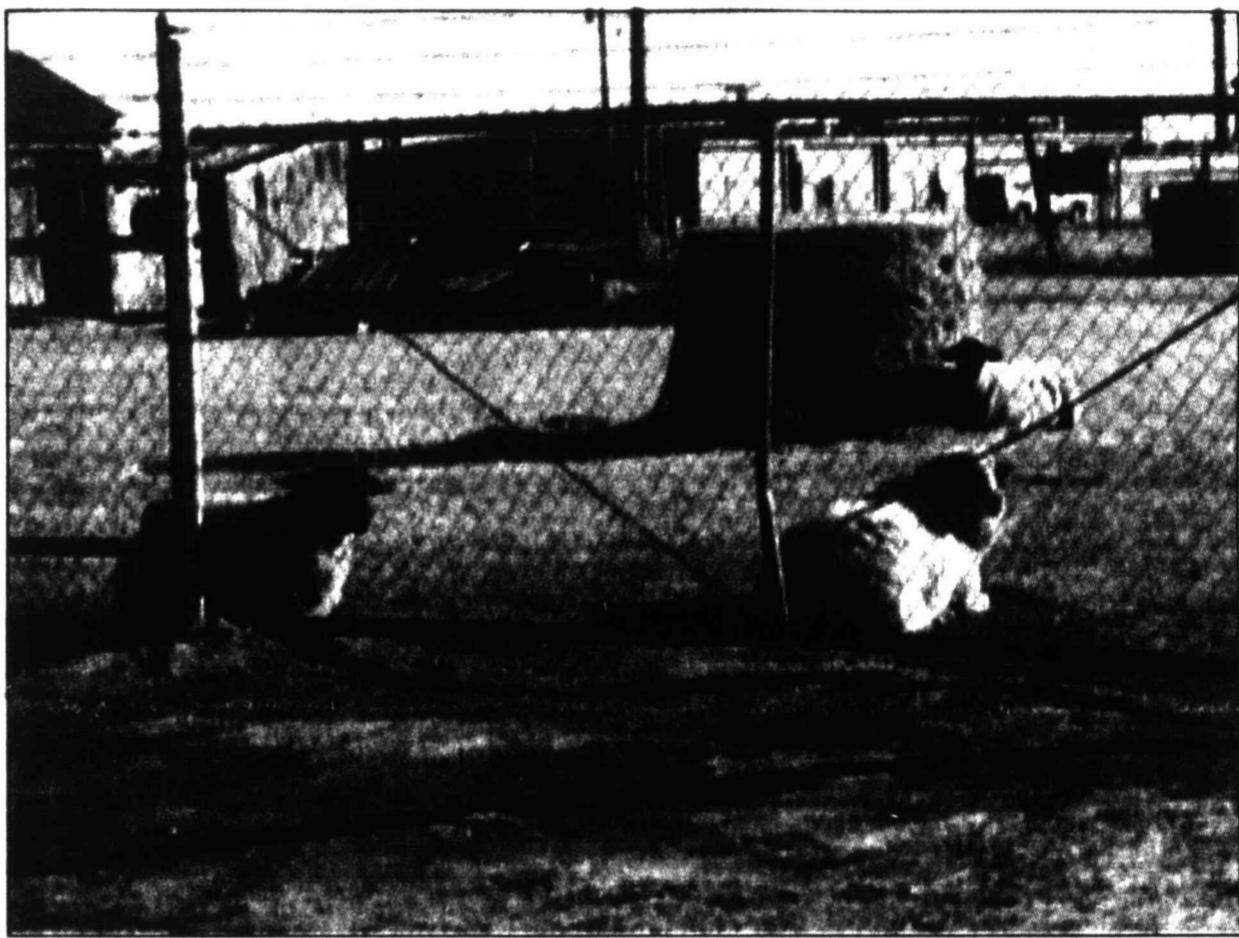
Gray County commissioners met in executive session at 3 p.m. Friday to discuss pending litigation between members of the Panhandle Regional Narcotics Trafficking Task Force and residents of Tulia who were arrested by agents of the task force a few years ago.

"We're really not directly involved, but because we are members of the task force, we're named in the suit," said Gray County Judge Richard Peet.

The individuals named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit have filed suit against the PRNTTF as a result of drug busts conducted in that city by the task force.

After the executive session, commissioners voted to allow attorneys for the county's insurance carrier to mediate for the county concerning the lawsuit.

Woolly sentries



(Pampa News photo by Marilyn Powers)

Although these three sheep have woolly coats, they seem to be enjoying the warmth of the sun's rays Monday morning in their pen on Doyle Street, south of Alcock Street. Two serve as sentries at the gate, while the third guards a hay bale.

Bush: Economic recovery is taking hold

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER
 AP ECONOMICS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — Declaring that "America's economy is strong and getting stronger," President Bush told Congress Monday in his annual economic report that last year's tax cut was doing the job in reviving business growth.

This year's 412-page "Economic Report of the President," is considerably more upbeat than Bush's report a year ago, issued at time when the country was still mired in a lackluster recovery with the unemployment rate continuing to rise.

In the new report, written as a strong defense of Bush's economic stewardship, the president says that the country has been able to overcome a series of shocks starting with the bursting of the stock market bubble in early 2000 followed by the first recession in a decade, the terrorist attacks, two wars and corporate accounting scandals.

"Americans have responded to each challenge and now we have the results: renewed confidence, strong growth, new jobs and a mounting prosperity that will reach every corner of America," Bush wrote in the message transmitting the report to Congress.

The release of Bush's economic

report, prepared by the president's Council of Economic Advisers, came on a day when the president was appearing in Missouri to tout the country's economic rebound, one of three such trips he has scheduled this week.

Bush took note of a number of encouraging developments in recent months, including strong economic growth beginning last summer which has finally begun to encourage the nation's businesses to start rehiring laid off workers.

The unemployment rate is now falling, hitting 5.6 percent in January, a month in which the economy managed to create 112,000 new jobs. However,

even with the job growth of recent months, the country still has 2.2 million fewer payroll jobs than when Bush took office in January 2001.

Acknowledging his jobs' deficit, Bush said, "We are moving in the right direction but have more to do. I will not be satisfied until every American who wants a job can find one."

The president credited last year's tax cut for making a sizable contribution to boosting economic growth.

Democrats and Bush's first Treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, have attacked that tax cut as being unnecessary and have charged that it made the deficit

(See ECONOMY, Page 3)

State budget board to release spending details

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A new state spending proposal has been developed, but Legislative Budget Board members and other officials are tightlipped about what it contains.

Budget Board Director John Keel said a "complete packet" running more than 100 pages would be made available Monday and "all the details" of the spending proposal would be published in

the Texas Register. State law permits the 10-member board, led by Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, to withhold details until members complete a recommendation to Gov. Rick Perry. He has 30 days to ratify or change it.

The San Antonio Express-News reported in Monday's editions that state officials were poised to declare a fiscal emergency and urge Perry to shift millions of dollars around

to fix it. The newspaper requested all materials, including proposals and explanatory materials, under the Texas Public Information Act.

One board member, Rep. Talmadge Hefflin, said leaders may seek Attorney General Greg Abbott's opinion on what information should be released before meetings.

"If there's a lot of noise, I would want to have his take on it," Hefflin, R-Houston and

chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, told the newspaper. "If, in fact, we did misread what was appropriate, we'd be able to correct it next time around."

An Austin lawyer who is an authority on open government issues said the spending proposal should have been provided before the meeting.

"There's nothing (in the law) that expressly authorizes them to hold it back," said

lawyer Jennifer Riggs. "They ought to release it."

A posted agenda listing agencies seeking additional funds includes the Regional Academic Health Center in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas Tech University at El Paso, the Texas Cooperative Extension and the secretary of state.

Riggs complained information was insufficient "on that agenda to tell employees of the

(See SPENDING, Page 3)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

SPENDING

agencies or any of the other parties affected" what the board is doing.

Perry and Dewhurst came to the Rio Grande Valley last year to announce their agreement on diverting \$9 million for the health center to ensure third-year medical students continue to receive a year of clinical training. Funds were also described as supporting added laboratories and faculty development.

Dewhurst also said earlier that he favors allocating at least \$2 million to help finance the launch of a four-year Texas Tech medical school in El Paso.

Heflin said the proposal "becomes public when we discuss it at a public meeting."

"If you release preliminary information and then we don't act on it or act on it in a different form, we'll get criticized for changing it," he said.

Failure to release explanatory materials seems inconsistent with open government, said Suzy Woodford, executive director of Common Cause of Texas.

"It's an outrage," Woodford said. "The public has every right to know what is the emergency, how much money is being spent and who is going to lose money before the board acts."

Texas lawmakers last year struggled to overcome a \$9.9 billion shortfall, writing a new two-year budget that cut health and human services and assorted other programs.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ECONOMY

problem worse. Bush fired O'Neill in December 2002 after he raised objections to going forward with further tax cuts.

The economic report came a week after Bush sent his new budget to Congress, a document that projects that this year's deficit will hit a record \$521 billion.

Bush blamed the huge deficit on the recession and the costs of boosting security at home and fighting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He said that his budget contained a plan to cut the deficit in half over the next five years, a task he said would be made easier by the growing economy.

Woman pulled alive from rubble of Turkish building after a week

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — An exhausted 24-year-old woman was pulled alive from the rubble of an apartment building Monday, a week after the structure collapsed, killing at least 88 people.

Yasemin Yaprakci, covered with dust, was carried on a stretcher into an ambulance as relief workers applauded. The rescuers had worked for hours to free her feet, which were trapped under bodies.

Relief workers found Yaprakci close to the entrance of the building, where rescue officials estimate more than a dozen people were crushed as they tried to escape.

Her condition was reported to be serious.

"Her overall condition is not good at all, she has bleeding under her skin," Riza Saribabici, the head physician of the Konya Numune hospital, said by telephone. He said she was suffering from gangrene and broken ribs.

Yaprakci was given oxygen under the rubble, where she has been surrounded with the scent of bodies for days.

"We had detected her alive with electronic devices and sniffer dogs. As we searched for her, we heard her saying, 'Water, water,'" Serdar Demirel, a rescue official, told private NTV television.

Grammys more like 'grimmys'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Grammys? More like the Grimmys.

With a bunch of dead winners, a Best New Artist band that has already split up and an uptight atmosphere created by the Janet Jackson uproar, the music industry's biggest awards night bordered on the downbeat.

Even Madonna, who last year famously locked lips with Britney Spears on MTV, played it straight Sunday. She refused to comment on the Jackson incident while walking the carpet and stuck to the script while introducing a performance by Sting.

The usually scantily clad Christina Aguilera sang her winning song "Beautiful" dressed in an outfit better suited for a stock analyst than a pop diva. She changed outfits before accepting her trophy for best female pop vocalist, clutching the straps of her low-cut dress to her chest.

She said she wanted to avoid provoking the kind of ire Jackson absorbed after the Super Bowl halftime stunt in which Justin Timberlake ripped off part of her top.

"We were making sure that everything was intact and whatnot after that drama. But I was good. I kept everything in place," she told reporters backstage.

Otherwise, the singer whose last album "Stripped" featured the bump-and-grind sexy song "Dirty" said she was sick of hearing about the incident.

The evening's sober feeling was reinforced by a tribute to The Beatles and the 40th anniversary of their introduction to America on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr — the only surviving band members — supplied only prerecorded greetings, while the widows of George Harrison and John Lennon were at the Staples Center event in person.

Sean Lennon, who was 5 when his father was slain by a crazed fan, told reporters he was grateful for all the archive footage of his famous parent.

The night did have its upbeat moments. OutKast's hip-hoppy jive won three trophies: best urban-alternative performance for "Hey Ya!" and best rap album and overall Album of the Year for "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below." It was the first rap album to win most of the awards in top categories.

Their rendition of "Hey Ya!" with the University of Southern California marching band was one of the more rousing performances of the night, along with a loud, wacky and tacky tribute to everything funky by George Clinton and his gang of musical pranksters.

Beyonce was the belle of the ball, opening the show with a performance alongside Prince, and going on to tie a record for female artists with her five awards. "Crazy in Love" won two trophies — for best R&B song and best rap/sung collaboration. Her boyfriend, Jay-Z, won two awards for collaborating on that hit.

Beyonce also won best female R&B performance and

best contemporary R&B album for "Dangerously in Love" and best R&B performance by a duo or group for a song with Luther Vandross.

Vandross, recovering from a stroke, won for best song, best R&B album and best male R&B performance for "Dance With My Father" and best R&B performance by a duo or group with vocals for "The Closer I Get to You," a remake with Beyonce.

It was the evening's most sentimental victory — the R&B crooner's first win in a major category in his more than 20-year career. He was unable to attend but sent a videotaped message, his first public remarks since his April 2003 stroke.

"I wish I could be with you there tonight. I want to thank everyone for your love and support," said a weak-looking Vandross. "And remember, when I say goodbye it's never for long, because" — and he sang a line from one of his many hits — "I believe in the power of love!"

The dark-rock band Evanescence won best new artist, but guitarist Ben Moody — who founded the group with singer Amy Lee — has already left the group.

Meanwhile, several posthumous winners collected honors.

The late Johnny Cash and director Mark Romanek won for best short form music video for the haunting song "Hurt." Cash's wife, June Carter Cash, who died a few months before he did last year, won best traditional folk album for the posthumous release "Wildwood Flower" and best female country vocal performance for "Keep on the Sunny Side."

Rock singer Warren Zevon, who rushed to complete his final album, "The Wind," before his September death from lung cancer, won his first two Grammy Awards, one for contemporary folk album. He also was honored for "Disorder in the House," a duet with Bruce Springsteen, which won for rock performance by a duo or group with vocal.

Meanwhile, CBS and Jackson offered conflicting reports about why she was not at the show, which was televised on a five-minute delay to avoid anything like the Super Bowl incident.

CBS said it agreed to allow Timberlake and Jackson to participate as long as they apologized on the air for their Super Bowl stunt. But a statement from Jackson's camp said CBS and the Grammys first asked her not to attend, then reversed themselves and re-invited her, but she chose not to go.

Timberlake took the CBS offer. He performed on several songs and won two trophies: male pop vocal performance for "Cry Me a River" and pop vocal album for "Justified."

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MONDAY • February 9, 2004

DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

Let the Buyer Beware When Choosing Credit Counseling

DEAR ABBY: I read your sound advice to "Addicted to Spending," the woman who racked up thousands of dollars in credit card debt. She said she couldn't sleep at night for fear her husband would divorce her when he found out. You were right that a credit counseling agency can provide valuable assistance, but she needs to be careful which one she selects.

The Internal Revenue Service oversees many credit counseling agencies because they are tax-exempt. We have received an increasing number of complaints that some of these agencies charge high fees, offer poor repayment plans, and provide little in the way of education and counseling.

We have stepped up our audits of credit counseling agencies and, where warranted, will revoke their tax exemption.

In addition, we have issued a consumer alert with the Federal Trade Commission and state regulators, warning consumers to check carefully before signing up with a particular program. A few tips:

(1) Beware of high fees or "voluntary" contributions.
(2) Carefully read any written statements before you sign, and make sure your creditors will work with the agency you want.
(3) Watch carefully the claims made in TV ads.

MARK W. EVERSON,
COMMISSIONER OF THE
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

DEAR COMMISSIONER EVERSON: I know my tax dollars are being well spent when the highest collection officer in the land reaches out to help people with money troubles. Everyone has heard the phrase, "Let the buyer beware." ("Caveat emptor.") However, it is especially discouraging to think that people who are vulnerable and trying to move their lives in a positive direction would be victimized by predators.

No doubt many readers will thank you for the warning. (Readers, you can find the IRS commissioner's alert by visiting the Web site: www.irs.gov/newsroom.)

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for more than 20 years. My wife and I have been friends with a certain couple, "Claude and Maude," for 15 years. On New Year's Eve we all went out to dinner and a few drinks. I was the designated driver, so I did not drink. When we returned home, all three, my wife, Claude and Maude, proceeded to get trashed to the max.

Maude got sick and passed out; my wife went to bed. Claude and I sat up and watched the ball drop and a couple of other programs. I fell asleep about 1:30 a.m. and assumed that Claude would, too. Around 2:00 a.m., I got out of my chair and walked to my bedroom. Claude was sitting on the bed next to my wife, putting his pants on. My wife was passed out, so I don't know what happened. It has bothered me so much since then that I can't sleep and don't know what to do. If ever there was a reason for me to become violent, that was it, but I kept my cool.

The next morning, my wife could remember nothing at all. What do you think I should do?

OUTRAGED
IN HOLLYWOOD, MD

DEAR OUTRAGED: In view of the fact that a 15-year friendship is at stake, talk to Claude. It's possible that he was so loaded that he didn't know where he was, and nothing happened.

The best advice I can offer now is that Claude, Maude and your wife should all do something about their drinking. Let this serve as a wake-up call.

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 or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone — teens to seniors — is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

For Better or For Worse



Zits



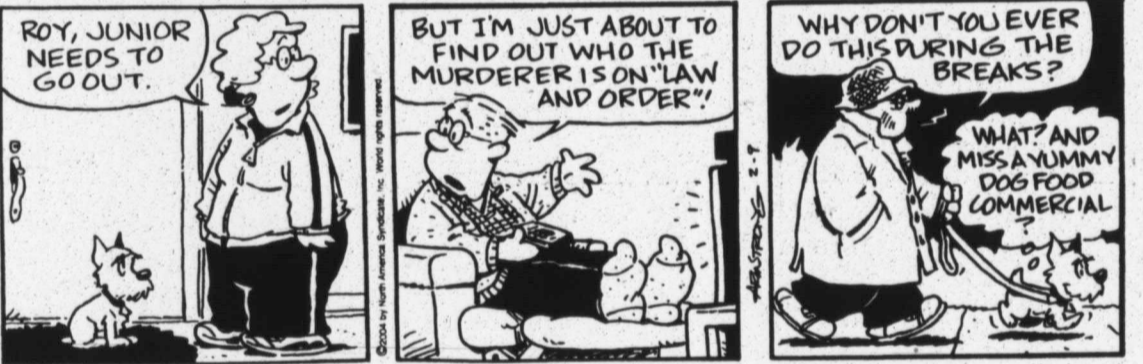
Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



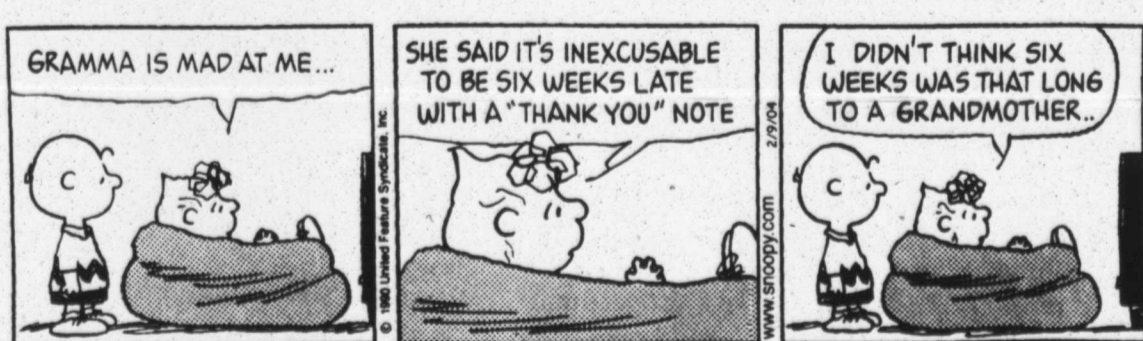
B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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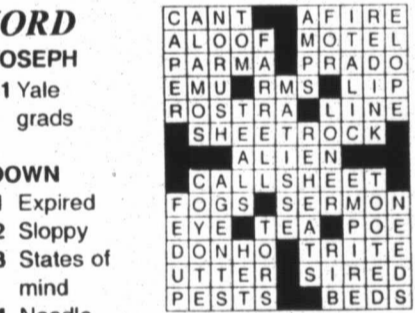
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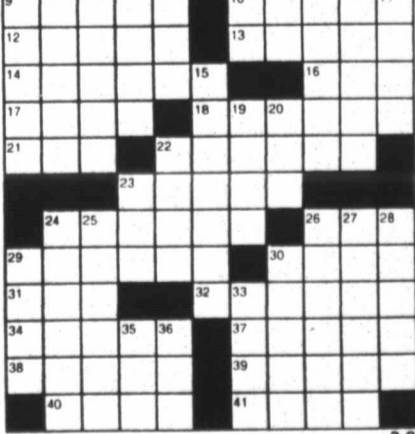
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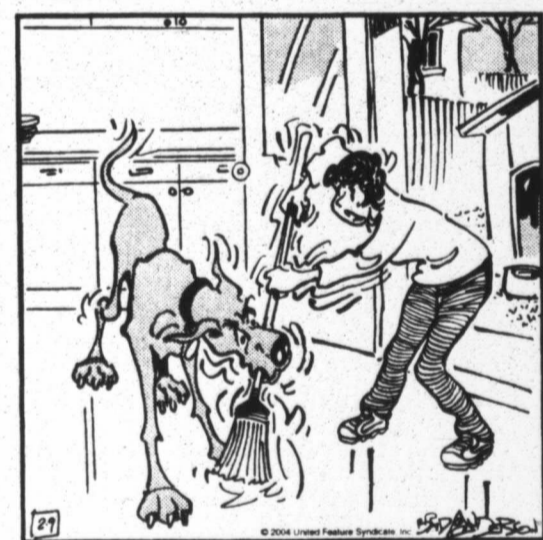
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21 messenger 28 drama
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for one 30 Not bare
23 Some 31 Sound-
H.S. related
24 Suspect's 32 Cellar
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25 Grocery 33 Pull on
store 34 Relaxing
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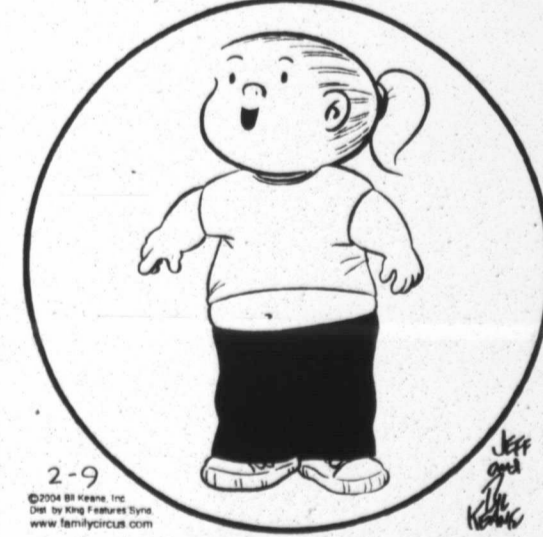


Marmaduke



"I want to sweep the back porch. I'm not going to sweep out your doghouse."

The Family Circus



"My tummy shows, Mommy. This shirt shrunk right into style!"

Flo & Friends



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SPORTS

Ninth-ranked Lady Raiders trim Baylor, 62-59

WACO, Texas (AP) — Texas Tech won another close game against Baylor, this time without the help of a disputed call.

Chesley Dabbs scored the go-ahead basket on a put-back with 32 seconds left, and LaToya Davis then hit two free throws after stealing a pass to lift the No. 9 Lady Raiders to a 62-59 win Sunday.

"Nobody deserved to lose this game. It was a great game," Tech coach Marsha Sharp said. "There were a lot of big plays. We were able to make the last one."

Dabbs took Erin Grant's

missed jumper and made the winning shot in a game that featured 14 lead changes.

No. 17 Baylor (17-5, 5-4 Big 12), which only had one basket in the last four minutes, then turned the ball over when Davis stole Emily Niemann's pass.

Davis, a 49 percent free-throw shooter, iced the victory for the Lady Raiders (20-3, 6-3) when she made two foul shots with 10 seconds left.

Niemann's 3-point shot bounced off the rim as the game ended.

In Tech's 64-63 win over

Baylor last month in Lubbock, Alesha Robertson made three throws in the final 7.6 seconds, hitting the game-winner after a disputed call.

Robertson tied that game with two free throws before Jessika Stratton had a turnover when she was called for stepping on the baseline — although a television replay showed her heel never touched it. Robertson made the game-winning free throw with 2.2 seconds left.

"We really hadn't talked about that," Baylor coach Kim Mulkey-Robertson said. "We know what happened.

This was just another Big 12 game, and they're all tough."

On Sunday, Baylor took a 59-58 lead with just under a minute left when Stratton stole the ball from Robertson. Stratton batted it ahead to Chelsea Whitaker for a breakaway layup.

Robertson led the Lady Raiders with 25 points, including five 3-pointers.

"This was a big win for us. We had a reason to prove the first one was not luck," Robertson said. "Baylor's a good team, and I want my biggest games against them."

Sophia Young paced the Lady Bears with 19 points.

Steffanie Blackmon scored 17.

Davis scored 13 of her 15 points after halftime, when Baylor held a 33-31 lead.

Tech opened the second half with an 18-4 run, capped by Davis' three-point play that gave the Lady Raiders a 49-37 lead.

Baylor responded with an 18-6 run and the game was tied at 55 after Sophia Young's layup with 5 1/2 minutes left.

"It was a game of runs," Mulkey-Robertson said. "They would make one, and we would make one. We just ran out of time."

Wrestlers advance to region

PAMPA — Three Pampa wrestlers will be advancing to the Region 1 Tournament after their performances in district competition last weekend in McNeely Fieldhouse.

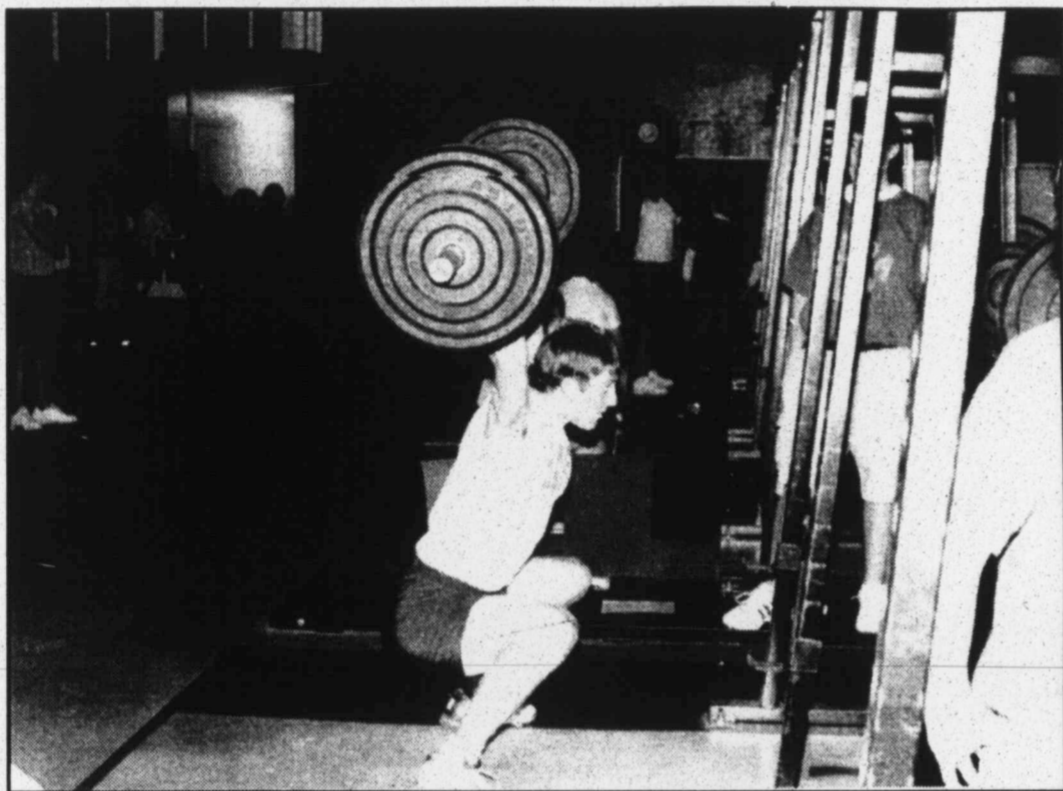
Kevin Parks won the heavyweight division while John Burns (140-pound division) and Joel Palmateer (171-pound division) placed

second. The top two finishers advance to regionals Friday and Saturday in Amarillo.

The Harvesters finished fifth in the team standings with 60 points.

Dumas placed a dozen wrestlers in next weekend's tournament and held off Boys Ranch to secure the Demons' sixth straight District 6 title.

Weight-lifter



Junior Michael Pergeson handles the barbell during an Olympic weight-lifting meet between Pampa and Canadian athletes last weekend in the PHS athletic fieldhouse. The meet was made up of 10 different classes with athletes competing against others with the same body weight.

Harvesters host Caprock teams

PAMPA — Still clinging to playoff hopes, the Pampa Harvesters welcome the Caprock Longhorns at 7:45 Tuesday night in McNeely Fieldhouse.

The Longhorns beat the Harvesters 56-51 in their first district 3-4A meeting, but Caprock will be without leading scorer Cheston Mitchell this time around. The 6-1 senior is sidelined with a broken arm for the remainder of the season. He had 16 points against the Harvesters, who had rallied from a 14-point deficit in the fourth quarter to almost overtake the Longhorns.

The Harvesters will still have to contend with 6-3 senior Will Mitchell, a strong inside player who is averaging a dozen points a game. Guard Ryan Ballin (5-6 sophomore) is a good outside shooter.

Pampa is led in scoring by 6-1 senior Collin Bowers (9.4 ppg), 6-1 senior Chance Bowers (9.4 ppg) and 5-10 senior Jed Martin (8.6 ppg). Collin Bowers is averaging 5.9 rebounds per game and Chance Bowers 5.1.

The Pampa-Caprock girls' game tips off at 6. PHS senior players will be recognized at 5:45.

District 3-4A Standings

Team	Boys	
	Dist	Overall
x-Palo Duro	10-0	29-1
Plainview	6-3	15-9
Caprock	6-4	15-13
Dumas	5-4	19-8
Pampa	4-5	9-17
Randall	2-7	6-19
Hereford	0-10	6-20
Team	Girls	
	Dist	Overall
x-Plainview	10-1	24-2
y-Hereford	7-5	17-8
Dumas	6-5	20-11
Randall	6-5	15-12
Palo Duro	5-6	10-17
Pampa	5-6	12-13
Caprock	0-11	1-23

x-clinched district title
y-clinched playoff spot

NOTEBOOK

SOCCER

PAMPA — There will be Harvester Soccer Booster Club meeting at 7 tonight in the Ready Room at the Pampa High School athletic fieldhouse.

Parents of soccer players are urged to attend.

GOLF

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Vijay Singh blew away the field Sunday at Pebble Beach to continue an amazing run that keeps moving him closer to his ultimate goal — replacing Tiger Woods at No. 1.

Singh birdied his first three holes to bury co-leader Arron Oberholser, closing with a 3-under 69 for a three-shot victory in the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

Singh finished at 16-under 272, three shots ahead of Jeff Maggert.

Maggert overcame a four-putt for double bogey on No. 16 with birdies on his last two holes for a 69. Phil Mickelson also had a 69 and finished third.

FOOTBALL

HONOLULU (AP) — Although Chad Johnson caught a 90-yard touchdown pass on the first play of his first Pro Bowl, the Cincinnati Bengals' brash receiver had a feeling even more spectacular feats were in store.

When the NFL's best are playing for nothing but pride and a millionaire's pittance in prize money, they still hate to lose.

"The other guys told me ahead of time, once the fourth quarter gets here, it's going to be competitive," said Johnson, who finished with five catches for 156 yards.

The veterans were correct. By the time the NFC wrapped up a 55-52 victory on Sunday, Johnson's catch was a mere footnote in the highest-scoring Pro Bowl in history — one that was dominated by newcomers who weren't interested in a laid-back Hawaiian vacation.

MVP Marc Bulger threw a Pro Bowl-record four TD passes, and Detroit's Dre' Bly returned an interception 32 yards for the go-ahead score with 4:50 to play during the NFC's rally from an 18-point deficit in the final 13 minutes.

Peyton Manning set a handful of offensive records, while Bulger masterminded a phenomenal comeback.

"It's going to be tough to match, if I make it back in the future," said Bulger, who didn't play until the second half.

The next wave of NFL talent crashed ashore in Honolulu during a thrilling game that featured everything from a 42-point fourth quarter to a pivotal miss on a 51-yard field-goal attempt by the once-perfect Mike Vanderjagt.

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