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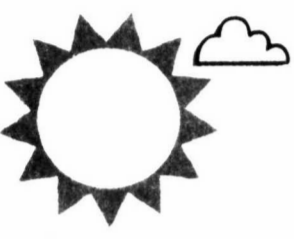
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Today's weather



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Deaths

Kendall Taylor Homer, infant.
Mark S. Powell, 38, construction contractor.
Robert F. 'Bob' Walker, 65, contract pumper.

Texas Today

Man indicted for faking his own death

HOUSTON (AP) — A federal judge ordered a businessman accused of faking his death in a boating accident last year held without bond Wednesday, hours after a grand jury indicted him on bank fraud and money laundering charges.

Larry Michael Nixon, 55, entered an innocent plea to each of the 10 counts contained in the indictment during an appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Calvin Botley.

The indictment accuses Nixon of defrauding Minnwest Bank Central, a Minnesota bank, of almost \$4 million in four bank fraud counts. The other six counts allege money laundering of \$1.94 million by transferring the illegal funds into a variety of Texas banks in an effort to conceal the money. His trial is scheduled for Feb. 23.

"It was part of the scheme that defendant would and did stage a boating accident in order to fake his death and thereby conceal his fraud," the indictment alleges.

Perry announces job training funding

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Rick Perry told border officials Wednesday that he would seek an additional \$25 million for a job training fund in Texas, but one border official said the money was a "drop in the bucket" for what is needed in the region.

Edinburg Mayor Richard H. Garcia acknowledged, however, that the money still would be a big help.

"All moneys are beneficial," said Garcia, chairman of the Texas Border Infrastructure Coalition, which was meeting in Austin.

The border has the highest unemployment rate in the state.

Deputies make arrest in boy's assault

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

A McLean man remains in Gray County Jail in lieu of \$5,000 bond as of press time today after being charged with injury to a child under the age of 14.

Andy Ray Ritchie, 17, was arrested at 1:27 p.m. Wednesday, and booked into the jail by Gray County

Sheriff's Deputy Bruce Burrell, according to jail records.

Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace Kurt Curfman set the bond, said a jail spokesperson.

Deputies Chad Brooks and Burrell went to the victim's home in McLean on Tuesday after the sheriff's office received a call requesting a welfare check

be made on the 12-year-old boy.

"The caller said the child had been beaten by an unknown 18-year-old male and possibly sustained moderate to severe injuries," said Lt. Joe Hoard of the sheriff's office.

The beating apparently occurred on Monday, Hoard said. The boy suffered bruises on his right thigh,

swelling and discoloration to the right side of the lower jaw, and bruises across the width of his back.

"He complained of extreme pain in his jaw, and said he had difficulty eating and drinking, and it hurt to breathe," Hoard said.

No further information concerning the boy's condition is available as of press time today.

The victim told deputies that Ritchie had beaten him because Ritchie was drunk at the time of the incident, Hoard said.

Deputies Brooks and Burrell are continuing the investigation, and the case remains open, Hoard said.

Child Protective Services has also been notified of the incident and is involved in the case, he said.

Analyst: Beef prices may drop

By DAVID BOWSER
Staff Writer

AMARILLO That sirloin strip should cost slightly less next year.

Jim Gill, marketing analyst for the Texas Cattle Feeders Association here, said today that retail beef prices should drop a little in 2005.

Averaged retail beef prices topped out at \$4.05 a pound this past year. It's the first time beef price averages have topped the \$4 mark.

Beef prices for 2005 should drop back to about \$4 a pound, Gill said.

The main challenge for beef producers, he said, will come from increasing supplies of pork and chicken.

The anticipated opening of the Japanese beef export market should keep price from falling any lower. Gill said continued strong consumer demand for beef should also help keep beef prices from falling.

With feeder cattle supplies continuing to tighten, feedyards in the Texas Panhandle and across the Great Plains may be absorbing losses.

Ranchers should continue to make money with fewer cattle available to go into the feedyards, Gill said, but lower bids by packers will put pressure on feedyards to lower their bids on cattle from ranchers.

See BEEF, Page 3



Pampa News photo by DEE DEE LARAMORE

Christmas a-blooming

A brilliant red tree of 350 poinsettia plants greets visitors to First Baptist Church's front foyer this Christmas. Linda Starnes, the church's flower chairman, said the poinsettias, a total of more than 400, have been donated in honor and memory of special people to decorate the church during the holiday season. Admiring the tree are FBC staff members, from left, Roxanne Giles, Steve Wilson, Brenda Condo and Stacy Hinkle.

Sheriff's fleet to grow by three

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

Gray County Sheriff's Office will add three vehicles to their fleet as a result of action taken by county commissioners at their regular meeting Wednesday in the county courthouse.

Purchase of a 2003 Chevrolet Trailblazer was approved by commissioners, and the vehicle has been bought from Quality Sales for \$19,644, said Chief Deputy Kelly Rushing. The entire purchase price will be reimbursed by a Homeland Security grant, said County Clerk Susan Winborne.

The Trailblazer will be a special-use vehicle designated as a mobile command unit with the capability of communicating with other agencies and other counties in the event of a disaster

or other emergency, Rushing said.

Commissioners also approved seeking bids for two patrol units for the sheriff's office.

"Every year, we try to replace the oldest units in the fleet," Rushing said. Sheriff's office vehicles are kept in service a minimum of five years, he said.

"We're not sure what kind the new ones are going to be right now. We're exploring the possibility of SUV (sport-utility vehicle)-type vehicles.

"We have a lot of Gray County that doesn't have pavement on it. We're looking at whether or not (buying SUVs) is going to enable us to better reach rural locations," Rushing said.

Bids on the two vehicles will be due Feb. 1.

Closure of the cash bond and DARE checking accounts maintained by the sheriff's office was approved by commissioners. Two new checking accounts, designated as abandoned vehicles and forfeiture, will be opened.

A contract with Danka was approved for two new copy machines for the sheriff's office.

Another contract, with Scotco for heat-

"We have a lot of Gray County that doesn't have pavement on it."

Kelly Rushing
Chief Deputy

See FLEET, Page 3

Pampa ISD board meets Friday a.m.

Board of Education members for the Pampa Independent School District plan a special meeting at 7 a.m. Friday, Dec. 17, at Pampa ISD administration building, 321 W. Albert.

Five items are listed on the agenda: Call to order, financial audit report, budget amendment, revised policy for compensation and benefits, and personnel.

Groom ISD tops accountability standards

GROOM Groom Independent School District is one of two school districts in Texas to receive the most allotments of Gold Performance Acknowledgments from the Texas Education Agency, announced Superintendent Jerry Stevens.

A maximum of 11 GPAs could be attained this year, according to a news release from Groom ISD. No school district received all 11 of the 1,100 public and charter schools in Texas. Carroll ISD received the most

with 10 out of the 11 areas. Groom was next with nine of the 11 GPAs.

"The teachers of Groom ISD are the best there is," Stevens said. "They work very, very hard at making sure the kids that attend Groom ISD are getting the best education possible. The support from the parents and community all go together to make this a wonderful school district. The scores just show what we already know, that Groom ISD is one

of the top school districts in the state."

The GPA system was developed by the TEA to show additional acknowledgments as part of the statewide accountability system.

GPAs were awarded this year to districts and campuses that met the acknowledgment standard on one or more of these 11 areas for the 2002-2003 school year: Advanced Courses Completion, Advanced Placement International Baccalaureate Results,

Attendance, Commended on Reading FEA, Commended on Math, Commended on Writing, Commended on Science, Commended on Social Studies, Recommended High School Program, SAI ACT Results (Class of 2003) and TASP Equivalency (Class of 2003).

Groom ISD did not qualify in Advanced Placement International Baccalaureate Results and SAI ACT Results, the release stated.

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Lefors group to sponsor light contest

LEFORS — Lefors Action Group will sponsor a "Light Up Lefors" Christmas Decorating Contest the weekend of Dec. 17-19 with winners receiving prizes and special recognition.

Four categories to be judged include Best Use of Lighting, Best Theme, Most Creative and Best Single Display.

Every home, large or small, has a chance of winning. Winners will receive a recognition sign placed in their front yard and prizes awarded on Dec. 20.

Gray Co. Red Cross Open House today

Gray County Area Chapter of the American Red Cross is hosting its annual Christmas Open House from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 16, at 108 N. Russell.

"Please come and share with us the holiday season as 'Together We Prepare & Together We Can Save A Life,'" said Jana Gregory, director. "Everyone is invited, especially our military families, instructors, and volunteers."



Perfect attendance pays

Lamar Elementary students Michelle Rivera and Dusty Herrera, center, stand with bicycles that they won in a drawing for perfect attendance for the entire fall semester. Southwestern Bell Pioneers, led by Gary Stevens, provided the bicycles as prizes. Pioneers Jean Ladd and Helen Kastein drew Michelle's and Dusty's names and presented the bikes during morning assembly in the Lamar gym. All children who had perfect attendance for the semester received a Top Bobcat Award sign to display in their yards or in the windows of their homes.

Beef

Continued from Page 1

A record corn crop will mean lower feed prices in the feedyard, but for now feedyards caught between lower bids from the packer and the higher costs of cattle coming into the feedyards has caused losses in some feeding operations.

Gill predicts a 750-pound feeder steer that sold for \$103.98 in 2004, will sell for about \$95 in 2005.

Fed cattle prices for 2005 are expected to sell between \$80 and \$90 a hundredweight, he said.

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Fleet

Continued from Page 1

ing and air conditioning equipment maintenance, was rejected by commissioners. They approved sending written notice to Scotco that the county is terminating the contract, effective in 30 days.

"It is uncertain whether we will go with another company or will use a

company on an as-needed basis," said County Judge Richard Peet.

One bid for landscaping of the courthouse grounds was received and opened. The bid, by West Texas Landscaping, was not accepted because commissioners asked for clarification on the gauge of PVC pipe to be used and other information on the automated watering system. West Texas Landscaping will meet with commissioners at 9 a.m., Dec. 31, to address commissioners' questions.

Jury reimbursements for 2005 were set. The rates, which are the same as for 2004, will be \$6 for appearing in response to a jury summons, and \$15 per day for serving on a jury.

Financing by CAT was approved concerning purchase of a new Caterpillar motor grader. The percentage will be between 4.5 and 5.5 percent.

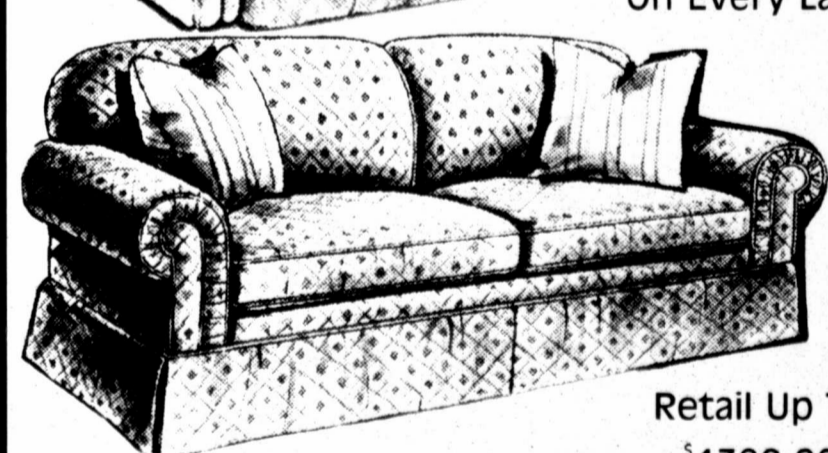
Salaries totaling \$219,942.80 and bills totaling \$255,183.55 were approved for payment.

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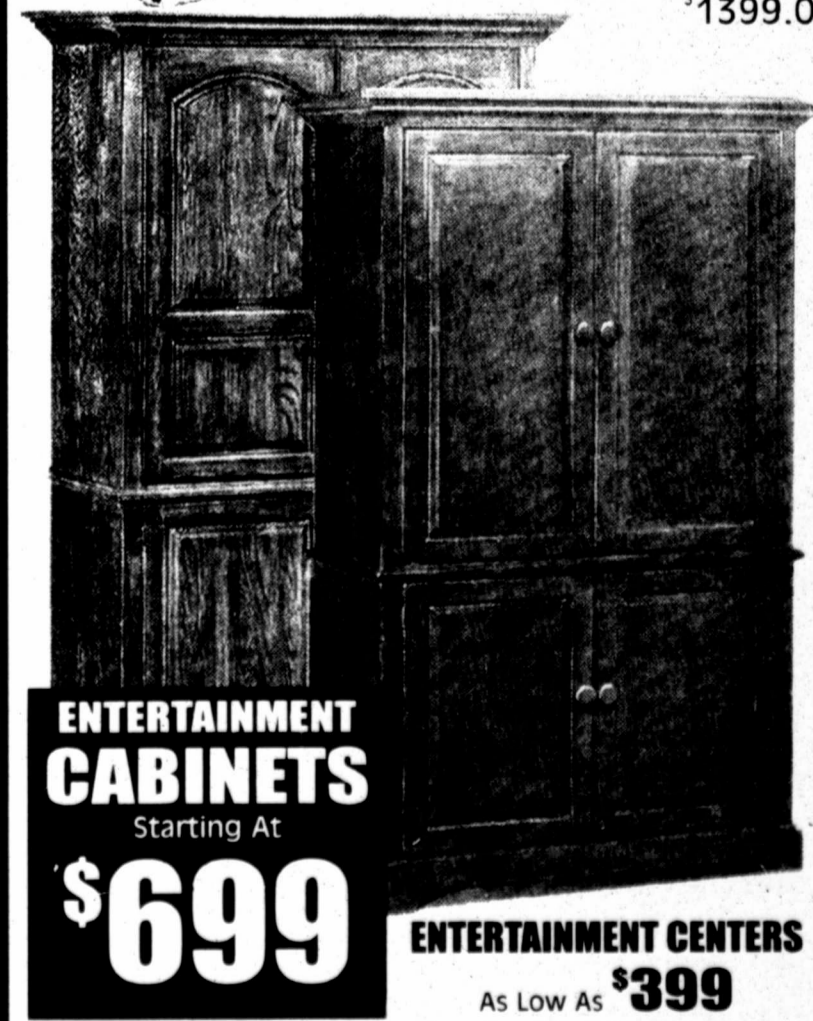
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Viewpoints

Helping more rewarding than clean house

When will the insects die? Since the recent rains and colder weather, several creepy-crawlies, insect and otherwise — have made their way into the house including — to my absolute horror and chagrin — a dead night crawler.

Yup, you heard right, a dead worm.

Bird food! In my house! One recent morning I awoke to find its peaceful corpse rotting unpleasantly just inside the kitchen door, where it lay sprawled across the tiles in the most loathsome fashion.

What a lovely way to start the day.

I don't know when rigor mortis in worms sets in, but this one was dried out and

flat in a couple of places. How utterly disgusting!

Alack and alas. I had just vacuumed and swept the entire house the previous day. This gruesome discovery could not have come two days earlier. Oh, no, it had to occur so as to mock all my best efforts, which, marginal housekeeper that I am, are not usually nearly so conscientious. Why, I worked four hours on that house.

See if I do that again. To make matters worse, my Labrador puppy, now well over six months old, decided the rugs smelled too good and were entirely too clean. She promptly christened them. I won't describe in what way.

Hm-hm-hm, I'm sure you

can guess.

I must say, it is enough to put an inferior housekeeper thoroughly in the doldrums and discourage any further cleaning frenzies, quite possibly for several weeks.

How nice.

I now have plenty of time to revel in the holidays without having to manage any pesky cleaning urges.

This is the time for good cheer, and the community offers several ways to breathe a second wind into that harried holiday spirit. For example, there is the Festival of Lights, a specta-

cle to look forward to throughout the year, as well as the many church and school pageants and programs.

Not enough to revive that initial holiday exuberance? Need the boost of a little charitable giving, but aren't

certain how or where to give?

Pampa Meals on Wheels is taking donations to benefit its needier patrons. MOW is instituting a special holiday program that allows individuals to pay for patrons not presently receiving meals or who can only

pay the minimum 25 cents.

With increased gasoline and food prices, MOW officials say each meal is averaging around \$4. Individuals may sponsor a patron for one week at \$20; one month at \$80; or one year at \$960. Sound interesting? Then give the folks at MOW a call. They'll be glad to hear from you.

The Salvation Army Angel Tree is another worthy project. Trees are located at several local businesses including United Supermarket and our very own Pampa News. Select an "angel" off a tree and give some needy child a happy Christmas. As hard as it is to believe, there are some children in this area who may

not have any gifts to unwrap come Christmas morn.

Tralee Crisis Center has a similar holiday project, though the deadline for it has passed. Still, you might want to keep it in mind for next year.

The Tralee tree is decorated with cards containing the gift requests of Tralee's most needy clients, families displaced due to unhealthy home situations. The deadline this year to return gift items to the center was Dec. 15.

Worthy charities and holiday projects abound. Sadly, I only have time and space to list a few. Remember, time is running out. There are now only eight days until Christmas.

Skyla Bryant
News Editor



Today in History

By the Associated Press

Today is Friday, Dec. 17, the 352nd day of 2004. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, went on the first successful manned powered-airplane flights, near Kitty Hawk, N.C., using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

On this date:

In 1777, France recognized American independence.

In 1830, South American patriot Simon Bolivar died in Colombia.

In 1939, the German pocket battleship "Graf Spee" was scuttled by its crew, ending the World War II Battle of the River Plate off Uruguay.

'Intellect alone is a dry and rattling thing.'

— Ilka Chase
American author, actress, humorist (1905-1978)

In 1944, the U.S. Army announced it was ending its policy of excluding Japanese-Americans from the West Coast.

In 1957, the United States successfully test-fired the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.

In 1975, Lynette Fromme was sentenced in federal court in Sacramento, Calif., to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Ford.

In 1979, in a case that aggravated racial tensions, Arthur McDuffie, a black insurance executive, was fatally beaten after a police chase in Miami. (Four white police officers were later acquitted of charges stemming from McDuffie's death.)

In 1981, members of the Red Brigades kidnapped Brigadier General James L. Dozier, the highest-ranking U.S. Army official in southern Europe, from his home in Verona, Italy. (Dozier was rescued 42 days later.)

In 1986, Eugene Hasenfus, the American convicted by Nicaragua for his part in running guns to the Contras, was pardoned, then released.



Our readers write

Celebrate Christmas

If we can't celebrate the birth of Christ this year, why should we celebrate time off "Happy Holiday" or the coming of winter "Season's

Greetings."

Get real, people. If you don't feel right celebrating Christmas ... don't.

I feel right celebrating Christmas and do.

In Christ's name, Merry Christmas!

Joan Braxton Pampa

Beyond wishful thinking about Islam

Now that three years and three months have passed since nearly 3,000 died on a day that will live in infamy, the hills are alive with the sound of positive musings about Islam. Publisher's Weekly has reported that many new books on the religion are hitting the stores, with most assuring readers that Islam is a religion of peace.

Many Dutch citizens, shocked by last month's murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, are now questioning that assumption. Wishful thinking about Islam also runs up against the Koran itself, which shows that

Islam offers peace at times but (under defined conditions) gives its adherents a license to kill.

Specifying those conditions is the hard part. One Internet site portrays a Christian debating a Muslim and asking: "All followers of Allah have been commanded to kill everyone who is not of your faith so they can go to Heaven. Is that correct?" The website states that the expression on the Muslim's face "changed from one of

authority and command to that of a little boy who had just gotten caught with his hand in the cookie jar. He sheepishly replied, 'Yes.'"

If only it were that easy. In reality, many Muslims contest such a definition of jihad and say that a Muslim can fight and be rewarded by Allah only when defending Islamic lands. But that should be the beginning rather than the end of discussion: It's vital to find out

which lands a Muslim sees as Islam's. Is Israel a Muslim land? What about Spain and the Balkans, which Islam ruled for centuries?

Similarly, when a Muslim says he opposes the murder of civilians, it's vital to ask: What do you mean by civilian? Is a non-soldier Israeli who has military training and could be called into active service a civilian? A worker at the Pentagon? How about those at the World Trade Center who advanced the capitalism that undergirds U.S. military efforts?

See ISLAM, Page 5

Marvin Olasky
Columnist



The new Iraq: Islamic yet democratic?

Feuding Sunnis and Shiites could thwart democracy in Iraq. But religion need not be a deal-killer when it comes to moving Iraq forward. In fact, Iraqis and Americans alike need to get the religion question right, or the whole democratic movement could unravel.

Iraqi elections are fast approaching. A big issue is the influence of religious leaders, most notably the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

As spiritual head of the majority Shiite population, he is by far the most important Islamic figure in Iraq. Fortunately, he has largely

taken a constructive role toward the enterprise in Iraq. Having watched horrors unfold under mullahs in his native Iran, he has said mostly good things about democratizing Iraq. He even issued a fatwa saying every eligible Iraqi should vote and declared that it was the duty of Shiites, who would dominate any democratically elected parliament, to protect the legitimate interests of minorities. That last point is crucial, because guaranteeing minority rights is the difference between democ-

cracy and the tyranny of mob rule.

We raise the religion issue also because some think the best way to democratize Iraq is to secularize the Muslim nation. Turkey did that in 1923 under Kemal Ataturk, whose forced secularization of his

1923 under Kemal Ataturk, whose forced secularization of his

nation created only a tenuous democracy and did not suppress Islamic devotion.

Drawing a hard line for secularism seems a waste of political energy for Iraq, even though we deeply believe that any nation bene-

fits from having a secular government. Islam is a deep and palpable force guiding Iraqi society, and it is best to give it a place in the nation's debate.

There's a practical reason, too. Ensuring that religious Iraqis are heard could keep them from going underground and fomenting rebellion.

Islamic democracy is a novel concept. But trying to separate Islam from the larger culture, like Saddam Hussein did, will likely spawn a backlash. Iraq's secular leaders and U.S. diplomats should make room for religion in Iraqi politics in January and beyond.

Texas Thoughts

Dallas Morning News

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Retiree

Culligan W. Christmas/C. Fatheree, W. left, with a company. S. Dec. 31. The

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Continued

Many Americans are peaceful and primarily as a result of more of military say it's allowable lands that once Muslim terror all the layers deep enough small children eventually be occupying large belongs to Islam.

Should all be blamed for? Clearly not. But take responsibility for all too frequent history and in grows out of should Christ outrages by those who call Christians. bloody entry into Jerusalem slavery rhetoric antebellum part of the struggle compare the of Christianity. For example, generally grew of its martyrs. opponents. C eventually led

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Pampa Bridge Club Duplicate plays Monday and Thursday at The Se For a part information Carol Carp 7940.

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Data found to be lacking on effects of gun control

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new analysis of efforts to control violence by restricting guns says there is not enough evidence to reach valid conclusions about their effectiveness.

The National Research Council said Thursday that a major research program on firearms is needed.

"Policy questions related to gun ownership and proposals for gun control touch on some of the most contentious issues in American politics," Charles F. Wellford, chairman of the committee that wrote the report, said in a statement.

Among the major questions needing answers are whether there should be restrictions on who may possess firearms, on the number or types of guns that can be purchased, and whether safety locks should be required, said Wellford, professor of criminal justice at the University of Maryland.

"These and many related policy questions cannot be answered definitively because of large gaps in the

existing science base," he said. "The available data are too weak to support strong conclusions."

Thirty-four states have "right to carry" laws that allow certain adults to carry concealed weapons. However, the report found no credible evidence that such

laws either decrease or increase violent crime.

Citing another example, the report said there is almost no evidence that programs aimed at steering children away from guns have had any effect on their behavior, knowledge or attitudes toward firearms.



Retirement honors

Culligan Water Conditioning staff honored Cordell Schneider with a Christmas/Cordell retirement party recently. Culligan staff, from left, Tim Fatheree, Weldon Holley and James Holley, presented Schneider, second from left, with a plaque and trophy honoring him for 12 1/2 years of service to the company. Schneider plans to work Tuesday and Thursday afternoons through Dec. 31. The public is welcome to come tell him goodbye before he retires.

Islam

Continued from Page 4

Many American Muslims are peaceful and define jihad primarily as an internal struggle to improve. Some talk more of military jihad and say it's allowable to regain lands that once were Islamic. Muslim terrorists peel away all the layers and go down deep enough to blast away small children who could eventually become soldiers occupying land that properly belongs to Islam.

Should all Muslims be blamed for such brutality? Clearly not. But Islam should take responsibility for what is all too frequent in Islamic history and in the culture that grows out of the Koran. Nor should Christians dodge past outrages by Christians and those who called themselves Christians. And yet, the bloody entry of the Crusaders into Jerusalem or the pro-slavery rhetoric of some antebellum fire-eaters is only part of the story: We need to compare the normal practice of Christianity and Islam.

For example, Christianity generally grew by the blood of its martyrs, but Islam often grew by the killing of its opponents. Christ's teaching eventually led to the develop-

ment of complementary roles for men and women, but Muhammad's teaching led to female subservience. Christians looked at slavery critically over the centuries and often fought for its abolition, but Muslims began the practice of enslaving Africans, and some Islamic countries today still allow slavery.

A useful book in this regard is Alvin Schmidt's "The Great Divide" (Regina, 2004). Do you want to know whether beheading is part of traditional Muslim practice? Schmidt notes that Muhammad himself ordered such killings, and that when Ottoman caliphs finally took over Constantinople in 1453, the embalmed head of Emperor Constantine XI became part of a traveling exhibit.

We are far from the end of our war against terrorism — most of which these days is Muslim in origin — but we may be at the end of the beginning. It's certainly time to enter into discussions with Muslims without offering either appeasement or shotgun-blast aggression.

Marvin Olasky, Ph.D., is a professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin and editor of "World" magazine.

Calendar items

Pampa Citizens on Patrol Ass'n. Pampa Citizens on Patrol Association meets at 8 p.m. the second Saturday of each month at 824 S. Cuyler.

Pampa Duplicate Bridge Club. The Pampa Duplicate Bridge Club plays Monday at 1 p.m. and Thursdays at 10 a.m. at The Senior Citizens. For a partner, or more information, please call Carol Carpenter at 669-7940.

Pampa Fine Arts Ass'n. Pampa Fine Arts Association Board of Directors meets at 7 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at Pampa Community Building (Chamber building).

Pampa Garden Club. Pampa Garden Club meets at 2 p.m. the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meeting location changes monthly.

Pampa Pilots Ass'n. Pampa Pilots Association meets at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month at the Airport Lounge.

Pampa Rotary Club.

Pampa Rotary Club meets at 12 noon every Wednesday at Pampa Country Club.

Pampa Takedown Club. Pampa Takedown Club Wrestling for youth 5-15 years of age. Practice is at 900 N. Frost. Season starts Sept. 25 through February. For more information, call Rick Urganhart at 665-8321.

Pampa Woodcarving Club. Pampa Woodcarving Club meets at 7 p.m., the second and fourth Thursday of each month at First Christian Church, 1633 N. Nelson. Meetings are open to any individuals interested in woodcarving from beginners to all experience. Projects and instructors are available. For more information, call 669-3008.

Panhandle Piecemakers Quilt Guild. Panhandle Piecemakers Quilt Guild meets at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Thursday of each month at Pampa Senior Citizens Center.

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THE PAMPA NEWS COMICS

Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: My husband took me out to an expensive restaurant. As we chatted over dinner, we realized that the couple next to us was eavesdropping on our conversation. They could hear everything we were saying. They kept turning their heads and looking straight at us. They even tried to peek when the check came.

My husband and I tried to ignore it, however, it put a damper on our nice evening. How should we tell nosy people to "butt out" of our dinner conversation? -- CONVERSATIONALLY SPEAKING IN DELAWARE

DEAR CONVERSATIONALLY SPEAKING: You and your husband missed an opportunity to have some fun. If you invent wild enough dialogue, the reaction can be funnier than a floor show. You could have raised your voices just a bit and begun discussing how you were going to spend the "drug money" -- or which girl you planned to send on the next "call." Short of asking to be seated at another table, there is no foolproof way to discourage nosy eavesdroppers.

DEAR ABBY: My letter is in response to the one from the neighbors who complained about the noise their neighbor's children made playing basketball in the yard.

As a boy, many years ago, I probably annoyed our neighbors the same way. Now that boy has grown into a man, who has taken care of literally thousands of youngsters in my practice of behavioral pediatrics.

Experience tells me that if all youngsters would be outside playing basketball or any other activity of exertion, we would have far fewer academic and behavioral problems. Approximately 75 percent of my patients never go outside to play. Many of them are addicted to

video games, and some to television. (Studies have shown that exercise reduces the need for psycho-stimulants, such as Ritalin and Adderall, as well as the dosage.)

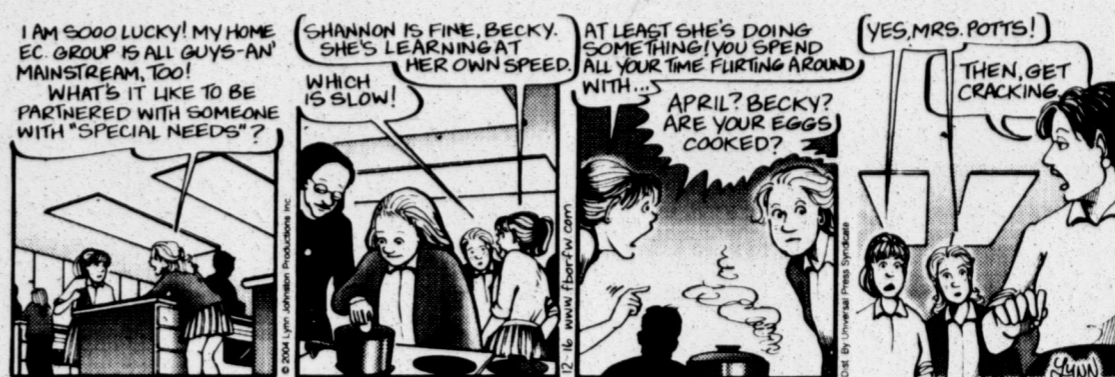
The ramifications of this addiction are enormous. These children tend to be more agitated and anxious. Their blood pressure and pulse are often increased. Their imagination is dulled. They have a higher risk of obesity, early onset diabetes, and future cardiovascular disease. Their sleep patterns are upset (many stay up all night to play their video games after their parents are sleeping), and there is some evidence that they are at increased risk for seizures.

If the pounding of a basketball is annoying to some folks, they should step back and look at the big picture. That sound would be a symphony to my ears because I know that these youngsters are doing something that will benefit themselves and ultimately society. -- JOEL P. SUSSMAN, M.D., FAAP, COLUMBIA, S.C.

DEAR DR. SUSSMAN: Thank you for an important letter. As some readers pointed out, the complainer should be thankful the neighbor children are involved in activities as healthy as athletics. (Better to shoot hoops than each other!) People who can't stand the sound of children playing should relocate to a development for seniors. Let us not forget that children are people, too, and they have a right to play on their own property, providing they're not disturbing someone late at night.

CONFIDENTIAL TO JANIS IN SUN CITY: "Americans will accept the fact that a person can be an alcoholic or a dope fiend, but if a man doesn't drive, they think there must be something wrong with him." -- ART BUCHWALD

For Better Or Worse



Zits



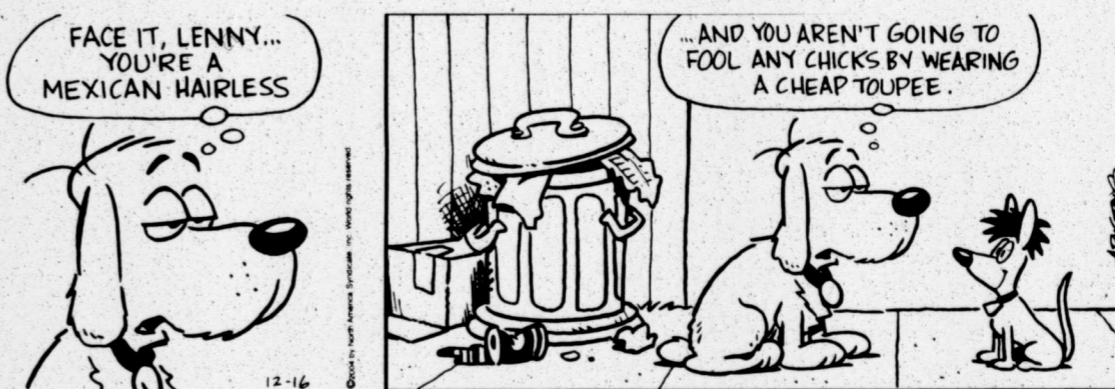
Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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- 1 Play some group jackets
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- Browning 46 Peer

10 La Scala songs

DOWN 1 Court player

13 Arose

14 Paris 2 Scent

15 Flightless bird

16 Perched follower

18 Duel 5 Mexican money

20 Keats work

21 Shopping aid

23 Diamond score

24 Call for file

26 Coarse

28 Stag party attendee

29 Faux pas

31 Giant great Mel

32 Science of light

36 Unfair treatment

39 Juvenile's music

40 UFO flier

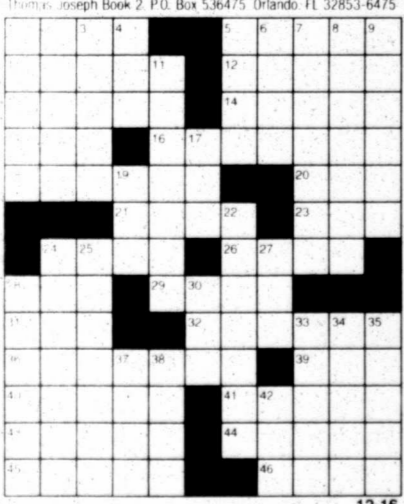
41 Marry in secret



Yesterday's answer

- 9 Uppsala's setting
- 11 Buffets concerns
- 17 Hockey legend
- 19 Hockey need
- 22 Multi-screen theater
- 24 Wood of film
- 25 Tangle
- 27 Fitting ethical
- 28 Ethical concerns
- 30 Mauna — legend
- 33 Sarcastic humor
- 34 Poultry buy
- 35 Depleted theater
- 37 Profound
- 38 Terminates
- 42 Table part

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Christmas parade



Walker and Gage Kennedy enjoy a ride with "Frost."

Overseas

British cabinet official resigns scandal's wake

LONDON (AP) — A key member of Tony Blair's Cabinet and the man in charge of legislation on crime and terrorism in Britain resigned after acknowledging that his department fast-tracked a visa for his former lover's nanny.

David Blunkett's departure Wednesday was a blow for Blair, who had strongly backed him and confidently asserted he would be cleared of wrongdoing. Blunkett was Britain's top law enforcement officer and had been establishing a new system of national identity cards.

sympathy for his shattered love affair. His three-year relationship with the married Quinn soured over the summer, and Blunkett has gone to court in an attempt to gain access to the 2-year-old son. Quinn, currently expecting another child whose paternity is the subject of intense media speculation, denies the toddler is Blunkett's son.

Blunkett has suggested Quinn leaked details of their relationship and the "Nannygate" claim to the media as a form of revenge.

Blunkett's place in the Cabinet became shakier with the revelation that he made caustic comments about colleagues to the author of a newly published biography.

Blair on Wednesday appointed Education Secretary Charles Clarke as Home Secretary to replace Blunkett. Clarke, 54, will be replaced in the education post by

Ruth Kelly, currently Cabinet Office minister, Downing Street said. Home Secretary is a key Cabinet post with responsibility for law and order, immigration and counterterrorism.

Blunkett's problems have been a distraction and embarrassment for Blair's government since the affair was revealed in August, but it got worse this month with the disclosure of his low opinion of some colleagues.

Quinn's nanny, Leoncia Casalme, had been told by the Home Office that it might take a year to process her visa application. Quinn brought that to Blunkett's attention, and he said he in turn showed the letter to officials to stress that such delays were unacceptable.

Blunkett said he felt he had to step down because his actions led to preferential treatment for a residence visa for a Filipina nanny employed by his former lover, American magazine publisher Kimberly Quinn.

"I believe these issues would never have been raised had I not decided in September that I could not walk away from my youngest son," said Blunkett, who has gone to court to establish that he fathered Quinn's 2-year-old son.

"Any perception of this application being speeded up requires me to take responsibility," he told reporters. He denied that he had been dishonest about his role.

Britain's only blind legislator, the divorced Blunkett gained some

'I believe these issues would never have been raised had I not decided in September that I could not walk away from my youngest son.'

— David Blunkett
British politician

Light-rail network being reborn perhaps

GENEVA (AP) — The old-fashioned streetcar, which had nearly clanged into oblivion by the end of the 20th century, has been making a sleek comeback with new lines opening from Sydney to Paris, Buenos Aires to Houston.

Now Geneva is laying the latest tracks in the trend.

The city on Wednesday opened a new tram line, part of an ambitious project to rebuild a network that only nine years ago had dwindled to just one route.

Passengers will be able to hop on a streetcar in the suburbs and arrive at the main train station 10 minutes later. A journey from one side of the city to the other will be almost halved to just

20 minutes.

More than 35 cities around the world have introduced new tram systems in the last 25 years, and many more have expanded their existing networks to try to solve congestion problems while curbing inner-city pollution.

"It's very symptomatic of a general trend to introduce more sustainable modes of transport," said Laureñt Dauby, light-rail chief for the Brussels-based public transport think tank UITP. "I think that increasingly cities are challenged to provide quality of living in urban areas."


UITP estimates that the length of light-rail track around the world will increase 40 percent by 2020.

In the European Union alone, 35 cities are expanding tram networks — including Brussels, London, Madrid and Paris — while a further 18 are introducing entirely new systems.

Cities across the United States — such as Houston, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City — have also built from scratch, while Washington, D.C., has just started construction on a light-rail system.

There are some problems associated with construction of rail systems.

Cities have to meet the upfront costs of laying tracks. And a single tram costs about \$2.7 million, compared with just \$400,000 for a new extended-length bus.

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Sports Day

Pampa's Penrod breaks own record with 190 pts.

By MICHAEL J. STEVENS
Sports Editor

The Pampa Swimming and Diving Team took part in the annual Seminole Invitational Dec. 9-10, in Seminole. The Harvesters finished eighth out of 16 teams from Texas and New Mexico.

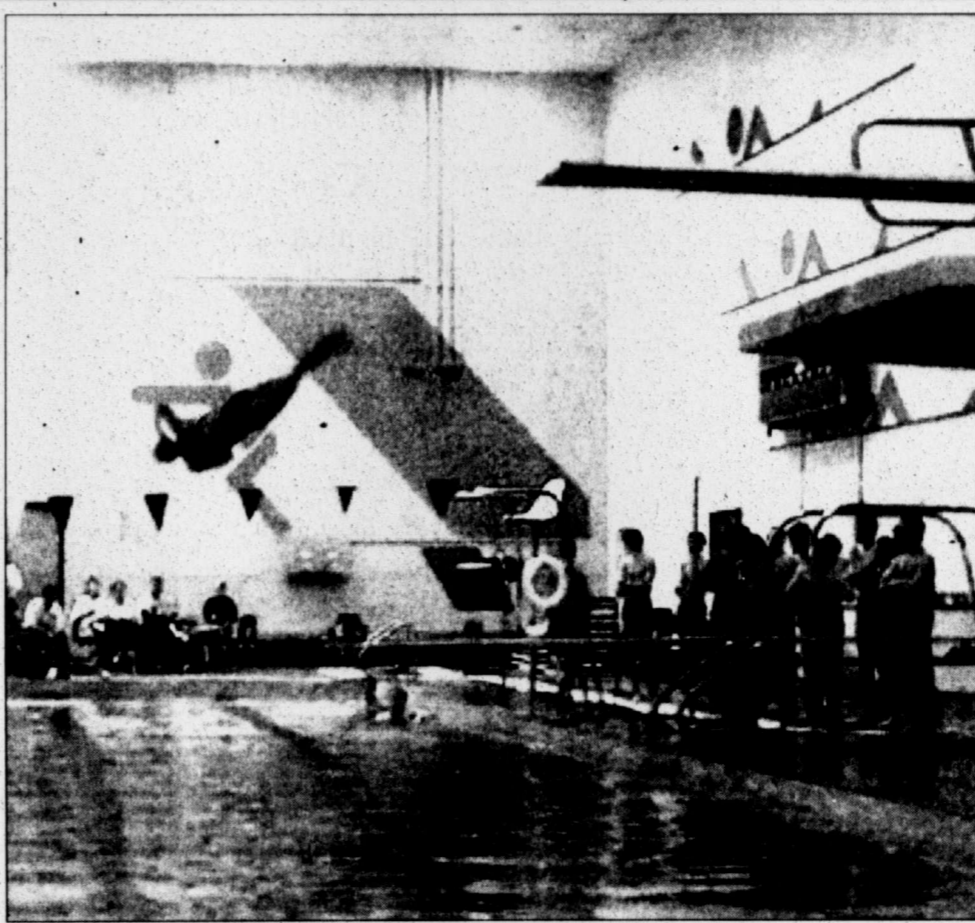
The meet began with diving. Thomas Wilson, competing in just his third diving meet, placed 14th.

Head Coach Greg Miller says his team is led by senior Whitney Penrod, who broke her own six dive record with 190 points. Penrod's nearest competitor had 112 points. "Whitney is a hard working athlete, and is preparing herself for a return trip to the state meet in February," said Miller.

Angela Henthorn (100 free style), Kirby Broaddus (200 free style) and Lydia West (500 free style) led the girls' effort, setting the pace for the rest of the team.

Juniors Tyler Wishon (50 & 100 free style), Derek Wishon (200 individual medley & 100 butterfly), Dalton Elliott (200 & 500 free style) and Thomas Wilson (100 breast & diving), scored all the points for the boys' team. Their time in the 200 Medley Relay and the 200 Free Relay still stands as second best in the region. "We are hoping to move into the number one spot by the end of our next meet," said Wilson. "That will give us a chance to go state in February," said Wilson.

The team's next meet is this weekend in Midland.



Pampa's Whitney Penrod is shown during one of her dives during the recent Seminole Invitational. Penrod, a senior, broke her own six dive record at the meet by scoring 190 points. The Harvesters finished eighth out of 16 teams from Texas and New Mexico competing in Seminole. Penrod and Pampa swimming and diving teammates will be in Midland this weekend.

CO-ED WRESTLING

If a girl wins without taking the mat, does she really win?

While writing Tuesday's article regarding the Pampa Harvester wrestling team's trip to Kansas last weekend to take part in the Tiger Invitational tournament, I was taken aback by the fact wrestler Richard Leal was not allowed to wrestle the opponent he was seeded against in his opening match because that opponent was a girl.

I spoke with Head Coach Josh Cadenhead via the phone that afternoon to try to gain some insight as to what happened. "We had no real control over how the wrestlers were seeded and Richard was matched with a girl," said Cadenhead. "And according to UIL rules, no Texas boy wrestler shall wrestle a girl wrestler at any time."

He's right. Texas has separate divisions for boys and girls which is mandated by the University Interscholastic League, the state's governing body for high school athletics. According to Section 1340 of the UIL rules and regulations, "There shall be the following divisions":

(A) High School Boys
(B) High School Girls
Directly below this mandate you find, "No high school boy shall wrestle against a high school girl and vice versa."

So what's the big deal? I thought the tournament was in Kansas. Shouldn't whatever rules that govern Dorothy and Toto then apply to this tournament? "No. The UIL implemented a rule that went into affect this year that basically states any Texas high school team competing in

another state shall do so abiding by UIL rules," said Cadenhead. Enter the "No Texas boy shall ever wrestle a girl" rule. Thus, Leal had to forfeit. He was moved directly to a consolation match, which he lost. Can you blame him? He thought he was going to wrestle. He prepared for it. He practiced and trained for it. The girl by the way, won her first match.

Then claimed the championship in her weight class without having to wrestle another match because her opponents had to forfeit. Where's the challenge in that? How can you brag about your skill to your

pals when you can't be sure you even have skill? I spoke with Mark Cousins of the UIL Wednesday afternoon. I asked him why this had to happen. "Because Pampa is a Texas team," he said. Okay. But if we are going to offer girls wrestling, why not co-ed? "We implemented separate divisions for boys and girls in 1998 to allow the girls' division the chance to grow," said Cousins. "We also had members of our committee and a number of school superintendents who expressed concern over co-ed wrestling at that time," he said. Will Texas ever offer co-ed wrestling? "No," said Cousins.

According to Cousins, Texas and Hawaii are the only two states that offer boys' and girls' wrestling divisions. He informed me the numbers for girls participating in wrestling in Texas have been growing significantly over the years.

See CO-ED, Page 9

Michael J. Stevens
Sports Editor



Banding together



Pampa News photo

Zed Richards, center left, presents a "Remember the Tradition" wristband to Greg Brown, representing the Dennis Cavalier Scholarship Fund along with Mary Ann Richards, far left, and Paulette Hinkle, far right, of M&H Leasing. Inspired by a recent column in the Sports Day section of The Pampa News, Hinkle ordered the green wristbands in order to help raise money for the scholarship fund in memory of the late athletic director. The wristbands are available from M&H Leasing, 1945 N. Hobart, for \$5 each with a limit of five per person. M&H Leasing will donate to the scholarship fund from the proceeds.

Wendell Palmer named to Track and Field Masters Hall of Fame

By MICHAEL J. STEVENS
Sports Editor

Congratulations are in order for Pampa's Wendell Palmer. Palmer was inducted earlier this month into the USA Track & Field Masters Hall of Fame.

The 72-year old Palmer is a well traveled and well recognized Masters athlete with a number of championships and records to his credit.

Earlier this year, while competing in the Jackrabbit Invitational in Odessa, he claimed first place finishes in the Weight Pentathlon, Discus, Weight Throw, Shot Put and Hammer.

He is also a 17 time National Discus Champion. Among his other accolades, Palmer has received the Panhandle Sports Hall of Fame Achievement Award four

times (1989, 1995, 1999 and 2002).

According to Masters Long Distance Running Chairman, Norm Green, Palmer and 12 others were presented as members of the 2004 Masters Hall of Fame during a meeting in Portland, Oregon on Dec. 3.

"Wendell will receive a plaque with his name inscribed on it to commemorate this honor," said Green. "He should receive that plaque by February."

Those receiving this honor were voted on and approved by members of the Masters Track and Field committee, the Masters Long Distance Running committee and previous members of the Masters Hall of Fame.

You can learn more about Palmer by clicking on to www.evaa.nu/DOCUMENT/dunton/2004/nov5.html, and scrolling down a bit.

The USATF web address is www.usatf.org.

Jones suing BALCO for \$25 million

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Olympic track star Marion Jones filed a defamation lawsuit against BALCO head Victor Conte, who told a national TV audience that he gave her steroids and watched her inject herself with them.

Jones is seeking \$25 million in the suit, alleging Conte tarnished her reputation when he made the statement Dec. 3 on ABC's "20/20."

Conte and three others connected to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative were indicted in February by a federal grand jury for a variety of alleged offenses, including illegally distributing steroids.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco, said Jones passed a lie detector test and includes a statement from her doctor saying she never used steroids.

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Playing NBA season has finally He has rea of seven acquired hi become a f

"He's fea everything instinct, bu play with Brown said

In other night, it wa Cleveland Washington 90; Detroit 96; Memph 69; San Ar Phoenix 10

Dickau Hornets' 20 of the fou Orleans the David V help the I skid.

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Gang Green



Pampa News photo by BEN BRISCOE

Pampa Junior High 7th grade Lady Harvesters Lariat Lowrey (left), and Sammie Pearson (center) appear focused on a Dumas player who fights for control of the ball during this past Monday's home game.

Dickau leads Hornets to first home win

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dan Dickau can play in the NBA, after all.

The point guard scored a career-high 23 points — including a four-point play on a 32-footer at the third-quarter buzzer — to help the New Orleans Hornets win at home for the first time this season, 98-89 over Golden State on Wednesday night.

"I don't look like your typical NBA player, so I get a lot of people that pull for me because of that," the 6-foot, 190-pound Dickau said. "I'm getting a chance to play now, and I'm trying to make the most of it. We start winning a little bit more and it's definitely going to be a great experience."

Playing for his fourth team in three NBA seasons, the former Gonzaga star has finally caught on in New Orleans. He has reached double figures in five of seven games since the Hornets acquired him from Dallas — and he's become a fan favorite.

"He's fearless. He still doesn't know everything yet. He just plays off of instinct, but he's been a pleasure to play with," Hornets forward P.J. Brown said.

In other NBA games Wednesday night, it was: Denver 100, Boston 99; Cleveland 112, Portland 88; Miami 98, Washington 93; Toronto 96, Minnesota 90; Detroit 94, New York 93; Chicago 96, Memphis 88; Houston 92, Atlanta 69; San Antonio 94, Orlando 91; and Phoenix 108, Utah 86.

Dickau scored 12 points in the Hornets' 20-5 run through the first part of the fourth quarter that gave New Orleans the lead for good.

David Wesley added 18 points to help the Hornets snap an 11-game skid.

Troy Murphy had 25 points and 12 rebounds for Golden State.

"This was a dangerous game against a team that hasn't won for a long time ... and we didn't show up," Murphy said. "They've got a lot of guys who

are hungry, who haven't had a chance to play a lot in the NBA."

Suns 108, Jazz 86

At Phoenix, Joe Johnson had a season-high 30 points to help the league-leading Suns improve to 19-3.

It's the NBA's best start since Dallas — led by current Suns point guard Steve Nash — started 21-3 two years ago.

"I don't look like your typical NBA player, so I get a lot of people that pull for me because of that."

— Dan Dickau
Point Guard, New Orleans Hornets

Amare Stoudemire added 19 points for Phoenix, which won its sixth straight.

Spurs 94, Magic 91

At San Antonio, Tim Duncan had 24 points and 14 rebounds for the Spurs.

Manu Ginobili added 17 points for the Spurs, who lost Tony Parker to a groin injury. Orlando's Steve Francis scored 20 points, but missed a tying 3-pointer in the final seconds.

Cavaliers 112, Trail Blazers 88

At Cleveland, LeBron James scored 25 points, and Ira Newble added a season-high 18 in Cleveland's ninth straight home victory.

James also had 11 rebounds and seven assists, and Jeff McInnis added 18 points.

Darius Miles led Portland with 21 points.

Nuggets 100, Celtics 99

At Boston, Carmelo Anthony's scored 25 points — including a jumper with 3.6 seconds left — to lift the Nuggets to their seven victory in 10

games.

Paul Pierce had 31 points for the Celtics. He had a chance to win it, but his jumper at the buzzer bounced off the rim.

Marcus Camby added 16 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks for the Nuggets.

Pistons 94, Knicks 93

At New York, Chauncey Billups hit two free throws with 2.6 seconds left for Detroit. Richard Hamilton scored 29 points for Detroit.

Stephon Marbury had 18 points for New York, but fumbled a pass in the final seconds before missing an underhanded 18-footer as time expired. Jamal Crawford led the Knicks with 25 points.

Heat 98, Wizards 93

At Washington, Dwyane Wade had 29 points and nine assists to help Miami win its sixth straight game.

Shaquille O'Neal added 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Heat, who swept the four-game season series with Washington.

Gilbert Arenas had 22 points for Washington.

Raptors 96, Timberwolves 90

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had a season-high 24 points and 14 rebounds as the Raptors snapped a seven-game skid.

Kevin Garnett, who had 23 points and 15 rebounds, was knocked to the floor late in the game by Matt Bonner.

Garnett and Latrell Sprewell went after the rookie forward before being held back. Bonner was ejected, and Sprewell received a technical foul for shoving him.

Bulls 96, Grizzlies 88

At Memphis, Tenn., Eddy Curry had 20 points to help Chicago win its second road game. Pau Gasol scored 24 points for Memphis.

Rockets 92, Hawks 69

At Houston, Tracy McGrady had 25 points, and Yao Ming scored 23 to lead Houston.

Al Harrington had 21 points and eight rebounds for Atlanta.

Cowboys, Arlington extend agreement deadline

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Officials for Arlington and the Dallas Cowboys have agreed to extend the deadline to finalize a stadium deal detailing who pays for what.

Both sides said the deal may not get done by year's end because of the holidays and the massive amount of paperwork involved.

If everything is not signed by Dec. 31, the master agreement — struck by the Cowboys and Arlington officials in August — allows either side to kill the deal and walk away. But both agreed to extend the deadline until the first few weeks of January.

"I'm not going to sign anything until we've had a chance to go over it with a

fine-tooth comb," Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck said, adding that there has been no hitch in the deal so far.

The City Council is to be briefed on the status of negotiations at its special meeting Monday.

Denis Braham, a Houston-based attorney representing the Cowboys, said neither side is threatening to end discussions. He said he expected the deal to be finalized by the first week of January at the latest.

"We don't intend to terminate it if we're very close," said Braham, a lawyer with Winstead, Sechrest & Minick.

Such a delay would not be unusual, said Marlin Mosby, managing director of Public Financial

Management, the city's financial adviser on the stadium deal.

"I get no sense at all that this deal is in trouble," said

Mosby, whose job is to hire several financial firms to sell the stadium construction bonds.

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-16 CRYPTOQUOTE

DZDOX WGV NGV QDKK LIU

WGVX RIGQP IO PLDDY LD

YIPDPDP. STQ VIQ LIU

WGVX EOFDVPJ. — NFNDOI

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: HATRED IS NEVER ANYTHING BUT FEAR — IF YOU FEARED NO ONE, YOU WOULD HATE NO ONE. — HUGH DOWNS

Co-ed

Continued from Page 8

Adding the numbers for girls signing up in co-ed states are extremely low by comparison.

If I am anything when writing these columns, I am honest. That being said, I cannot say I am a real proponent of girls' wrestling anyway. As one who wrestled in junior high and high school, I am certainly not a fan of co-ed wrestling. Have you ever attended a wrestling match? Not one involving Triple H, The Rock, Jell-O, mud or a Mawashi. Take in a junior high or high school wrestling match, then let me know what you think. At least Texas and Hawaii have the capacity to restrict participation to same sex matches, which is how it should be if we are to offer and grow girls' wrestling. There is just something not completely right with a teenage boy wrestling a

teenage girl. Take morality out of the picture for a moment and think hard about — and consider — the reality of co-ed wrestling.

So what then can coach Cadenhead do to assure no member of his team will ever go through what Léal had to last week? Aside from not taking part in tournaments beyond the Lone Star state's borders, Cousins suggested, "He will need to do some advance research. I would suggest if he takes his team to another out-of-state tournament, that he try to find out if there are any girls competing and if so, in what weight divisions." A fair statement actually. The bumper of course would be telling any of your guys they can go, they just can't wrestle. Heck, that's a cheerleader, isn't it?

Interactive Bonus: Would you support co-ed wrestling? I would like to know. E-mail me at sports@thepampnews.com. I will post results early next week.

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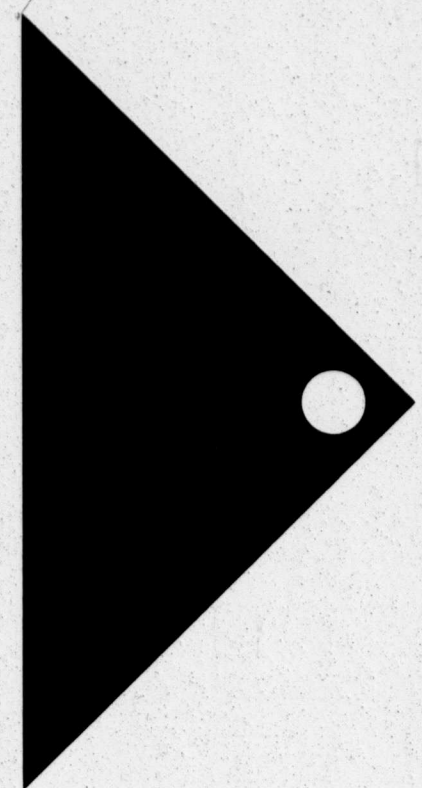
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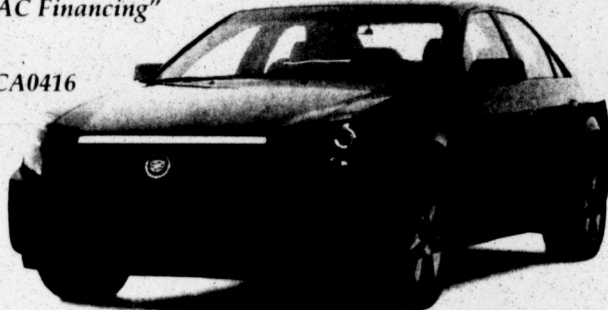


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Company paying \$12 million over mutual fund sales

WASHINGTON (AP)—A company that sold high-fee mutual funds to military officers has agreed to pay \$12 million to settle regulators' charges that it used misleading sales material to promote the funds.

The Securities and Exchange Commission and the National Association of Securities Dealers, the brokerage industry's self-policing

organization, announced Wednesday the settlements with First Command Financial Planning Inc. over sales of the so-called "contractual plan" funds.

First Command neither admitted nor denied wrongdoing in the records but did agree to be censured and to refrain from future violations of securities laws.

The NASD issued a warn-

ing to investors on contractual plan mutual funds, which charge commissions that can take 50 percent of the investor's contributions in the first year. Also called systematic investment plans or periodic payment plans, they allow investors to accumulate shares of a mutual fund by making monthly payments, usually as little as \$50, over a long investment period of 10,

15 or 25 years.

The fund plans all but disappeared from civilian markets in the 1970s and now are sold almost exclusively to military personnel.

The NASD also alleged that First Command, based in Fort Worth, Texas, "inappropriately" confronted a customer who complained, failed to maintain e-mail and adequate supervisory procedures,

and filed an inaccurate regulatory report.

James Provo, a First Command district supervisor based in Charleston, S.C., agreed in a settlement with the NASD to pay a \$25,000 civil fine and to be suspended for 30 days from acting in any supervisory capacity. He neither admitted nor denied wrongdoing.

The \$12 million that First

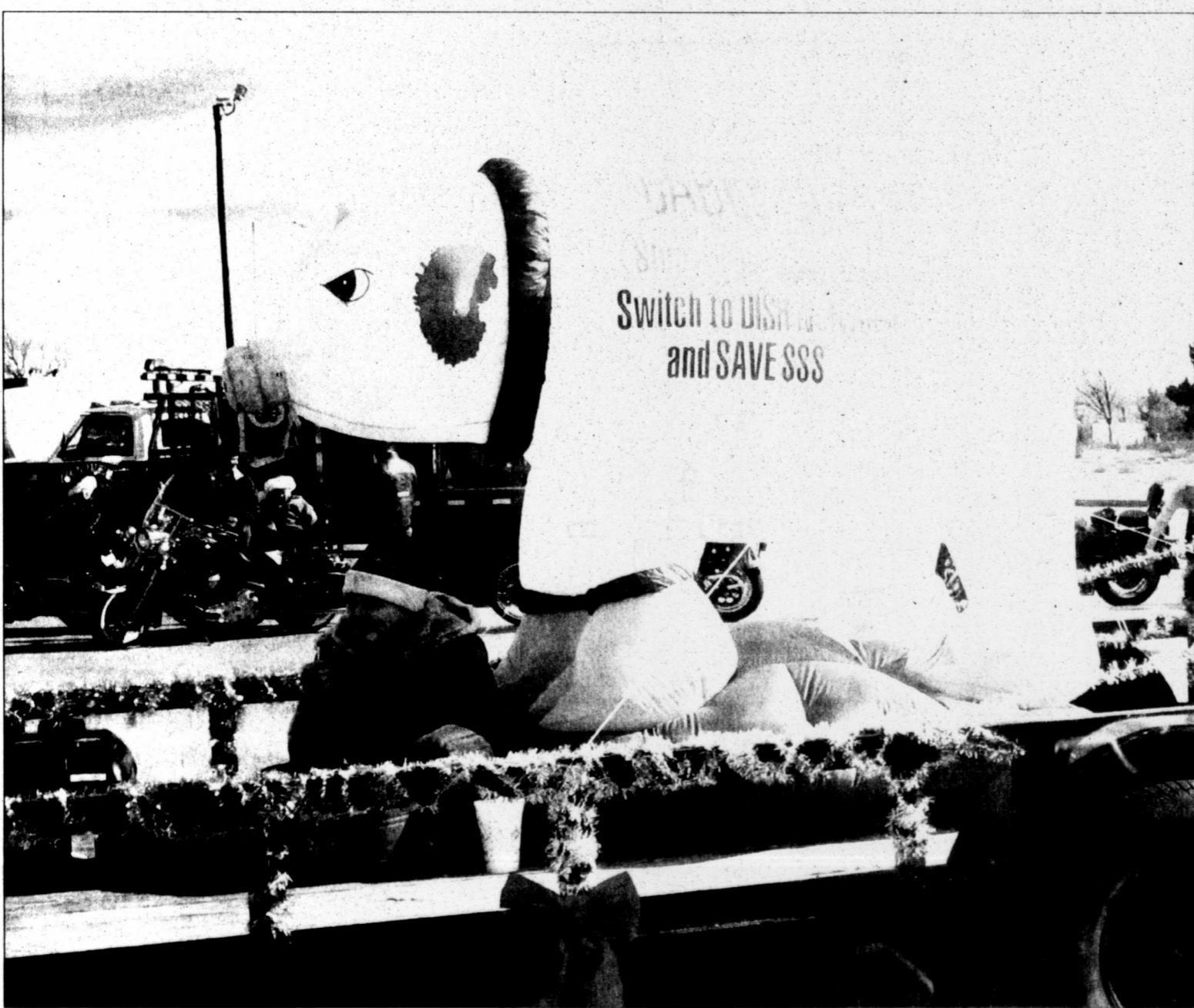
Command is paying will go to reimburse certain customers and for investor education for the military. After the customers are compensated, some \$8 million is expected to remain for investor education.

First Command also agreed to hire an independent consultant approved by the SEC and the NASD to review its sales practices, including the scripts used by sales agents.

Christmas Parade



Bill Hoch, Pampa High School Rodeo Club, holds Old Glory aloft.



Abbie Hathcoat on the float sponsored by Pampa Communications-Dish Network.

Write-in winner of disallowed ballots

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A complete review of disqualified ballots in San Diego's mayoral race showed Wednesday that write-in candidate Donna Frye would have ousted Mayor Dick Murphy had those votes been counted.

The final tally showed that 5,547 voters wrote in Frye's name but failed to darken the adjoining bubble — enough votes to eclipse Murphy's 2,108-vote margin of victory in a three-way race.

Frye, a city councilwoman who launched her write-in bid five weeks before the Nov. 2 election, remained undecided on her

next move. She has until Jan. 7 — or 30 days from the election's certification — to pursue a legal challenge.

Sally McPherson, San Diego County's registrar of voters, determined that ballots with unfilled bubbles cannot be counted under state election law. A Superior Court judge upheld her position last month in a challenge filed by the League of Women Voters of San Diego.

"Law says that you got to fill in the oval. I don't think our position will change — it will not change," McPherson said Wednesday. Murphy began his second term last week.

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