

HIGH 69 LOW 41

See expanded weather on Page 2

Pampa hangs tough fight in Amarillo. SEE PAGE 7



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# County accepts bid for copying deed records, field notes

By MARILYN POWERS Staff Writer

A bid by an Amarillo company was accepted by Gray County commissioners at their 9 a.m. meeting this morning, providing that the company's work meets with the approval of County Clerk Susan Winborne.

Lason was one of three companies submitting bids to copy old deed records and field notes onto compact discs and microfilm. Their bid of \$38,532 was the lowest by more than \$6,000.

LGS of Houston submitted a bid of \$44,713.50, and Kellpro of

Watery reflection

Duncan, Okla. bid \$55,321.50 for the work.

The imaging will involve 31,950 photostatic images and 6.942 nonphotostatic records.

"Lason did imaging for Moore County," Winborne said. "They're District Attorney's crime victim satisfied with Lason's work. I'd like to go see those."

Commissioners agreed to hire LGS of Houston for the work if Lason's imaging did not meet with Winborne's approval.

The bids were opened at 10 a.m. during the commissioner's meeting in the second-floor courtroom at the county courthouse, 205 N. Russell.

A bid of \$1,478 from Kinnith Hambright for tax delinquent property in McLean was accepted. The land is Block 66, Lots 10, 11, 12 and 13 of Original Town McLean.

A resolution supporting the 31st assistance program was passed. District Attorney Lynn Switzer told commissioners that it was time to once again apply for a grant to help fund the program, and the resolution would be included with the grant application.

Switzer said that in 2006, sexual assaults and other types of crimes which involved injuries increased two-tenths of one percent over 2005. The number of child abuse cases handled by her office for that time period remained roughly the same, while domestic violence declined by six-tenths of one percent.

Victims were contacted in 97 district cases in 2006 and assistance was offered, Switzer said.

"Less than one percent turned down the help," she said. "We also help victims of non-violent crimes."

Xochitl Valenzuela is the victim's assistance coordinator in the district attorney's office.

See COUNTY, Page 3

Wind farm

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Trees along Red Deer Creek are reflected in the ripples of the creek as it flows through Central Park following weekend rains. The forecast calls for mild and windy conditions, with a possibility of more raing

PGWCD meeting focuses on Pickens, other leases

#### lease meet set April 20 Landowners and Ag Producers from across the state are making it their business to learn more about the development and benefits of wind farm leases. The North Rolling Plains Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and First Ag Credit, will co-host a meeting at the Pampa Chamber of Commerce meeting room at 10 a.m. April 20. The Pampa Chamber Office is located at 200 North Ballard Street, just north of First United Methodist Church. Anyone interested in wind energy is encouraged to attend Presenters will provide information about the environmental, wildlife, economic impacts and other general concerns

when leasing their land for See WIND, Page 3

the

for wind energy utilization.

The primary purpose of

the meeting is to discuss

items landowners and ag

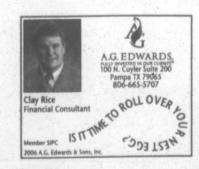
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meeting.

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By DAVID BOWSER Staff Writer

WHITE DEER -- When the Panhandle Water Ground Conservation District granted High Impact Pumping Permits to Boone Pickens and Mesa Water, Inc., five years ago there was some conjecture that before Pickens would be able to sell his water, his permits would

He wasn't. They were about to. The High Impact Pumping Permits were due to expire in May, as are High Impact Pumping Permits issued to other landowners within the district, but because of changes in the district's rules, Pickens and Mesa were able to roll their expiring High Impact Pumping Permits over into Initial Pumping Permits, and The total amount of land under the this time the whole process was a lot six permits is about 78,633 acres. less contentious.

Conservation District Friday approved four Initial Pumping Permits for Pickens and three more for Mesa.

Mike Powell, a Dallas attorney for Pickens and Mesa, said that Pickens owns the water rights on some of the land included in the permits, while Mesa owns the others.

All six permits contain special provisions that allow Pickens, and Mesa to protect for the next five years the water rights they hold, but requires them to apply for drilling permits from the district in order to produce the water.

About 58,000 acres of that were The Panhandle Ground Water water rights Mesa bought from Quixx, a wholly owned subsidiary of what was then Southwestern Public

> Service electric utility. "It went a lot smoother this time," said Jason Green, who represents Donley County on the PGWCD

The board approved new Initial Pumping Permit for the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority for 469.74 acres of water rights that they bought from James A. Epps out of a 659.74-acre plot. The board amended Epps' permit to reflect that it is now for 220 acres.

The board also approved a transfer

of 12 acres of water rights under an IPP from Epps to CRMWA.

The district board also approved three eight-year agricultural water conservation equipment loans totaling \$112,400 for three Carson County farmers. The 5.9 percent loans will be used to buy sprinkler irrigation systems.

The board approved the sale of two lots of tax delinquent property in Carson County. They approved the sale of nine lots in Donley County. They approved the sale of 10 lots in Potter County.

Floyd Beaver of Panhandle bought two lots at 508 Chester in Panhandle for \$50 each.

See WATER, Page 3



Wednesday, April 4 & Thursday, April 5 • 9:00AM-9:00PM Friday, April 6 & Saturday, April 7 • 9:00AM-6:00PM **NEW BOOKS ADDED DAILY - DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT SALE** 

#### NEXT DAY FORECAST

Tuesday

Wednesday





Partly cloudy Mostly sunny

Partly cloudy

Thursday

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 69. Northwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 41. East wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Wednesday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 60. East southeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 40. South wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Thursday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a high near 59. South southeast wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Thursday Night: A 30 percent chance of showers, Mostly cloudy, with a low around 41. East wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

() This information brought to you by...



### Services tomorrow

STALL, Gertrude V. McMinn — 2 p.m. Carmichael-Whatley Colonial Chapel.

**JOHNSON**, Shelby D. — Graveside services 10 a.m. in Mobeetie Cemetery.

MOORE, Ellen Margaret - Noon, Queen of Angel Catholic Church, Dickinson.

### Landfill closed this weekend

The Pampa Landfill will Saturday. be closed this weekend for

City officials said the landfill will be closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It will reopen at 8 a.m. April 9.

The landfill is normally open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon on

The first Saturday of each month, the landfill is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but because of the Easter holiday weekend, the landfill will be closed the first Saturday of April. It will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., however, on Saturday, April 14.

### PEDC to meet Wednesday

Development Corporation executive director. will meet at 7 a.m. Wednesday.

The only thing on their

The Pampa Economic sion to review applicants for

The board will meet in the Nona Payne Room of the Pampa Community agenda is an executive ses- Building, 200 N. Ballard.

### St. Vincent to sell soft drinks

Church is having a fundraiser that soda drinkers should like. They are currently taking orders through April 15 for their Coke Truckload Sale.

Each case contains 24 plastic bottles that are 20 ounces and the cost per case is \$18.50, which makes each bottle 77 cents.

for sale are Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Dr Pepper, Diet Cherry Vanilla Dr Pepper,

St. Vincent de Paul Vault, Barq's Root Beer, MinuteMaid Lemonade, Nestea Cool, Fanta and four varieties of flavored Dasani

> Payment is required when the order is placed. Those purchasing the soft drinks will pick them up on April 21 at St. Vincent school

For a complete list of A few of the items that are items offered or to place an order, call St. Vincent church office at 665-8933, contact any parish member or go by the parish office at 2300 North Hobart.

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### Stocks

The following grain quotations are provided by Attebury Grain of White Deer. Wheat

The following 9:30 a.m. N.Y. Stock Market quotations are furnished by Edward Jones & Co. of Pampa. OXY ......49.29

30.65 Cabot Oil Gas . Coca Cola 48.23 +0.23 HAL .31.82 +0.08 106.48 +0.03

24.75 +0.06 43.14 +0.16 XCEL 75.30 -0.15 .76.74 -1.05 XOM Nat'l Oilwell. 26.20 +0.14 28.44 -0.02 44.85 -0.20 31.13 -0.15 MCD . Pioneer Nat 43.13 +0.02 -0.42

67.87 -0.48

25.75 +0.29

CVX 47.03 +0.08 OKE..... .44.98 -0.02 669.00

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### West Texas Crude. .65.87

### **Obituaries**

McLEAN - Shelby D. Panhandle area Johnson, 87, died Sunday, April 1, 2007 in McLean, Texas.

Graveside services will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 3, 2007 in Mobeetie Cemetery with Rev. Jerry Johnson, officiating. cousin, Arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-Whatley Funeral Directors.

Mr. Johnson was born ing in 1979. He April 21, 1919, in Gageby, was preceded in Texas. He had lived in the

most of his life. He married Bonnie Faye Childress Oct. 11, 1939. She died April 21, 1988. He owned operated and Johnson Dragline Service since 1958, retirdeath by



Shelby D. Johnson, 87

daughter, Virginia Treat, and two sisters, Fern Wilson

and Vivian Frye. Survivors include one daughter, Janice Matthews of Dawn, Texas; three sons, Gerald Johnson of McLean, Johnson of Bellevue, Texas, and Jack Johnson of Wellington, Texas; three sisters, Mary

She was known by

her grandchildren

Survivors

two

as "Bangaw."

include

Luther of Amarillo, Texas, Juanita Martin of Arizona, and Georgie Jarrett of Colorado Springs, Colo.; one brother, Archie Johnson of Houston, Texas; 21 grandchildren; and 26 greatgrandchildren.

Memorials may be to a favorite charity.

Sign the online register at www.carmichael-whatley.com

### Gertrude V. McMinn Stall, 90

Stall, 90, died Saturday, March 31, 2007, in Pampa, Texas.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday at Carmichael-Whatley Colonial Chapel been a Pampa reswith Glen Walton, minister of the Bell Ave. Church of Christ in Amarillo, and Rev. John Green, pastor of the Lighthouse Church in Dumas, officiating.

Burial will be in Fairview Cemetery under the direction of Carmichael-Whatley Funeral Directors.

Mrs. Stall was born November 5, 1916, in Kirkland, Texas. She mar-

Gertrude V. McMinn ried Tommy Stall on "Woman of the Year." She December 23, 1933, in was a member of Mary Ellen Hollis, Oklahoma. and Harvester Church of Christ.

He preceded her in death on Jan. 29, 1989. She had ident since 1961. She was the utilization review clerk in medical records Highland General Hospital retiring after 20 years.

Mrs. Stall was a Professional Women's Club where she was a past presi-

daughters, Mary Ruth Stall of Pampa and Sonja Young and husband Jesse Dale of Stall Dumas; two sisters, Eunice Mills

member of the Business and of Weatherford and Faye Mullinax of Amarillo; one brother, Floyd McMinn of dent and was also honored as Pampa; two grandsons:

Terry Young and wife Cynthia of Bryan and Roger Young and wife Jessica of Fort Smith, Arkansas; six great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by a son, Tommy Leon Stall, in 1941, her parents, G. D. and Ruthie Passmore McMinn, a brother, Lloyd McMinn, and a sister, Nina Faye Mills.

MEMORIALS: BSA Hospice, 800 N. Sumner, Pampa, TX 79065.

Sign the online register at www.carmichael-whatley.com

### Ellen Margaret Moore, 93

HOUSTON — Ellen Margaret Moore, 93, of Houston, departed this life her three husbands, George grandchildren; and several Saturday, March 31, 2007, at a Houston hospital.

Born in Rosita, Colo., on January 26, 1914, one of three children born to Robert and Margaret Cowan Payne. She grew up in Walsenburg, Colo., and spent all of her married years in Pampa, Texas. Ellen lived in Baytown for nine years before moving to Houston in 2005. She enjoyed dancing, playing the piano and was an avid quilter.

Hamlin, Tom Crummy and D.N. "Doc" Moore; her daughter, Margaret Hamlin Snider; and brother, John Alexander Payne. Ellen is sur-

vived by two daughters, Lorene Rodriguez of Houston, and Wanda Bevis of



Moore

she was preceded in death by grandchildren; 22 great- Dickinson, Rev. Stephen, P. nieces, nephews

and cousins in Colorado and New Mexico. Her family will receive friends at

Crespo & Jirrels Funeral Home from 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, with rosary at 6 p.m. Mass of Christian

burial will be Hallsville, Texas; a sister, noon, Tuesday, April 3, 2007

In addition to her parents, Walsenburg, Colo.; 12 Church, 4100 Hwy. 3, celebrant. Zigrang, Honoring the family as pallbearers will be Rick Hausman, Chris Rodriguez, Colin Rodriguez, Courtney Rodriguez, Carl Theiss, Bill Autrey, Derek Theiss, James Autrey and Shane Chauncey.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Crespo & Jirrels Funeral and Cremation Services, 6123 Garth Road, Baytown, 281-839-0700. To view an obituary or post a tribute to the family, visit, Read of at Queen of Angel Catholic www.crespoandjirrels.com.

### **Emergency Services**

the following incidents for the weekend Somerville, the 700 block of Murphy. period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Friday, March 30 Five traffic stops were made. A traffic complaint was reported in

the 100 block of Starkweather. Accidents were reported in the 1800 block of North Hobart and the 1200 block of North Hobart.

An abandoned vehicle was reported in the 800 block of West.

A suspicious vehicle was reported near the intersection of Huff and

Calls concerning animals were received from the 800 block of East Frederic, the 1700 block of Grape, the 1100 block of Terrace, the 1400 block of Williston, the 2700 block of Seminole, the 300 block of Somerville, the 1200 block of Garland, the 2700 block of Cherokee and the 2400 block of Navajo.

Found property was reported in the

police department lobby. Civil matters were reported in the 700 block of North Banks and the 1100 block of Neel.

Welfare checks were made in the 1300 block of North Hobart and near the intersection of Highways 60 and 70.

Agency assistance was provided in the 200 block of Russell, the 1500 block of North Banks, on Highway 60 West and the 1000 block of Browning, resulting in one arrest.

Warrant service was attempted at two locations resulting in one arrest. Criminal trespass was reported in the

2200 block of Dogwood. Suspicious persons were reported in the 100 block of North Cuyler, the 800 block of North Sumner and near the intersection of Finch and Somerville.

One alarm was reported. An open door was reported in the 700 block of East Kingsmill. A domestic disturbance was reported

in the 1200 block of Darby. An assault with no injuries was reported in the police department

lobby. A gas drive-off was reported at Murphy USA in the 2800 block of West 28th resulting in one arrest. Value of

the gas was \$52.58. Saturday, March 31 Seventeen traffic stops were made,

resulting in two arrests. A traffic complaint was reported in the 700 block of Murphy. Calls concerning animals were

Pampa Police Department reported reported in the 300 block of 1800 block of North Sumner. the 700 block of Naida, the 800 block of Brunow, the 800 block of Campbell, the 700 block of North Wells and the 1400 block of Naida.

Civil matters were reported in the 500 block of South Barnes, the 800 block of Somerville and on two occasions in the police department lobby.

Welfare checks were made in the 600 block of West Foster and the 100 block of East Craven.

Open doors were reported in the 100 block of South Cuyler and the 800

block of Magnolia. Suspicious persons were reported in the 1100 block of South Hobart and the 1900 block of Duncan.

911 hang-ups were received from the 700 block of North Hobart and the 1300 block of Starweather. Violation of city ordinances were

reported in the 1400 block of South Hobart, near the intersection of Twiford and Lefors and in the 300 block of Warren where stopping, standing or parking in a prohibited area was report-

Harassment was reported in the 2200 block of North Wells.

One suicide attempt was reported. A runaway was reported in the 2700 block of Navajo.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1600 block of Russell, the 700 block of North Dwight, near the intersection of 19th and Sumner and the 600 block of Hazel, where fighting was reported.

Domestic disturbances were reported in the 1200 block of Darby and in the 400 block of Perry.

One alarm was reported. Burglary was reported in the 1000

block of North Dwight resulting in one Sunday, April 1 Twenty-six traffic stops were made,

resulting in five arrests. Accidents were reported at the inter-

section of Brown and Municipal and the 1400 block of North Hobart. A suspicious vehicle was reported in

the 400 block of Brown. A traffic complaint was reported at the intersection of Duncan and Sunset.

Calls concerning animals were received from the 1100 block of Prairie, the 1600 block of Somerville, two calls from the 300 block of Somerville and the 700 block of Naida.

Found property was reported in the

Agency assistance was provided in the 1000 block of Neel, the intersection of Kentucky and Price Road, the 1200 block of South Barnes and near the

intersection of Alcock and Nelson. Civil matters were reported in the 500 block of Gillespie, the 1500 block of North Sumner and the 2000 block of

Welfare checks were made in the 500 block of North Faulkner and the 2800 block of Charles.

Harassment was reported in the police department lobby. Violation of city ordinance was reported in the 900 block of Christine.

Suspicious persons were reported in the 1500 block of North Hobart and the 1600 block of Somerville. Disorderly conduct was reported in

the 1000 block of Terry Road, near

23rd and Wells, the 300 block of Hazel, the 900 block of Love and the 700 block of East Browning. Domestic disturbance was reported

in the 600 block of North Christy. Assault was reported in the 1100 block of Cinderella.

A stolen vehicle was reported in the

Two alarms were reported.

1100 block of East Browning.

Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests for the week-

end period. Saturday, March 31

Shawn Lee Weatherford, 36, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of Russell by Pampa Police Department for running a stop sign, no valid driver's license, failure to appear, failure to maintain financial responsibility, displaying a fictitious license plate, displaying expired registration and expired motor vehicle inspection.

Mark Grogan Watkins, 54, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO for expired registration, failure to appear and bail jumping.

David Young Sinches, 52, of Pampa was arrested in the 900 block of Varnon by PPD for no insurance and driving while license suspended.

Sunday, April 1

Gregory Lane Elliott, 25, of Pampa was arrested in the 200 block of North Cuyler by PPD for public intoxication. Jerry Lynn Martin, 27, of Pampa was

See RECORD, Page 3

arrested in the 200 black of North

# Court rebukes administration on greenhouse gas emissions

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court ordered the federal government on Monday to take a fresh look at regulating carbon dioxide emissions from cars, a rebuke to Bush administration policy on global warm-

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In a 5-4 decision, the court said the Clean Air Act gives Environmental Protection Agency the authority to regulate the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from cars.

Greenhouse gases are air

pollutants under the landmark environmental law, Justice John Paul Stevens said in his majority opinion.

The court's four conservative justices — Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas — dissented.

Many scientists believe greenhouse gases, flowing into the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate, are leading to a warming of the Earth, rising sea levels and other marked ecological changes.

The politics of global warming have changed dramatically since the court agreed last year to hear its first global warming case.

"In many ways, the debate has moved beyond this," said Chris Miller, director of the global warming campaign for Greenpeace, one of the environmental groups that sued the EPA. "All the front-runners in the 2008 presidential campaign, both Democrats and Republicans, even the business community, are much further along on this than the Bush adminisCongress last November. The world's leading climate scientists reported in February that global warming is "very likely" caused by man and is so severe that it will "continue for centuries." Former President Al Gore's movie,

Democrats took control of

An Inconvenient Truth making the case for quick action on climate change won an Oscar. Business leaders are saying they are increasingly open to congressional action to reduce

greenhouse gases emissions, of which carbon dioxide is the largest. Carbon dioxide is pro-

duced when fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas are burned. One way to reduce those emissions is to have more fuel-efficient cars.

The court had three questions before it.

-Do states have the right to sue the EPA to challenge tailpipe emissions. its decision?

-Does the Clean Air Act give EPA the authority to regulate tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases?

-Does EPA have the discretion not to regulate those

emissions? The court said yes to the first two questions. On the third, it ordered EPA to reevaluate its contention it has the discretion not to regulate

### county Continued from Page 1

Gray County provided an

in-kind contribution of approximately \$20,000 worth of goods and services in 2006 for the assistance program.

The county will pay 100 percent of an employee's salary for the first 12 weeks to employees qualifying for workmen's compensation, according to policy passed this morning by commis-

sioners.

The employee will also continue to earn sick leave and vacation time during that first 12 weeks.

Beginning with the 13th week, the employee will receive worker's compensation, and the paycheck from the county will be discontinued for the remainder of the period in which the employee is unable to work. The accrual of sick leave and vacation hours will also stop beginning with the 13th week.

"If worker's comp pays,

we're charged against our insurance premium," said County Judge Richard Peet concerning the county's policy to pay salaries for the first 12 weeks.

Commissioners approved removal of two names from the sheriff's office checking account. The two are no longer employed by the sheriff's office.

Payment of bills totaling \$74,258.76 and salaries of \$223,911.49 were also approved.

# Wind

Continued from Page 1

wind farm development. Rod Wetsel and Frank Horak, authors of a booklet titled "Wind Facts: A Landowners Guide," will give an overview of current wind farm development and discuss what landowners

Water

Continued from Page 1

George Lee bought three

lots in Clarendon and four

in Howardwick for a total of

\$1,345. Thelma L. Sutton

bought a lot in Clarendon

for \$450. Larry Lineycomb

bought a lot in Clarendon

Perez bought a lot at 809 S.

Hill Street for \$875. Raul

Antonio Meza bought 824

N. Fairfield for \$3,175;

1406 N. Nelson for \$2,175;

405 N. Lincoln for \$3,275,

and 816 N. Washington for

\$500. CW Day Properties

bought 1408 N. Jefferson

McAdams bought 113 N.

McMasters for \$528.

Tooley Investments bought

304 N. Virginia for \$751

Calvin

\$11.11.

In Potter County, Abdeil

for \$703.

should look for in leases. "From a USDA stand-

point, one of the questions we have been asked many times is, 'How will a wind farm development on my land affect my CRP, my Conservation Plan or my Farm Program Payments?" said John Crowell, North Rolling Plains RC&D coordinator.

NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) representa-

and a lot in Sunset Terrace

The board approved four

applications for domestic

wells. William and Shelley

Dodson and the Mays Trust

have each applied to drill a.

four-inch well or smaller in

They approved two appli-

cations for three-inch stock

wells at Crow Hollow LLC,

a Donley County feed yard

and one for a two-inch

replacement irrigation well

for Curtis Schaefer in

from Dan Steed, a Gray

County farmer, who com-

plained that PETCO, a

petroleum company that

had appeared before the

PGWCD's board last fall,

was not following an agree-

The board also heard

Donley County.

Pampa in Gray County.

for \$151.

tives will be on hand to answer questions on how the development of a wind farm would impact USDA Farm Bill Program participants for conservation planning and technical assistance needs.

For more information contact the North Rolling Plains RC&D office in Pampa at 806-669-0312.

ment it reached with the dis-

ditional permit to allow

PETCO to drill a well and

pump water for use in an

effort to increase production

from aging oil wells. The

gram from the lexas

which oversees oil produc-

tion in the state, before

drilling the water well for

drilled a water well in

February, but didn't apply

for a permit from the Texas

Railroad Commission until

requested a hearing before

the railroad commission

before they considered their

Steed said he had

their flood program.

PETCO

Commission,

apparently

The district issued a con-

trict.

Potter County. Brad Smiley water district required

has applied to drill two PETCO to first get a permit

domestic wells southwest of for their water flooding pro-

Railroad

March.

permit.

# **Airline** quality suffers

WASHINGTON (AP) -Airline hassles are on the rise: More passengers found themselves bumped, their flights delayed or their bags lost last-year than in 2005, according to the annual Airline Quality Rating report released Monday.

The report does not include recent weather-related flight delays such as the ones that left JetBlue and United Airlines planes idling for hours on taxiways.

"They just don't get it yet," said Dean Headley, an associate professor at Wichita State University who co-authored the study with Brent D. Bowen of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

One upside, researchers said, was that the overall number of airline complaints has stabilized since hitting a five-year low in 2005.

Jet Blue, which rated highest on the list for the past three years, was bumped out of the top slot by Hawaiian Airlines, which made its debut on the list this year. The top three on the 18-airline list were Hawaiian, JetBlue and AirTran, while the bottom three were, from worst to best, Atlantic Southeast, American Eagle and Comair.

Industry spokesman David Castelveter blamed the majority of delays on bad weather.



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MANY SIZES IN

CAN SPECIAL

ORDER OTHERS

## Record

Continued from Page 2

Cuyler by PPD for driving while intoxicated, third or more. Sergio Venzor, 30, of

Pampa was arrested by PPD for failure to identify and giving false information. Nicole Sharee Ramey,

24, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO for possession of a controlled substance. Juan Tinajeros, 19, of

Pampa was arrested in the 800 block of East Browning by PPD for tampering with government records with intent to make genuine.

Alisha Been, 46, of Pampa was arrested in the 800 block of East Browning by PPD for violation of probation driving while intoxicated.

Tracey Don Matthews, 39, of Amarillo was arrested by GCSO for violation of court order, two counts of possession of a controlled substance more than four grams and less than 200 grams and possession of marijuan more than four cunces and less than five pounds.

Texas Department of Public Safety for driving while intoxicated, third or more. Michelle Rene Harry, 27,

of Lane, Okla., was arrested by GCSO for theft by check and 16 counts of issuance of bad check. Randell Dale Northcutt,

24, of McLean was arrested by GCSO for assault causing bodily injury family violence.

Monday, April 2 Tracey Lee Worley, 57, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO for public intoxication. way the way to be a fact of

Pampa Fire Department reported the following incidents during the 48-hour weekend period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Saturday, March 31 No reported calls. Sunday, April 1

12:38 p.m. - Two units and six personnel responded to the 1500 block of Hamilton on a fire alarm activation.

1:47 p.m. — Two units and four personnel responded to the 2200 block of North Price Road for a public service program.

Guardian EMS ambu-Dennis Allen Dobyns, 49, lance reported the following An incorrect addressee of Pampa was arrested by calls for the weekend period appeared in the section.

ending at 7 a.m. today. Saturday, March 31

10:45 a.m. - A mobile ICU responded to the 600 block of North Wells and transported a patient to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

11:34 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1200 block of North Wells and transported a patient to PRMC. 9:35 p.m. — A mobile

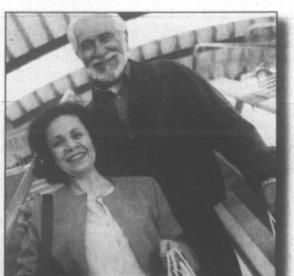
ICU responded to the 200 block of North Russell and transported a patient to PRMC

Sunday, April 1

3:17 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to PRMC and transported a patient to Northwest Texas Hospital.

5:15 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the Jordan unit and transported a patient to PRMC.

The Inspiration and Faith section of the 2007 Pride Edition contained an article on the Fellowship of Christian Cowboys and the Texas Rodeo Bible Camp. People who want to make a camp donation should send them to Top O' Texas Christian Cowboys or Texas Rodeo Bible Camp, P.O. Box 91, Pampa, TX 79065.



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# Viewpoints

# Housing boom: Foreclosure on common sense

One reason for the default on their equity climb. Others mortgages is that many people who should never have qualified for a loan got approved anyhow?"

"For starters." "You're going to have to

explain. Well, it all dates back to 9/11. We'd already been in a recession when the terrorists attacked. To keep the economy from going into a free fall, then Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan

lowered interest rates." "Yes, I remember."

"People were suddenly able to afford houses they couldn't afford before. Home sales began to shoot up. As demand for housing rose, so did housing values.

"Let me get this straight. climbed, homeowners saw decided owning a home was the way to easy wealth, so they began to buy, too."

"Which further drove up values?"

"Exactly. Soon, frenzy was under way. Bidding wars were breaking out. It was common for sellers to receive multiple offers well beyond their asking price."

"That was nuts."

"That was human nature. When a big snowstorm is forecast, people rush to the store to hoard all the milk and toilet paper. The housing boom was like that."

"It never crossed people" minds that they might b overpaying?"

"Unfortunately not. It appeared to many people housing values even rational, well-educated

people - that the rapid rise in ated special mortgages -That caused speculators to who didn't qualify for the jump into

Tom

Purcell

Columnist

the market, which drove up values even more. It was about then that unqual-

ified buyers

jumped into the fray." "Unqualified buyers!"

"Roughly 25 percent of Americans have a bad credit or unstable employment history. But this didn't stop loan originators from going after them, too. Mortgage brokers and banks get commissions and fees every time they originate a loan - even risky loans."

"Risky loans?" "Finance companies cre-

values would never end. subprime loans - for people

safer 'prime" loans. Because these loans come with greater risks, high-

er interest rates are charged - usually 2 or 3 percentage points higher. These loans are extremely profitable, as long as they are paid back."

"I still don't see how it was possible."

"The Washington Post's Steven Pearlstein explained how. Mortgage people created all kinds of nutty schemes. These included interest-only mortgages, nomoney-down mortgages,

adjustable-rate mortgages and so on. In some cases, loan applicants didn't even have to provide proof of income.'

"Didn't the mortgage people worry about defaults?"

"Pearlstein explains that such loans are often sold to third parties. Thus, the loan originators didn't have to worry about the risk and they still got their commissions and fees."

"So unqualified people were given giant loans to buy overvalued houses they couldn't afford? How did they keep up with the payments?"

"As long as the buying frenzy continued, housing values kept getting pushed to even more insane heights. That allowed homeowners to either sell and cash out or

borrow against their rapidly rising equity to get the money they needed to make their monthly payments."

"They borrowed money to pay their mortgages!"

"In some cases. It was a beautiful thing while it lasted. During the past four years, \$9.5 trillion in new mortgage debt has been pumped into the housing industry. That money fueled one heck of a party.'

"But the party is over?" "I'm afraid so. According

Chi

Lin

3:3

inv valu

to Pearlstein, the subprime mortgage market is in a meltdown. He said that 1.5 million Americans may lose their homes to foreclosure. And hundreds of homes could be dumped onto a glutted market, further driv-

See PURCELL, Page 5

# Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, April 2, the 92nd day of 2007. There are 273 days left in the year. The Jewish holiday Passover begins at sunset.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany, saying, "The world must be

made safe for democracy." On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon landed in

In 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act, which authorized establishment of the U.S. Mint.

Most of us love from our need to love, not because we find someone deserving."

 Nikki Giovanni American poet

In 1805, storyteller Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark.

In 1865, Confederate President Davis and most of his Cabinet fled the Confederate capital of Richmond, because of advancing Union forces.

In 1872, Samuel F.B. Morse, developer of the electric telegraph, died in New York.

In 1932, Charles A. Lindbergh

and John F. Condon went to a cemetery in New York City's Bronx borough, where Condon turned over \$50,000 to an unidentified man in exchange for Lindbergh's kidnapped son. (The child, however, was not returned, and was found dead the following month.)

In 1974, French president Georges Pompidou died in

In 1982, several thousand troops from Argentina seized the disputed Falkland Islands, located in the south Atlantic, from Britain. (Britain seized the islands back the following In 1986, four American passengers were killed when a

bomb exploded aboard a TWA jetliner en route from Rome to Athens, Greece. In 2005, Pope John Paul II, who'd led the Roman Catholic

Church for 26 years, died in his Vatican apartment at age 84. Ten years ago: The White House released documents showing how eager it had been to exploit the money-drawing powers of President Clinton and Vice President Gore during the 1996 campaign while coordinating with the

Democratic Party's fundraising machine. Five years ago: Israel seized control of Bethlehem; Palestinian gunmen forced their way into the Church of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, where they began a 39-day standoff.



# Bush is his own worst enemy it seems

President George W. Bush seems to have developed a habit of hitting itself on the head with a hammer. The current flap over the firing of eight U.S. attorneys was created entirely by the Bush administration with no help or somehow from the Democrats.

The U.S. attorneys are political appointees who serve at the pleasure of the president. He can ask for their resignations at any time. Since the appointees are nearly always ambitious, politically smart young attorneys of the same political party as the president, they know this and give up the post without complaint.

Regardless of the reason for asking for their resignations, the federal prosecutors are always given a face-saving exit. This time, however, some moron in the Justice Department said publicly,

The administration of when someone inquired Justice Department mis- to keep the taped conversaabout the resignations, that they were "performance related." In other words, the prosecutors were publicly accused of

Charley

Reese

being incompetent - derelict in their duties.

Columnist Naturally, the attor-

neys yelled foul. It's a matter of defending their honor and reputation. The Democrats in the House and Senate surely said, "I can't believe the Bush administration is handing us this opportunity." So now the administration will be hauled before Congress and asked to prove the charge that the resignations

were "performance related." The flap could have been contained easily by simply saying the moron in the spoke and the matter was not performance related. All eight are good people who did a good job, but the presi-

dent has decided that it's time for s o m e changes,

etc. But, no,

the president, in the tradition of Richard Nixon, gets on his high horse and says he will fight subpoenas for his White House aides and accuses the Democrats of going on a fishing expedition and wanting a show trial. Well, he should remember what happened to Nixon. It wasn't the Watergate burglary that brought Nixon down; it was the cover-up.

As a matter of fact, Nixon asserted executive privilege tions he had made confidential. The Supreme Court ruled that he had to make the tapes public. He did and resigned four days later.

Now, something that should never have even made the papers will be in the news for weeks.

Even offering to allow Karl Rove and Harriet Miers to "have a conversation" behind closed doors with no cameras, no transcript and no oath to tell the truth gives the impression that the Bush administration has something it wants to hide from the American people. A lengthy e-mail from a top Justice Department figure outlining in detail a strategy for fooling the Senate didn't help the case at all.

Personally, I'm glad the president has bungled this.

See REESE, Page 5

# THE PAMPA NEWS

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806-669-2525 • 800-687-3348 Fax: 806-669-2520 email: editor@thepampanews.com

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### Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around

Texas:

March 26 Fort Worth Star-Telegram on the Texas Legislature and stem cell

research: Of the more than 6,000 bills that will receive attention from the Texas Legislature, at least nine of them deal with stem cell research.

As lawmakers take up these admittedly controversial proposals, we advise that they keep in mind one of the principal precepts taught to every medical student: First, do no harm.

"The status quo is just fine because at least you can live with it," Dr. Luis Parada, professor and chairman of the

Department of Developmental Biology at UT-Southwestern Medical Center, recently told reporters and editors at the Star-Telegram.

Parada was part of a delegation from Texans for Advancement of Medical Research, which has spent two legislative sessions simply trying to defend that status quo.

This session, said board member Cheryl Travis, a founding member of TAMR, the organization favors House Bill 2704, written by Rep. Beverly Woolley, R-Houston. Woolley's bill would strictly ban human cloning but guarantee that promising stem cell research remains legal.

Opposition to stem cell research in Texas comes down to pro-life issues. Travis agrees that this is a pro-life

question but argues that the research itself is pro-life.

"I am a card-carrying Republican," she said. "I am a Christian. I am very conservative, as is my husband who is a licensed minister - and we believe very strongly that this is a Christian, pro-life stance."

Woolley's bill would prohibit a human egg that is created in any manner other than traditional or in vitro fertilization from being implanted in a human or artificial uterus. That specifically bans human cloning.

But it would permit research that doesn't invoive human cloning. And it would establish an advisory committee to develop guidelines for research.

See STEM CELLS, Page 5

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Courtesy photo

The Easter Bunny and Klaire pose for a photo Saturday at First Christian Church. Klaire is a student at Mother's Day Out at First Christian Church in Linda Bodie's class. Pictures with the Easter Bunny will also be available from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday. Filled and wrapped Easter Baskets for any age are

### Subprime lender bankrupt, fires 3,200

LOS ANGELES (AP) -Subprime mortgage lender New Century Financial Corp. filed today for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, and said it would fire 3,200 workers, or 54 percent of its work force, to better position the company for a possible sale.

Once the second-largest provider of subprime mortgages in the U.S. based on loan volume, New Century was the latest lender to fall on hard times amid a spike in mortgage defaults caused by borrowers unable to make payments.

More than two dozen subprime lenders have shut down in recent months and others are scrambling to stay in business.

New Century said it has agreed to sell its loan servicing business to Carrington Capital Management LLC and its affiliate for about \$139 million, subject to the approval of the bankruptcy

"The decision to pursue the sale of the company's assets and operations through the bankruptcy process was a difficult but appropriate decision for our board to make," president and chief executive Brad A. Morrice said in a statement.

"This was a very hard step for me personally and clearly not the outcome I would have preferred," Morrice said.

CIT Group and Greenwich Capital Financial Products Inc. have agreed to provide up to \$150 million in working capital to facilitate the reorganization process, the

company said. New Century has also agreed to sell certain loans and residual interest in some trusts to Greenwich Capital for \$50 million.

New Century, based in Irvine, filed the bankruptcy action in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware. The move had been expected for several

Last week, New Century said several of its lenders planned to sell their outstanding mortgage loans and use the proceeds to offset payment obligations by the company.

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TILE & LAMINA

# Tribune accepts \$8.2 billion; will sell Cubs

CHICAGO (AP) Tribune Co. has accepted a buyout offer from real estate investor Sam Zell in a deal valued at about \$8.2 billion and plans to sell the Chicago Cubs at the end of this season, the media company said today.

The owner of the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, and various other newspapers and TV stations spent six months soliciting bids and reviewing offers.

Tribune had set a selfimposed March 31 deadline to announce a spin-off, buyout or reorganization.

In addition to the Zell bid, the Tribune considered a competing offer from Los Angeles billionaires Eli Broad and Ron Burkle.

The company has been under pressure from key shareholders to boost its stock price and, along with others in the newspaper industry, has been losing readers and advertisers to the Internet. Tribune is the newspaper publisher after Gannett Co.

deal and will eventually become chairman of the Chicago-based company's board when the buyout is complete sometime in the fourth quarter.

The buyout will be conducted as a two-part deal, the company said. The first stage, expected to be completed in the second quarter, will involve a cash tender offer of \$34 per share for 126 million shares, more than half of the outstanding Tribune shares. The remaining shares will be purchased later at the same \$34 per share price.

Broad and Burkle also had offered \$34-per-share, and the company's board reportedly spent much of the weekend sifting through the two offers.

Tribune has about 240 million shares outstanding, according to a regulatory fil-

"The strategic review process was rigorous and thorough," William Osborn, a Tribune director who led statement. "We determined ty for achieving the highest value for all shareholders and is in the best interest of investors and employees."

The deal already has the support of two of Tribune's largest shareholders, including the Chandler family, which has about a 20 percent stake in the media company.

Charles Bobrinskoy, vice chairman of Ariel Capital Management, said his money management firm also would support the Zell deal. Ariel Capital owns about 6.1 percent of Tribune

"These are clearly challenging times for all newspaper companies, but we're very pleased by today's announcement and plan to support the proposed transaction," Bobrinskoy said.

Tribune said Zell will use an employee stock ownerthe deal and lower the taxes on the structures. on any sale. The ESOP, the majority invest \$315 million in the provides the greatest certain-company's common stock.

"I am delighted to be assowith ciated Tribune Company, which I believe is a world-class publishing and broadcasting enterprise," Zell said in a statement. "As a long-term investor, I look forward to partnering with management and employees as we build on the great heritage of Tribune Company.'

An ESOP allows the company to borrow money and repay loans using pretax dollars. Payments of both interest and principle are taxdeductible and would create more leverage for a buyer.

"The ESOP can only help pay down this mountain of debt with a positive corporate culture that drives performance but does not deflate the motivation of workers," said Joseph Blasi, a professor at Rutgers ship plan to finance part of University who is an expert

Zell, 65, made his fortune which resembles a profit- reviving moribund real sharing plan, will become estate. After a bidding war owner of culminated in February, he the review process, said in a Tribune once the deal is sold his company, Equity complete. Zell will be enti- Office, to the private equity Tribune said Zell plans to that this course of action tled to buy 40 percent of the firm Blackstone Group for

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# missing brothers found dead in ice

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Two young brothers who disappeared while playing outside their home on the Red Lake Indian Reservation have been found encased in the ice of nearby First Thunders Lake, four months after the search for them

"Our worst fears were confirmed," FBI Special Agent Ralph Boelter said, announcing that the two tiny bodies had been found about a half-mile from their home.

Police dogs picked up the scent of Tristan Anthony White, 4, and Avery Lee Stately, 2, on Sunday, the first day of organized search-

ing after the weather warmed, Boelter said.

The two boys, both American Indian, disappeared Nov. 22 from their home in a remote area near Canadian border. Authorities have not determined whether they somehow wandered out onto the lake's thin ice and fell in or if foul play was involved in their deaths.

Divers searched First Thunders Lake shortly after the two were reported missing, and hundreds of volunteers and law enforcement officers scoured the area, but they found no sign of the

resumed their work on Sunday with the warmer

One theory is that the

Boelter said search teams boys wandered away to the southern edge of the lake, then walked across the partially frozen water before falling through the ice.

## Purcell

Continued from Page 4

ing down values." "That's not good."

"It gets worse. Consider all the jobs that depend on housing market. Construction companies, cabinet manufacturers, furnishing companies ... an

endless number of industries will be hurt as the correction ripples through the economy.

"Correction?"

"That's a term we like to use in the finance business. Translated it means: "Oops, we lost control of our senses yet again!"

-Tom Purcell is a humor columnist nationally syndicated exclusively by Cagle Cartoons.

## Reese

Continued from Page 4

It's one of his lesser bungling jobs, but it might serve to end once and for all the invention of "executive privilege." There is nothing in the Constitution and nothing in reason or logic that would shield a public employee from having to testify under oath to Congress. Yet the law and various court rulings on this subject are murky.

Presidents usually base their claim on the separation of powers, but while it's true

that Congress can't run the executive branch, it certainly can investigate how it's being run, since both the laws and the money to enforce them originate in Congress. And, in this case, if it

turns out that the administration was trying to head off a legitimate criminal

investigation or instigate an illegitimate investigation, then Bush will be in deep, deep trouble. Couldn't happen to a more deserving fel-

-Write to Charley Reese at P.O. Box 2446, Orlando,

# Stem cells

Continued from Page 4

Federal law prohibits the use of federal dollars for research on any stem cell lines other than those in existence in 2001 when President Bush created his embryonic stem cell research policy. Some states - California, Massachusetts and Connecticut, for example - are seeking ways around

"They are appropriating state dollars

to create research buildings that are completely separate from federal funding," Parada said.

In a way, Parada said, this is a debate about a settled argument.

"In vitro fertilization has been in existence for decades," he said. "And for every egg that is fertilized and becomes a child, a minimum of 10 eggs gets flushed down the sink. So that says that this society has decided that this is not unethical.'

Some claims of the benefit of stem cell research are premature or overblown.

"We don't know just how much

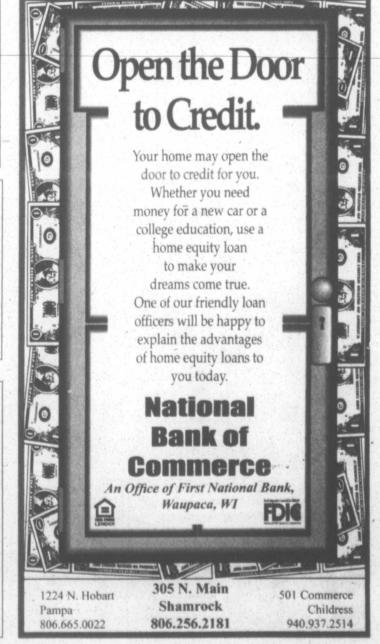
embryonic stem cell research is going to impact biomedical research or how quickly, but we are greatly intrigued by the probability," Parada said. "And there is only one way to find out."

Meanwhile, promising scientists flock to states were research is permitted and well-funded - or to foreign venues such as Singapore.

Part of the problem, he said, is the lack of front-page headlines proclaiming, "Let's be practical."

And practicality is what is called for

in this debate.



# Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: My daughter recently had a baby boy. Mother and baby are doing fine, but the problem is the sonogram during pregnancy showed a baby girl, according to the doctor. So now our grandson has a slew of pink blankets, jammies and clothes given by friends before little Jack was born. I say, no big deal. My wife says it is a big deal. No way a boy should be dressed in pink. She's worried the color will give the wrong message to people, who will then treat our grandson like a girl in a way they won't even be aware of, even though they're told he's a boy. She worries that this will somehow make him a cross-dresser when he's grown up and make him gay. Our daughter and son-in-law are in a quandary, too, over the pink clothes. What do you think? - JACK'S GRANDPA IN **GUERNEVILLE, CALIF.** 

**DEAR GRANDPA:** As long as the baby gifts have not been used, there should be no problem exchanging them for items in the "right" color. However, please tell your wife that her fears are groundless. Even if her grandson decides to become a crossdresser later in life -- which, by the way is NOT related to what color clothes a man wore as a baby -- it won't make him gay. The majority of cross-dressers are heterosexual.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 23-year-old "woman." I say "woman" because I still feel like a girl. I graduated from college two years ago. Unlike a lot of people my age, I am self-supporting. Since graduation, I have tried to adopt some of the behaviors of an adult. I work hard at my job and manage my money well. I get up early on weekends and do chores around the house, and I'm learning how to cook. I make an effort to reach out to my parents, who are recently retired. I try to learn about the world around me and keep up with the news. So why do I still feel like a teenage kid? - KID AT HEART IN NORTH **CAROLINA** 

DEAR KID AT HEART: Please don't judge yourself so harshly. You are more mature than many people who are chronologically older. From my perspective, it appears that you are growing up at a very respectable pace. If you are under the impression that because people reach a certain age they are suddenly mature adults, you are operating under a misconception. Age is only a number. People mature at different rates, and there are folks in their 50s, 60s and older who are still growing up. Wisdom and maturity are gained cumulatively -- and in some cases it can take a lot longer than 21 years for individuals to stop behaving like children.

DEAR ABBY: I was visiting a local shopping center and was dismayed to notice that the car parked next to mine had a baby seat in the back -- complete with an actual live baby. My first instinct was to immediately call the police. However, it was a mild day and partially overcast, and the moderate conditions made me hesitate for fear of being a "busybody." A day later, I'm still second-guessing myself. So I ask you, did I do the right thing by not sticking my nose in, or was it my responsibility to have alerted the authorities? - INDECISIVE IN SAN MATEO

**DEAR INDECISIVE:** Unless you were prepared to stay by the vehicle until that foolish, neglectful parent returned, you should have called the police. Leaving a baby alone in a parking lot, regardless of how mild the weather was, is against the law. In some states, there are also laws against leaving pets in parked cars.

TO MY JEWISH READERS: Sundown marks the first night of Passover. Happy Passover, everyone!

#### For Better Or For Worse







#### Zits









#### Garfield

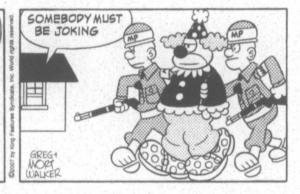






#### **Beetle Bailey**





#### Marvin





### **Crossword Puzzle**

#### *CROSSWORD* By THOMAS JOSEPH ACROSS 40 Russian

1 Obscene refusal material 41 Minus 5 Told whoppers DOWN 9 Ecuador's 1 Parlor capital treat

10 Broadcast 2 Some-12 Dark what 3 Practical 13 Dance 4 Carryall music 14 Confused 5 Young 16 "Right you fellow 6 Clock

17 Store numeral event 7 Fake 18 Pearl 8 Fiat producer 9 Suppress 21 "You 11 Active there!' one 22 "Gesund-15 "You're heit" preceder not

23 Good news for a buyer 24 Beyond what's acceptable

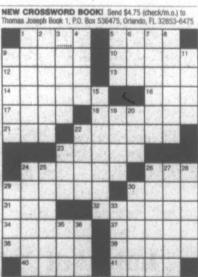
26 Chore 29 Bamboo eaters 30 Aspiration 31 First woman 32 Casual pants 34 Conclude successfully 37 Insurance seller 38 Make speeches 39 Tempts



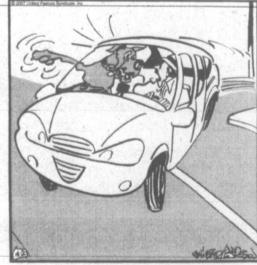
Saturday's answer

19 Almanac 28 Defeats span 20 Scandal coin subject 30 Dutch 22 Couch capital 23 Silent with approval "The" 24 Pub 33 Foyer 25 Street 35 Salt type

Lake City better off 26 Deck player extras 36 Tabby or knowing" 27 Supposes Spot



### Marmaduke



"Stop arguing with my GPS."

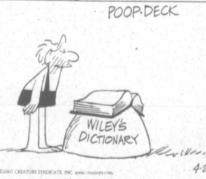
The Family Circus

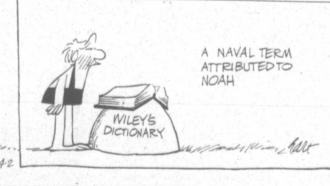
THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



"They kept telling the sculptors to hurry up. That's why they called it Rushmore.'

### B.C.





### **Haggar The Horrible**







### **Peanuts**







### Flo & Friends





### Blondie







# Sports Day

# best, even mighty Mays are no match

#### By The Associated **Press**

The Dallas Mavericks had a long winning streak, the NBA's best record and no chance.

Who would when the Phoenix Suns put on a display like they did Sunday?

"When we play well, no one is going to defend us well," MVP Steve Nash said. "This was one of those games where we were close to our best."

Leandro Barbosa scored points, Amare Stoudemire added 24, and the Suns rolled to a 126-104 victory. Nash had 23 points and 11 assists, while Shawn Marion rebounded from a scoreless first quarter to finish with 20 points on 8-for-10 shooting. He also frus-Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki most of the after-

Elsewhere Sunday, Washington's Caron Butler was lost indefinitely with a broken hand; LeBron James skipped Cleveland's game with a sore knee; and Dwyane Wade said he will take part in Miami's prac- last month. tice Monday.

most impressive performances in the NBA this sea-

In other games, it was: Detroit 94, Miami 88; Chicago 105, Atlanta 97; Golden State 122, Memphis lem for Dallas, which has 117; Washington 121, allowed Stoudemire to Milwaukee 107; Utah 86, make 26 of 32 shots in the Houston 83; Minnesota 105, Orlando 104, in over- Mavs knew they didn't play time; Boston 98, Cleveland their best — though it may 96; Toronto 107, Charlotte not have mattered if they 94; Indiana 100, San did Antonio 99; Denver 114, Seattle 103; and the Los Angeles Lakers 126, Sacramento 103.

The Suns shot 65 percent (46-of-71), the highest in the league this season and a record for any team at US Airways Center, formerly America West Arena.

Phoenix shot 86 percent in the fourth quarter (13-for-15), 4-of-4 on 3s.

"That's about as good as we can play," Phoenix coach Mike D'Antoni said.

It was too good for the Mays (61-12), who had their nine-game winning streak snapped and have dropped two straight against the Suns.

"We need a practice," Dallas coach Avery Johnson said. "We haven't practiced in a while because of our schedule, a really good hard practice. We need a good practice to clean up a few things, and it showed today."

The game was close until Phoenix took the lead for good in the third quarter, then turned it into a run-away in the fourth. The 126 points were the most Dallas has allowed this season in a game that didn't go into overtime. The only time the Mavericks allowed more in any game was - not surprisingly — against the Suns in a 129-127 doubleovertime loss to Phoenix

Josh Howard scored 28 All took a back seat after for Dallas, 18 in a tight first Phoenix put on one of the half that featured 13 ties and nine lead changes. Jerry Stackhouse added 25 and Jason Terry 20. Nowitzki scored 21 but was just 6-of-18 shooting.

> Offense wasn't the problast two meetings. The

"Every game is a big game for us. This particular big game was bad for us because we came out flat," Johnson said. "They had more energy and hit all their shots. I don't know when a team shot that well from the field, so let's just give them all the credit."

# With Suns at their | Pampa track teams compete in Amarillo

The Pampa Harvester boys and girls track teams traveled to Amarillo over the weekend to compete at Dick Bivins stadium.

The teams were originally scheduled to go over Friday for prelims, but the rainy weather held things back until Saturday.

Facing district next week, the Harvesters got some extra practice with competitors from Palo Duro, Artesia, NM, Caprock and other schools in the area.

Results are as follows:

**Boys Varsity** 100 Meter Dash Chase Harris - 5th - 11.46 Ryne Malone - 8th - 11.60 200 Meter Dash Ryne Malone - 15th 24.40

Andrew Van Houten 20th - 24.88 Darrell Willis - 21st

400 Meter Dash Payton Reagan - 21st -

800 Meter Run Matt Jimenez - 2nd 2:01.14 1600 Meter Run

4:44.17 110 Meter Hurdles Jerrod Bivins - 12th -17.20

Matt Jimenez - 4th

300 Meter Hurdles Jerrod Bivins - 15th 43.81

4x100 Meter Relay 4th place - 44.19 4x200 Meter Relay 5th place - 1:33.01 4x400 Meter Relay 9th place - 3:38.27 Long Jump Jerrod Bivins - 6th - 21-

00.50 Shavious Kelley - 8th -Jon Luke Covalt - 23rd -

18-03.00 Triple Jump Shavious Kelley - 4th -

42-06.50 Jerrod Bivins - 15th - 40-Jon Luke Covalt - 25th -

38-02.75 Shot Put Jacob Wichert - 25th - 32-

Continues pg. 7



Pampa News photos by JORDAN REAGAN

Pampa's Ryan Jimenez takes the lead in the JV Boys 100 Meter Dash on Saturday at Amarillo's Dick Bivins Stadium. Jimenez got 18th place with a

# Power programs monopolize spotlight in football, hoops

have money, fans and facilities — three key ingredients that make any athletic department great.

That begins to explain how Florida and Ohio State have come to dominate the year in college sports like no resources, that usually two programs ever have.

On Monday, they meet for the men's basketball title. Three months ago, they played for the football championship. The Gators are hold the two titles at the same time.

Funny how things turn out when you've got a few extra million to spend on sports at your university.

"When have means you have the wherewithal to have good facilities," said Chuck Neinas, the well-respected leader of a search firm that finds football coaches and athletic

already the first program to directors for big-time programs. "You build a tradition and that allows you to pay for good coaches."

Though the schools operate in different regions, they share more common traits than differences.

One key similarity: These are — or at least once were - schools where football was king, and they learned how to use that to their advantage.

of success that attracts talent, most universities. With the helped us through the school supplement them. simply more money to be made by filling 105,000 seats in the Horseshoe, or 90,000 at the Swamp, than by filling a basketball arena one-fifth their size.

> 105,000 people on a Shoe definitely helps all pro-

Success in football drives grams," Ohio State coach were able to donate to their success in everything else at Thad Matta said. "I think it's schools instead of having the exceptions of a few elite bas- recruiting process. The notoketball programs, there's riety of the football program coaches defending their prois something we try to work hand-in-hand with."

Thanks in large part to revenue from the football program, Ohio State led the NCAA in revenue last year, "The correlation between bringing in nearly \$105 million. Florida brought in \$78 Saturday afternoon in the million. Both programs made enough profit that they

The days of basketball grams' status on these campuses are long gone. Instead, they bask in the football teams, taking recruits to games and bringing those coaches in for motivational speeches to their teams.

"It's everything at Florida that's good," Gators coach Billy Donovan said.

# 1st annual Pampa Body of Christ 4 on 4 Basketball tournament

**Place: Austin Elementary** Entry Fee: \$100 per team Deadline for entry: April 11

Date: April 13-14 Roster: 5 man rosters

Prizes will be awarded to the top three teams. There will also be a 3-point contest with \$10 entry fee to be held on April 14 at noon. Winner will receive \$100. For more information contact Ricky Martin. (home) 665-4804 (cell) 595-0689 (work) 665-8451

### Former Michigan State football player charged with throwing neighbor off balcony

LOMBARD, Ill. (AP) — A former football player was charged with murder for allegedly throwing a neighbor to his death from a third-floor balcony at their apartment building in suburban Chicago.

Hubert D. Thompson, 28, who played for Michigan State, surrendered peacefully late Friday after holing up in his apartment for nearly seven hours while police SWAT teams surrounded the building. He was ordered held on \$3 million

Police found James Malone, 66, sprawled on the pavement below the balcony when they arrived around 1:45 p.m.

Authorities said they did not have a motive. "The allegation is that it was unprovoked," DuPage County State's Attorney Joseph Birkett said. "This individual

is going to be evaluated, I'm sure. Thompson retreated to his apartment and would not respond to officers, prompting police to evacuate other residents and surround the building, Deputy Lombard Police Chief Dane Cuny said. Thompson surrendered after talking to a police negotiator, Cuny said. It wasn't immediately clear

if he had an attorney. Thompson was once the top-rated defensive end prospect in the nation.

Discus

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- 14.90

1:12.69

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15 - 10.00

Girls Varsity

200 Meter Dash

400 Meter Dash

4x100 Meter Relay

4x200 Meter Relay

9th place - 1:50.79 4x400 Meter Relay

9th place - 4:20.01

High Jump

Long Jump

Triple Jump

Shot Put

8th place - 51.79

Justin Kenney - 26th - 76-

Kelby Doughty - 18th

Amber Brown - 24th -

Kylie Wariner - 15th -

Trisha Moore - 19th -

Natalie Parker - 11th - 4-

Kelby Doughty - 12th -

Amber Brown - 24th - 14-

Britteni Rice - 31st - 14-

Natalie Parker - 4th - 34-

Sarah Foster - 29-04.00

Stephanie Polascek - 22nd

Teysha Parker - 18th -

Tora Campbell - 16th -

Girls Junior Varsity

100 Meter Dash

400 Meter Dash

800 Meter Run

1600 Meter Run

# Pampa Track

Continued from pg. 7

Discus Jacob Wichert - 23th - 82-

Coby Smith - 24th - 82-04 **Boys Junior Varsity** 100 Meter Dash Taylor Smith - 13th

12.00 Ryan Jimenez - 18th -

Josh Humphrey - 20th -

12.40 200 Meter Dash Travis Haggerman - 7th -

Adam Estrada - 9th -25.39

Ryan Jimenez - 15th -400 Meter Dash

William Rivera - 4th -Eric Ramirez - 17th -

59.22 800 Meter Run Uriel Diaz - 17th - 2:24.36 1600 Meter Run Agapito Salazar - 13th -

5:39.55 Uriel Diaz - 14th - 5:40.21 300 Meter Hurdles

Taylor Smith - 10th -48.26 4x100 Meter Relay 5th place - 46.90 4x200 Meter Relay 5th place - 1:38.18

4x400 Meter Relay 5th place - 3:43.96 High Jump Travis Haggerman - 8th -

J5-04.00 Long Jump Adam Estrada - 6th - 18-

Taylor Smith - 11th - 18- 3:05.71

Triple Jump Taylor Smith - 2nd - 37-

Adam Estrada - 13th - 34-

### Handing off



Kayla Ware hands the baton off to teammate Stephanie Polasceck during the JV Girls 4x200 Meter Relay. Ware and Polascek's team got 6th place with a time of 2:02.83.

3200 Meter Run Victoria Jenkins - 13th -15:20.14

100 Meter Hurdles Diana Mechelay - 8th -

Victoria Jenkins - 17th -300 Meter Hurdles Diana Mechelay - 12th -Eli Strandklieu - 18th -4x100 Meter Relays

8th place - 56.43 4x200 Meter Relays 6th place - 2:02.83 4x400 Meter Relays 5th place - 4:33.55 High Jump Kimberly Curtis - 3rd - 4-

Long Jump Teysha Parker - 4th - 14-

Cheyenne Collins - 6th -30-07.50

Stephanie Polascek - 11th 28-00.00 Shot Put

Ashley Brown - 12th - 26-Kelcie Serrato - 16th - 25Discus Rachel Nunn - 6th - 81-11 Kristian Beltran - 12th -

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# It's No. 1 vs. No. 1 for the championship

By NANCY ARMOUR

AP National Writer ATLANTA (AP) - Now we'll see who's really No.

Florida, the top overall seed in the NCAA tournament, and Ohio State, which finished the regular season as the top-ranked team, rolled into tonight's championship game.

After a tournament filled with nail-biters, Saturday night's games were downright pedestrian. Ohio State (35-3) beat Georgetown 67-60 despite more foul trouble from Greg Oden. Florida (34-5) romped to a 76-66 victory over UCLA in a rematch of last year's title game that wasn't any closer than the original.

It will be a title game rematch of sorts. The Buckeyes and Gators met for a title in January — only it was on grass, not hardwood. The gridiron Gators won that one in an upset, beating Ohio State 41-14 and making Florida the first school to hold titles in football and men's basketball at the same time.

add to its title collection. as he did points (seven) and UCLA (43-26). But the Buckeyes might

want a little revenge for rebounds (six). their football brethren. Yes, that was Ohio State football sure to be different. coach Jim Tressel sitting in The Buckeyes haven't Florida's Lee Humphrey the front row Saturday night lost since Jan. 9 at has a knack for hitting big with his Florida counterpart Urban Meyer across the

Florida is trying to become the first team since Duke in 1992 to repeat, and the first ever to do it with the same starting lineup.

"They're a very, very good team," Florida coach Billy Donovan said of Ohio State. "We got a chance to play them in December. It was a game where I think our team and their team have gotten better and improved as season has gone on."

Florida routed the Buckeyes 86-60, embarrassing them in every facet of the game. It was only Oden's fifth game back after offseason wrist surgery, and the Gators ran him off the floor. He couldn't keep up with Joakim Noah or a gimpy Al Horford and finished with Now Florida is looking to almost as many fouls (four) Monday night's game is

Wisconsin, a streak of 22

will be their biggest test. seem to be playing their best. Again. They've won

nine in a row and have allowed only two teams to score more than 70 during that stretch. The matchup is the most intrigu-

Oden-Horford ing. Oden has come a long way in the last three months, and it's only been in the last few weeks that The teams met in his full array of skills has Gainesville in December, been on display. He leads and it was barely a contest. the Buckeyes in scoring and rebounding, and was named an All-American.

inches and 35 pounds to the 7-footer, but the bigger the game, the bigger Horford plays. Though he only had nine points Saturday night, he had 17 rebounds — the very margin by which Florida outrebounded

Still, the championship game will likely come down to guard play.

shots, and he scored all but straight. But they've looked two of his 14 points against vulnerable in the NCAA UCLA from long range. tournament, and Florida Taurean Green struggled with his shot, hitting only 2-The Gators, meanwhile, of-9, but he is able to go off at any time.

> Mike Conley Jr. is overshadowed by Oden, his high school teammate and childhood buddy. But he is arguably the most valuable of Ohio State's "Thad Five" right now. He's carried the team in their last two games, and he was the reason Ohio State didn't selfdestruct when Oden went out Saturday night.

Jamar Butler is a steady shooter, and Ron Lewis is the reason the Buckeyes even got this far. It was his Horford gives up two long 3-pointer that forced overtime against Xavier in the second round.

This is the Buckeyes' first trip to the title game since they played in three straight from 1960-62. They won the title in 1960 and were runners-up the next two years.

# Johnson holds off Gordon to win at Martinsville

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (AP) — Jimmie Johnson offered no apologies for putting his mentor through 53 laps of frustration.

"Believe me, I was nervous up there," Johnson said Sunday after withstanding furious pressure from Jeff Gordon to win the Goody's Martinsville Speedway. "I wasn't sure if I could hang on, especially as hard as he was hitting me in the center of the turn. But he could never get position, so I kept doing my thing."

Johnson's thing proved just enough, beating Gordon by a bumper to win for the third time in the last four races — and the second in a - at Martinsville row Speedway.

"I'm speechless. I've looked up to him my whole career, before I even was back here racing. I've looked up to him and knew how good he was Martinsville," Johnson said career wins at the track are on me pretty good."

the most among active rac-

"That was probably the hardest driving I've ever done."

The teammates provided a stirring duel at the end of the second Car of Tomorrow race, one that had been mostly devoid of the destructive physical driving that normally leaves several cars broken long before the checkered Martinsville flag at Speedway.

But the spectacle at the finish was all Johnson and Gordon, who tried everything he could short of wrecking his teammate and friend, but couldn't make the

"The only way I could get by him was to wreck him, but he's my teammate and I tell you what, there's going to be some interesting racing going forward because he blocked me really bad," Gordon said. "I thought I had a chance at him a couple of Gordon, whose seven times, but he shut the door

# Scott beats Appleby in Aussie duel at Houston Open

HUMBLE, Texas (AP) — Stuart Appleby has been watching Adam Scott play for more than a decade and the two have become friends, as Australians on the PGA Tour often do.

the final round of the coming down the stretch. I Houston Open, but the pleasant banter ceased once the competition intensified.

Scott held off Appleby with a 6-under 66 on Sunday, saving par with a 50-foot putt on the 72nd hole after hitting his tee shot into the

The 26-year-old Scott finished at 17 under, three good strokes ahead of Appleby, the defending champion, and a long way to get here.'

third-round leader Bubba Watson.

"The conversation kind of came to a minimum and it was time to knuckle down and get on with the job," Scott said. "It's not that I They played together in don't think of him as a friend don't want to just lie down and give my friend a victo-

Appleby, nine years older, first met Scott in Australia when he was a precocious teenager. The two have only recently become close

"All Australians are pretty buddies," Appleby. "We have to travel

The Houston Open might as well become an honorary tournament Down Under.

Scott became the sixth Aussie to win in Houston, joining Appleby, Bruce Devlin, Bruce Crampton, David Graham and Robert Allenby. Appleby and Crampton have won it twice and the eight victories by Australians are the most in any U.S. tour event. Only the British Open (nine) has had champions from Australia.

Appleby joked that it eased the sting of losing to know that another Aussie

"Marginally," Appleby

Scott, gave Appleby a chance to win it.

Scott led by one stroke as they stood on the 18th tee, but Scott pulled his tee shot into the pond that lines the left side of the 488-yard hole, the course's most diffi-

Appleby drove into the fairway bunker, then immediately gave Scott a reprieve by hitting his approach into the water near the green.

"I knew what I had to do," Appleby said. "It's just a matter of you've got to do it.

And I didn't get to do it." Scott took his drop, hit his approach safely away from the water, then holed the parsaving putt. He pumped his

fist, Tiger Woods-style, after for a 72. the ball disappeared and the crowd roared.

"It was relief, along with elation," said Scott, who earned his first win since last year's Tour Championship. "I was pretty happy for it to be all over with, because it was looking a bit messy."

Appleby took a double bogey to finish with a 69. But it was easily his best finish of the year and filled him with confidence heading to next week's Masters.

"I like the way I hit the ball," he said. "I want to get there (to Augusta) and get set for that. I'm ready to go."

Watson, searching for his get ready for Augusta. first win, birdied the last hole

Watson was one of 27 players who came back Sunday morning to finish after storms Saturday postponed the start of the third round for six hours.

Players were allowed to lift, clean and place their balls in the fairway again on Sunday after a predawn thunderstorm dumped a halfinch of rain.

Scott spent four weeks in Europe before returning at Doral last week. He shot a final-round 80 - including a 10 on one hole - and came to Houston thirsting for some competitive pressure to

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> Excellent pay pkg. Paid vacation Paid holidays Paid uniforms Group Health Ins. 401(k) Plan w/ Company match Quarterly Safety Bo

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nus Program Out & Back, regional & long haul Frequent home time M-F. 8AM to 5PM Call 1-800-657-8784 EOE

LOOKING for licensed

electrician, licensed plumber and lead carpenter to relocate to Woodward, Ok. \$1500 Sign-On Bonus for qualified applicants. Please call Kline Mechanical 580-256-5014 WANTED:

Qualified service technicians to work in busy, well established auto repair shop. Send resume or pick up application at Thomas Automotive, 217 E. Atchison, Pampa, TX. WANTED: Building

maintenance/Janitor. Special Events: set up, tear down & clean-up. Building Maintenance. On site assistance and monitoring during evening & week-end events. 5 to 20 hours each week-\$8 per hour. Call 669-3241 PRIVATE day school

needing PT & Substitute day care workers. At least 1 yr. exp. preferred. 665-0703 ask for Cynthia or



Frito Lay is seeking hard workers in the Borge and Pampa area to fill full-time **Route Sales Positions** 

(\$33,000-\$45,000 / yr) Benefits 101K/re ptions, health/dental/vi ion ins. and vacation eave. Candidates mus have a solid work histo ry, strong communica tion skills and an excellent driving record. Please call apply on line

for consideration.

Optician Training will be provided to highly motivated career minded individual. Ideal candidate will show maturity by solid work record or college course work. Resumes will be accepted by fax to 806-665-3511.

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UPS in Pampa has immediate openings for the 4am-9am shift. Apply online at www.upsjobs.com.

21 Help Wanted

OUTREACH Services is hiring providers in Pampa. Please call Mary 1-800-800-0697 or 806-373-0986. EOE. FULL time & part time catering help, Monday-

> NEEDED: General laborers! Drug testing Required!! Apply in person, Landscape, 120 S. Hobart No Phone Calls

Friday. Apply in person at Dixie Cafe, Pampa.

NOW HIRING:

Please!!!

West Texas Landscape 120 S. Hobart. Please No

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Phone Calls!!!

Now Hiring: **CDL Drivers** Pre-Employment Drug testing/ DOT physical

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LOCAL Delivery Drivers for Pampa, TX. Class A ary based on experience. Health & Dental ins... 401K and uniforms provided. Call 806-595-0495 Mon.-Fri., 7:30-4:30pm.

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Is now taking applications for a RN Excellent Pay & Ben efits Package

1201 N. Hobart, Space D (Coronado Center) 665-1445 or online at

NON-PROFIT cent Residential Prograaccepting applications. Minimum requirements, bachelor's degree and three years documented full time exp. in residential child care operations or related field. Must be willing to work a flexible schedule. Competitive Salary and Benefits. Call 806-665-7123 or mail resume PO Box 337, Pampa, TX 79066-0337.

> W&W FIBERGLASS TANK CO. Immediate Openings Fiberglass Manufacturing General Labor 40+ hours / week Wages based on exp. Apply in person 100 N. Price Rd. Pampa

IMMEDIATE **OPENINGS** Sandblaster/Painter Shop Welders-Wire/Stick 40+ hours / week Wages based on exp. Apply in person

2930 W. Hwy. 152

21 Help Wanted

must be available to work all shifts. Pampa Communications. 641 N Hobart CONSTRUCTION Help-

er needed on a daily basis

Mainly carpentry. Call

Home HealthCare

662-2566.

Is now taking applications for a WEEKEND \*Excellent Pay Apply in person at, 1201 N. Hobart, Space D (Coronado Center)

or online at

FT Admin. Secretary.

ing experience; experi-

proficient (Word, Excel,

Outlook, Quickbooks or

accounting programs). High school education re-

quired; College or equiva-

lent experience preferred.

Submit resume to HR,

P.O. Box 1422, Pampa

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BUILD a sunroom, tem-

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now leasing apts. Seniors

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cluded. Stop by 120 S.

PICK up rental list from

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2 bdr., 1 ba. New paint,

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DOWNTOWN office space for rent. Utilities & cleaning service provided Ample parking, 669-6823. conference room. Outside

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SEALED Bids are being

accepted for a 2005 Chrysler Pacifica 2002 Ford Focus SE and a 2000 Buick Regal LS Turbo. Bid sheets may be picked up from the Pampa Teachers Federal Credit Union at 808 W. Francis, until April6, 2007, during the hours of 9-11:30 am and 1-4pm. Sealed bids will be taken through Apr. 6, 2007, at 6pm. Pampa Teachers Federal Credit Union reserves the right to accept or reject any and

121 Trucks

New tires, 120,000 mi Runs great! \$3000. 806-

A FC HELP WANTED

Front Counter Help Needed at Kentucky Fried Chicken. \$6.25 per hour to start. Must apply in person between 2pm and 5pm at 2201 N. Hobart.

No phone calls please

## Learning to save lives



COURTESY PHOTO

Sierra, Summer, Michael, Matthew and Benji practice their first aid on little Macy during a Red Cross training for youth. The youth are part of the Eastern Texas Panhandle's Youth Chapter of the American Red Cross.

# Bello the clown reunited with prized mini bike in NYC

NEW YORK (AP) — Bello Nock, the daredevil clown, was all smiles Sunday when he was reunited with his lost little bike.

The star of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus thanked Ricky Robinson, who found Bello's shiny foot-high, 6-inch-wide contraption Friday night outside a restaurant on Manhattan's West Side.

"Give me a hug. I need my bike. That is my bike. Thank you, buddy," Bello said, outside Madison Square Garden, where the circus was performing.

In exchange for returning the bike, Robinson, 54, will receive a \$1,000 reward, a new bicycle donated by Toys R Us, and free tickets to Knicks games and the circus show named for Bello, "Bellobration."

The bitty bike was taken from a Manhattan street Friday. Bello and two fellow clowns had put on an impromptu show for a passing camera crew, when Bello rested his bike against a street sign and forgetfully walked away.

After reading about the lost bike and seeing a picture of it in a news-

paper, Robinson showed up at Madison Square Garden Sunday morning with the bike.

"I didn't know what it was," said Robinson, a native of Bridgeport, Conn. "I didn't know how anybody rides it."



Edward Jones

### Pig winners



Courtesy photo

St. Matthew's Day School student Cooper Trolinger sold the winning "Big Fat Pig" raffle ticket to Shane Stehr of Borger. Cooper won a stuffed pig and Shane won the real pig.

## Marine home safe after four tours

LEAGUE CITY, Texas (AP) — The family of a 24-year-old Marine Sgt. Jorge Valdez celebrated his safe return home and the completion of four Iraq tours dating back to the beginning of the war.

Valdez, of League City, returned home this weekend and was honored at a ceremony held by family and friends.

Hilda Valdez said she was relieved to be free of the constant fear of receiving a military phone call with bad news about her son.

"There were lots of tears and lots of sleepless nights," she said. "I'd wake up in the middle of the night and check my cell phone to see if he had called."

Jorge Valdez, who enlisted in the Marines while still a Clear Creek High School student, couldn't have known what was in store when he shipped off to boot camp upon graduation in 2001, months before the terror attacks of Sept. 11.

His unit, based in Yuma, Ariz., was deployed in February 2003, the month before the American-led invasion of Iraq began.

"I understood when I enlisted that this was a possibility," Jorge Valdez said. "I didn't go through this just to play Marine. There's a responsibility that came with it. I was kind of scared, but this is what we're here for."

He said he had some harrowing experiences in Iraq — his convoy was fired upon and he lost a buddy to a bomb explosion. He said he also learned to appreciate the niceties of home, such as hot showers, toilets that flush and a comfortable bed.

"If you don't have the best job or you don't have the nicest car, just be thankful for what you got. It could be so much worse. Trust me. It could be so much worse," he said.

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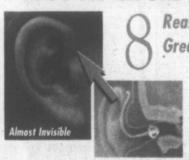
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