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HIGH
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LOW
16

See expanded weather on Page 2

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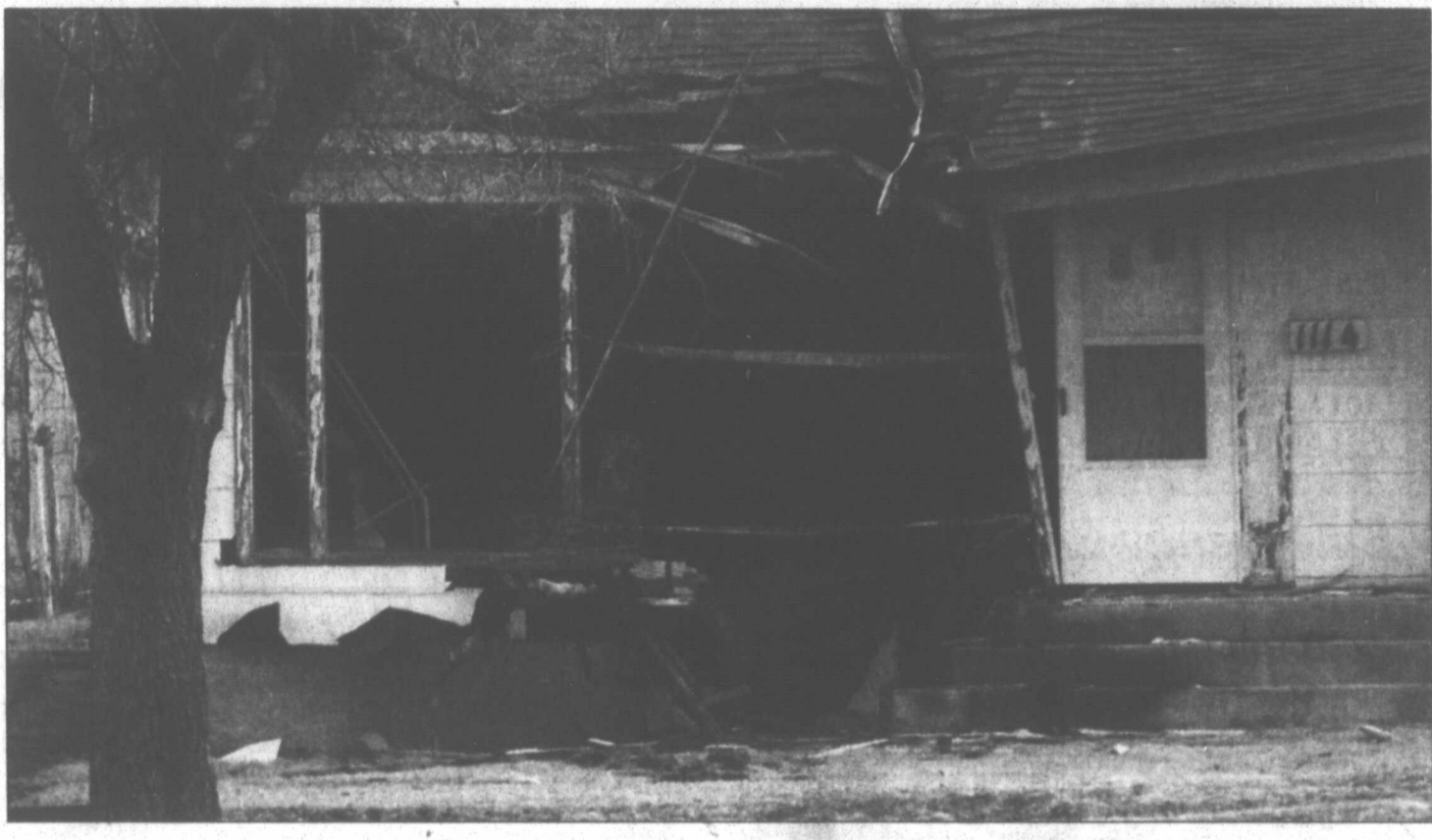
PAMPA, TX

Man dies after ramming vacant house with car

By MARILYN POWERS
 Staff Writer

An apparent high-speed departure from the scene of a misdemeanor ended with the death of a 30-year-old Pampa man after his vehicle crashed into a house early today.

Jorge Alberto Ortiz-Mares, of 1221 E. Francis, was driving a 1997 Pontiac Grand Prix when he left the parking lot of an apartment building at 1601 W. Somerville at a high rate of speed just after midnight, according to Pampa Police Department Assistant Chief Dennis Burton.



Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS

The front wall and roof of a house at 1114 W. Somerville was damaged shortly after midnight today when a 30-year-old Pampa man, Jorge Alberto Ortiz-Mares, became airborne in his vehicle and crashed into the home. Ortiz-Mares was transported to Amarillo by ambulance and was later pronounced dead.

Police were at the apartment buildings concerning a disorderly conduct report involving loud music from a vehicle at 12:07 a.m. Police records show that other calls to the address from the same source during the evening included domestic disturbance and criminal mischief, involving a tail light being broken out of a vehicle.

"Officers were in the parking lot, and the suspect apparently saw police and fled in his vehicle," Burton said. "By the time officers could give chase, he was gone."

Officers turned onto Hobart Street in search of the fleeing vehicle but did not find it or the driver. Meanwhile, a call was

received by emergency dispatch that a vehicle had driven into a house.

"Police believe that because of excessive speed, Ortiz-Mares lost control of the vehicle," Burton said. "It became airborne and struck the house. Police report the vehicle ended on its side in

the front room of the home." The vehicle that crashed into the house at 1114 W. Somerville was determined to be the same one officers had been searching for after it left the apartment buildings at a high rate of speed. Indications of the vehicle's high speed include the lack

of tire tracks leading up to the house and the vehicle's landing on its passenger side, Burton said.

Pampa Fire Department, Guardian EMS Ambulance, and PPD responded to the scene of the accident. The Jaws of Life was used to extract Ortiz-Mares from the

vehicle, Burton said.

Ortiz-Mares was transported by Guardian EMS ambulance from the scene to Northwest Texas Hospital in Amarillo, where he was pronounced dead shortly after arrival, Burton said.

See DEATH, Page 3

School board approves new track, Houston job

By KERRI SMITH
 Staff Writer

Pampa Independent School District held a special meeting this morning to consider and possibly approve two items — the demolition of Sam Houston school and the approval of an engineering firm to oversee the construction of a new track at the high school.

Athletic Director Stuart Smith addressed the board regarding the cost for various engineering firms to direct the Athletic Department Capital Improvement Project. Sports Engineering Technologies proposed a fixed fee of \$31,200 to oversee the

bidding process, surveys and construction of a new track at the high school.

"I've contacted a former employer of the gentleman that owns this company and he gave nothing but rave reviews for his work," Smith said. "I also talked to a few schools that had this company as their engineer on their track projects and they gave very good recommendations also." The board voted and approved this firm as the engineer for the project.

Board members discussed whether they should award a bid for the demolition of Sam Houston school now or should allow for a

rebid that includes demolition and remodeling at the high school also.

Lee Porter was concerned that if the high school project was not bid out soon that there might be a delay in the process that would cause the demolition to be delayed another year.

"My main concern is making sure there are construction firms available to do the work this summer," Porter said. "We do not want this project to be delayed for another year. I wonder if having this project rebid to include not only the high school but Sam Houston's demolition would make sure a company is

committed to Pampa this summer."

Superintendent Barry Haenisch had a message from Henry King, the consultant for the project, who said he felt the bid for Sam Houston should be awarded now. He said he wants to get the specs for bidding on the high school project ready in March, so there should not be any problem getting a company to commit to this summer in Pampa.

After these discussions, the board voted to award the bid for demolition of Sam Houston to Advanced Environmental Services from

See PISD, Page 3

Mayor, two spots open in election

Pampa voters will elect a mayor and two commissioners in the May 12 election.

Ward 1 Commissioner Brad Pingel's seat is up for re-election, as is the Ward 3 seat held by Lana Miller. Ward 3 will not have an incumbent because Miller moved out of the precinct, City Manager John Horst said this morning.

Mayor Lonnie Robbins' seat is up for re-election, too.

A story in Sunday's newspaper omitted the fact that Robbins' and Pingel's offices would be up for election.

Today is the first day candidates can file for the offices.

See ELECTION, Page 3

City commission to meet Tuesday

By KERRI SMITH
 Staff Writer

Pampa City Commissioners will hold a regular meeting at 4 p.m. Tuesday at the City Commission chambers on the third floor of City Hall, 201 W. Kingsmill. Items on the agenda to be considered are three different resolutions, appointing two people to the Panhandle Elderly Apartments Board, approving an interim city secretary and approving an amendment to the Joint Election Agreement.

The commission will hear the second and final reading of a resolution and possibly approve an agreement between the Pampa EDC and the manufacturing company MXT, L.L.C. that would provide an economic development grant for the creation and

retention of primary jobs in Pampa.

Commissioners will consider an authorization to release a lien to Richard C. DeVuyst and M. Linda DeVuyst dba Red River Dairy. This loan was originally given to Larry D. Roden, Gary Wayne Roden and Ricky Roden, dba Top O' Texas Dairy.

Also under consideration will be re-allocation of the remainder of the 2005-2006 bond issue of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.

Two vacant positions on the Panhandle Elderly Apartments Board need to be filled, preferably prior to Feb. 22. These vacancies occurred when two of the members died.

The commission will consider approving

See CITY, Page 3

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NEXT DAY FORECAST

Tuesday **Wednesday** **Thursday**



Mostly cloudy **Snow: 30%**

Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 30. Wind chill values between 13 and 18. Windy, with a north northeast wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Tuesday Night: A 40 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a low around 16. Wind chill values between 6 and 11. Northeast wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Wednesday: A 30 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 23. Northeast wind around 10 mph. Wednesday Night: A 20 percent chance of snow before midnight. Cloudy, with a low around 15. East northeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday: Partly cloudy, with a high near 35. Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 26.

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Emergency Services

Pampa PD

Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents for the 72-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Friday, Feb. 9
Eighteen traffic stops were made, resulting in at least three arrests.

A traffic stop in the 400 block of North Sumner involved no insurance and no driver's license.

Traffic complaints were received from the 700 block of West Foster, the 1300 block of East Browning, the police department lobby, and an unreported location.

Vehicle accidents were reported in the 2200 block of North Hobart and the 1300 block of North Hobart.

Abandoned vehicles were reported in the 1000 block of Varion Drive and the 1000 block of Huff Road.

Reckless driving was reported in the 600 block of West Foster.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 1300 block of Garland, the 500 block of North Somerville, the intersection of Mary Ellen and 18th streets, on two occasions in the 1500 block of North Christy, and the 2500 block of Charles.

A runaway was reported in the 1200 block of North Hobart.

An arrest was made in the 1200 block of South Nelson on a warrant.

Agency assistance was rendered in the 400 block of Crest.

A welfare check was made in the 1900 block of Christine.

A suspicious person call was received from the 300 block of South Cuyler.

A suspicious vehicle call was received from the 300 block of East Brown.

Violation of a city ordinance was reported in the 100 block of South Nelson.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1200 block of South Nelson and the 1200 block of North Hobart.

Criminal trespass was reported in the 600 block of Plains.

Telephone harassment was reported in the 700 block of Lefors.

Violation of a protective order was reported in the police department lobby.

A domestic disturbance was reported in the 400 block of North Faulkner.

Assault was reported in the 100 block of East Harvester and the 2400 block of Charles.

One burglar alarm was reported.

Forgery was reported at FirstBank Southwest, 300 W. Kingsmill.

Burglary was reported in the 900 block of East Frederic.

Saturday, Feb. 10
Seventeen traffic stops were made.

A traffic complaint was received from the 1300 block of West Kentucky.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 500 block of Lefors, the 500 block of North Wells, the 800 block of Beryl, the 800 block of South Gray, the 500 block of North Somerville, the 1100 block of South Dwight, and the intersection of Denver and Reid streets.

Sunday, Feb. 11
Thirteen traffic stops were made.

A traffic complaint was received from the 2100 block of North Dwight.

A vehicle accident was reported in the 300 block of

Obituaries

Services tomorrow

EARP, W.H. 'Hood' — 2 p.m. Central Baptist Church.
ADCOX, Loraine H. — Graveside services 2 p.m. Fairview Cemetery.

W.H. 'Hood' Earp, 84

W. H. "Hood" Earp, 84, died Saturday, Feb. 10, 2007, in Pampa.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Feb. 13, 2007, at Central Baptist Church with Rev. Norman Rushing, pastor, and Rev. Rick Parnell, associate pastor, officiating.

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

Mr. Earp was born Aug. 15, 1922 in Okra, Texas, and came to Pampa in 1946 from Weinert, Texas. He served in the U. S. Army Air Force during World War II. He married Earlene "Ikey" Driggers on Aug. 26, 1944,

in Weinert. Mr. Earp worked in various oilfield-related businesses from 1946 until his retirement from LSI, Inc. in 1996. He was a member of Central Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his father, John Wesley Earp Jr.; his mother, Ruth Smith Earp; a sister, Elizabeth Earp Heiskell; a brother, John Wesley Earp III; and a great-granddaughter, Jenna Kay Earp.

Survivors include his wife, Earlene "Ikey" Earp of

the home; two daughters, Debbie Robertson and husband David, and Jeanna Miller and husband Johnny, all of Pampa; a son, Wyatt Earp and wife Raynetta of Pampa; a sister, Darlene Earp Dunham of Nocona; six grandchildren, Shelley Brantley and husband Ken and Jeremy Miller, all of Amarillo; Rodney Robertson and wife Tonya and Jamie Winborne and husband Tommy, all of Pampa; Jay Wyatt Earp and



Earp

wife Jennifer of Duncan, Okla.; and Joshua Miller of Weatherford, Okla.; six great-grandchildren, Natalie and Jaycee Winborne, both of Pampa; Judd and Lauren Earp, both of Duncan, Okla.; Emily Robertson of Pampa, and Wesley Brantley of Amarillo.

Memorials may be to Central Baptist Church, 513 E. Francis, Pampa, TX 79065 or BSA Hospice, 800 N. Sumner, Pampa, TX 79065.

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

Loraine H. Adcox, 90

Loraine H. Adcox, 90, died Sunday, Feb. 11, 2007 in Dalhart.

Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2007, at Fairview Cemetery with Rev. Philip Elsheimer, pastor of Calvary Assembly of God Church, officiating. Arrangements are by Carmichael-Whatley

Funeral Directors. Mrs. Adcox was born Aug. 31, 1916, in Gomez, Texas. She married Earnest Adcox on Feb. 28, 1985. He preceded her in death on Jan. 22, 1998. She had been a resident of Pampa since 1979, moving to Dalhart in 2005. She was a founding member of the Calvary

Assembly of God Church. Survivors include two sons, Raymond Self of Dalhart and Tom L. Foster of Arlington; two daughters, Sherrye King of Flagstaff, Ariz. and Marlene Wyant of Pampa; 11 grandchildren, 24-great grandchildren, and 7 great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in

death by two brothers and two sisters. Memorials may be to Calvary Assembly of God Church, P. O. Box 1837, Pampa, TX 79066-1837.

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

the 700 block of East Murphy.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 1600 block of North Somerville, where a tail light on a car was broken.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1600 block of North Somerville and the 700 block of East Murphy.

Sheriff

Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests today.

Saturday, Feb. 10
Renard Lee Villarreal, 34, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO for public intoxication.

Sunday, Feb. 11
Mary Michelle Daniels, 35, of Pampa was arrested in the 800 block of South Barnes by Pampa Police Department on capias pro fines for no driver's license, no insurance, and unsafe backing.

Brent J. Bradford, 44, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO on capias pro fines for possession of drug paraphernalia and public intoxication.

Fire

Pampa Fire Department reported the following calls during the weekend period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Saturday, Feb. 10
7:32 a.m. — Seven units and 11 personnel responded to the 1000 block of Twiford on a structure fire.

Sunday, Feb. 11
2:14 p.m. — One unit and two personnel responded to the 1400 block of Williston

on a Dumpster fire.

Monday, Feb. 12
12:21 a.m. — Two units and six personnel responded to the 1100 block of Somerville on a vehicle extrication.

2:17 a.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the 1000 block of Huff on a medical assist.

Ambulance

Guardian EMS ambulance reported the following calls during the weekend period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Saturday, Feb. 10
7:34 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1000 block of Twiford. No transport.

1:30 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the Fire Department Drill Tower for a testing standby. No transport.

3:26 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to Pampa Nursing Center and transported a patient to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

Sunday, Feb. 11
12:17 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1900 block of Hilton Road and transported a patient to PRMC.

12:19 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1100 block of North Somerville and transported a patient to Northwest Texas Hospital.

12:22 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to PRMC and transported a patient to BSA.

6:07 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to PRMC and transported a patient to a private residence.

Another blood drive scheduled Thursday

Coffee Memorial Blood Center will hold a blood drive in Pampa from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday.

The event will be at Clarendon College Pampa Center, 1601 W. Kentucky. Every donor will receive a M*A*S*H T-Shirt.

To schedule an appointment, call 1-877-574-8800.

A press release from the center indicated that there is a need for all blood types. Residents are encouraged to attend one of these and help with the need for all blood types.

For more information, contact Suzanne Talley at 806 331-8841 or Stephanie Hinds at 806 331-8852.

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Wheat	4.30	
Milo	6.58	
Corn	7.27	
Soybeans	6.30	
The following 9:30 a.m. N.Y. Stock Market quotations are furnished by Edward Jones & Co. of Pampa.		
OXY	46.23	-0.29
BP PLC ADR ..	62.25	-0.65
Cabot Corp ..	46.82	-0.05
Celanese	28.36	-0.01
Cabot Oil Gas ..	65.25	-0.61
Coca Cola	48.01	+0.25
VLO	55.19	-0.31
HAL	29.66	-0.25
TRI	49.61	+0.01
KML	106.04	+0.05
XCEL	23.98	-0.02
Anadarko	41.60	+0.05
XOM	74.87	+0.01
Nat'l Oilwell ..	66.92	+0.38
Limited	28.20	-0.30
Williams	27.80	-0.01
MCD	44.52	-0.04
Atmos	32.14	-0.09
Pioneer Nat	40.07	-0.18
JCP	82.71	-0.14
COP	66.72	-0.27
SLB	63.54	-0.92
Tenneco	25.30	+0.62
CVX	72.85	-0.47
Wal-Mart	47.81	-0.16
OKE	43.43	-0.09
NS Grp	NA	NA
New York Gold	672.30	
Silver	13.92	
West Texas Crude	59.89	

Death

Continued from Page 1

"He had massive head and internal injuries," Burton said. "No autopsy is planned."

Toxicology tests are pending, and the investigation is continuing, he said. No passengers were found with Ortiz-Mares in the vehicle at the time of the accident, Burton said. The owner of the house on Somerville Street has been notified of the accident. The house was vacant at the time of the wreck, Burton said.

Ortiz-Mares is believed to be from Mexico. He also apparently had an alias, Jorge Alberto Lopez-Orozco, Burton said. Funeral services are pending.

PISD

Continued from Page 1

Odesa. Their proposal is for \$272,933 for demolition and asbestos abatement and \$15 a linear foot for any undisclosed thermal insulation. The materials will not be deposited in the Pampa landfill.

Election

Continued from Page 1

The city election will be held in conjunction with the Pampa Independent School District election.

Candidates have until March 12 to file applications to be included on the ballot with the city secretary's office.

March 20 is the last day for a candidate to withdraw from a race.

Early voting begins on April 30 and ends May 8. May 4 is the last day to receive an application to vote by mail.

City

Continued from Page 1

An interim city secretary to be effective on March 1 until a permanent selection can be made from applications that are due by March 9.

Also on the agenda is approval of an amendment to the Joint Election Agreement to name Karen Price as the Joint Election Officer.

A special city commission meeting may be scheduled for Feb. 28 at noon instead of the regular meeting on Feb. 27. Some members of the commission will be in Austin attending Panhandle Day.

Tape reveals Armitage outing Valerie Plame

By **MATT APUZZO**
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — Jurors in the CIA leak trial today heard a one-minute excerpt from Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward's tape recorder which revealed a top State Department official repeatedly discussing CIA operative Valerie Plame.

Woodward, who famously kept the identity of his "Deep Throat" Watergate source a secret for decades, testified that in June 2003, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage disclosed that the wife of a prominent Iraq war critic worked for the CIA.

Armitage mentioned several times, in sometimes explicit terms that had to be redacted, that former Ambassador Joseph Wilson's wife was a weapons of mass destruction analyst for the CIA.

"His wife is at the agency and is a WMD analyst," Armitage said on the tape.

The exchange occurred at the end of a lengthy interview for one of Woodward's books on the Bush administration's war policy. Woodward did not publish an article on Plame, who was

outed a month later by columnist Robert Novak. Armitage also was the source for that story.

Novak's column sparked an FBI investigation that Libby is accused of obstructing. He is accused of lying to investigators about his conversations with reporters regarding Plame but is not accused of the leak itself.

Woodward testified that he interviewed Libby a few weeks after talking to Armitage.

"I have no doubt Mr. Libby did not say anything about Mr. Wilson's wife," Woodward said.

Woodward's testimony doesn't directly undercut Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald's case but it offers fodder to Libby's attorneys, who say Libby is being made a scapegoat by the administration.

Woodward, who protected the identity of former FBI official Mark Felt until Felt himself came forward in 2005 as the secret source for the Watergate stories, said Monday that he was only cooperating because Armitage had encouraged it. Armitage has acknowledged being the source for Woodward and Novak but

has said it was accidental.

Woodward was the second defense witness to testify Monday. His Post colleague, Walter Pincus, testified that White House press secretary Ari Fleischer leaked him Plame's identity in July 2003.

Pincus, a veteran national security reporter, said he was talking to Fleischer for a story about weapons of mass destruction. He said Fleischer "suddenly swerved off" topic and asked why Pincus continued to write about Wilson.

"Don't you know his wife works for the CIA as an analyst?" Pincus recalled Fleischer saying.

Fleischer testified that he first learned that information from Libby over lunch. Fleischer testified he leaked the information to two reporters during a presidential trip to Africa but he did not mention the Pincus conversation.

In exchange for his testimony, prosecutors promised not to charge Fleischer.

Libby argues that he never discussed Plame with Fleischer. Pincus' testimony helps defense attorneys make the argument that Fleischer needed someone to

blame to cover up his own leaking.

Novak, whose column triggered an FBI investigation into the leak, was also scheduled to testify Monday.

attorneys said.

Associated Press writer Michael J. Sniffen contributed to this report.

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DA arrested for blocking police

RAYMONDVILLE, Texas (AP) — Willacy County's top prosecutor was arrested after he refused to allow police to enter his office with a search warrant related to allegations of abuse of office, theft and oppression, officials said.

Raymondville police arrested District Attorney Juan Guerra on Sunday at the Willacy County Courthouse on a misdemeanor charge of interfering with the official duties of a police officer, police Chief Uvaldo Zamora said.

"He stood in front of the door and said we weren't going in and, 'If you have to arrest me, arrest me,'" Zamora said in today's editions of the Valley Morning Star. "We gave him several more opportunities to cooperate. But he refused. We had no other choice but to place him under arrest."

Zamora said Guerra was expected to be arraigned today.

Special prosecutor Gustavo Garza said Sunday that Guerra is under investigation for theft by a public servant, official oppression and abuse of office. He said the allegations involve "a \$10,000 attempted extortion," the sale of a 2002 Toyota Camry that belonged to the state and an \$800 telephone reimbursement.

Guerra remained in the Willacy County Jail early today without bail pending arraignment, Willacy County Sheriff Larry Spence said. He declined to make Guerra available, citing jail policy against inmate interviews.

A telephone call to the DA's office went unanswered this morning, and a message left with Precinct 4 County Commissioner Aurelio Guerra, who is Juan Guerra's brother, was not immediately returned.

Garza, a Cameron County justice of the peace, said he was appointed special prosecutor by state District Judge Migdalia Lopez. He said the investigation was initiated by a grand jury last year.

Guerra has been wrestling with his colleagues in the county justice system for years over controversies such as county audits and prison contracts. Other officials say he is antagonistic and holds vendettas over breaches of political loyalty.

On Thursday, Guerra sought to stop Lopez from hearing any of his cases. He cited her appointment of Garza, a longtime political rival of Guerra's, as special prosecutor against Guerra.

The following day, Guerra said he was trying to have the county sheriff, district clerk, and county clerk removed from office. He said the district clerk refused to accept his petitions, which he said were based on allegations of official misconduct.

Garza said Sunday that the investigation into Guerra "has nothing to do with politics."

"This is a country of laws and not of men. The evidence will speak for itself," Garza said.

Raymondville is in the Rio Grande Valley, about 210 miles south of San Antonio.

Lefors school board to meet Tuesday

Lefors Independent School District's School Board will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the high school library at 209 E. Fifth St.

School board elections will be ordered for May 12.

Financial items on Tuesday's agenda include approval of monthly expenditures, a budget amendment, and extension of the cur-

rent depository contract with FirstBank Southwest.




Purchase of new scoreboards will be discussed, and Update 79 will be presented for approval.

Other items on the agenda include a superintendent's report and a report on the district's cash position.

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Viewpoints

Rebel giant put fear into the hearts of Yankee soldiers

The first time the Yankee soldiers saw Henry Clay Thurston charging toward them through the clouds of black powder smoke they must have rubbed their eyes in disbelief. This gray-clad Johnny Reb towered over the other fighting men like a pine tree growing next to a bush.

Born May 4, 1830, in Greenville, S.C., Thurston grew to 7 feet, 7-and-a-half inches. Some folks quibbled that he only stood a mere 7 feet, 6 inches but no one wanted to get in an argument with him about it. Maybe the Abe Lincoln-style stovepipe hat he favored in his later years did make him look a little taller.

To put Thurston's height in perspective, in a piece called "The Men in the Union and Confederate Armies," the Web site <http://www.civilwarhome.com> says the average height of Union soldiers was 5 feet, 8-and-a-half

inches. Even the tallest Yankee measured only 6 feet, 10-and-a-half inches.

Thurston and his family, which included four brothers who also wore extra, extra, extra longs, moved to Missouri, where he spent his early years. In 1850 he went to California for a while, coming home to Missouri via the Isthmus of Panama. At 23 he married Mary Thurston, a distant cousin. They would have four children.

When the Civil War broke out, Thurston joined the Confederate Army, serving as a private under Col. John Q. Burbridge in the 4th Missouri Cavalry. Given Thurston's size, that speaks well for the sturdiness of Missouri horseflesh.

Early in the war, when the Southern military still worried about discipline and the orderly forming of ranks, a colonel assembled Thurston's company. Noting

that one of the soldiers in the rank rose way above the rest of the men, the officer figured Thurston had stood up on a stump and ordered him off. When Thurston did not move, the officer drew his saber and roared, "I will make you obey orders! What are you standing on?" To which Thurston drawled, "I am standing on the ground."

Mike Cox

Texas Tales



Though federal marksmen could hardly hope for a more visible target, Thurston survived the hostilities with only a couple of relatively minor wounds, including a high shot that grazed the top of his head. His outfit fought with distinction in

Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana.

The skyscraper soldier became a prisoner of war late in the conflict, but did not spend long in confinement, gaining parole at Shreveport, La., in June 1865.

After the war, Thurston reunited with his family in Missouri and migrated southwest to Texas, stopping when he got to Titus County. He bought 100 acres east of Mount Vernon and spent most of the rest of his life farming.

Except when he toured with a circus company that billed him as "The World's Tallest Man." While it's impossible to prove he actually stood taller than anyone on the planet, Thurston did go into the record books as the tallest Confederate soldier.

Despite his size, he seems to have been a gentle giant. But he had his limits. Once, when a much shorter man looked up at him and asked, "How's the weather up

there?" Thurston let fly with a big gob of spit directed down on the man. "It's raining," the old Rebel answered.

"He was very proud of his great height and on every occasion of note would take the opportunity to exhibit himself, being called upon by all kinds of organizations in all parts of the country to mark in their ranks as a color bearer," a Mount Vernon newspaper wrote of Thurston. The Titus County farmer particularly liked to attend local and national reunions of Confederate veterans, serving as a human flag pole.

On Friday, July 2, 1909, Thurston sat down to supper with his son Ed, his daughter-in-law and their son. Mrs. Thurston told him that since he had not been feeling very well, he'd better pass on the cabbage. The big man began to

See THURSTON, Page 5

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Feb. 12, the 43rd day of 2007. There are 322 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was born in present-day Larue County, Ky.

On this date:

In 1554, Lady Jane Grey, who had claimed the throne of England for nine days, and her husband, Guildford Dudley, were beheaded after being condemned for high treason.

In 1818, Chile officially proclaimed its independence, more than seven years after initially renouncing Spanish rule.

In 1870, women in the Utah Territory gained the right to vote (however, that right was taken away in 1887).

In 1907, the steamer Larchmont collided with a schooner off New England's Block Island; accounts vary, but more than 300 lives may have been lost.

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded.

'No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.'

— Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

In 1912, Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, abdicated, marking the end of the Qing Dynasty.

In 1915, the cornerstone for the Lincoln Memorial was laid in Washington D.C.

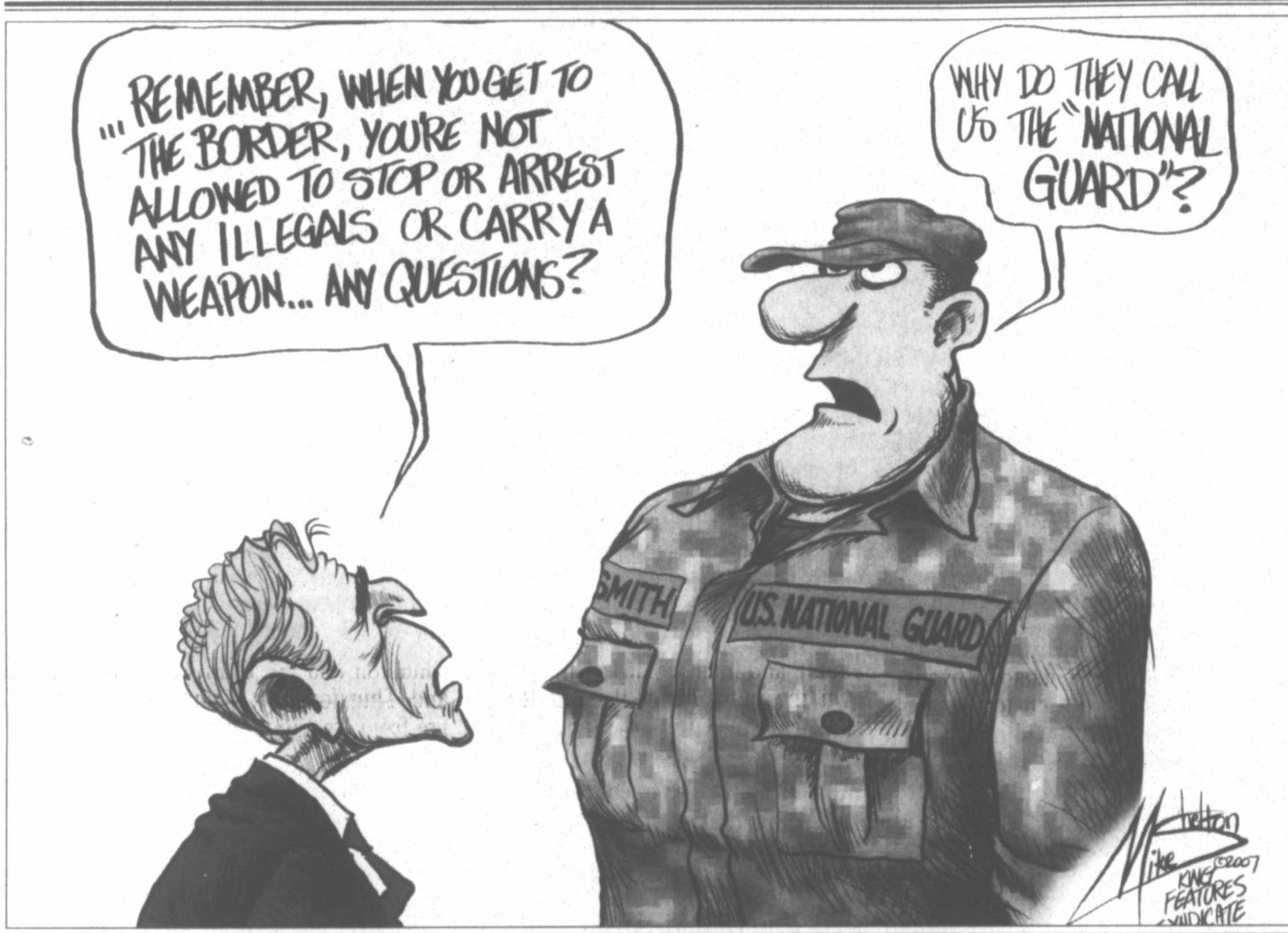
In 1940, the radio play "The Adventures of Superman" debuted with Bud Collyer as the Man of Steel.

In 1973, Operation Homecoming began as the first release of American prisoners of war from the Vietnam conflict took place.

In 1999, the Senate acquitted President Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Ten years ago: The highest-ranking official to flee communist North Korea, Hwang Jang Yop, asked for political asylum at South Korea's consulate in Beijing. The Clinton administration gave permission to 10 U.S. news organizations to open bureaus in Cuba.

Five years ago: Former Enron chairman Kenneth Lay expressed "profound sadness" about the collapse of the energy giant, but refused to testify at a Senate hearing. Former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic went on trial in The Hague, accused of war crimes. Pakistan charged three men in connection with the kidnapping of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in Karachi (they and a fourth man were later convicted of Pearl's murder). An Iranian passenger jet crashed, killing all 119 on board.



What age can do to one's outlook, optimism

A kind lady accused me of becoming "cranky" because I criticized the pope's visit to Turkey.

Why, crikey, I'm shocked. I thought my point that the crisis in Christianity is in Europe and North America and that the church could better use its resources there than on a public-relations trip to a Muslim country was quite reasonable.

Nevertheless, I rummaged around in my mental attic until I found my conscience. I've dusted it off and examined it carefully. I don't think I am cranky, but there are some characteristics of advancing age that might be mistaken for crankiness.

For example, one loses patience with hearing the same excuse for failure that has been heard hundreds of times before. More money for education is one such excuse. We already spend more on education than any

other nation in the world, and we get poorer results. Whatever the key to education is, it obviously is not money.

One gets tired of hearing politicians flap their lips about the "high cost of health care" while at the same time ignoring the problem. The problem is the high cost — to wit, the prices charged by hospitals, nursing homes, doctors, pharmaceuticals and all the other appendages of the health-care system. To play around with the notion of who will pay these high costs — public or private insurance — is to avoid the issue.

The same thing applies to the "high cost" of higher education. Well, you don't

need a splendid campus and grand buildings just to train an accountant or a social worker or a teacher or a lawyer. Most universities have become pretentious vocational schools for the middle class. Students could

hear their lectures just as well in an office building or a Quonset hut, for that matter. Nor do they need to be entertained by high-priced sports teams.

Too much experience robs one of the bliss of ignorance, which is real, but at the same time, it leavens one's optimism with realism. There is always progress, but it is never easy, and progress also creates new problems. There is also regression. Utopia never comes. One wishes the old German saying "too

soon old, too late smart" were not true.

There is a poignant truth to the Adam and Eve story. The one fruit they were forbidden to taste came from the tree of knowledge. Knowledge, once acquired, cannot be unacquired, except through disease or brain injury. All the images stored in our brain have an effect on us. That is reason enough for parents to guard their children's brains from all the images of death and violence the commercial entertainment industry supplies.

So, dear lady, I shall be on my guard lest I become cranky, but please keep in mind that most of my illusions are in tatters. Like Patrick Henry, I have only the lamp of experience to light my way, and my experience tells me that the future

See REESE, Page 5

Charley Reese

Columnist



Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

■ Feb. 4
Houston Chronicle on tougher sex offender laws:

There is a difference between being tough on crime and talking tough about crime. That distinction is in danger of being lost in the push to adopt laws that would impose the death sentence for repeat child sex offenders and a mandatory 25-year sentence for first-time offenders. The governor and lieutenant governor of Texas each made passage of the so-called "Jessica's Laws" prominent in his campaign. Legislators have filed more than 30 related bills, most proposing to "get tough" on an

offense no one denies is devastating.

When proponents of these measures cite the psychological wreckage in a child victim's life, they are not exaggerating. The damage can take years to repair. Every child deserves laws that promote protection and prevention as effectively as possible. Every offender deserves punishment that matches the severity of the offense.

By most accounts, Texas already has some of the most stringent laws in the nation to deal with sex crimes involving children. When asked if he had the tools he needed to vigorously prosecute these cases, Harris County District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal said he did. Rosenthal is no softie.

But two years ago talk-show host Bill O'Reilly told Gov. Rick Perry that

Texas laws weren't tough enough. He told Perry Texas should join a half-dozen other states that have added the death penalty and the 25-year minimum sentence. At the recent inaugural ceremony, both Perry and Dewhurst mentioned their commitment to these measures. Dewhurst told listeners that there's tough and then there's Texas tough.

A society concerned about coping with this terrible and confounding crime will disregard the tough-guy rhetoric and ask whether the proposed measures will make children safer.

Proponents of high sentences presume that offenders will be convicted and locked safely away. Rosenthal said

See OPINION, Page 5

THE PAMPA NEWS

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Harvard names historian as first female president

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — Drew Gilpin Faust recalls her mother lecturing her that “this is a man’s world, sweetie, and the sooner you learn that, the better off you’ll be.”

It was a lesson, she wrote in a memoir, that she refused to accept.

On Sunday, Harvard University named Faust the first female president in the school’s 371-year history.

“I hope that my own appointment can be one symbol of an opening of opportunities that would have been

inconceivable even a generation ago,” Faust said. But she also added, “I’m not the woman president of Harvard, I’m the president of Harvard.”

A Civil War scholar and respected university insider, Faust, 59, emerged as a candidate considered by the school’s governing body to be best suited to cool tensions within the faculty after the tumultuous five-year presidency of Lawrence Summers.

Two years ago, Summers created an uproar when he said that genetic gender differences may explain why few women rise to top science jobs. At the height of the controversy, Faust oversaw two panels that examined gender diversity on campus.

She has been dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study since 2001, two years after the former women’s college merged into Harvard as a research center with a mission to study gender issues.

Faust was elected by the seven-member Harvard Corporation, the school’s governing body, and ratified by the 30-member Board of Overseers.

With Faust’s appointment, half of the eight Ivy League schools have woman presidents. The other three are Amy Gutmann of the University of Pennsylvania, Shirley M. Tilghman of Princeton University, and Ruth J. Simmons of Brown University.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Carrying a tune



Tyler Lambright sounded a little like Hilary Duff in the CREATE-a-Beat! karaoke room recently. COURTESY PHOTO

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Thurston

Continued from Page 4

butter a biscuit when he fell back in his chair in heart failure.

Before Thurston could be laid to rest, the local undertaker had to await the arrival by train of a custom-made casket from Texarkana. Eight feet long, it couldn't fit into the hearse with the doors closed.

They buried him in a grave much

longer than deep in Mt. Pleasant's Edwards Cemetery. His house, which had nine-foot ceilings, still stands in Mount Vernon.

The editor of the local weekly newspaper eulogized Thurston as “a kind and generous friend, a citizen of strong prejudices [the modern word would be beliefs], and intense patriotism.”

On the other hand, the old Rebel hadn't been a church goer and “made no pretension to religion whatsoever.”

Even so, the newspaperman surely spoke for the whole community when

he concluded: “He was our friend and we shall miss his cheering words and hearty handshake.”

Note from the author: Mount Vernon psychologist R.L. Flournoy has done a lot of research on Thurston. The delightful anecdotes about Thurston and the Confederate officer and Thurston's “it's raining” remark are from Dr. Flournoy's work.

Mike Cox, a member of the Texas Institute of Letters, is the author of a dozen Texas-related books.

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Opinion

Continued from Page 4

that high penalties generally work against the prosecution, and the stiffer penalty would result in fewer families coming forward. Because child sexual abuse is overwhelmingly a covert crime that occurs between a child and someone known to the child, fewer cases prosecuted means more children remaining in abusive situations.

Many victims' rights groups are particularly leery of the death penalty. It puts the child and the family in the position of testifying in the capital trial of another family member. The fear is that, rather than deterring offenders, the death penalty would deter the family from reporting the offense.

Imposing the death penalty for repeat offenders would mean that an offender would receive the same punishment, regardless of whether the victim was killed. This raises the specter of a “perverse incentive” for the offender to kill the child to eliminate the witness.

State Sen. John Whitmire,

chairman of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, says the Texas penal code allows for long sentences, difficult parole and civil commitment when child sexual offenders fail to comply with the terms of their release. No one should mistake this state as weak on offenders, he said. Yet he urges caution about the unintended consequences of some of the measures being pushed this session.

Shannon Edmonds, director of governmental relations for the Texas District and County Attorney's Association, outlines potential outcomes that concern many prosecutors. These include the already mentioned reluctance to report by families; jury nullification in cases in which an automatic severe penalty seems excessive relative to the offense; and an unmanageable number of cases going to trial because offenders will no longer have an incentive to plead guilty.

It is tempting to believe harsher sentences might prevent offenders from slipping through the system, but when seasoned prosecutors say otherwise, politicians

and the public should listen. These are difficult cases to prosecute; replacing a range of penalties with mandatory sentencing is only likely to increase the difficulty of obtaining convictions. Without increased disclosure, without additional cases being prosecuted and more success in gaining convictions, it is hard to see that tougher sentencing laws are actually tough on crime.

Changing the Texas criminal code should not be based on the emotional devastation of a family that lost a beloved child, or the urging of a talk show host. Those who wish to benefit victims of childhood sexual offense need to look beyond the quick fix of unrealistically harsh sentences. They add little to the ability to prevent these horrific crimes.

2 teen girls cancel school

TRENTON, Ohio (AP) — Edgewood City Schools Superintendent Tom York said he was perplexed when he logged onto the district's Web site to announce a one-hour delay for cold. He found an announcement that school was canceled for snow — which wasn't in the forecast.

“I didn't make that call, and I'm the guy who does, so I knew something was up,” York said.

Indeed, Now two teenage girls are accused of gaining unauthorized access to the Web site and posting the fake winter school closing.

The two Edgewood High School students were charged Friday.



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Reese

Continued from Page 4

Troy or in the Roman forum. We are as a species opportunistic predators, and neither religions nor philosophies have been able to cure us. Therefore, if you do not expect peace, you will not be disappointed. If you do not look for utopian solutions, you won't look in vain. If you expect more of the same, you can at least take comfort in being right.

But never forget that life, even as it is, is a delightful feast.


—Write to Charley Reese at P.O. Box 2446, Orlando, FL 32802.

will not be radically different from the past.

We make progress with our toys and weapons, but human nature remains what it was before the gates of

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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

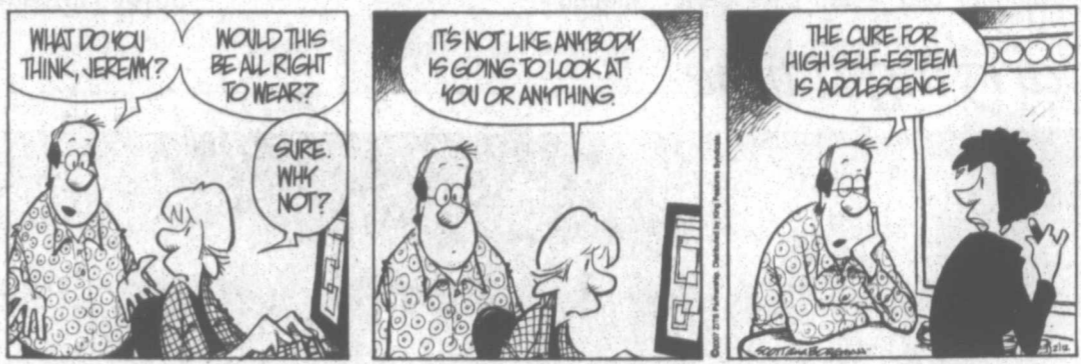
DEAR ABBY: Valentine's Day is nearly here, and it can be a sad day for people who are alone -- especially for widows and widowers living by themselves. This holiday can be more painful for them than birthdays, anniversaries and other holidays because they are constantly bombarded with images of love by retailers. I would like to offer a suggestion that can turn an otherwise difficult day into a day for them to look forward to. Last year, my fiance and I spent Valentine's Day with his widowed grandmother. Her husband has been gone 10 years, and she has not remarried. He was her soul mate, the center of her life. We wanted to do something to make it a day she could look forward to. Abby, I cannot tell you how happy she was when we told her we would be spending the evening with her. She had the table set for dinner by noon that day. When we arrived, she was glowing. We stayed for hours and listened as she told stories about her life with her husband. We both learned so much that we didn't know about her life and family. We wouldn't trade that night for anything. As a couple in love, we get to spend every day celebrating our love for each other. We don't need a day set aside to remind each other of that. Valentine's Day is about love. It doesn't have to be romantic love. We have decided to spend every Valentine's Day from now on with her, so we can make it "her" special day. Everyone knows someone who has lost the one that he or she loves. I see no reason not to take a little time to make this a special day for them. Such a small gift can make a world of difference. — **BETH IN BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.**

DEAR BETH: Thank you for a beautiful letter. From reading it, I know you and your fiance have a wonderful future ahead of you. You have made an important point. Regardless of the holiday hype, the most precious gift a person can give to another isn't one that's tangible. It's the gift of time. Although Valentine's Day celebrates romantic love, we all know that there are many kinds of love. On Wednesday, I hope that none of my readers who are unattached will sit at home alone and brood. Reach out to other singles! Rent a stack of videos, pop some popcorn, sit back and enjoy each other's company. Or pick up the phone and call someone to say that he or she is in your thoughts. Everyone likes to be remembered. For those lucky folks who "have everything," take a moment and thank the good Lord that you are so blessed. And while you're at it, offer up a prayer for the safety of the men and women who are serving our country in all four corners of the globe, as well as their families at home who are doing without them. I have found that going so puts everything in perspective.

For Better Or For Worse



Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

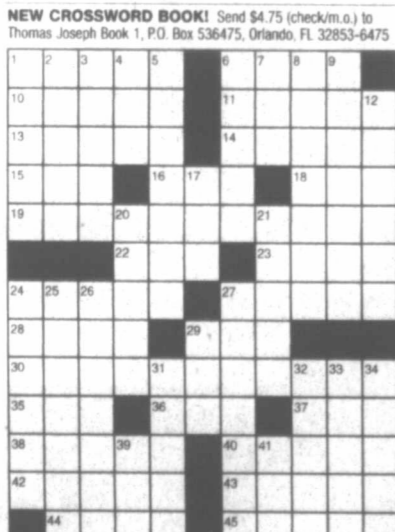
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 42 Unadorned
 - 1 Rosters
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 - 21 Eat away (on)
 - 24 Indiana team city
 - 25 Gym
 - 26 Spoils
 - 27 Atlantic resort
 - 29 Fast flier
 - 31 Loquacious
 - 32 Goaded (on)
 - 33 Florida city
 - 34 Petty quarrels
 - 39 Work unit
 - 41 Flurry



Saturday's answer

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Marmaduke



"You heard me. No dog food a la mode."

The Family Circus

By Bil Keane



"I wish Jack Frost would go south for the winter just once!"

B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



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Flo & Friends



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Sports Day



If you see any of these boys around town, be sure and ask them about tickets to the brisket dinner. Pictured here are: (L-R) seniors, Alex Torres, Jarron Clark, Brett Ferrell, Robbie Dixon and Brady Eakin.

Harvester Baseball to host brisket dinner

The Pampa Harvester baseball team will host a brisket dinner at 2 p.m. this Sunday at the Optimist Club. There will be all-you-can-eat brisket, baked potatoes, salad and cobbler. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 8 and under, and are available from any of the baseball players or by calling 665-2105.

Mickelson starting to hit his stride

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (AP) — So much for the demise of Phil Mickelson.

The last time he had the lead in the final round of a golf tournament, Mickelson sprayed the ball so badly off the tee that it finally caught up to him on the last hole of the U.S. Open. He clattered shots off trees and tents on his way to a dubious double bogey that cost him his third straight major.

Three tournaments into the 2007 season, Lefty didn't do much to stop speculation that he would never be the same.

Mickelson might agree after his five-shot victory in the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

He might be even better.

With a command performance from tee-to-green, Mickelson went wire-to-wire on the Monterey Peninsula and closed with a 6-under 66, tying the 72-hole tournament scoring record and giving him great vibes about the rest of the year.

He used his debacle at Winged Foot to become a better driver, and he was all that and more at Pebble Beach. Mickelson missed only one fairway in the final round and only got in trouble when his 6-iron caught a gust and dis-

appeared into the weeds, a lost ball that sent him to a double bogey on the fifth hole.

The rest of the final round was a breeze. He made three birdies during a four-hole stretch around the ocean to pull away from the pack, and for the second time in three years, was able to stroll up the 18th fairway in peaceful sunshine.

"I was excited to get back here," Mickelson said. "I felt like I was finally starting to play well."

Mickelson says things like that after all his victories, this one his third at Pebble and the 30th of his career. But ask him about his driver, and he can't contain his enthusiasm.

Whether he was trying to hit a draw or a fade, high or low, even a straight shot, the ball obeyed.

That was the lesson he took out of Winged Foot — becoming better off the tee — and while Pebble Beach is not a major, Mickelson felt as though it showed everyone he was ready for anything.

"I've never had this type of feeling on the tee box, knowing that it's going to be in the fairway and not worry about it," he said. "Not seeing if it's going to go left or right or worried about that. I just feel so confident now."

The rest of his game isn't bad, either.

His short-game coach joined him earlier in the week and they worked on his putting, which Mickelson felt had held him back in two mediocre starts and a missed cut this year. He didn't make them all, but he made enough. Mickelson finished at 20-under 268 to tie the record set by Mark O'Meara in 1997.

He earned \$990,000 to become the third player in PGA Tour history to surpass \$40 million for his career. He went up to No. 4 in the world rankings. And he won on the West Coast Swing for the 11th time in his 15 full seasons on the PGA Tour.

The important statistics, however, were accumulated over four days of sunshine and rain.

Mickelson tied for fourth in driving accuracy, hitting 82 percent of his fairways. He tied for first in greens in regulation, missing only 15 all week. He averaged only 28 putts per round, tied for fifth. And his average drive of 285.1 yards was tied for fourth.

It all starts off the tee.

"It's very easy for me to hit fairways. It feels that way," Mickelson said.

And that's when he's dangerous.

Mark James takes Allianz Championship with 4-under

BOCA RATON, Fla. (AP) — England's Mark James won the Allianz Championship on Sunday in his first tournament of the year, closing with a 4-under 68 for a two-stroke victory over Champions Tour player of the year Jay Haas.

James spent the previous three weeks skiing in the French Alps. "I came out here fairly cold from the winter off and only started practicing this week," he said. "It's a nice surprise and gives me a lot of confidence."

James finished at 15-under 201 on The Old Course at Broken Sound, and earned \$240,000 for his third career victory on the 50-and-over tour.

Haas birdied the par-5 18th for a 70. "As good as I played yesterday was as poorly as I played today," Haas said. "Off the tee, I had been bragging about how good my driver was, but I maybe hit three or four fairways today."

R.W. Eaks (68), Morris Hatafsky (70) and Brad Bryant (69) tied for third at 12 under, and Loren Roberts (67), Keith Fergus (68) and Dana Quigley (70) were another stroke back.

James, tied for the lead with Haas and Craig Stadler at the beginning of play Sunday, birdied six of the first 12 holes to reach 16 under. James bogeyed the 14th to drop back to 15 under, where he stayed for the final four holes.

James most difficult moment of the day came when he bogeyed the nine hole for his first bogey of the tournament. James took a calculated risk on the ninth when he took off his shoe to hit a ball out of shallow water, but only managed to chip it about 2 feet. Haas and Stadler also bogeyed the hole to stay one stroke behind.

Stadler double-bogeyed the 14th and 16th en route to a 74 and a 9-under total. Nick Price closed with a 68 to tie for 20th at 6 under in his Champions Tour debut. "I'd have liked to play a little better in my debut," Price said. "My game left a little to be desired. But it's been great and it's nice to feel wanted again."

Celtics extend franchise record breaking skid

By The Associated Press

The Boston Celtics are in a record-breaking rut that has shaken their confidence and damaged the image of a once-proud franchise.

"You can feel it in the locker room, each loss definitely hurts," Paul Pierce said. "These guys are going to keep playing hard. We just need to get it out of our head."

Easier said than done, especially when you've lost a franchise-record 18 consecutive games. The latest loss came Sunday when Ricky Davis' jumper from the corner with 0.2 seconds remaining lifted the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 109-107 victory.

"It is tough, the guys played so hard and deserve to win," said Pierce, who scored 29 points. "We did everything we could. Down the stretch, they made the last play."

The Celtics' previous

franchise low was 13 straight losses in 1993-94 and 1996-97. They've blown past that mark, and haven't won since beating Memphis on Jan. 5.

The Utah Jazz also lost 18 straight in 1982 and seven teams have lost 19 games in a row. The Celtics still have a ways to go to get to the NBA record of 24 straight losses by the Cleveland Cavaliers, a streak that spanned the end of the 1981-82 season and start of the 1982-83 season.

In other NBA games, it was: Chicago 116, Phoenix 103; Seattle 114, Sacramento 103; Cleveland '99, the Los Angeles Lakers 90; Miami 100, San Antonio 85; Indiana 94, the Los Angeles Clippers 80; Portland 94, Washington 73; Dallas 106, Philadelphia 89; and Atlanta 106, Golden State 105.

At Minneapolis, the Celtics led by 10 points in the first half and 107-105 with 1:17 to play after Pierce fed Al Jefferson for a dunk.

Miami takes over San Antonio Spurs

MIAMI (AP) — Once Dwyane Wade got rolling, things seemed almost easy for the Miami Heat.

Wade — virtually silent offensively for the first three quarters — had 18 of his 26 points in the final period and the Heat held San Antonio without a field goal for more than 7 minutes down the stretch on the way to beating the Spurs 100-85 on Sunday.

He was 3-for-9 from the field entering the fourth, then hit 7-of-10 shots in the final 12 minutes, falling two points short of matching the Spurs' offensive total in the stanza by himself. Miami outscored San Antonio 31-20 in the fourth.

"It was a great game until Dwyane Wade decided to take over," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "And then it was over."

Shaquille O'Neal had 16 points in 25 minutes; he didn't play in the final 15:44, partly because he's still coming back from knee surgery, partly because the smaller

lineup the Heat used did well enough to not necessitate his return. Jason Kaponu added his first career double-double, 13 points and 11 rebounds.

The win was Miami's fifth in its last six games and pulled the Heat within one game of the .500 mark again; Miami (25-26) can get there Tuesday when it hosts Portland in its last game before the All-Star break.

"We're just trying to continue to get better," Wade said. "If anyone knows basketball, they understand that we're not going anywhere, that we've been having a lot of injuries. But we're getting it back. That's our whole focus, to keep going this way."

Manu Ginobili had 26 points off the bench for the Spurs, who fell to 2-4 on their eight-game road trip. Tony Parker added 20 for San Antonio, while Tim Duncan finished with 13 points and 11 rebounds and Brent Barry scored 11.

Thrashers v. Ambassadors



Coach John East of the Pampa Thrashers takes a 3-point shot as Donnie Hooper looks on during Saturday night's game with the Harlem Ambassadors.

Pampa News photo by JORDAN REAGAN

Lions Club



Barry Owens and daughter Holly enjoy themselves at a recent Pampa Lions Club meeting. Holly is the local Lions' February Sweetheart of the Month.

Pampa News photo by ReDONN WOODS

PFAA



Pampa Fine Arts Association honored past Artists of the Year recently including Darlene Holmes, from left, 2006 Artist of the Year; Cile Taylor (1987); John Forister (1993); Janice Sackett (1999); Gerald Sanders (1979); Dona Cornutt (2007); Kaye Crouch (2000); Mimi Gross (2002); and Natalie Reeve (1980).

COURTESY PHOTO

Eddie Murphy rules weekend box office

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Movie fans couldn't pass up three Eddie Murphys for the price of one.

Murphy's comedy "Norbit," in which he plays three wildly different roles, opened as the top weekend movie with \$33.7 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The DreamWorks production easily beat the debut of the MGM-Weinstein Co. thriller "Hannibal Rising," a prequel about "The Silence of the Lambs" serial killer Hannibal Lecter that came in at No. 2 with \$13.35 million.

Murphy had not had a starring role in a movie since 2003's "The Haunted Mansion," but "Norbit" benefited from huge acclaim and publicity he has received for "Dreamgirls," for which he is expected to win the supporting-actor Academy Award.

"He wasn't that visible on marquee in huge hits for a while, then suddenly every time you turn around, it's 'Wow, what a surprise. Eddie is great,'" said DreamWorks spokesman Marvin Levy.

But while it was the year's biggest opening so far, "Norbit" was not able to lift Hollywood out of its box-office funk that has seen revenues fall for six straight weekends. The top 12 movies took in \$91.3 million, down 10.5 percent from the same weekend in 2006, when "The Pink Panther" and "Final Destination 3" both debuted in the \$20 million range.

"Norbit" was the 14th No. 1 opening for Murphy and came in well above the expectations of distributor Paramount, which had projected the movie might pull in about \$25 million over its

opening weekend.

The movie was trashed by critics, but the lure of Murphy again handling multiple roles as he did in "Coming to America" and "The Nutty Professor" proved irresistible. Murphy plays mild-mannered Norbit, his grossly overweight and overbearing wife and a Chinese orphanage owner who raised him.

"Dreamgirls," another Paramount-DreamWorks release, also remained in the top 10 with \$3.1 million, lifting its total to \$97.1 million.



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Grammys embrace veterans

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Clearly, the Grammys aren't concerned about bringing sexy back.

The Recording Academy embraced more serious fare by veteran artists on Sunday, showering the Dixie Chicks with five awards, including the rare trifecta of record, album, and song of the year. Mary J. Blige won three for her comeback record, "The Breakthrough," the biggest mainstream success in her 15-year career. And four trophies went to the Red Hot Chili Peppers for their hit album "Stadium Arcadium."

Meanwhile, Justin Timberlake — a major focus of the show with two performances and four nominations, including for album of the year — took home two trophies in little-noticed side categories. British singer-songwriters Corinne Bailey Rae and James Blunt, both newcomers nominated for multiple awards, were shut out. And two of the year's biggest hits, "Hips Don't Lie" and "Promiscuous," didn't get any awards — both lost out to a remake of Stevie Wonder's decades-old "For Once In My Life," performed by Wonder and 80-year-old Tony Bennett.

There were many such "Granny" moments at the 49th annual awards show. Despite flashes of youth in performances by Timberlake, John Mayer and Chris Brown, the show had a definite VH1 Classics appeal, from the kickoff by the reunited Police — who were not nominated for any awards and had no purpose except to draw audiences — to the tributes that lovingly recalled the fading music industry's golden years.

Perhaps the only moment that seemed to have any cutting-edge element was the "My Grammy Moment," in which three young women vied for a spot to sing with Timberlake. The winner, 19-year-old Robyn Troup, was determined by text messages and Internet votes. The contest was an obvious nod to "American Idol," the TV talent competition which crushed the Grammys when it went head-to-head on a Wednesday night last year, prompting the Grammys to flee back to Sunday.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, including album of the year for "Taking the Long Way," and record and song of the year for "Not Ready to Make Nice," their defiant anthem penned songwriter Dan Wilson. It was sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and their record sales plummeted when feisty lead singer Natalie Maines criticized

President Bush on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on renowned producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country. (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year.)

The standing ovations the Chicks received Sunday illustrated how much the political climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines crowed from the podium after the country award was handed out earlier in the night. "Well, to quote the great 'Simpsons' — 'Heh-Heh.'"

"Just kidding," added Maines. "A lot of people just turned their TVs off right now. I'm very sorry for that." Bandmate Emily Robison noted, "We wouldn't have done this album without everything we went through, so we have no regrets."

All the trophies collected by the Dixie Chicks, Blige and the Chili Peppers contributed to the evening's old-school feel. Though the show featured a medley with bright new stars such as double-winner Mayer, John Legend and Rae, it relied heavily on the classics: Nominee Lionel Richie sang his '80s hit "Hello" and Smokey Robinson sang his Motown classic "The Tracks of My Tears" in a tribute to R&B. Rock and Roll Hall of Famers The Police, who split in 1984, reunited to kick off the show with their rendition of "Roxanne."

Even some of the more contemporary artists were relegated to singing songs that weren't their own. Christina Aguilera, a winner for female pop vocal performance, sang the late James Brown's "It's A Man's Man's Man's World" instead of her own nominated songs, while Carrie Underwood, the newcomer with one of last year's most successful albums, crooned The Eagles' "Desperado" and "San Antonio Rose" instead of her signature tune "Jesus, Take the Wheel," which was nominated for song of the year.

But new artists were celebrated, a bit. The teenage Brown injected some hot-footed funk with his "Run It," while Underwood was celebrated as the best new artist. And double winners included youngsters Underwood, Mayer, T.I. and Ludacris.

Blige was the overall nominations leader with eight.

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