

NEXT DAY FORECAST

Tuesday Wednesday Thursday



Mostly sunny Mostly sunny Mostly sunny

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 60. Wind chill values between 32 and 37 early. West northwest wind around 10 mph becoming south.

Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 36. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 67. South southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 39. South southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 70. Southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 41.

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C.H. 'Sonny' Bigham

LUBBOCK — Sonny Bigham, 65, of Lubbock, died Saturday, Feb. 17, 2007 at his residence.

Visitation will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Resthaven Funeral Home. Celebration of Life services will be at 1 p.m. Wednesday in Resthaven's Abbey Chapel with burial to follow at Resthaven Memorial Park.

C. H. "Sonny" Bigham was born March 30, 1941, in Lefors, Texas to the late "Tead" and Evelyn (Lambert) Bigham. The family moved to Lubbock in 1950.

Sonny owned and operated

C&W House Movers Inc. from 1970 to 2003. He married Doyleene Horton on Jan. 12, 1960, in Shallowater.

Survivors include his wife, Doyleene of Lubbock; two sons, Chris James Bigham and Sonny Bigham Jr.; a daughter, Shelly Narvaiz; six grandchildren; a brother, "Boker" James Kit Bigham of Shallowater; a sister, Bobbie Howard of Lefors; and a stepbrother, Rick Simco of Dallas.

He was preceded in death by a son, David Dean Bigham and a brother, Harris Bigham.



Bigham

Obituaries

Services tomorrow

OSBORN, Marilee — 2 p.m. Central Baptist Church.

Billy Neal Stovall, 76

Billy Neal Stovall, 76, died Monday, Feb. 12, 2007, in St. Johns, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2007, at First Baptist Church with Dr. Johnny Funderburg, pastor, officiating.

Burial will be in Fairview Cemetery with military rites courtesy of U.S. Air Force, Altus, Okla. Arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors.

Mr. Stovall was born May 15, 1930, in Dalhart to Lamon and Inez Webster Stovall. He had been a resident of Pampa since 1934. He was a 1948 graduate of Pampa High School and

received his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska.

He was a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. He retired from the Air Force in 1972 as a lieutenant colonel after serving 22 years. He then farmed and ranched in Gray County until his death.

He married Margaret Humphries in 1953 in Pampa. She preceded him in death in 1978. He later married Betty Prigmore Cooper



Stovall

on March 16, 1979, in Pampa.

He was a member and deacon of First Baptist Church. He was a member of the BSA Hospital Board. He was a member of the Pampa Veterans' Hall of Fame. He was preceded in death by his parents and three daughters, Linda Wallin in 1994, Debra Sharpton in 1995 and Suzanne Vickery in 2001.

Survivors include his wife, Betty Stovall of the home; two daughters, Cindy Moore and husband Scott of Pampa and Linda Patton and

husband David of McKinney; one son, Michael Cooper of Pampa; one sister, Patsy Martin of Denver, Colo.; seven grandchildren, William Sharpton, Melisa Jones and Rebecca Moore, all of Pampa, Keevin Wallin of Florida, Jason Vickery of Vermont, Kristy Sharpton of Corpus Christi and Kayla Wallin of Elk City, Okla.; and five great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church Missionary Fund, P.O. Box 621, Pampa, TX 79066-0621.

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

Edith Hobbs, 87

Edith Hobbs, 87, died Sunday, Feb. 18, 2007, in Pampa.

Services are pending with Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors.

Mrs. Hobbs was born on Nov. 20, 1919, in Walters, Okla., where she attended school, graduating from Walters High School in 1938. She married Lee

Hobbs on Nov. 5, 1945, in Burkburnett. She moved to Pampa in 1952. She was employed by Fraser Insurance Co. for several years. She was a member of Central Baptist Church.



Hobbs

enjoyed sewing and reading.

Survivors include her husband, Lee Hobbs of the home; one son, Dan Hobbs and wife Zonell of Pampa; one brother: Athel Norman and wife Jessie of Walters, Okla.; two

granddaughters, Susan Hobbs of Amarillo and Cindy Hobbs of Pampa. She was preceded in death by her parents and two brothers.

Memorials may be to Central Baptist Church, 513 E. Francis, Pampa, TX 79065.

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

Marilee Osborn, 75

Marilee Osborn, 75, died Sunday, Feb. 18, 2007, in Pampa.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2007, at Central Baptist Church with Rev. Norman Rushing, pastor, and Rev. Rick Parnell, associate pastor, officiating.

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

Mrs. Osborn was born Feb. 11, 1932, in Brownwood. She had lived in Clovis, N.M., for 15 years but lived in the Pampa area most of her life. She married Kenneth Osborn on Aug. 24, 1951, in Pampa. He preceded her



Osborn

in death on Sept. 23, 1997. She was a member of Central Baptist Church.

Survivors include two sons, Doug Osborn of Bennett, Colo., and Steve Osborn of Pampa; one brother, Bill Conklin of Lubbock; and seven grand-

children. She was preceded in death by a son, Wesley Osborn.

Memorials may be to Central Baptist Church, 513 E. Francis, Pampa, TX 79065.

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

Emergency Services

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

Friday, Feb. 16
 Six traffic stops were made.

Traffic complaints were received from the 500 block of West Brown and the 800 block of East Browning.

A vehicle accident was reported at the intersection of Harvester and Duncan streets.

Motorist assistance was rendered at the intersection of Harvester and Coffee streets.

An abandoned vehicle was reported in the 900 block of North Crest.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 1000 block of South Barnes, the 500 block of North Somerville, the 600 block of Carr, the 200 block of Tuke, and the 2100 block of North Wells.

An attempt to serve papers was made in the 700 block of East Francis.

One suicide attempt was reported.

Civil matters were reported in the 200 block of North Russell, the 300 block of East Frederic, and on two

occasions in the 900 block of South Finley.

Violation of a city ordinance was reported in the 1200 block of North Hobart.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the police department lobby, the 400 block of North Nelson, the 200 block of West Craven, and the 1400 block of North Somerville.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 200 block of North West.

A domestic disturbance was reported in the 500 block of North Somerville.

Assault with a deadly weapon was reported in the 600 block of Red Deer.

Burglary was reported in the 1100 block of East Kingsmill. A door frame was damaged, and a flashlight, tool kit, antique typewriter and case, miscellaneous tools, and antique watches were taken. Total estimated value of damage and loss is \$294.

Saturday, Feb. 17

Thirty-five traffic stops were made.

Traffic complaints were received from the 400 block of East Frederic and the 300 block of East Brown.

A vehicle accident was

reported at the intersection of Alcock and Wells streets.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 1800 block of North Faulkner, the 1200 block of South Christy, the 1600 block of North Faulkner, the 600 block of East Browning, the 1200 block of North Russell, the 2200 block of North Christy, the 500 block of South Gillespie, and an unreported location.

Warrant service was attempted on one occasion.

A civil matter was reported in the police department lobby.

A suspicious person call was received from the 700 block of Magnolia.

A suspicious vehicle call was received from the 2500 block of Perryton Parkway.

A prowler was reported in the 2100 block of North Dwight.

A silent/abusive 911 call was received from the 700 block of North Hobart.

Disorderly conduct -- public intoxication was reported in the 400 block of West Foster. At least four arrests were made in connection with the incident.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 500 block of Montagu. A window sill, thermostat, wall furnace and bathtub surround were damaged, and walls were spray painted. Estimated cost of damage is \$2,100.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 500 block of Montagu. Two vehicle tires were punctured. Estimated cost of damage is \$200.

Criminal mischief was reported at the intersection of Browning and Warren streets.

Two burglar alarms were reported.

Theft was reported in the 100 block of South Russell.

Sunday, Feb. 18

Sixteen traffic stops were

See RECORD, Page 3

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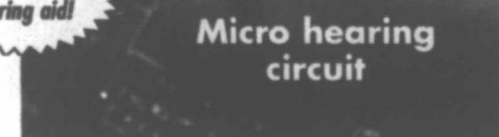
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51ST ANNUAL- Pancakes & Bacon, St. Matthew's Parish Hall, 727 W. Browning, Tues. February 20, 5-8 p.m. Tickets \$5, pre-school free. Day School Support Group Book Fair & Bake Sale.

FOR TICKETS to Tri-County Heart Association's Gala, February 24 at 6:30pm, call 570-0979 or 665-2515.

MARDI GRAS Sale - Fat Tuesday Only!! Draw a bead for 20%-50% off at Rheams Diamond Shop 111 N. Cuyler

CLOTHING ROOM Mary Ellen & Harvester Church of Christ (bldg. across the street, South of Pampa High School) Open Tues., Feb. 20th, 9-1 p.m. 665-2373, lv. msg.

MONDAYS AT Pak-A-Burger: Jr. Burger & Fries \$1.99. 669-2865.

Record

Continued from Page 2

made. A traffic complaint was received from the 800 block of East Francis. Motorist assistance was rendered in the 200 block of West Kingsmill. Vehicle accidents were reported in the 100 block of East Randy Matson Avenue, the 1400 block of North Hobart, and the 800 block of West Kingsmill. Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 300 block of Sunset, the 700 block of Magnolia, the 1000 block of Huff Road, the 1300 block of North Russell, and the 2900 block of Duncan. Lost property was reported in the police department lobby. A Texas driver's

license, two Social Security cards, a check book, a check, a Visa card, a MasterCard, and a Movie Gallery card were lost. Estimated value of loss is \$30. A suspicious vehicle call was received from the intersection of 18th and Evergreen streets. At least one arrest was made in connection with the incident. Disorderly conduct was reported in the 800 block of East Foster, the 400 block of Doucette, and the 1500 block of North Hobart. Harassment was reported in the 1200 block of North Wells. Criminal mischief was reported in the 1900 block of North Christine. A window of a 1995 Dodge pickup was broken. Domestic disturbances were reported in the 900 block of Duncan and the 900 block of Schneider. An information report and

traffic stop concerning a domestic disturbance were made in the 2200 block of Perryton Parkway. Theft was reported in the police department lobby. The incident occurred in the 1100 block of Neel Road. Money valued at \$200 was taken. Burglary was reported in the 1800 block of North Zimmers. A pool table with equipment, bicycle, two two-wheel child's scooters, a corner pool cue rack, and two pool cues were taken. Estimated value of loss is \$1,100. Burglary was reported in the 800 block of East Frederic. A tool box and tools, a grinder, a welder, and two jacks were taken. Estimated value of loss is \$4,587. **Monday, Feb. 19** Four traffic stops were made. Warrant service was

attempted on one occasion, resulting in at least one arrest. One burglar alarm was reported. Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests today. **Saturday, Feb. 17** Maria Hernandez, 31, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of West Foster by Pampa Police Department for public intoxication. Heriberto Suarez, 33, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of West Foster by PPD for public intoxication. Edilberto Rodriguez, 38, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of West Foster by PPD for public intoxication. Carlos Hernandez, 37, of Pampa was arrested in the 400 block of West Foster by PPD for public intoxication. Dusty Douglas, 23, of Pampa was arrested in the 800 block of East Foster by PPD for assault causing bodily injury/family violence and resisting arrest. **Sunday, Feb. 18** Rachell Lynn Daniels, 20, of Amarillo was arrested in the 800 block of East 18th by PPD for possession of drug paraphernalia and capias pro fines for consumption of alcohol by a minor and failure to appear. **Monday, Feb. 19** Casey Lee Hinds, 31, of Pampa was arrested in the 300 block of North Hobart by PPD for possession of less than two ounces of marijuana, no driver's license and no insurance.

a.m. today. **Saturday, Feb. 17** 8:07 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to Pampa Regional Medical Center and transported one patient to BSA. 3:26 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 700 block of Christy and transported one patient to PRMC. 5:41 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the intersection of Alcock and Wells. No transport was made. Pampa Fire Department reported the following calls for the 48-hour weekend period. **Saturday, Feb. 17**

No reported calls. **Sunday, Feb. 18** 10:27 a.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the 1200 block of North Wells on a medical assist.

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Zone

Continued from Page 1

resource, or other basic industry. Abatement may be extended to the value of permanent buildings and structures, fixed machinery and equipment, and certain other personal property, site improvements, and office space and related fixed improvements necessary to the operation and administration of the facility. Property which would be fully taxable and ineligible for abatement would include land, inventories, supplies, housing, hotel accommodations, deferred maintenance investments, property to be rented or leased (except when a leased facility is granted abatement to be executed with the lessor and lessee), improvements for the generation or transmission of electrical energy not wholly consumed by a new facility or expansion, any improvements that are not integral to the operation of the facility, and property owned or used by the state or by any organization owned, operated, or directed by the state. Any tax abatements granted by Gray County would be for a term not exceeding 10 years and not exceeding 100 percent of the assessed valuation of the property. In order to be considered eligible for tax abatement

within the zone, the planned improvement must increase the value of the property by at least \$100,000 for new facilities or by \$50,000 for existing businesses. It must be expected to prevent the loss of employment, retain employment, or create employment on a permanent basis. It must not have the sole effect of transferring employment from one part of the county to another. Existing businesses would be granted a two-year abatement of the amount of value the facility is increased if the business engages in modernization and/or expansion over and above normal repair and upkeep. A company seeking abatement must file a written request with the county commissioners court. The request should consist of a completed application form accompanied by information on the proposed use and general nature and extent of the property to be abated, maps and property description, and a time schedule for completing the proposed improvements. A business seeking abatement for modernization to already-existing facilities within the zone must also give a statement of the assessed value of the facility for the tax year immediately preceding the application. Financial information may also be required. After an application is received, commissioners have 45 days to deny the

application or consider it, including considering it on an expedited basis. If the application is to be considered, a hearing will be scheduled to obtain public input on the application. Commissioners will determine at the hearing whether to proceed with abatement. If tax abatement is to be granted, the agreement between the applicant and the county will be considered for approval at the next commissioners' meeting. The proposed abatement will require approval by a simple majority of commissioners. If the application is to be expedited, the hearing will be held at the next commissioners' meeting and may be followed immediately by commissioners' voting on whether to grant the abatement and, if granted, on the amount of abatement. Applicants whose requested abatements are not approved may seek a review or rehearing. Abatement will not be approved if the construction, alteration, or installation of improvements related to a proposed modernization, expansion, or new facility were begun before the application for abatement was filed. Other portions of the resolution deal with default and delinquency in paying taxes, transfer of the abatement to a new owner or lessee, and an annual evaluation by the county of property under abatement.

Guardian EMS reported the following calls for the weekend period ending at 7 **Belo exec Moroney dies** DALLAS (AP) — James M. "Jimmy" Moroney Jr., who helped shape Belo Corp. as one of the country's largest publicly traded publishing and broadcasting companies, died Sunday at the age of 85.

Water

Continued from Page 1

are buying water rights, and Stillwell said that ranchers in the rolling prairie of Roberts, Ochiltree, Lipscomb and Hemphill Counties where Mesa is buying water rights are realizing value for their

groundwater that is not reflected in the price of rangeland. The price of irrigated farmland in other parts of the Panhandle, however, has reflected the underground water for 50 years or more. Stillwell said cities like Lubbock should not be able to dictate how, when and where ranchers in Roberts County, 250 miles away,

should be able to sell their water. "There are vital private property rights that preclude that kind of outcome," Stillwell said. "We believe the State of Texas will continue to recognize the priority of our ownership rights, subject only to reasonable conservation supervision by local groundwater districts."

Plant

Continued from Page 1

and out of the facility, the company said. Two Valero employees and a contract worker were transferred to University Medical Center's burn unit in Lubbock. One remained in critical but stable condition Saturday and the other two were in satisfactory condition, a nursing supervisor at the hospital said. Valero said the other 16 people who were taken to hospitals had all been treated and released. Representatives of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency were at the site Saturday, Valero said.

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Viewpoints

Competition best prescription for drug prices

Health care has changed a lot in recent years. One of the ways it has changed is that patients rely much more on prescription medicines to treat disease, manage a condition or prevent problems.

About three years ago, I voted to add a voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare. I believed that such a benefit would help update Medicare to reflect the change in the way doctors treat patients. I also believed that it would improve the quality of life of all Medicare recipients who had not been able to afford all of the drugs recommended to them and that ultimately it would be good for the taxpayer as fewer Medicare beneficiaries would develop complications caused by not taking their medicines.

This benefit, known as Medicare Part D, has proved to be very popular with over 80 percent of beneficiaries pleased with the way it has worked, according to surveys. There are generally more than a dozen plans available to each Medicare beneficiary in the country so that he or she can choose the one that best meets his or her needs. In addition, the competition among plans has helped keep the cost to beneficiaries and the cost to the taxpayers lower than expected. The first year of Part D saw average monthly premiums drop from \$37 to \$24.

I have heard two primary complaints about the prescription benefit. One is that it does not cover all drug costs — that there is a “hole” in coverage. It is true that the

benefit does not cover 100 percent of drug costs. The goals of the program are to help every Medicare beneficiary with some of his or her drug costs and to provide catastrophic coverage so that someone who got very sick and had extremely high drug bills would not lose all of his or her savings. There are special provisions that provide extra help for low income seniors, but paying all of everyone's drug costs would be very expensive and would likely require raising taxes.

The other point that some raise is that the government should negotiate with the

drug companies directly to set the price that each plan would charge for a particular medication. The House recently voted on a bill along those lines. I am always interested in finding ways to improve the prescription drug benefit and other parts of Medicare.



Mac Thornberry
U.S. Representative

I also want to be careful about changing key elements of programs that are working. A big part of the reason that Medicare costs are lower and benefits more generous than expected is that there is competition among the plans. Eliminating that competition in favor of government

price-fixing could increase costs, reduce the choices available, or both.

There are those who point to the Veteran's Administration Health Care System as an example since the government negotiates a price for the entire VA. Such a system would not work as well for Medicare, however. As a result of the government stepping in, the VA offers access to many fewer drugs than are covered under Medicare.

For example, the VA makes available 31 classes of prescription drugs, while Medicare Part D offers access to 209. Often under the VA system, there is only one brand available of a particular kind of drug. In fact, over a million veterans who are eligible to participate in

the VA system have chosen to participate in the Medicare benefit instead.

Rather than have the government set the price of each drug, I believe that government should make sure that there is competition for each beneficiary's business. Real, fair competition will help keep choices high and prices low.

Good health care can help us live longer, healthier lives. The government plays an important role, but we also rely on health care professionals, the research and development sector, and the free market system to help ensure quality and affordable health care, especially for our seniors. We need to keep working to improve

See DRUGS, Page 5

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Feb. 19, the 50th day of 2007. There are 315 days left in the year. This is Presidents' Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 19, 1945, during World War II, some 30,000 U.S. Marines began landing on Iwo Jima, where they commenced a month-long battle to seize control of the island from Japanese forces.

On this date:

In 1803, Congress voted to accept Ohio's borders and constitution.

In 1807, former Vice President Aaron Burr, accused of treason, was arrested in the Mississippi Territory, in present-day Alabama. (Burr was acquitted at trial.)

In 1846, the Texas state government was formally installed in Austin, with J. Pinckney Henderson taking the oath of office as governor.

In 1878, Thomas Edison received a U.S. patent for “an improvement in phonograph or speaking machines.”

In 1881, Kansas prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.

In 1942, President Roosevelt signed an executive order giving the military the authority to relocate and intern Japanese-Americans as well as Japanese nationals living in the United States.

In 1942, Japanese warplanes, attacking in two waves, raided the Australian city of Darwin; at least 243 people were killed.

In 1959, an agreement was signed by Britain, Turkey and Greece granting Cyprus its independence.

In 1986, the U.S. Senate approved an international treaty outlawing genocide, 37 years after the pact had first been submitted for ratification.

In 1996, baseball showman Charlie O. Finley died in Chicago at age 77.

Ten years ago: Deng Xiaoping, the last of China's major Communist revolutionaries, died. Detroit's daily newspapers accepted a back-to-work offer from employees who'd been on strike for 19 months, but the strikers charged the conditions for return amounted to a lockout.

Five years ago: President Bush opened a two-day visit to South Korea. Peru's justice minister ruled out a presidential pardon for Lori Berenson after the Supreme Court confirmed the American woman's 20-year sentence for aiding leftist rebels.

'I can never give a 'yes' or a 'no.' I don't believe everything in life can be settled by a monosyllable.'

— Betty Smith
American author
(1904-1972)



Silly Biden flap illuminates our stupidity

The country, indeed the world, must be in better shape than I thought if adults can waste ink, airtime and hot air complaining that one senator, Joe Biden, called another senator, Barack Obama, “articulate.”

As best as I can understand this silly business, some blacks inferred that Biden was implying that other blacks are not articulate. Folks, that's stupid. If I say that Biden is articulate, do you think the rest of the people in Delaware would infer that I thought they were not well-spoken?

This reminds me of an even more stupid flap some years ago when an official in Washington used the word “niggardly” and was practically lynched by the ignorant mob. “Niggardly” has nothing whatsoever to do with race. It just means stingy in a petty way.

We would be better off if people who don't understand the English language would buy a dictionary rather than put their ignorance on public display.

The fact is that not all blacks are articulate, just as not all whites, not all Asians, not all anybody is articulate. Some people are and some are not. I think what this fly fart tells us is that there are some professional racists among black people who are ready to pounce on any excuse to cry “racism.”

Hypersensitivity is as bad as insensitivity. There is enough real racism left in this country that nobody should feel he has to waste time seeing it where it does-

n't exist — in complimentary words spoken by one politician of another.

I suppose while I'm upsetting the hypersensitive, I might as well go whole hog and say that the Virginia legislator who suggested that blacks get over slavery is right. People who never did anything wrong apologizing to people to whom nothing wrong was done is plain stupid.

Is there any black man in America today who would rather have been born in Rwanda or Mozambique or Angola than in the U.S.? I don't think so. Whatever problems we have in this country fade when compared with the miserable conditions in most of the African

countries today. However our ancestors got here — as slaves, bond servants or fleeing fugitives — we can all be glad they made it.

One is much better off being offended by the word “articulate” than being sliced and diced by a machete and left in the sun to rot.

Another bone I have to pick is with successful angry blacks. Listen, if you're making millions of dollars playing a sport or performing or excelling in business, you don't have any right to be angry. You've beat the system. You're living high on the hog with the top 5 percent of the population. You should have traded in your anger for gratitude a long time ago and be busy trying to help less-fortunate people.

Naturally, if you are per-

See REESE, Page 5

Charley Reese
Columnist



Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

Feb. 11
Fort Worth Star-Telegram on global warming action:

The only way to explain people who aren't taking global warming seriously: They are out of the loop.

The planet's premier authority on the subject, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), issued a landmark report on Feb. 2, concluding for the first time that the evidence for global warming is “unequivocal.”

This group of hundreds of leading scientists worldwide said that the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) and other human activity such as

the destruction of tropical forests are “very likely” — in the scientific context, more than 90 percent certain — to be the cause for most emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping “greenhouse gases” that are warming the Earth. Increasing, tangible evidence of this effect includes the melting of polar ice in the Arctic and steadily rising sea levels.

Researchers say the long-term consequences later in this century and beyond could be jarring.

For example, coastal areas around the world could be deluged by widespread flooding, displacing hundreds of millions of people. In some areas, such as Africa, deserts could expand.

Numerous animal and plant species would be harmed; some could become

extinct. Already, the Arctic polar bear is suffering from the melting of the ice structures from which it hunts its prey.

In Texas and other parts of the Southwestern U.S., significantly higher temperatures could make summers even more scorching, resulting in greater drought and increasingly pinched water supplies (not to mention higher electric bills). Along Texas' Gulf Coast, residents could see a greater risk of flooding and destruction from hurricanes, making it even more costly to insure homes and businesses.

While Texas might become a less hospitable place during warm months, winter could be less miserable in frigid climates such as North Dakota. Crops,

See OPINION, Page 5

THE PAMPA NEWS

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'Ghost Rider' tops weekend's box offices for \$44.5 million

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Satan's bounty hunter has looted the wallets of movie-goers.

"Ghost Rider," Sony's comic-book adaptation starring Nicolas Cage as a motorcycle stunt driver moonlighting as a collector of evil souls for the devil, debuted as the top weekend movie with \$44.5 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Debating in second place with \$22.1 million was Disney's "Bridge to Terabithia," based on

the children's novel about a boy and girl who create an elaborate fantasy land to escape from the troubles of the real world.

The movies bumped off the previous weekend's No. 1 flick, DreamWorks' Eddie Murphy comedy "Norbit," which slipped to third place with \$16.8 million, lifting its total to \$58.9 million.

Premiering at No. 4 with \$14 million was the Warner Bros. romance "Music and Lyrics," starring Hugh Grant as a washed-up

pop singer and Drew Barrymore as his unlikely songwriting partner.

The Lionsgate romance "Tyler Perry's Daddy's Little Girls" opened in fifth place with \$12.1 million, a sharp drop from filmmaker Perry's February releases the last two years, 2006's "Madea's Family Reunion," which premiered with \$30 million, and 2005's "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," which debuted with \$21.9 million.

Universal's spy thriller "Breach" debuted at No. 6 with \$10.4 mil-

lion. It stars Chris Cooper as Robert Hanssen, the FBI man caught in 2001 for selling secrets to Russia, and Ryan Phillippe as a young bureau operative who helps bring him down.

Though trashed by critics, "Ghost Rider" helped pull Hollywood out of its box-office doldrums, with overall revenues rising for the first time in six weeks. The top 12 movies took in \$141.4 million, up 28 percent from the same weekend last year.

"This is the weekend that could turn the tide and get us going in the right direction," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Media By Numbers.

Based on the Marvel Comic books, "Ghost Rider" delivered Hollywood's biggest opening so far this year, topping the \$34.2 million debut for "Norbit." "Ghost Rider" was the best opening weekend ever for Cage, beating the \$35.1 million debut of "National Treasure."

Donation



Pampa News photo by ReDONN WOODS

Greg Brown, boss lion of the local Lions Club, recently presented a donation in the amount of \$1,000 to Suzanne Pingel. Pingel is the Safe and Drug Free School coordinator and the homeless liaison for Pampa Independent School District. The contribution was made to the program's homeless account.

Opinion

Continued from Page 4

depending on where they are grown, could be either positively or negatively affected by global warming.

The new report by the IPCC, which was established in 1988 by the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization, projected that seas would rise 7 to 23 inches by the end of this century. But some scientists say a total melting of Greenland's massive ice sheet could gradually raise water levels by more than 20 feet over perhaps 1,000 years or more.

Temperatures are most likely to rise about 3 to 7 degrees by the end of this century, but the potential range is anywhere from 2 to 11 degrees, the IPCC report concluded.

Some IPCC projections eventually could prove somewhat off-target. But the report should be taken seriously. It's a product of extensive research and multiple studies by top scientists who have done in-depth analyses of climate data with the aid of supercomputers.

Many uncertainties still exist about global warming. No one can say with certain-

ty how much of the cause is human activity, or precisely how rapidly temperatures and sea levels will rise. But it would be foolish to dismiss the weight of scientific evidence and rely on shoot-from-the-hip observations such as the recent remark by state Rep. Phil King, R-Weatherford, that global warming is "bad science."

As the Star-Telegram Editorial Board has said in previous editorials, Congress should begin seriously considering the adoption of legislation to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Several bills to mandate reductions in emissions have been filed.

Emissions could be restricted through a "cap-and-trade" system that would allow the buying, selling and trading of emissions credits and would provide a strong financial incentive for businesses to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Another method would be to slap a hefty "carbon tax" on the use of fossil fuels, whether it be an old, dirty, coal-fired power plant or a gas-gulping SUV. The bigger the polluter, the greater the tax would be.

America and other nations must decrease air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through greater energy

efficiency and conservation and the expansion of cleaner alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, biofuels and nuclear power.

The United States also should encourage much stronger family planning programs worldwide. The world's population is approaching 6.6 billion and has more than doubled in less than 50 years. More people means more consumption of fossil fuels that escalate air pollution and contribute to global warming.

But the world still will have to rely extensively on fossil fuels for years to come.

Texas needs to build new coal-fired plants, such as those proposed by TXU, to accommodate the state's explosive growth and quickly expand its dwindling reserve power generation capacity. That also would help the state reduce its heavy reliance on high-priced natural gas as the primary fuel for power generation.

TXU's new coal plants would have much lower emissions of major federally regulated pollutants (sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and mercury) than older coal plants. The company also has pledged to design and build the plants so that they

later could be retrofitted to accommodate new technology to capture and store carbon dioxide. TXU said it would spend \$500 million retrofitting four older coal plants to slash pollution from them.

At this point, neither the federal government nor Texas restrict carbon dioxide emissions.

Drugs

Continued from Page 4

important government programs and our health care system, building on the strengths that have provided us with the best health care system in the world.

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Reese

Continued from Page 4

sonally insulted, you have a right to get angry and retaliate, but this generic anger about racism that some successful blacks wear as a mask just doesn't ring true, because everybody knows they smile all the way to the bank.

Race, like the Middle East, is a subject we ought to talk about and debate in an open and frank manner rather than throwing epithets around like confetti. Who knows? If we talk enough, we might come to a genuine understanding.

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

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Honoring The Volunteers Who Rose To The Occasion

Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: My brother and I are one year apart and grew up practically as twins. We buried our mother and bought some land together. Then, in our late 20s, my brother met and married a woman. We still lived together, only with hostility and distance. Five years have gone by, and we now live apart. However, the feelings of hurt still remain -- and in fact have intensified. Recently I wrote a letter to him expressing my anger about the past, and he cut me off permanently. We both understand that we needed to separate and how unfortunate it was that it happened with a lot of anger and resentment. However, I am being married this summer and am unable to decide if I should invite him to the wedding. On the one hand, I don't want to create another wound, but on the other, it feels as if we have finally broken free, and it is time to move on and respect his wish to be rid of me. I am actually relieved that the end has finally come. The truth is, I'm not even sure if I want him there. But the rest of our family probably will. What do you think? -- **GERALD IN SAN FRANCISCO**

DEAR GERALD: A wedding is the joining together of a couple who hope to spend the rest of their lives committed to each other. It is NOT a time for feuding brothers to attempt a reconciliation, which could be distracting for all concerned. If you plan to patch things up with your sibling, do it before the wedding or don't invite him.

DEAR ABBY: Is it appropriate for a couple living together -- "Carrie" is a widow and "Jake" is divorced -- to wear wedding bands on the ring fingers of their left hands? They say they are "married in their hearts" and cannot marry legally for financial reasons. My husband and I feel that the wearing of wedding bands without following the rules of marriage (i.e., a ceremony

conducted by a person licensed to marry and the receiving of a legal document) diminishes the sanctity and authenticity of our own wedding bands and those of all others who are legally married. -- **JEAN IN LOS GATOS, CALIF.**

DEAR JEAN: Couples who find themselves in the situation of the couple you have described sometimes discuss it with their clergyman and exchange vows so they can be "married in the eyes of God." Because Carrie and Jake's marital situation bothers you so much, why don't you mention this to them? After that, however, I would urge you to devote your attention to your own marriage, because how others choose to conduct their lives is no reflection on the sanctity and authenticity of your wedding bands -- and frankly, it's none of your business.

DEAR ABBY: My precious daddy died of cancer seven years ago. My problem is, Mother has never laid him to rest. She keeps his ashes in her dirty garage. She says it's because he wanted all three of us children to be together when his ashes were scattered -- but my brother lives 1,000 miles away and hasn't been able to get back home. I have tried talking to Mom, reasoning with her, even suggesting she drive off one day and do it by herself if it would make her feel better. Still nothing! Isn't this disrespectful? Dad deserves better, but she refuses to let him go. -- **STYMIED IN SACRAMENTO**

DEAR STYMIED: Your mother's inability to let go of your father's ashes is not as unusual as you think. Consider this: Your father is in heaven. The ashes in the garage are but the remains of his discarded earthly shell. If enough time elapses, you can scatter your parents' ashes together.

For Better Or For Worse



Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 40 Rocker
 - 1 TV's Bob
 - Lauer
 - 41 Transmit
 - 5 Dublin natives
 - 10 Neighborhood
 - 11 Composition
 - 13 Pert lass
 - 14 Mare
 - Cune's husband
 - 15 Tubside
 - 17 "— been swell!"
 - 18 Military attack
 - 19 Bullfight call
 - 20 By way of
 - 21 Winter treat for birds
 - 22 Tier
 - 25 — beat (faller)
 - 26 Yemen neighbor
 - 27 Veto
 - 28 Train unit
 - 29 Some correspondents
 - 33 Total
 - 34 Jackhammer sound
 - 35 Brewing aid
 - 37 Body of law
 - 38 Dramatist O'Neill
 - 39 Patella's place
- DOWN**
- 1 Venomous
 - black snake
 - 2 Opera pieces
 - 3 They're pitched outdoors
 - 4 The Caymans, e.g.
 - 5 Gazelle's cousin
 - 6 Singer Bonnie
 - 7 Mamie's mate
 - 8 Not kidding
 - 9 Moves
 - 24 Back's gain
 - 25 Breath
 - 27 Less messy
 - 29 Likely
 - 30 Make amends
 - 31 Burdened
 - 32 Spirited horse
 - 36 Coatrack part

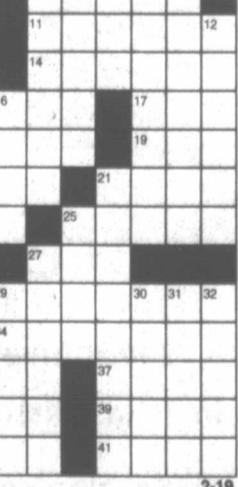
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Saturday's answer

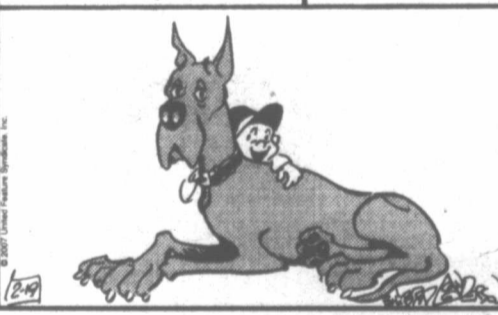
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 6 Singer Bonnie
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 25 Breath
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 31 Burdened
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 36 Coatrack part

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Sports Day

Girls soccer finishes strong in weekend double-header

By JORDAN REAGAN
Sports Editor

In order to make up for a Tuesday game postponed due to weather, the varsity girls soccer team took on the Randall Lady Raiders Friday at Kimbrough stadium.

The Lady Harvesters were defeated by Randall, the top

team in the district, 4-0.

"The girls played hard, but we came up short," coach Trent Davis said.

The following morning, the Lady Harvesters faced Palo Duro in Pampa, looking to improve their 1-3 district record.

Faby Soria ran onto a

through ball from Jenee Norris in the 62nd minute to place the first and only goal of the game, and brought Pampa to a 1-0 win over the Lady Raiders.

"We didn't play the best soccer that we've played this year," Davis said, "but we still managed to pull out the

victory."

Looking to have a third playoff spot, the Lady Harvesters have a critical game Saturday against Caprock, who currently holds the third spot.

The girls will play at 12 p.m. Saturday at Travis Elementary in Pampa.

NASCAR writes its own 'Ricky Bobby' ending

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Writer

The first 150 laps of the Daytona 500 was like watching drivers circle the lot at the grocery store politely waiting for parking spots to open up.

Then the sun went down, a full moon popped up and everybody started behaving like the Wolfman — suddenly in a hurry and only too eager to mix it up.

The last 50 laps featured five wrecks, all involving multiple cars, and small wonder. There was no room. With three dozen circuits left, the top 20 were separated by a second. With six laps to go, the field was as tightly packed as it was at the start.

At the finish, as car parts, smoke and sparks flew through the air behind them like the climactic chase scene from "The Road Warrior," Kevin Harvick and Mark Martin were racing side by side at around 200 mph separated by the length of a car hood. Seconds later, providing a perfect exclamation point, Clint Bowyer skidded across the line with his car upside down — and on fire.

The guys calling the race on Fox, with decades of NASCAR experience between them, scoured their collective memory banks to come up with an ending nearly this wild.

One referenced "Joey

Chitwood," the daredevil who performed death-defying auto stunts beginning in the 1940s, and whose best work is still available on youtube.com. Another nominated the 1979 Daytona 500, when Cale Yarborough and Donnie Allison locked up in a final-lap battle, spun into the infield, started throwing insults and then punches as Allison's brother, Bobby, pulled over and joined the fray. The fight garnered so much attention that a nation watching the first-ever live broadcast of a 500-mile race barely noticed Richard Petty making up a half-lap deficit and sneaking across the finish line.

Grand as that race was,

driver-turned-broadcaster Darrell Waltrip came up with an even better one.

"This finish," he said, recalling last year's NASCAR-inspired hit comedy, "It's 'Ricky Bobby.' It couldn't have been any better."

Nor better-timed.

Think back to the events of last week, when NASCAR czar Brian France gave his upbeat state-of-the-sport address. He boasted about new TV partners, new sponsors, a new carmaker coming on-board to challenge America's Big Three, and the additional responsibilities all that money rolling in would place on the people who make the sport go.

Howell ends long drought with playoff win over Mickelson

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Charles Howell III finally ended that nasty habit of finishing second, making three clutch pars in a playoff that delivered a dramatic victory over Phil Mickelson in the Nissan Open on Sunday.

Howell closed with a 6-under 65 and got into a playoff when Mickelson bogeyed the 18th hole. Howell put away the two-time Masters champion with his third straight par save, holing a 3-foot putt on the 14th hole and raising his head to the sky in utter relief.

"I said a prayer before I hit the putt," Howell said, his voice cracking. "I said, 'It's time. Go in.'"

It was only the second victory of his career, and

Howell had been haunted by nine runner-up finishes since winning the now-defunct Michelob Championship in the fall of 2002. He already had two runner-up finishes in four starts this year, including three weeks ago against Tiger Woods down the coast at Torrey Pines.

Mickelson, bidding for his second straight victory, had control throughout the playoff until coming up short of the green on the par-3 14th. He opted for putter, but it took a high hop leaving the blade and stopped 10 feet short. The par putt missed to the right.

Howell also was short, but his chip came out nicely just beyond the cup.

"I had every chance on the

back nine to create some separation and not give anyone a chance," said Mickelson, who twice missed putts inside 4 feet and closed with a 68. "I felt like I had the tournament in my grasp and let it go."

They finished at 16-under.

Howell earned \$936,000 and is atop the PGA Tour money list for the first time in his career. Aside from finally getting his hands on another trophy, Howell accomplished his first goal of 2007. The victory all but assures he can return to the Masters in April because the Augusta native will climb into top 25 in the world ranking.

Along the way, he exorcised a few demons.

It was four years ago at Riviera where Howell lost a three-shot lead, then missed a 5-foot birdie putt on the second playoff hole. This time, he got past No. 10 with an unlikely par. He clipped the trees when he tried to chip off the cart path, then got up-and-down from about 80 feet for par.

And while putting has been his nemesis, he holed one big putt after another from 8 feet for par on the 18th to keep the heat on Mickelson, from 6 feet for par on the 18th to extend the playoff, and the 3-footer on 14 that must have looked like a mile.

"It's been a long time," Howell said. "I'm speechless."

Taylor places well in Austin

As a freshman, Rebecca Taylor placed first at regionals in both the 50 freestyle and diving, qualifying to compete in the state swim meet this weekend.

Competing with the best swimmers and divers from all over the state, Taylor placed 6th in diving and 14th in the 50 free.

Taylor also set a school record in the 50 free with a time of 25.94.

Because she's only a freshman, Taylor has a bright future in store for her as far as her high school swimming career is concerned, as does the rest of the team, which is composed of all freshmen or sophomores.

Optimist Club meets tonight to discuss new system

There will be a meeting tonight at 7:30 at the Optimist Club building to discuss whether or not to go to a new system for 11 and 12 year old boys.

The new system would add 10 feet to the length of the bases and four feet to the distance the pitchers' mound is from home plate.

Leadoffs would be permitted. This is one of the matters to be decided at the organizational meeting for Optimist baseball and softball coaches.

"If it isn't broke, don't fix it," declared a Pampa Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken Baseball coach.

He was referring to the upcoming vote Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Optimist Club building on whether to go to a new system for 11 and 12 year old boys.

The new system would add 10 feet to the length of the bases and four feet to the distance the pitchers' mound is from home plate.

Leadoffs would be permitted. This is one of the matters to be decided at the organizational meeting for Optimist baseball and softball coaches.

"If it isn't broke, don't fix it," declared a Pampa Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken Baseball coach, "the Cal Ripken system is patterned after the Little League Baseball system," he continued. "Little League is the most successful baseball program for kids in the country."

It has developed a program for boys who are nine through 12 years of age.

It is based on their ages and mental and physical development.

These kids will grow up soon enough and will play more like real baseball when they get to Babe Ruth."

The other side of the story was expressed by a Babe Ruth coach. "Our kids are behind when they reach the Babe Ruth League," he said, "For example, North Randall has already been playing on 75 foot bases at ages 11 and 12."

Randall has won the District baseball championship in high school for nine of the last 10 years."

All persons interested in Optimist baseball or softball are encouraged to attend tonight's meeting.

Dad Inspires Duncanville's McNeely

By Jean-Jacques Taylor
Dallas Morning News
Sports Columnist

DUNCANVILLE — Each day, Phil McNeely sits at his desk in the Duncanville boys basketball office and stares at the framed photo of the Pampa High School gym named after his daddy.

It always transports him to a simpler time, when his hair was jet black and his biggest responsibility in the Panhandle town 60 miles northeast of Amarillo was making sure the basketballs were locked up at the end of Daddy's practice.

"There's a lot of pride when I look at that picture," he said Thursday after putting the state's top-ranked Class 5A basketball team through a 90-minute practice.

"It lets you know where you come from."

Those were the good old days. So are these.

McNeely has the best team in Texas. Maybe the nation. Duncanville plays

Fort Worth Dunbar on Saturday and the playoffs begin next week.

Finish the season undefeated, given its rugged schedule, and Duncanville will have as much right as Lincoln did a few years ago to claim a mythical national championship. For now, Duncanville is 31-0 and ranked No. 1 in the state.

Impressive, for sure, but this isn't McNeely's first great team.

His 1991 team won a state championship. So did the 1999 team. But don't expect much more than a shrug of the shoulders and a bemused look when you ask McNeely about his success spanning three decades as Duncanville's coach.

He'll tell you Daddy was better. Much better.

Clifton McNeely led Pampa to four state boys basketball championships in the '50s. Daddy had winning streaks of 58 and 70 games, which is why a 31-game streak doesn't impress his son all that much. Daddy's

career record was something like 323-41 in 13 seasons, according to his son. Guess that's why the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches put him in its Hall of Fame 27 years ago.

Every game McNeely wins is a credit to Daddy's approach. Show the kids you care about them fit not just their basketball ability fit and they'll give you everything they have. Learn their likes and dislikes. Learn their girlfriends.

Learn their body language. Learn their families. Discipline them when they screw up and praise them when they deserve it. Teach them the game, so they can succeed. Then show them how to win with humility and lose with grace. Don't degrade them during practice or games when they make a mistake fit even if it has happened more than once. Do those things and you'll create better basketball players who become better men.

"The most important

thing I learned from Daddy was work ethic. He used to talk to me about the time you have to spend building a program," McNeely said. "It takes time to build a relationship with a kid. You have to be around them."

The son learned Daddy's lessons well.

"He's one of those coaches who cares about you off the court," said Shawn Williams, a sophomore who's one of the state's best players. "He's always making sure you're alright and that you're taking care of your books and that you don't have any problems with girls."

Daddy's gone now. Died a couple of years ago after fighting Alzheimer's as long and as hard as he could. But there are still days when McNeely plops in his chair, leans back, closes his eyes and asks Daddy for guidance.

Like he always has, Daddy responds. Every time.

"If you had a situation

with a player or a parent or any other thing that came up," said McNeely, "I could always call him and ask him how to handle this situation. Now, I find myself saying, 'What would Daddy say or tell me?'"

Duncanville coach Phil McNeely talks with point guard Brent Stanton.

McNeely is 631-171 as a head coach. Not bad for someone who tried his best to avoid the game that has beckoned him since he was a youth. Daddy didn't encourage either Phil or his twin brother, Mike, to become coaches.

Daddy knew the hours were long and the pay low. Not to mention the missed meals and time with the kids. But Mike coached Irving Nimitz for several years and hardly anyone remembers when Phil didn't coach Duncanville.

"Daddy always said, 'Don't be a coach,'" McNeely said.

Every time McNeely walked away from coach-

ing, he always returned. Frankly, he was better at coaching basketball than any other occupation he tried. He arrived at Duncanville 25 years ago after a failed experiment as a drill bit salesman and became head coach two years later.

Daddy set a high standard, and he knew it. That's why few things made Daddy prouder than sitting in the stands at Austin's Erwin Center and watching his son twice cut down the nets after the Class 5A championship game.

"It was fun, especially right after the game, because you could see the pride in his eyes," McNeely said. "It was a really neat experience. After the last one, he said, 'Don't get carried away, you're still two short.'"

A month from now, don't be surprised if Daddy's lead is down to one.

-REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS.

Oswalt already an 'old guy' in Astros clubhouse

KISSIMMEE, Fla. — The moment Roy Oswalt walked into the Houston Astros clubhouse at spring training, things seemed different.

The past three seasons, Oswalt shared the "ace" label with Andy Pettitte and Roger Clemens. But with Pettitte back with the New

York Yankees and Clemens still mulling his future, Oswalt is alone in the spotlight and missing two influential mentors.

"I feel like, all of a sudden, I'm the old guy," Oswalt said. "I'm not that old, but I feel like the old guy."

Only 29, Oswalt also feels like he's entering the prime of his career, a tantalizing notion considering he had the NL's lowest ERA in 2006 and won 20 games in each of the previous two seasons.

The Astros apparently think so, too, signing him to a five-year, \$73 million con-

tract last August.

"The only thing he has left to do is win a Cy Young award, which I think he should've won already," said general manager Tim Lincecum. "He's going to continue to be a tremendous major-league pitcher. The sky is the limit."

Oswalt went 14-3 as a rookie in 2001 and 19-9 in 2002. He's a better pitcher now, he said, because he's smarter, more patient and learned to value innings more than strikeouts — something he gleaned from Clemens and Pettitte.

Early in his career, Oswalt

set a goal to strike out at least 200 batters each season. Now, he'd rather have 200 innings.

"That's the biggest thing for a starting pitcher," Oswalt said. "It's not ERA, it's not the number of strikeouts, it's not even wins."

West outshoots the spread at Sin City's All-Star game

LAS VEGAS (AP) — From Kobe Bryant to the last blackjack dealer, everybody believed the NBA was a big winner after gambling on a 72-hour All-Star extravaganza in Sin City.

Sure, the main event was a bit of a bust, but the All-Star game is always a crapshoot.

Bryant had 31 points, six assists and six steals in his second MVP performance at the league's midseason showcase, and the West set All-Star records for assists and field goals in a 153-132 win over the East on Sunday night.

Nobody could bet on this game in the local casinos — the favored West covered the 4 1/2-point spread — making the result even more inconsequential than usual. Instead, this outlandish weekend will be remembered for its setting — the first All-Star game held outside an NBA franchise city,

and the first with a flock of bedazzled showgirls flanking Wayne Newton for a pregame rendition of "Viva Las Vegas."

"No doubt about it, we definitely enjoyed Las Vegas," said Phoenix's Amare Stoudemire, who had 29 points and nine rebounds. "I hope the All-Star game comes back here soon, because it was a lot of fun."

After an appropriately decadent performance featuring acrobats, a juggler, Elvis impersonators and the usual All-Star hijinks from 24 NBA stars, Bryant emerged as the game's best player in front of the southern Nevada fans who adopt the Lakers as their team.

With the crowd chanting "M-V-P" in the final minute, Bryant roared through the lane and threw down a vicious dunk over Chris Bosh's head. The weekend went a whole lot better for

Bryant than his previous MVP outing in 2002 in Philadelphia — where his hometown fans booed his every move.

'No doubt about it, we definitely enjoyed Las Vegas. I hope the All-Star game comes back here soon because it was a lot of fun'

— Amare Stoudemire
Phoenix Suns

"As players, we always want to feel like we're appreciated for what we do," Bryant said. "To have this type of reaction here in this All-Star game is very humbling. I just feel very blessed to be able to come out and

put on a really good show."

Most everybody knew the real show went on in the dozens of casinos and hundreds of clubs around the Las Vegas Strip, where athletes, celebrities, groupies, entourages and old-fashioned basketball fans parted the weekend away in a hip-hop hoop summit. The fun never stopped and the crowds never thinned for three days and four nights in a city that loves an outrageous time.

The weekend heated up Saturday when Boston's Gerald Green won the dunk contest with a much-needed injection of originality, and Miami's Jason Kaponov was crowned the top 3-point shooter with a record-tying final performance.

By Sunday night, the glorified exhibition was all that remained — and the NBA's biggest stars rolled through a fairly nondescript contest

featuring plenty of points and almost no defense. Some things don't change, even in Vegas.

"We got here at 2 o'clock," said Shaquille O'Neal, who played point guard and showed off a shimmy-shake move against Mehmet Okur on one fourth-quarter possession. "There's a lot of stretching and standing around. We were all kind of stiff, so the game was a little lopsided. But that's OK. They came here to see a show, and they got a show."

Celebrities were all over the front row: Diddy, Jay-Z, Beyonce, Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Eva Longoria, Ludacris, Prince, Dave Chappelle, Chris Tucker, Steve Carell, Jeremy Piven, Cameron Diaz, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver. Paris Hilton and Barry Bonds were among those who couldn't get on the floor.

The West jumped to a big early lead with sharp outside shooting and solid ball movement.

Perhaps Phoenix's Mike D'Antoni, the West coach, managed to inject a bit of his Suns' philosophy into his stars despite the injury absence of catalysts Steve Nash and Allen Iverson.

Bryant's team led by 33 points before coasting to victory during the East's 44-point fourth quarter. Stoudemire was outstanding in a performance that cemented his comeback from microfracture knee surgery, and Denver's Carmelo Anthony scored 20 points in his first All-Star game.

LeBron James, the 2006 MVP, led the East with 28 points. Orlando's Dwight Howard had 20 points and 12 assists, but his club had far too many mediocre performances — including O'Neal's 5-for-13 effort.

Bonds on his way, but Bernie might stay home

By The Associated Press

While everyone is gearing up for Barry Bonds' arrival at San Francisco Giants camp, it appears Bernie Williams might not show up for spring training at all.

The longtime Yankees star wants a guaranteed roster spot, not a maybe, so it seems he won't be with the rest of New York's position players when they start

workouts Tuesday.

Manager Joe Torre planned to call Williams again — but catcher Jorge Posada thinks Williams can't be persuaded to accept a minor league contract.

"I called him and he hasn't returned my call," Posada said Sunday in Tampa, Fla. "That just tells me something negative. That just tells me he won't be here."

After 21 years in the

Yankees' organization, including 16 with the major league team, the 38-year-old Williams feels slighted and doesn't think he should have to earn a job. His agent, Scott Boras, said Saturday that the outfielder hasn't shown any desire to do that or to play for another team.

Williams' No. 51 remains in storage, and pitcher Jose Veras has taken his corner locker in the Legends Field

clubhouse.

Williams' absence is as notable as the presence of any player, a hole in the fabric of the team's last great era, when the Yankees won four World Series titles from 1996-2000.

"I think he's hurt. I don't think there's any question," Torre said. "He's a very proud individual. I know there are a lot of players in this clubhouse who certainly feel for Bernie. But, again,

unfortunately, it's the nature of the game a lot of times."

Bonds is definitely headed to spring training after a drawn-out contract negotiation with San Francisco this offseason, and the buzz has already begun at Giants camp in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Will he show up Monday, when position players are due to report? When will he speak? Is he in as good shape as he says after a winter of

intense workouts at UCLA?

The hype surrounding the 42-year-old slugger will start in earnest the second his vehicle pulls up at Scottsdale Stadium. His first workout with the entire team is scheduled for Tuesday, so he doesn't have to come to the ballpark until then. He wasn't even expected to get to the desert until late Monday.

"It'll be interesting," pitcher Matt Cain said.

New Rangers manager stressing fundamentals

SURPRISE, Ariz. (AP) — While Ron Washington has an easygoing manner and disposition, there are a few things the Texas Rangers' rookie manager won't tolerate on the field.

"Baseball is about fundamentals and players must take fundamentals seriously," Washington said. "I will not tolerate poor fundamentals and poor execution, and that's in a practice drill or any game, including a spring training game."

For 28 Rangers pitchers and catchers, that started Sunday in their first official workout of spring training. Washington, the former Oakland Athletics third-base coach and infield instructor, stressed to them that "teams win because of execution."

After a light throw-and-catch session, the team had fielding drills focused on the pitchers covering first base, with Washington emphasizing footwork and body position.

Washington had already reminded the players of the fielding problems that plagued Detroit pitchers in last year's World Series, when they had five errors against the St. Louis Cardinals.

More than three months after replacing the fired Buck Showalter, Washington was finally on the field for the start of spring training. He liked what he saw on the first day.

"Good attitude among all

the guys," he said. "Top notch. They all know the situation here. I suspect they will go out and compete. That's all I want."

The Rangers have had only one winning season and haven't finished above third place in the AL West since making their last playoff appearance in 1999.

Among the pitchers taking part Sunday was Eric Gagne, the 2003 NL Cy Young Award winner who was limited to 15 2-3 innings pitched

the past two seasons because of elbow and back injuries. Gagne wasn't scheduled to throw until Monday, but took part in the infield drills and ran on the first day of camp.

"At this point, I feel good and it's really good to say 'good,'" Gagne said. "I like being around the players and everything associated with the game. Being out of the last two years, and now back, showed me what I missed and how much I love this game."

The 31-year-old Gagne signed a \$6 million, one-year deal to be the Texas closer, a move that returns Akinori Otsuka to the eighth-inning setup role the Rangers envisioned for him when they got him before last season.

From 2002-04, Gagne had 152 saves for the Los Angeles Dodgers, including a major league-record 84 straight. His deal with Texas gives him the chance to earn an additional \$5 million in performance bonuses.

NCAA bids may be hard to find in Big 12

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Days in the Big 12's regular season are dwindling to a precious few, and NCAA tournament bids may be going with them.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the conference seemed assured of at least five invitations when the selection committee emerges bleary-eyed on March 4 from its weekend of seclusion.

Many coaches were bravely hoping even for six, a Big 12 record last achieved in 2004-05.

But now with two regular-

season weeks and the conference tournament to go, a more accurate prediction might be four.

Co-leaders Kansas (23-4, 10-2 Big 12) and Texas A&M (22-4, 10-2) are assured of not only bids, but good seeds as well. Texas (19-7, 9-3), even though super freshman Kevin Durant seems to be cooling off a bit, is probably a cinch to nab its ninth straight bid under coach Rick Barnes.

After that, however, things start to get interesting.

The Kansas State Wildcats

under first-year head coach Bob Huggins go into their Big Monday matchup against the ninth-ranked Jayhawks with eight conference wins, the most they've had since the Big 12 was formed. At 19-8 and 8-4, they're solidly in fourth place in a league where they've never finished higher than seventh.

No doubt, CBS would love to have Huggins in the tournament. And Kansas State does have a couple of marquee wins for the committee to ponder, including

one at Texas. The Wildcats could get another Monday night by upsetting Kansas at home.

But the way things keep getting jumbled week after week in the Big 12, very little seems certain.

No. 18 Oklahoma State (19-7, 5-6), considered an NCAA lock when it was 15-1, has gone into freefall and could get locked out.

Texas Tech (17-10, 6-6) has won two straight to creep back into the picture after losing five in a row and seemingly dropping out.

Arizona State stuns No. 22 USC to end 15-game skid

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Arizona State forward Jeff Pendergraph was relieved when the Sun Devils snapped a school-record 15-game losing skid — and already talking about starting a different kind of streak.

Pendergraph had 14 points and 15 rebounds to lead Arizona State to a 68-58 victory over No. 22 Southern California on Sunday night.

"Some people might still think we've got one, and we won't get any more," he said. "That pressure's always going to be there. We've just got to win as many as we can. Our goal isn't to just win one and be done."

Next up is No. 19 Arizona, which visits next Sunday. If the Sun Devils play as well as they did in the second half against the Trojans, a victory over the once-mighty Wildcats isn't out of the question.

"We've had a group of winners here for a while," first-year coach Herb Sendek said. "And tonight we finally showed it on the scoreboard. In a lot of different ways, we have been winning every night, and this time we actually get one on the scoreboard. I think it really speaks to the perseverance and the heart of this team."

ASU rallied from a nine-point second-half deficit to win. Limited to 21 points in the game's first 22 minutes, ASU blitzed the Trojans with 47 points in the second half, shooting 57.1 percent from the floor.

"There's no letdown when they have only 21, 23 points with 15 minutes to go," USC coach Tim Floyd said. "We

just didn't finish the game." USC (19-8, 9-5 Pac-10) has dropped two of its last three. The Trojans were coming off a 80-75 victory at No. 19 Arizona Thursday night, their first win in Tucson since 1985.

"It's very disappointing," USC guard Nick Young said. "This could have been one of those games that put us in the (NCAA) tournament."

In Sunday's other Top 25 game, No. 2 Ohio State defeated Minnesota, 85-67. Arizona State (7-19, 1-14) has been close to that elusive first conference victory several times. But the Sun Devils always found a way to break down at the worst possible moment.

ASU's last five losses had come by six or fewer points, including a 67-61 loss to No. 5 UCLA here Thursday night.

With every loss, the Sun Devils faced questions about whether in coach Herb Sendek's first season they would become the first team to go winless in the Pac-10 since the conference expanded in 1978-79.

Another defeat appeared likely when the Trojans surged to a 32-23 lead with 15:15 to play. ASU often struggles to score, but the Sun Devils suddenly awoke and outscored USC 24-7 to take a 47-39 lead with 6 minutes to go.

USC came no closer than three points the rest of the way. When it ended, hundreds of yellow-clad students rushed the court, mobbing the Sun Devils.

Checks pay off in Stars' 5-2 win

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Stars keep gaining ground in the Pacific Division.

Mike Ribeiro and Jere Lehtinen each scored two goals, Darryl Sydor added three assists and Marty Turco made 17 saves as the Stars beat the San Jose Sharks 5-2 on Sunday.

The Stars have 72 points, one behind the second-place Sharks and six behind first-place Anaheim in the Pacific before the Ducks' game against the Los Angeles Kings on Sunday night.

On Jan. 15, the defending Pacific champion Stars trailed the Ducks by 15 points and the Sharks by seven.

"We're confident we can keep moving up," Ribeiro said. "We know where we stand. This was a four-point game for us."

Stu Barnes added a goal and Sergei Zubov had two assists for the Stars.

Lehtinen capped the scor-

ing with 1:35 left on an empty-netter to help Dallas improve to 9-3-1 in its past 13 games, including a 6-1-1 run at home.

"(The Sharks) are a good team so we knew we had to come out and play hard," Sydor said. "We know what the standings look like. For us, this game meant a one-point deficit or a five-point deficit (behind San Jose)."

After consecutive shutouts, the Sharks ended their team-record scoreless streak at 190 minutes, 22 seconds on Mark Bell's power-play deflection at 1:52 of the third period. San Jose's previous record was 165 minutes, 38 seconds from Jan. 21-Feb. 1, 1999.

Mike Grier also scored and Evgeni Nabokov stopped 16 shots for the Sharks, who have lost their past three and were beginning the second half of a season-long eight-game road trip.

"It's a little late in the sea-

son for moral victories," Grier said. "We're not getting it done, not playing well enough to win games."

Turco was returning as Dallas' starter after backup Mike Smith played in the previous four games. Smith had started two of the previous four games and came on in relief of Turco in the other two, but coach Dave Tippett says there is no goalie controversy, that he was merely giving Turco a rest.

"He's looked good the last couple of days in practice," Tippett said. "You can tell he was fresh and rejuvenated out there."

Entering Sunday's game, Turco had allowed five goals in the previous 22 shots he had faced, but he was sharp in the first two periods against the Sharks despite flu-like symptoms.

"Marty's preparation was good and it was a good game to bounce back in," Dallas' Mike Modano said. "It was a big game for him and for all

of us."

Dallas took a 1-0 lead at 6:41 of the first period when Barnes notched his 11th goal of the season, deflecting Zubov's pass from the right point past Nabokov.

At 15:05 of the second period, Ribeiro scored on a rebound for his ninth goal of the season and stretched Dallas' advantage to 2-0.

Lehtinen's team-high 18th goal of the season at of the second period made it 3-0. After Bell scored for the Sharks, Ribeiro's power-play deflection at 2:59 of the third period pushed the Stars' lead to 4-1.

Grier's 13th goal of the season at 13:15 pulled the Sharks within 4-2.

One of the few positives for the Sharks was ending their nagging scoreless streak.

"We've been in a slump but we're capable of scoring," San Jose's Joe Thornton said. "We hope this kick-starts something."

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This year you have the powerhouse team of strength and ingenuity working in your favor. Often, when you think of a daydream, it becomes a reality. You might be surprised by your ability to materialize your desires this year. Lady Luck helps you along, but so does your willingness to ask questions and network. Share your dreams more often. If you are single, a friendship might develop into a very special bond. Let it happen. You actually might have quite a set of suitors to choose from. Have fun! If you are attached, you will become more of a team through more public interactions, time with your friends and sharing your goals. ARIES always has to put in his two cents.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

***** You might be filled with energy and vivaciousness. Sometimes spontaneity is the best and only way to go. You don't need to go overboard; you have a strong sense of when you need to pull back. Tonight: Whatever puts a smile on your face.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) *** Your mind could be working overtime, but it might not be the time to share just yet. You might test out an idea on one specific person whom you trust ultimately. Keep a lid on this matter for several days. Tonight: Make it an early night.

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

2-19 CRYPTOQUOTE

R SCZCD HXDDN TQXKF
GRCFL FYC XSUN PTDDXFL
FYTF RSCDCLF EC TDC FYC
SKEQCD NXK MCF RST
GRTEXSG — ETC HCLF

Saturday's Cryptoquote: THE CHERRY TOMATO IS A MARVELOUS INVENTION, PRODUCING, AS IT DOES, A SATISFACTORILY EXPLOSIVE SQUISH WHEN BITTEN. — JUDITH MARTIN

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2715 Aspen	\$174,500
1900 Grape	\$159,900
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2300 Navajo	\$134,500
1827 Fir	\$120,000
2410 Cherokee	\$115,000
2424 Cherokee	\$105,000
2328 Comanche	\$99,500
1816 Beech	\$89,900
1711 Aspen	\$75,000
1429 Williston	\$65,000
1211 N. Russell	\$61,500
2221 Hamilton	\$37,500
LAMAR SCHOOL DISTRICT South West	
1045 S. Christy	\$62,500
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931 Cinderella	\$74,500
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1008 Sirraco	\$69,900
813 N. Wells	\$62,500
1908 Christy	\$61,500
809 N. Dwight	\$59,500
WILSON SCHOOL DISTRICT South East	
106 S. Cuyler	\$97,500
812 Denver	\$68,000
601 N. Frost	\$50,000
1352 Garland St.	\$42,500
505 N. Lowry	\$29,900

Major changes coming to meat, poultry inspections

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first major changes to food inspection in a decade will increase federal scrutiny of meat and poultry plants where the danger from E. coli and other germs is high or where past visits have found unsafe practices.

The new policy will result in fewer inspections at plants with lower risks and better records for handling meat and poultry.

"We're just putting resources where the risk is greatest, and those plants

that demonstrate excellent control will get less of our resources," said Richard Raymond, the Agriculture Department's top food safety official.

To decide the level of scrutiny a plant should get, the "risk-based" system will consider the type of product and the plant's record of food safety violations.

A plant that makes hamburger and has repeated violations would get more inspection. A plant that makes cooked, canned ham

and has a clean track record would get less scrutiny.

"There are certain food products that carry a higher inherent risk than others," Raymond, the undersecretary for food safety, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "And there are certain plants that do a better job of controlling risk than others."

For now, the new system will be used in processing plants, not in slaughter plants. No timetable has been set for shifting to the

new inspection system.

Critics say the idea sounds good, but they fear department officials are rushing a complex new system into place.

"One of the concerns is that this is simply an effort to save money in a tight budget year," said Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "We want to make sure a budget shortfall is not what's driving these important inspection decisions."

Raymond says the agency's budget is not driving changes in the inspection program. "We're not going to save any money on this part of risk-based inspection," he said, adding there could be cost-savings if the changes are extended later to slaughtering operations.

The risk-based inspection system will be the most significant change to food safety inspections in a decade. The department overhauled inspections in 1996 when hundreds of people got sick

and four children died after eating undercooked hamburgers from Jack in the Box restaurants.

Daily inspections of meat and poultry plants are required under current federal laws, which date back to 1906. Food safety laws were enacted in response to Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," which exposed horrifically unsanitary conditions in Chicago's meatpacking industry.

Free concert



COURTESY PHOTO

The Canadian Arts Alliance will host an admission-free CD release party and concert with Spring Creek Bluegrass Band at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Palace Theatre in Canadian. The band consists of Taylor Sims, lead vocals/guitar; Jessica Smith, bass/vocals; Chris Elliott, banjo; and Alex Johnstone, mandolin/fiddle. All four have studied their craft with Joe Carr and Alan Munde, both veterans of bluegrass, while attending the commercial music program at South Plains College in Levelland. For more information about the group or the upcoming concert, call Sims at (970) 275-4701 or (806) 323-3403.

Ex-county clerk arrested

MISSION, Texas (AP) — A former Hidalgo County district clerk has been arrested in Mexico and brought back the United States after authorities issued a warrant for his arrest on charges of sexually assaulting a minor, police said.

Omar Guerrero was arrested Saturday evening in Reynosa in the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas, Mission Police Chief Leo Longoria said. He was returned to the U.S. early Sunday morning and is expected to be arraigned Monday afternoon.

"This was coming," Longoria said. "We have received information previously that he was in our area of reach, and we've been patient."

Guerrero had been missing since Dec. 6 when Mission police issued a warrant for his arrest in connection with the sexual assault

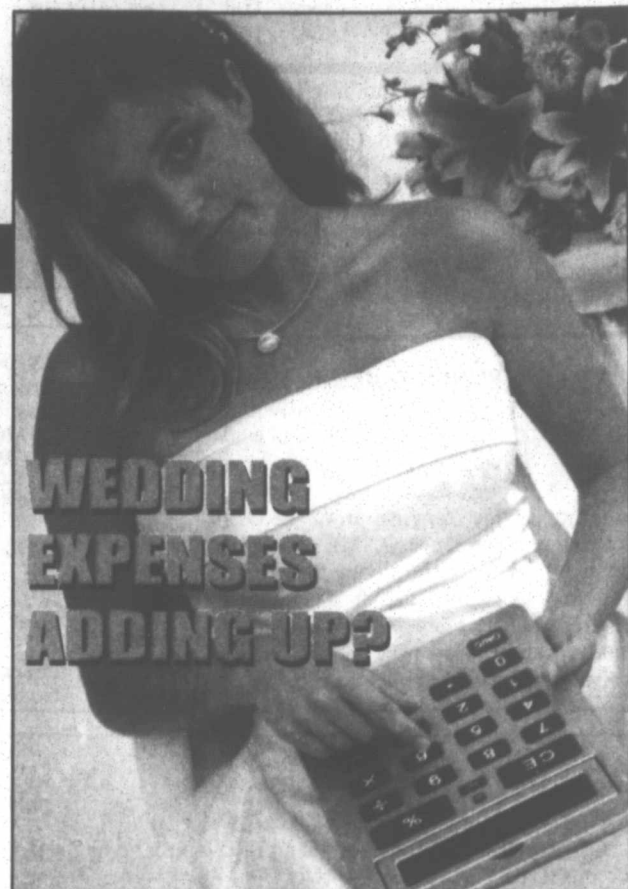
of a teenager. He faces up to 99 years in prison if convicted of the first-degree felony.

The Monitor in McAllen reported in a story for its Monday editions that Guerrero was arrested at a Reynosa convenience store.

Authorities allege that Guerrero took a teenage girl to parties, exposed her to alcohol and drugs, and had sex with her at several hotels in Mission, Sharyland and South Padre Island, the newspaper reported.

Guerrero's attorney, Al Alvarez, was in New York when he learned of Guerrero's arrest. He told the newspaper he had not talked to Guerrero and did not expect to be back in McAllen in time for the arraignment on Monday.

Once considered a rising star in Hidalgo County government, Guerrero has faced a series of legal setbacks that have hurt his career.



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