

Tomorrow's Weather

HIGH
58
LOW
37

See expanded weather on Page 2

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Fire marshal determines cause of apartment blaze

By **KERRI SMITH**
 Managing Editor

Pampa Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire at 11:17 a.m. Tuesday at the Courtyard Apartments, 1031 N. Sumner. A total of six units and 18 personnel responded to the fire.

Captain Jerry Tomaschik said that two apartments were damaged in the fire with estimated damages of \$10,000. He said that no one was injured in the fire because everyone that was home at the time of the incident was evacuated safely.

Fire Marshal Keith Fisher said the cause of the fire was a plumber doing soldering work on pipes.

Fire evidence



Pampa News Photos by JORDAN REAGAN
 Top photo - A hole remains in the roof of an apartment after Tuesday's fire at the Courtyard Apartments. Bottom photo - The adjacent apartment sustained damages to the ceiling.

Texas faces massive bill for school retirees

AUSTIN (AP) — Public pensions in Texas are in fair financial shape, but the state still faces a massive bill to cover health care costs and other retirement benefits for state employees and public school workers, according to a report released Tuesday by the Pew Center on the States.

Texas has about 89 cents of every dollar needed for the pension benefits promised to state employees and teachers over the next 30 years, according to the report, part of a new project on state pensions and investments. Nationally, public pensions have 85 cents of every dollar needed.

Pension experts consider a funded ratio of 80 percent or higher to be healthy, the report said.

Despite the condition of public pension funding, the state faces a \$36.8 billion unfunded liability in providing health care and other

benefits to current and future retirees.

The report said the five largest states — California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois — have set aside no money to pay for health insurance and other retiree benefits. New York figures show it owes an estimated \$50 billion, while California owes about \$48 billion.

"States' fiscal health and economic vitality depends greatly on their ability to wisely manage these bills coming due," said Susan Urahn, managing director of the Pew Center on the States.

Texas, like most states, handles retiree benefits on a pay-as-it-goes-basis rather than setting aside money to decrease the unfunded liability.

Urahn said in the past year, 13 states have established trusts for themselves or local governments to help pay for nonpension benefits

LOVETT LIBRARY

Library making changes

By **KERRI SMITH**
 Managing Editor

Lovett Memorial Library, 111 N. Houston, is currently receiving a face lift of sorts, as the staff moves items around and tries to make accessing the library easier for everyone.

According to Librarian Misty Guy, the children's area will be moved from the upstairs loft back down to the first floor.

"In order to make this change, we are taking out old books, which you will see a lot of at the next Friends of the Library book sale," Guy said. "We are also making room for new material, so do not be alarmed at the empty shelves because they will be filled."

"We also wanted to make it a little easier to browse the stacks, so we took books off of the bottom shelf to help those who have knee problems and find it hard to bend down. We are using the top shelves to display books."

Guy said that while the library is waiting on all of the new material to come in, if you do not find something you are looking for you might consider the inter-

library loan service. This service is free and Lovett can borrow books from other libraries for use in Pampa.

The library also has a selection of talking books on cassettes and CDs for people to listen to at home while doing housework or for those who are driving to see families this holiday season.

Also available is English for New Americans on CD, Spanish for Law Enforcement and Health Care Providers on CD.

"Please be patient with us during this transition at the library and happy holidays from the library staff," Guy said.

Normal library hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday.

During the holidays, the library will be closed Dec. 24 and 25 for Christmas. The library will close early at 6 p.m. Dec. 31 and will again be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

For information regarding the library, contact Guy or any of the other library staff at 669-5780.

More schools meet requirements

AUSTIN (AP) — Almost 88 percent of Texas schools met the federal progress requirements mandated under No Child Left Behind after 73 campuses appealed and had their status upgraded, the Texas Education Agency said Tuesday.

A total of 664 of the states 8,061 campuses failed to meet the requirements, known as adequate yearly progress, which judges schools based on student performance on standardized tests in reading/language arts and mathematics as well as either graduation or attendance rates.

Of those schools that didn't meet adequate yearly progress, 485 are subject to sanctions.

If a campus or district fails to meet adequate yearly progress for consecutive years, that campus or district is subject to certain requirements such as offering supplemental education services, offering school choice or taking other corrective actions.

A total of 203 campuses appealed their status, but only 73 of those were upgraded.

Pampa woman retires after 37 years with government

By **MARILYN POWERS**
 Staff Writer

Sandra Alewine of Pampa retired recently after a 37-year career with the U.S. government, including 10 years in the Pampa Social Security office.

Alewine began her government career in May 1970 when she became employed by the commissary office at Altus Air Force Base in Altus, Okla. She worked there until she moved with her family to eastern Oklahoma in 1972.

After a brief break in government service due to a hiring freeze, Alewine was hired in June 1973 by

the Social Security Administration in Muskogee, Okla. as a clerk typist.

In 1977, Alewine was promoted to the position of claims representative. She was resident representative in Altus for 12 years, handling three and a half counties with one other employee. When the office became a one-person office, she asked for and received a transfer to the Pampa office in January 1977.

Alewine has seen several changes during her career. One is the advancement of information handling.

"When I started to work for Social Security, their connection with other offices and payment centers was the old teletype machine," she said. "I saw the computer system grow from that to what it is today. In years past, it averaged 45 to 60 days to process a simple retirement/survivor claim. Today, a claim can be processed in one day."

During her career, Alewine volunteered several times to work at other offices when needed. She has worked in Angleton and in Covington, La. She was a guest instructor at the Dallas training center.

In September 2005, she volunteered to work in Baton Rouge, La. after Hurricane Katrina hit that area.

"It was probably the most emotional 13 days of my career," she said of her time in Baton Rouge.

Alewine has a daughter and son-in-law, Kathey and Kirk Rice, and granddaughter Karami, all of whom live in Pampa, and a son, Mark, in Richardson.



CHRISTMAS DINNER
 Tuesday, December 25th from 11:00am to 2:00pm at the Fellowship Hall of Mary Ellen & Harvester Church of Christ
 1342 Mary Ellen - located across from Pampa High School
 Free To Everyone

NEXT DAY FORECAST

Thursday



Sunny

Friday



Sunny

Saturday



Cloudy

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 58. Wind chill values between 27 and 37 early. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south-southwest.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 37. Wind chill values between 29 and 34. South-southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 58. West-southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Friday Night: A chance of rain before 9 p.m., then a chance of rain and snow between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m., then a chance of snow after 11 p.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 27. Windy, with a north-northwest wind 10 to 15 mph increasing to between 20 and 25 mph. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

Saturday: A 30 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 32. Windy, with a north-northwest wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 35 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 25. West-northwest wind around 10 mph.

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Stocks

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

Wheat	8.87
Milo	6.73
Corn	7.71
Soybeans	10.00

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

QNY	78.35	+0.99
BP PLC ADR	73.11	-0.30
Cabot Corp	33.15	-0.28
Celanese	41.90	NC
Cabot Oil Gas	38.24	+0.28
Coca Cola	62.44	+0.22
VLO	69.12	+0.55
HAL	36.45	NC
XCEL	22.71	+0.05

Anadarko	62.76	+0.91
XOM	91.27	-0.15
Nat'l Oilwell	69.62	-0.08
Limited	18.91	+0.02
Williams	35.06	+0.34
MCD	59.67	-0.16
Atmos	27.11	-0.04
Pioneer Nat	46.64	+0.03
JCP	44.36	-0.73
COP	83.70	+0.16
SLB	91.79	+1.40
Tenneco	24.55	-0.49
CVX	91.38	+0.19
Wal-Mart	48.21	-0.03
OKE	44.63	-0.12
New York Gold	807.40	
Silver	14.17	
West Texas Crude	90.49	

Study: Homeowners premiums remain high after reform

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas homeowners insurance premiums stabilized some after legislative reforms in 2003, but were still the highest in the United States, according to a new study.

The average annual premium in Texas for the most common homeowner policy was \$1,372 in 2005, while the national average was \$764, according to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

Premiums in Texas have always been relatively expensive because of severe weather conditions such as hurricanes, hailstorms and tornadoes. Rates went up in the

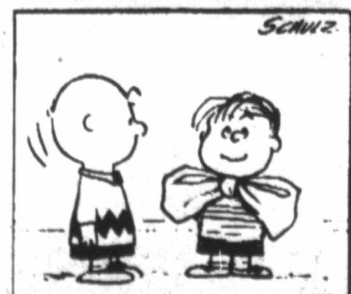
early part of the decade as insurers fielded a rash of mold claims. The Legislature responded in 2003 with reforms that promised to bring relief to homeowners.

As of 2005, Louisiana had the second-highest premiums at \$1,144, and Florida was third at \$1,083. The premiums in all other states were less than \$1,000.

The study found that Texas premiums increased slower than the national average in the two years after the 2003 reform. The state saw increases of 0.7 percent in 2005 and 2.6 percent in 2004. Nationally, rates increased 4.8 percent in 2005 and 9.1 percent in 2004.

"Texas is number one and will continue to be number one as long as we have the type of weather we have now, which is very severe," said Jerry Johns, president of Southwestern Insurance Information Service. "Companies have to have money to pay claims, which can run into billions of dollars annually."

Alex Winslow, of the consumer group Texas Watch, said the study confirms that most homeowners have experienced rising insurance premiums despite the reforms.



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Obituaries

Services tomorrow

STEPHENS, Imrie Boyd — Graveside services, 10 a.m., Memory Gardens Cemetery, Pampa.

Olene Brown, 90

Olene Brown, 90, of Canyon, Texas, formerly of McLean, Texas, died Dec. 17, 2007, at Canyon. Services will be at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21, 2007, at the First Baptist Church in McLean, Texas, with Pastor Kenneth Martin officiating.

Olene Robinson was born Dec. 30, 1916, to Samuel and Mary Robinson in Tompkinsville, Ky. She married R.L. Brown on Nov. 9, 1935, in Chillicothe, Texas. They were married for 64

years until his death in 2000. Mrs. Brown was a homemaker who lived in McLean most of her married life. She was active in the First Baptist Church in McLean. She loved her family and enjoyed reading, sewing for her daughters, and doing crossword puzzles. She and her husband grew a garden every summer and canned several jars of vegetables. Many people enjoyed the benefits of their labor.

Survivors include four daughters, Mary Donald (Sam) of Amarillo, Laura Morris (Wayne) of McLean, Martha Back (Johnny) of Canyon, and Brenda Parker (Brad) of Canyon. Mrs. Brown raised one granddaughter, Jeanette Gammon. Additional survivors include 12 grandchildren, Deborah Lynn Heitz, Samuel W. Donald, Jr., Cathlyn Escebedo, Sandra Keeble, Sid Morris, Cynthia Helms, John Back, Sara Back, Derek Parker, Mindy Parker

and Carrie Parker; nine great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Brown was preceded in death by her husband, R.L. Brown in 2000; a daughter, Barbara Hatfield in 1962; her parents; a grandson, Christopher Donald; and nine brothers and sisters.

MEMORIALS: First Baptist Church of McLean, Texas

Emergency Services

Pampa PD

Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents for the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. Tuesday.

Eight traffic stops were made. A traffic complaint was received from the intersection of Frederic and Henry streets.

Motorist assistance was rendered at the intersection of Foster and Osage streets.

An abandoned vehicle was reported in the 3100 block of Perryton Parkway.

Vehicle accidents were reported in the 2800 block of Charles and the intersection of Kentucky and Mary Ellen streets.

Animal control officers made stops concerning animals in the 400 block of Graham, the intersection of 18th and Beech streets, the intersection of 18th and Chestnut streets, the 700 block of Bradley Drive, the 1100 block of East Foster, the 100 block of South Sumner, the 600 block of Lefors and twice in the 2300 block of Cherokee.

Welfare checks were made in the 100 block of North Sumner and the 2700 block of Perryton Parkway.

Lost property was reported in the police department lobby. A driver's license was lost.

Lost property was reported in the 1200 block of North Price Road. Lost was a pack of 125 lottery scratch-off tickets valued at \$250.

A runaway was reported in the police department lobby.

Agency assistance was rendered at the intersection of McCullough and Tignor streets.

Warrant service was attempted on two occasions.

A suspicious person call was received from the intersection of Gwendolen and Faulkner streets.

Suspicious vehicle calls were received from the 1100 block of Varnon Drive, the 800 block of North Nelson, the 1500 block of North Hobart and the intersection of 19th and Coffee streets.

A silent/abusive 911 call was received from the 2200 block of Lea.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 800 block of North Nelson. At least one arrest was made in connection with the incident.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1100 block of Seneca.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 800 block of East Craven. Rocks were thrown through a windshield and a vehicle hood was scraped. Estimated cost of damage is \$550.

Criminal trespass was reported in the 2800 block of Charles. At least one arrest was made in connection with the incident.

Criminal mischief was reported in the police department lobby and the 1600 block of West Somerville, where a glass window valued at \$400 was damaged.

Harassment was reported in the 400 block of North Warren.

Telephone harassment was reported in the 900 block of Osborn.

Sexual assault was reported in the police department lobby.

Assault was reported in the 1000 block of North Dwight.

Three alarms were reported.

Theft was reported in the 600 block of East Frederic. Two pairs of sunglasses were taken. Estimated loss is \$6.

Theft was reported in the 900 block of Osborn. A purse valued at \$100 was taken from a residence.

Theft was reported in the 1600 block of North Hobart.

Burglary was reported in the 1100 block of Frost.

Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle was reported in the 800 block of Gwendolen.

PPD reported the following incidents for the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Seventeen traffic stops were made. One stop in the 1000 block of East Frederic resulted in at least one arrest.

Motorist assistance was rendered in the 800 block of South Hobart.

Driving while intoxicated was reported in the 600 block of East Frederic.

Abandoned vehicles were reported at the intersection of Harvester and Williston streets, and the intersection of Cuyler and Foster streets.

Animal control officers made a stop concerning animals in the 700 block of East Browning.

A welfare check was made in the 1000 block of North Frost.

Two attempts to serve papers were made.

Warrant service was attempted on one occasion.

Suspicious person calls were received from the 1000 block of Varnon Drive, the 600 block of West Brown, the 3100 block of Perryton Parkway, the 1000 block of North Hobart and the 400 block of Short.

A suspicious vehicle call was received from the 1500 block of North Hobart.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the police department lobby, twice in the 1000 block of North Dwight, once in the 1200 block of Darby and the 2600 block of North Hobart.

Disorderly conduct/language was reported in the 900 block of Osborn.

Criminal trespass was reported in the 2200 block of Mary Ellen. A window valued at \$30 was damaged.

Assault was reported in the police department lobby.

Theft was reported at Pampa High School, 111 E. Harvester. Taken were two wallets and contents from lockers in the junior varsity locker room.

Theft was reported in the 2800 block of Charles.

Identity theft was reported in the police department lobby. The victim's Social Security number was used to obtain credit.

Embezzlement was reported in the police department lobby. Taken was approximately \$836 from a checking account.

Burglary was reported in the 300 block of North Wynne. A basement window was broken, a safe was damaged, and four antique vases and one military sword were taken.

Sheriff

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

Monday, Dec. 17

Peter G. Rodriguez, 40, of Pampa was arrested by GCSO on a probation violation for possession of a controlled substance, enhanced.

Valerie M. Nalley, 26, of Buffalo, Mo., was arrested by GCSO on a probation revocation for theft over \$50 and under \$500.

Matthew Thompson, 29, of Amarillo was arrested by Texas Department of Public Safety for driving while intoxicated.

Tuesday, Dec. 18

Ryan Wohlford, 22, of Pampa was arrested in the 200 block of West Kingsmill by Pampa Police Department for credit card abuse.

Joshua Jeremiah Garza, 33, of Pampa was arrested in the 100 block of East Frederic by PPD for theft by check, no valid driver's license, operating a unregistered motor vehicle and two counts of failure to appear.

Wednesday, Dec. 19

Rubin Alejandra Garza, 22, of Pampa was arrested in the 500 block of West Florida by PPD on a probation violation for credit card abuse.

Fire

Pampa Fire Department reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Tuesday, Dec. 18

9:05 a.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the 1800 block of Fir on a call for medical assistance.

11:17 a.m. — Six units and 18 personnel responded to the Courtyard Apartments, 1031 N. Sumner, on a structure fire.

Ambulance

Guardian EMS ambulance reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Tuesday, Dec. 18

9:05 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1800 block of Fir and transported a patient to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

9:05 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 500 block of Magnolia and transported a patient to PRMC.

11:16 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1200 block of North Sumner on a fire standby

12:02 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 2500 block of Fir. No transport.

9:05 p.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1900 block of North Duncan. No transport.

Wednesday, Dec. 19

12:31 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded east on Highway 60 to Gray County line. Call disregarded.

1:59 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to PRMC and transported a patient(s) to a private residence.

5:46 a.m. — A mobile ICU responded to the 1500 block of West Kentucky and transported a patient to PRMC.

Edward Jones



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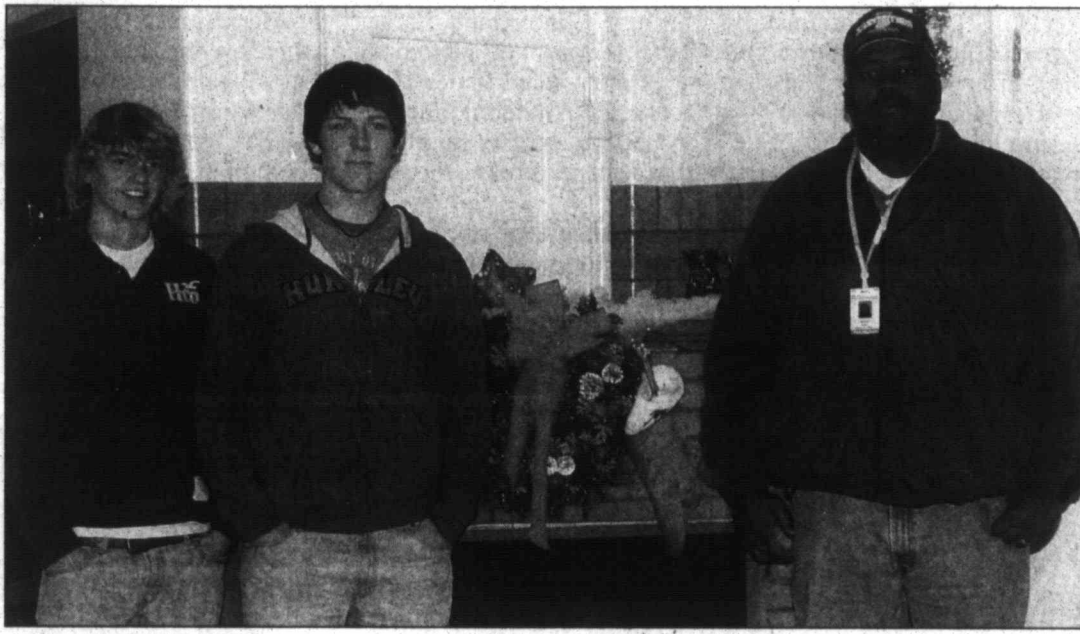
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Student Crime Stoppers



Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS
Pampa Police Officer Michael Ryan, right, has organized a Student Crime Stoppers group at Pampa High School with Kevin Freis, left, and Colby Copeland as the first two members. The group plans to hold fund raisers to raise donations for local charities. One example of donations is that the fine paid by PHS students to retrieve their cell phones after violating cell phone rules at the high school was used to help make up a \$1,200 donation to the Salvation Army Angel Tree this year, Ryan said.

Actor gives \$1M to college

MARSHALL, Texas (AP) — Denzel Washington is donating \$1 million to Wiley College to re-establish its debate team. The gift was announced Tuesday by school officials. Washington was in Marshall last week to screen "The Great Debaters," the story of Wiley's 1930s debate team. He stars as educator and poet Melvin Tolson, who led the all-black college's elite debate squad. During his appearance, the 52-year-old actor-director said he would like to see the team get going again. Marshall is a city of about 24,000, located 140 miles east of Dallas. Wiley has about 900 students. "The Great Debaters" opens Christmas Day. It has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award for best picture drama.

Exelon seeks license for nuclear power plant in Victoria County

VICTORIA, Texas (AP) — Exelon Nuclear has chosen an 11,500-acre site in Victoria County in southeast Texas to pursue the possible construction of a nuclear power plant. Exelon officials said Tuesday that the company will apply to the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission by September 2008 for a combined construction and operating license. The Warrenville, Ill.-based company expects to spend \$23 million on the application process. Officials said submitting the application next year will allow the company to take advantage of tax credits and federal loan guarantees contained in the 2005 Energy Policy Act. "If Exelon makes this investment in our community, it will give us a chance to reinvent our economy in a way similar to what happened when DuPont came to town in 1952," Victoria Mayor Will Armstrong said. "From a financial and psychological standpoint, this is the biggest opportunity we've had in Victoria County since 1952." Exelon stressed that it hasn't committed to building the plant, which would sit about 20 miles south of Victoria on U.S. Highway 77. Victoria is located about 100 miles southeast of San Antonio. The company said the decision will hinge on a solution for disposing of used fuel, public acceptance of a new nuclear plant and assurances the project would be financially successful. In June, the company said it was studying both the Victoria County site and a site in Matagorda County. Craig Lambert, Exelon's vice president of engineering for new plant development, said the Victoria site was better suited for a reactor, partly because of its soil composition. The company said the site would use a man-made freshwater lake for cooling. It has already made arrangements with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority to reserve water for the proposed plant, officials said. Exelon Nuclear spokesman Craig Nesbit said construction of the plant could generate between 2,000 and 3,000 jobs. After construction, the plant could employ between 700 and 900.

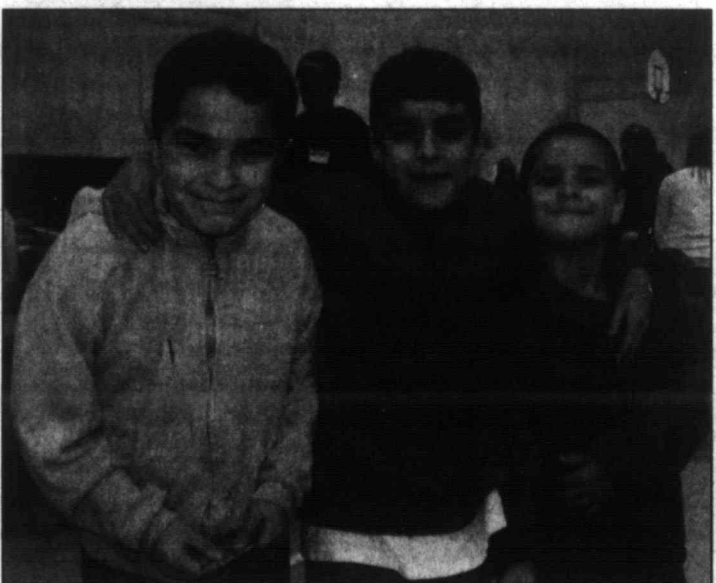
Bride wears toilet paper dress

NEW YORK (AP) — Here comes the bride, all dressed in white ... two-ply, extra-soft toilet paper. Lovebirds Jennifer Cannon and Doy Nichols of Lexington, Ky., plan to get hitched Wednesday in a public restroom. She'll be wearing a gown fashioned from glue, tape and Charmin Ultra Soft and Ultra Strong toilet tissue. The intricately detailed dress was designed by Hanah Kim, winner of the 2007 Toilet Paper Wedding Dress Contest, sponsored by Cheap-Chic-Weddings.com. The wedding ceremony, to be attended by family and friends, will take place in Times Square at the Charmin Restrooms — temporary, free public restrooms, a company spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Santa Claus knocked unconscious

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A man dressed as Santa Claus was knocked unconscious by a thrown object that hit his face while he was riding on the back of a truck decorated as a sleigh. Kevin Smith says he never saw what hit him Saturday. Whatever it was, it broke his nose and gave him a concus-

sion and two black eyes. "One second I was up there waving to people, and the next minute I wasn't," Smith said. He was taking part in Santa Run, sponsored by the firefighters union, which features off-duty firefighters who dress up as Santa and ride through residential areas handing out candy to children. Other volunteers realized something was wrong after they hadn't heard from Smith for a few minutes. They stopped the truck and found him lying unconscious. "It pretty much cold-cocked him," fire Lt. Scott Himelspanch said. Smith awoke in the back of the sleigh. "They thought I'd spilled my hot chocolate, but then they realized it was blood," Smith said. "The rest of the night was kind of hazy." Smith, a firefighter for eight years, said he hoped to return to work on Christmas Day. Assistant Fire Chief Brian Schaeffer said an assault report was filed with police but that no witnesses have come forward.



Pampa News Photo by KERRI SMITH
The Kimbro brothers enjoyed Christmas shopping together recently. From left are Kelton, 9, Kenyon, 10, and Kadin, 5.

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Viewpoints

Making Sense: National polls at times misleading

Primary season, which appears to have begun about a week after the 2004 presidential elections, is getting sillier with each passing day. This is thanks to the media, which not only feast on the season's daily menu, but attempt to predigest it for the American people.

As fuzzy as the process of the selection of the two party's presidential nominees appears to be, the media's goal is as clear as day — to make it fuzziest and to influence the outcomes.

They do it by attaching great importance to a host of factors that are really meaningless, not the least of which is citing national polls to indicate the front-runners, while carefully ignoring those factors which will

decide the outcome.

They know that national polls are worthless indicators of which candidates are probable winners, but that doesn't stop them from proclaiming that the alleged winners in those polls are the front-runners in the race for their party's nomination.

Given that false assumption, Rudy Giuliani emerges as the front-runner for the GOP nomination. Primaries, however, are not decided by national polls, they are decided by the voters in the primary states. Giuliani may be the front-runner in national polls, but he's barely in the race in such states as Iowa and New Hampshire — the earliest contests where victory goes a long way in indicating which candidates

are the likely nominees when the dust clears. And Giuliani himself admits it, pinning his hopes on the states whose primaries come much later and he is popular.

When Rudy Giuliani loses in Iowa and when Rudy Giuliani loses in New Hampshire and South Carolina, his standing in the national polls will also plunge.

What is now going on is what's been going on for decades in presidential primaries — you have all of these leakers leaking information, such as the Drudge Report's contention that the

Democrats want Mike Huckabee to win the GOP nomination because they believe he'd be the easiest Republican to beat in the general election.

Translated, that means that Huckabee really scares the pants off the Democrats, who hope they can prevent him from being the GOP nominee by

persuading Republican voters from voting for someone else because Huckabee is a sure loser.

The reality here is that Americans have been electing governors to the presidency for a long time — such

men as Roosevelt, Carter, Reagan, Clinton and George W. Bush. And guess what? There are only two former governors running in the GOP primaries, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee.

Based on the record, that fact alone makes either one a probable winner next November. And it's why the Democrats and their media allies want neither man to win the GOP nomination.

Their front-runners, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, are not governors, they are United States senators, and in modern times the American people simply do not elect senators to the presidency.

Match either one against either Romney or Huckabee,

and history teaches us that it's most probable that the next occupant of the Executive Mansion in Washington will be a former occupant of a governor's mansion in Arkansas or Massachusetts, and not a United States senator.

Given that fact, doesn't it defy reason for the Democrats to want to run against Mike Huckabee? Today's Democrats may be corrupt, not just a little bit slimy. And they are inherently Marxist, but they are not stupid, even though Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid make them look that way.

The American people need to be informed about these simple facts, but the

See REAGAN, Page 5

Michael Reagan

Columnist



Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 19, the 353rd day of 2007. There are 12 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 19, 1843, "A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens, was first published in England.

On this date:

In 1777, Gen. George Washington led his army of about 11,000 men to Valley Forge, Pa., to camp for the winter.

In 1813, British forces captured Fort Niagara during the War of 1812.

In 1907, 239 workers died in a coal mine explosion in Jacobs Creek, Pa.

In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corporation began transmitting overseas with its Empire Service to Australia.

In 1946, war broke out in Indochina as troops under Ho Chi Minh launched widespread attacks against

'He that jokes confesses.'

— Italian proverb

the French.

In 1957, Meredith Willson's musical play "The Music Man," starring Robert Preston as charming con man Harold Hill, opened on Broadway.

In 1972, Apollo 17 splashed down in the Pacific, winding up the Apollo program of manned lunar landings.

In 1974, Nelson A. Rockefeller was sworn in as the 41st vice president of the United States.

In 1986, Lawrence E. Walsh was appointed independent counsel to investigate the Iran-Contra affair.

In 1998, President Clinton was impeached by the Republican-controlled House for perjury and obstruction of justice (he was later acquitted by the Senate).

Ten years ago: A SilkAir Boeing 737-300 plunged from the sky, crashing into an Indonesian river and killing all 104 people aboard. In Milwaukee, postal clerk Anthony Deculit killed a co-worker he'd feuded with, wounded a supervisor and injured another worker before taking his own life. James Cameron's epic film "Titanic," the highest-grossing film ever made, opened in U.S. theaters.

Five years ago: Secretary of State Colin Powell declared Iraq in "material breach" of a U.N. disarmament resolution. After a prosecutor cited new DNA evidence, a judge in New York threw out the convictions of five young men in a 1989 attack on a Central Park jogger who had been raped and left for dead. Roh Moo-hyun won South Korea's presidential election.

One year ago: A Libyan court convicted five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor of deliberately infecting 400 children with HIV and sentenced them to death. (The six later had their death sentences commuted, and were transferred to Bulgaria, where they were pardoned and set free.)

The Knuckleball



The Sinker



Fact-based foreign policy not happening

As everyone can see, the National Intelligence Estimate that stated Iran has no nuclear-weapons program and hasn't had one for the past four years has not affected George W. Bush. He still wants to present Iran as a dangerous country and to cripple the country with sanctions.

What this tells you is that facts and truth have no relevance at all to Bush. That makes him a truly a dangerous president. He and Dick Cheney really should be impeached, although that will not happen because Congress is full of cowards.

The American people have a right to expect a fact-based foreign policy. What they get from Bush is a foreign policy based on a secret agenda and perhaps, God forbid, even mental fantasies. I suspect the secret agenda has to do with oil,

but no one on the outside really can know what worms are roiling about in Bush's and Cheney's brains.

Is Iran a dangerous country? Iran hasn't invaded another country in more than 100 years.

It hasn't threatened to invade another country. The much-publicized statement about wiping Israel off the face of the map was a mis-translation. The Iranian president really said that the Zionist state would pass away like the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, Iran has no intercontinental ballistic missiles, no nukes to put on them if they existed and none of the logistical means to support an invasion.

As for Iran's support of

Hezbollah and Hamas, you should note that both organizations existed a long time before the U.S. got around to labeling them as terrorist organizations. In fact, neither is a terrorist organization.

Al-Qaida is a terrorist organization because its only agenda is to kill people it considers as enemies. Hezbollah is a Lebanese patriotic organization with a widespread social, political and welfare operation. It fought the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and, if intelligence can be believed, it fought us when we occupied a portion of Lebanon.

Hamas similarly has a wide program of education and welfare. It has a small

military wing that has occasionally used suicide bombers against the Israelis. Hamas opposes Israeli occupation, which is something we should also do. Just because an organization that has no airplanes or artillery employs suicide bombers doesn't mean it's a terrorist organization. God knows our Army and Air Force have killed thousands more civilians than Hamas. The number of Israelis killed by Palestinians is very small in comparison with the number of Palestinians killed by Israelis.

Both organizations should more accurately be classified as guerrilla organizations opposing occupation by the most powerful military force in the Middle East. Their quarrel with Israel should not concern us. They repre-

See REESE, Page 5

Charley Reese

Columnist



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Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

■ Dec. 10
 El Paso Times on help for soldiers' families:

When military personnel are deployed to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan, they often leave dependents behind. Having a member of the family away from home and in harm's way places a tremendous physical and emotional strain on those left behind.

They deserve, and must be given, all possible support.

So it was good to see Secretary of the Army Pete Geren at Biggs Army Airfield on Thursday, placing his signa-

ture on an "Army Family Covenant" pledging his support in increased efforts to help Army families with support and services. Fort Bliss installation commanders also stood and shouted their pledges of commitment.

In an interview, Geren said, "Fort Bliss is such an important part of the future of our Army. Fort Bliss is growing — from 9,000 soldiers in 2003, it's going to be 30,000 soldiers in 2013 — and with those soldiers will come families, and we're trying to get ahead of those families, trying to make sure we have the quality of life when those families get there."

Last summer, Army family and youth programs received an additional \$100 million, about \$1.9 million of

which was given to Fort Bliss. That will help in honoring the commitment made Thursday.

Geren noted that of one million Army soldiers, half are married and those families have 700,000 children.

"We are in an era of persistent conflict; this is the new normal," Geren said. "Our families are stretched, but they continue to step up and stand with their soldiers and they help those who need it, not just their (own) soldiers. ... Our families get no medals, but they are heroes."

Indeed they are, and they — along with those in uniform — deserve the very best in support and services that their country can give them. URL: <http://www.elpasotimes.com>

Train carrying holiday travelers derails in Pakistan

MEHRABPUR, Pakistan (AP) — An express train crowded with holiday travelers derailed in southern Pakistan on Wednesday, killing at least 58 people and leaving hundreds of terrified survivors to claw their way out of the wreckage in total darkness.

The train, which derailed at

about 2 a.m., was loaded with an estimated 900 passengers, many of them heading home for the Islamic holiday of Eid ul-Adha.

Dozens of soldiers and police helped tend the injured and carry them away to waiting ambulances, as hundreds of people from the surrounding villages looked on. Army

engineers used two cranes and cutting equipment to free the last survivors.

Passenger Mohammed Yusuf sat on a pink blanket next to a pile of discarded shoes and clothes, wailing in grief at the death of his younger brother.

He said his wife, two children

and another brother were injured and taken to a hospital but their conditions were unknown. Yusuf, 26, said his brother survived the impact and was crying out in pain, but that he had been unable to free his trapped leg.

"It's unbearable. Don't say that he is dead," Yusuf pleaded as other

relatives tried to console him.

The train was speeding from Karachi toward Lahore when about 12 of its 16 carriages came off the rails near Mehrabpur, about 250 miles north of Karachi. It was unclear what caused the accident.

SOUTH AFRICA

Ex-guerilla fighter in line for top exec

POLOKWANE, South Africa (AP) — Jacob Zuma is now in line to become the country's next president and will have to fight to convince all South Africans — and a nervously watching world — that he won't set Africa's largest economy on a dangerously populist slide.

Zuma defeated President Thabo Mbeki by 2,329 votes to 1,505 at the party convention Tuesday in the most divisive contest in the 96-year-old history of the African National Congress.

Zuma's courting of the poor has many fearful he will pull South Africa's economy left, despite his assurances to the contrary. This month, Zuma traveled to the United States and Britain to reassure investors and met with white Afrikaner business leaders.

At a news conference, Zuma ally Kgalema Motlanthe sought to further dispel fears, saying that while there may be a difference in "emphasis," there "are no ideological differences" in the ANC.

Some whites have been saying they would leave if Zuma becomes president, joking that they would "zoom-a" out of the country.

Zuma, a burly larger-than-life man with a wide grin, dresses up in traditional leopard skins, has several wives and will not say or does not know how many children he has fathered.

He was acquitted of rape last year, but could still face bribery charges in

a multimillion-dollar arms deal. His supporters say he is innocent and that the scandals were part of a political smear campaign.

The moral voice of the nation, for-

'Zuma's widely recognized shortcomings could create more space for discussion and criticism of the government's policies. A healthy public debate unconstrained by fear and political correctness is exactly what South Africa needs.'

— Marian Tupy
Analyst

mer Cape Town Archbishop Desmond Tutu, on Friday urged ANC members not to elect Zuma, pleading that they "not choose someone of whom most of us would be ashamed."

But others point to Zuma's innate intelligence; his warmth contrasted with Mbeki's perceived aloofness; political acuity and an ability to reconcile enemies and build a consensus.

Zuma was a leader of the exiled ANC's military wing, and, like former President Nelson Mandela, served time at the Robben Island prison.

Zuma brokered the peace that ended violent clashes between ANC members and the Zulu Inkatha party, and infighting among ANC members in his native KwaZulu-Natal province

at the time of the first all-race elections in 1994.

That style of leadership is what many ANC members seek and will need to mend the deep rift the battle for the presidency has created in the party.

"What we are hoping for in a new leadership ... is a political willingness to engage with different views and engage more seriously. We are hoping for a different environment," said Zwelinzima Vavi, secretary-general of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions, which supported Zuma.

Africa analyst Marian Tupy, of the Cato Institute, a conservative think tank,

in Washington, said Zuma "is a man of poor judgment and questionable ethics" but a better choice than Mbeki who "has monopolized too much power."

"Zuma's widely recognized shortcomings could create more space for discussion and criticism of the government's policies," Tupy said. "A healthy public debate unconstrained by fear and political correctness is exactly what South Africa needs."

For the first time, post-apartheid South Africa will have a president who is not the head of the ANC, raising questions about how the bitter rivals will work together. Mbeki's term ends only in 2009; his loss Tuesday raises questions about whether he will remain the country's leader or call early elections.

Kosovo, Serbia facing off on role of United Nations

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Serbia and Kosovo square off at the U.N. Security Council Wednesday, with the Kosovars demanding quick independence and the Serbs demanding that the province remain part of its territory.

Both sides have supporters in the U.N.'s most powerful body — the U.S. and key European Union nations backing Kosovo's call for independence and Russia supporting its close ally Serbia and calling for further negotiations.

The council meeting will focus on a report by United States, European Union and Russian mediators in two-year talks between Belgrade and Kosovo on resolving the status of the Serbian province.

The talks ended in late November without an agreement.

Hashim Thaci, Kosovo's prime minister-elect, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Kosovo is "ready for independence."

"We have no time to lose, to waste," he said. "We need a decision ... for independence and qualitative recognition of (the) democratic world. ... We wasted a hundred years. We fight for our independence. We deserve our freedom."

But Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin is pressing for further negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina and has appealed to the international community to "encourage them to reach a mutually acceptable solution

to this problem."

Churkin has introduced elements for a council statement that would back additional negotiations, but Britain, France, the U.S. and others have said the talks have been exhausted and it's time to resolve Kosovo's status.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the West on Tuesday of forcing Kosovo into an uncompromising stance which is blocking negotiations.

Although Kosovo formally remains part of Serbia, the southern province has been run by the U.N. and NATO since 1999, when the Western military alliance ended former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic's crack-

down on ethnic Albanian separatists.

Thaci, a former rebel leader who won last month's general elections, said two years of negotiations failed to resolve the status issue and additional time would be fruitless — "now is (the) time for decision."

"Independence for Kosov is the only solution for Kosovo," he stressed. "It's a guarantee (of) peace and stability in the region and is the best choice for the United States and Europe."

Russia's Lavrov said the West has been "holding Pristina's hand" throughout the negotiations on Kosovo's future and forcing the predominantly ethnic Albanian-populated province into an "uncompromising position." Pristina is the capital of the Kosovo region.

Reagan

Continued from Page 4

media are doing their best to keep the truth from them and manipulate them,

especially by attaching great importance to the meaningless national polls.

—Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on more than 200 talk radio stations nationally as part of the Radio America Network.

Reese

Continued from Page 4

sent no threat to the U.S.

As for Iran, it has a legal right to enrich uranium to provide fuel for its nuclear reactors. Bush, who has demonstrated that he has no real interest in nuclear non-proliferation or even disarmament, demands as a precondition for talks that Iran stop what it has a legal right to do. That is unacceptable to the Iranians and should be to the American people.

If the U.S. had told the Soviet Union that a precondition for any talks was dismantling the Soviet missile force, there

never would have been any talks or treaties. There probably would have been a nuclear war.

As silly and ridiculous as Bush often appears, it is extremely dangerous to have a muddled-thinking, ignorant man in the White House. He controls far more destructive power than he is capable of using in a sane and proper way.

All wars are started by political leaders, and all wars are destructive of human life and civilization itself. Just read a little history and look at the political idiots who caused World Wars I and II. What a gargantuan waste of life and treasure those two fiascoes were.

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

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SOUTH KOREA

Exit polls show ex-Hyundai CEO winning election

By BURT HERMAN
Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Exit polls showed Lee Myung-bak winning South Korea's presidential election by a landslide Wednesday, as voters overlooked fraud allegations in hope the former Hyundai CEO will revive the economy.

Lee of the conservative Grand National Party received 50.3 percent of the vote, according to an exit poll sponsored jointly by TV stations KBS and MBC.

The next closest candidate, liberal Chung Dong-young, had 26 percent, and independent Lee Hoi-chang was third with 13.5 percent.

The poll of 70,000 people had a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percentage point.

The results were similar to an exit poll by TV station SBS that had Lee winning with 51.3 percent of the vote. YTN news channel's exit poll put Lee on top with 49 percent.

Lee of the conservative Grand National Party, a former Seoul mayor, has led the race for months.

He has pledged to take a more critical view of Seoul's engagement with rival North Korea and seek closer U.S. ties. Efforts to end North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions stand at a critical juncture, with the communist country set to disclose all its programs for eventual dismantlement by a year-end deadline.

Just days before the vote, the parliament voted to authorize an independent counsel investigation into Lee in a stock manipulation case where prosecutors had already cleared him of wrongdoing. The counsel is to complete the probe before the Feb. 25 inauguration, and Lee has said he would step aside from the presidency if found at fault.

"I want to thank the people who have defended me from numerous negative campaigns," Lee told reporters Wednesday morning after voting in Seoul.

"This time, we have to change the government without fail. To do so, all the people should take part in the voting."

Analysts say the independent counsel investigation will hound Lee after the election as he would be the country's first president-elect to undergo a criminal probe. By South Korean law, a president-elect can be prosecuted but receives immunity from most criminal lawsuits after inauguration.

Unlike previous elections dominated by issues like security policy with rival North Korea or relations with the United States, this year voters were focused on economic matters due to concern over sky-high real estate prices, soaring unemployment and a widening gap between rich and poor.

Nicknamed "The Bulldozer" for his can-do business acumen, Lee's support has been bolstered due to dissatisfaction over the five-year term of liberal President Roh Moo-hyun, who was constitutionally barred from seeking re-election.

In 2002, Roh was elected after pledging not to "kowtow" to the U.S. while also continuing the rapprochement with the North fostered by his predecessor and fellow liberal Kim Dae-jung, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his "sunshine" policy of engagement with Pyongyang.

Lee has made the economy central to his campaign, pledging to raise annual growth to 7 percent, double the country's per capita income to \$40,000 and lift South Korea to among the world's top seven economies — known as his "747" pledge.

Lee first gained prominence as head of Hyundai's construction unit that symbolized South Korea's meteoric economic rise in the 1960-70s. As Seoul mayor from 2002-2006, he made his mark by opening up a long-paved-over stream to create a new landmark in the capital that also earned him environmental credibility.

Nicknamed "The Bulldozer" for his can-do business acumen, Lee's support has been bolstered due to dissatisfaction over the five-year term of liberal President Roh Moo-hyun, who was constitutionally barred from seeking re-election.

With Illinois site chosen, pressure's on to make FutureGen plant viable

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Decades after Texas outdid Illinois for a multibillion-dollar science project that went nowhere, the Land of Lincoln is getting its revenge as the chosen home of a futuristic power plant developers hope will be virtually pollution-free.

The big question now: Will this experiment, again heavily subsidized by U.S. taxpayers, do what the infamous superconducting super collider didn't and actually work?

FutureGen, as the plant has been dubbed, is a public-private venture years in the making aimed at designing and testing technology to turn coal into a gas that can be stripped of hydrogen, which then would be burned to produce electricity. Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas created during the process, would be captured, then injected underground for ostensibly permanent storage.

The FutureGen Alliance, a consortium of 12 U.S. and foreign energy companies, announced Tuesday that it chose Mattoon, Ill., as the site of the plant over nearby Tuscola and the Texas towns of Jewett and Penwell.

At Southern Illinois

University in Carbondale, John Mead thinks FutureGen is a can't-miss.

"I think there's a pretty high confidence that these concepts can be turned into successful engineered processes," said Mead, chief of the school's Coal Research Center. "We're pushing technologies. But I think the understanding of science is there and we're gaining experiences every day in terms of making these processes work."

"I think the technology will be challenging, but I don't see that as a stumbling block."

Hours after Tuesday's announcement, the U.S. Department of Energy warned that cost overruns for the \$1.8 billion project — nearly twice the price tag almost five years ago — "require a reassessment of FutureGen's design." The DOE, and therefore taxpayers, are footing three-fourths of the plant's cost.

"DOE believes that the public interest mandates that FutureGen deliver the greatest possible technological benefits in the most cost-efficient manner, requiring a restructuring of FutureGen to 'prevent further cost escalation,'" said James

Slutz, the department's acting principal deputy assistant secretary for fossil energy.

In the 1980s, Texas outbid Illinois and other states to win the super collider, what was to have been a 54-mile underground ring of magnets that would smash protons together.

Though scientists once hoped that \$11 billion project would help unlock the secrets of matter and energy. But it was just one-fifth complete when Congress pulled the plug on it in 1993 at a cost to taxpayers of \$2 billion, ending a project many federal lawmakers viewed as little more than a bloated, over-budget science experiment the nation could ill afford.

Texas had pledged \$1 billion to that effort, which promised a payoff of 4,500 construction and 2,500 permanent jobs.

In courting FutureGen, Texas had promised \$260 million in cash and tax credits. Illinois offered a \$17 million grant to help pay for various project costs, as well as an estimated \$15 million in sales tax exemptions on materials and equipment through local enterprise zones.

Alaska's Aleutian Islands hit by 7.2 quake

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A large earthquake rattled Alaska's seismically active Aleutian Islands, but there were no immediate reports of any damages or injuries.

The magnitude-7.2 quake struck at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday and was centered about 125 miles west of Adak in the island chain, according to a preliminary report by the U.S. Geological Survey.

A dispatcher with the Anchorage Police

Department said he didn't feel the quake, some 1,300 miles away, and there were no reports of any injuries or damages.

The Aleutian Islands are a chain of more than 300 islands that extend southwest from Alaska into the northern Pacific Ocean.

A tsunami warning was canceled early Wednesday for Alaska's coasts after officials determined waves from the earthquake posed no widespread destructive threat.

Bush to visit Jerusalem, West Bank on 9-day trip

By DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush will visit Israel and the West Bank next month to push Israel and the Palestinians toward peace and try to write his own chapter in the annals of Mideast diplomacy.

On a nine-day trip beginning Jan. 8, Bush plans to stop in Jerusalem, the West Bank, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. It will be Bush's first presidential visit to each of the countries, except Egypt.

Mideast peacemaking has been on the back burner during most of Bush's presidency, but he emerged from a high-stakes conference in Annapolis, Md., last month re-energized about assisting

Israel and the Palestinians in forming an independent Palestinian homeland. The trip is aimed at helping the two sides gain traction in talks that got under way earlier this month.

"Part of it is to continue to keep the discussions going, to show the commitment and to remind the world that this is a moment that has presented itself, and it's time for everyone to seize the opportunity to make sure that the Palestinians and the Israelis are supported," White House press secretary Dana Perino said Tuesday. "In addition to that, the president wants to help try to increase Israeli and Arab reconciliation."

Bush will focus the leaders on finding a long-term, sustainable peace, although it remained unclear whether he

'The important thing is for the leaders to keep their eye on the big picture and to work with their staffs — and trust their staffs — who are going to work out these details.'

— Dana Perino
Press secretary

would engage in detailed negotiations. He is scheduled to meet separately with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. No three-way meeting is planned.

"The important thing is for the leaders to keep their eye on the big picture and to work with their staffs — and trust their staffs — who are going to work out these details," Perino said. "And the president can

help facilitate those discussions. I do not anticipate, although we can let you know as we get closer, whether there would be detailed discussions about a concession on one side or the other."

The White House said the trip also will be an opportunity to reaffirm U.S. commitment to the security of American allies in the Middle

East, especially the Gulf nations, and work with them to combat terrorism and extremism. Iraq, Iran, regional security and economic ties also will be discussed on the trip.

Bush met in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, with leaders in the region in June 2003. Perino said she did not think a stop in Iraq will be added, although the White House does not announce such trips in advance for security reasons.

In Jerusalem, Bush will meet with President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and in the West Bank he will meet with President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. He will not meet with the Islamic militant group Hamas, which seized the Gaza

Strip in elections in June. That split the Palestinian territory in two — the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and the West Bank controlled by Abbas.

"The president wants to deal with the elected leader of all the Palestinians," Perino said, referring to Abbas and Fayyad. "He is going to focus on talking with them. Hamas is a terrorist organization. He is not going to be talking with them."

Bush says conditions in Israel and the Palestinian territories are ripe for a more aggressive U.S. role: Abbas and Olmert agreed in Annapolis to renew peace talks, there is a unifying fight against extremism fed by the Palestinian conflict, and the world understands the urgency of acting now.

Obama calls for new foreign policy

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Democrat Barack Obama said Tuesday the nation's foreign policy challenges call for a new leader who will worry more about doing the right thing than how it will look.

"There are moments in history when it is not enough to fall back on conventional ways of doing things, because the threats we face, the challenges we face, are unconventional," Obama told a crowd in Des Moines. "There are moments when we're called to stand up for what is right even if it's not popular, because that's what makes us stronger and safer. There are moments when new challenges demand new American leadership."

He said that for too long the conventional way of thinking about foreign policy has valued "time in Washington over timely judgments, posturing over pragmatism and fear of looking weak over the conviction to get things right."

He said he hasn't been

afraid to buck Washington thinking when it comes to foreign policy, including his opposition of going to war with Iraq while he was a state senator in Illinois. He said he's the only Democratic nominee his Republican opponent won't be able to challenge on that point.

While Obama highlighted his record, he also said he's "running to do more than end the war in Iraq."

"I'm even more interested in ending the mind-set that got us into it. It's easy for us to lay all of the problems of the world at George Bush's doorstep," he said.

Rival Hillary Rodham Clinton has frequently questioned Obama's experience when it comes to foreign policy. On Tuesday, he brought out a group of policy advisers including Tony Lake, a national security adviser to former President Clinton, and Susan Rice, former assistant secretary of state for African Affairs under Clinton.

World briefly ...

Disappearance of American teenager Natalee Holloway becomes a cold case in Aruba

ORANJESTAD, Aruba (AP) — Prosecutors dismissed the case against the three main suspects in the disappearance of American teenager Natalee Holloway, saying they still believe they were involved in her death but can't prove it after 932 days of searching failed to turn up a body.

The three young men were re-arrested last month after prosecutors in Aruba discovered online chat sessions they hoped would break the case open. But none of the men talked in custody, and without the 18-year-old's body, prosecutors said they had no recourse but to halt the most notorious missing persons case in the Caribbean.

If the three suspects were put on trial, the lack of evidence "would lead to an acquittal," the Public Prosecutor's Office said in a statement.

Moving Holloway into the cold-

case files "is a tough burden to bear" for her parents, they acknowledged Tuesday, but the prosecutors said they had little choice.

"The public prosecutor's office and the police have gone the extra mile and have exhausted all their powers and techniques in order to solve the mystery of the disappearance of the girl," the statement read.

Jamie Lynn Spears, 16-year-old sister of Britney, says she's pregnant

NEW YORK (AP) — Another Spears baby is reportedly on the way — and it's not Britney's. Jamie Lynn Spears, the 16-year-old "Zoey 101" star and sister of Britney, told OK! magazine that she's pregnant and that the father is her boyfriend, Casey Aldridge.

"It was a shock for both of us, so unexpected," she said. "I was in complete and total shock and so was he."

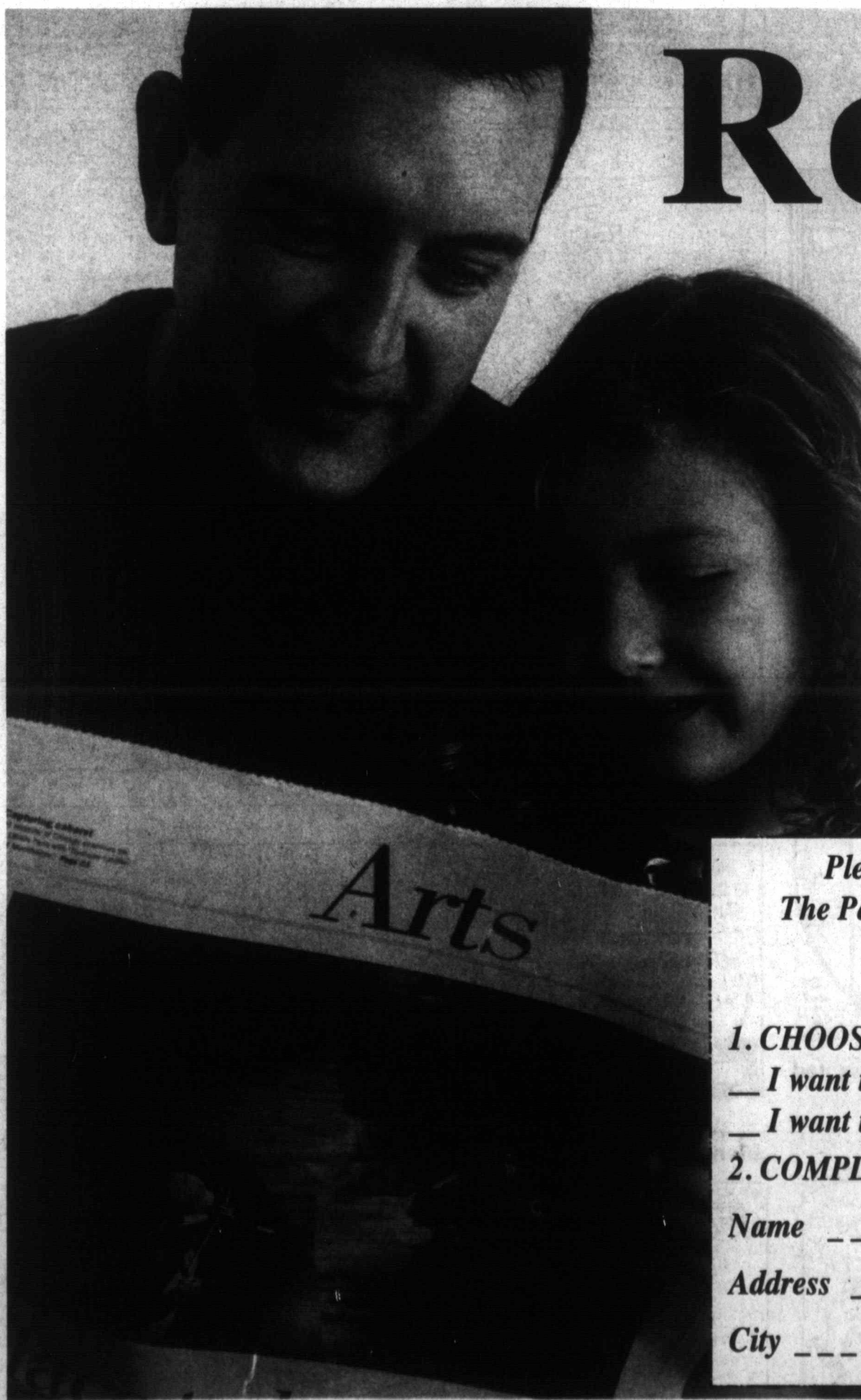
Spears is 12 weeks along and initially kept the news to herself when she learned of the pregnancy from an

at-home test and subsequent doctor visit, she told the celebrity magazine, which hits stands in New York on Wednesday and the rest of the country by Friday.

Clemens denies allegations by his former trainer that he used banned substances

NEW YORK (AP) — Roger Clemens denied allegations by his former trainer that he took performance-enhancing drugs, calling them "a dangerous and destructive shortcut that no athlete should ever take."

The accusations against the seven-time Cy Young Award winner from former trainer Brian McNamee were the most striking in last week's Mitchell Report. Former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell wrote McNamee said he injected Clemens with steroids in 1998 while with the Toronto Blue Jays, and steroids and human growth hormone in 2000 and 2001, while with the New York Yankees.



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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR READERS: Yesterday I printed the feedback I received regarding a letter from "Smothered in Michigan," a recently divorced mother of two. Her ex-husband had been an alcoholic. She's now dating his "polar opposite" who "treats her like a queen" and is "loving, affectionate, generous and caring." She went on to say he stops by her job "only a few" times a day, and the minute she's home he shows up at her door. All her dinners are with him -- he pays for everything -- and he doesn't leave until her kids go to bed. He spends every waking hour with her and accompanies her wherever she goes. She said she knows she should feel grateful, but instead feels "indebted, stalked, controlled and burdened." Her question: "Am I just being selfish, and can I train myself to like being spoiled?" I told her she and the man were overdue for a frank talk about personal space, that she's still healing from her divorce, and he seems so smitten or insecure that he's preventing her from figuring out where she ends and he begins. Many readers felt she should listen to her intuition, that the man is a potential abuser, and the traits she listed are red flags. Today I'll share the classic warning signs of an abuser. Read on:

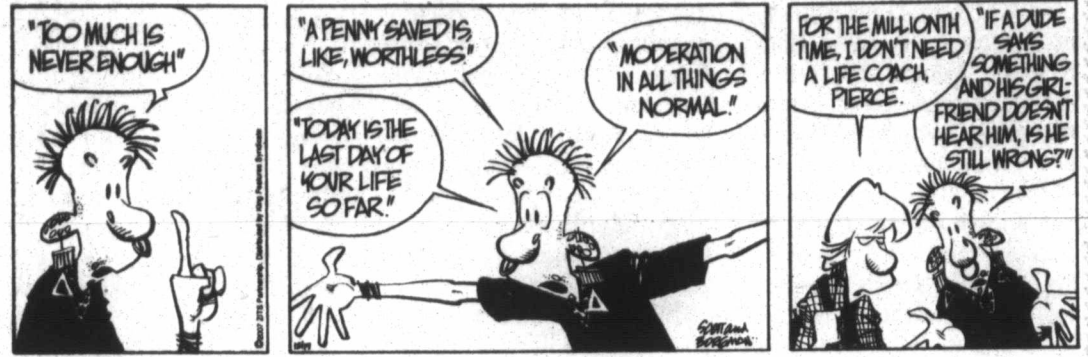
- (1) **PUSHES FOR QUICK INVOLVEMENT:** Comes on strong, claiming, "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." An abuser presses for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.
- (2) **JEALOUS:** excessively possessive; calls constantly or visits unexpectedly; prevents you from going to work because "you might meet someone"; checks the mileage on your car.
- (3) **CONTROLLING:** Interrogates you intensely (especially if you're late) about whom you talked to and where you were; keeps all the money; insists you ask permission to go anywhere or do anything.
- (4) **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:** Expects you to be the perfect mate and meet his or her every need.

- (5) **ISOLATION:** Tries to cut you off from family and friends; accuses people who are your supporters of "causing trouble." The abuser may deprive you of a phone or car, or try to prevent you from holding a job.
- (6) **BLAMES OTHERS FOR PROBLEMS OR MISTAKES:** It's always someone else's fault if something goes wrong.
- (7) **MAKES OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OR HER FEELINGS:** The abuser says, "You make me angry," or "You're hurting me by not doing what I tell you."
- (8) **HYPERSENSITIVITY:** Is easily insulted, claiming hurt feelings when he or she is really mad. Rants about the injustice of things that are just a part of life.
- (9) **CRUELTY TO ANIMALS OR CHILDREN:** Kills or punishes animals brutally. Also may expect children to do things that are far beyond their ability (whips a 3-year-old for wetting a diaper) or may tease them until they cry. Sixty-five percent of abusers who beat their partner will also abuse children.
- (10) **"PLAYFUL" USE OF FORCE DURING SEX:** Enjoys throwing you down or holding you against your will during sex; finds the idea of rape exciting.
- (11) **VERBAL ABUSE:** Constantly criticizes or says blatantly cruel things; degrades, curses, calls you ugly names. This may also involve sleep deprivation, waking you with relentless verbal abuse.
- (12) **RIGID GENDER ROLES:** Expects you to serve, obey and remain at home.
- (13) **SUDDEN MOOD SWINGS:** Switches from sweet to violent in minutes.
- (14) **PAST BATTERING:** Admits to hitting a mate in the past, but says the person "made" him (or her) do it.
- (15) **THREATS OF VIOLENCE:** Says things like, "I'll break your neck," or "I'll kill you," then dismisses them with "Everybody talks that way," or "I didn't really mean it."

For Better Or For Worse



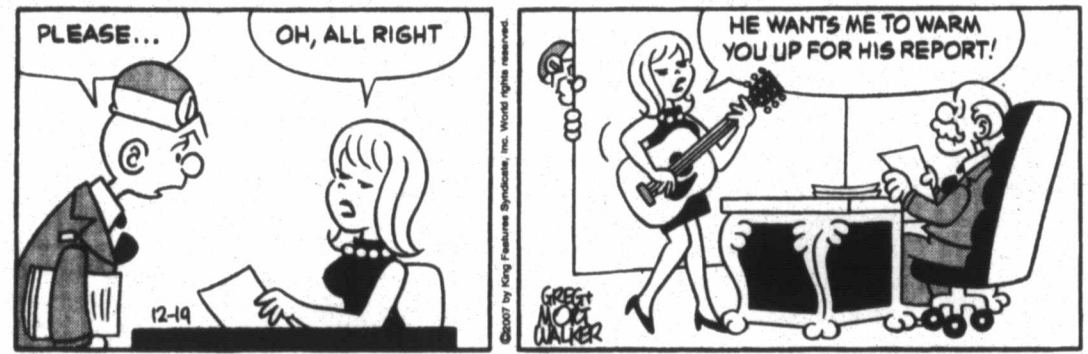
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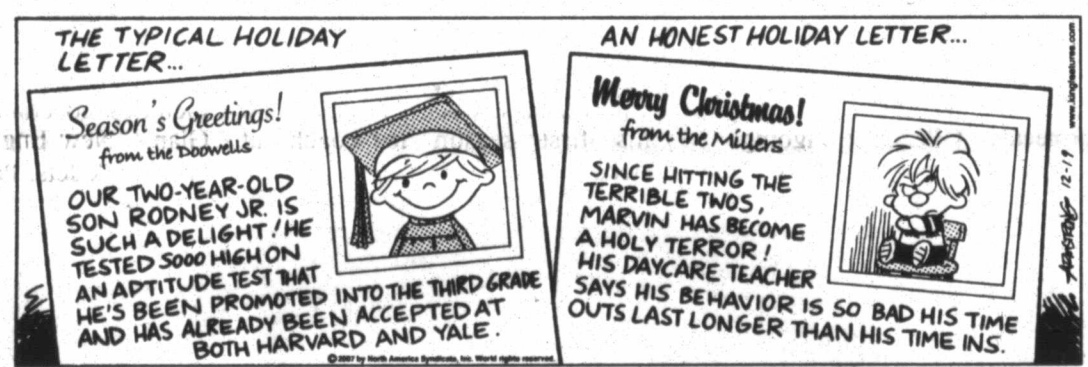
Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Puts on

1 Misplaces the wall

6 Schooner feature

10 Open, as aspirin

11 Cavalry sword

12 God

13 Full of verve

14 Tall tales

15 Uppsala's nation

16 Fancy planter

17 Bit of ointment

18 Break off

19 Made a model of

22 Diamond of music

23 Bin fill

26 Botched

29 Dress line

32 Sinking signal

33 "CSI" evidence

34 Slow passage

36 Tees, e.g.

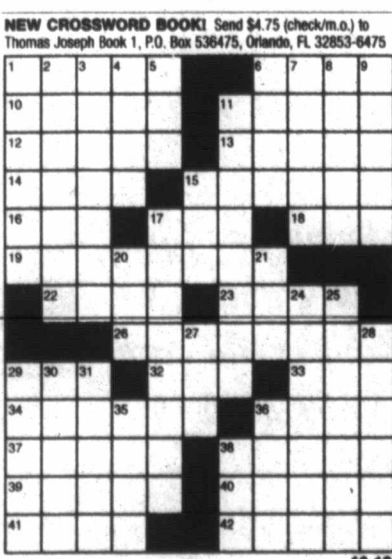
37 Dome home

38 Filer's worry

39 Grand National Park

40 Book part

41 Neighbor of Turkey



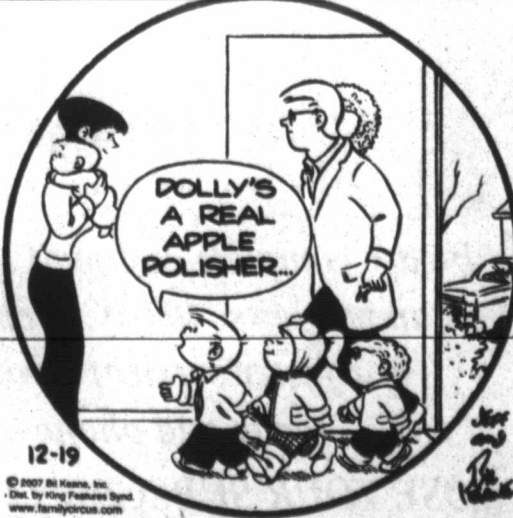
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



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Sports

Flag Football



Pictured here are the Optimist Club Flag Football Tournament Champions, the Texas Longhorns. Back row, (L-R) coaches Jackie Martindale, Tuffy Sanders and Mike James. Front row, (L-R) Brennan Brogdin, Trae Corley, Rylan Hathcoat, Royce Angel, Patrick Allen, Logan Martindale, Keshawn Stewart, Braeden Pickering and Yzari Velasquez.

Courtesy photo

In their season to remember, player death still looms large at Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — They shout his name after each practice. His game-day locker, never used, remains intact.

Aaron O'Neal didn't play a single down for Missouri, but the former reserve linebacker's picture is seemingly everywhere at the school's athletic training complex, from the main hallway in a public area to the coaches' private sanctuaries.

It's been nearly three full football seasons since O'Neal, a 19-year-old redshirt freshman, collapsed on the Memorial Stadium field during a preseason workout and died less than two hours later.

In a season of unrivaled success that took No. 7 Missouri (11-2) to the brink of the BCS national title game, the legacy of the player known as A.O. continues to loom large for the Tigers, who face No. 25 Arkansas (8-4) in the Cotton Bowl on New Year's Day.

"I think about him all the time," said assistant coach Cornell Ford, who helped recruit O'Neal after the player's record-setting career as a team captain and running back at Parkway North High School near St. Louis. "He's very much a part of everything we do."

The 6-foot-3, 220-pound O'Neal would be a junior now, an upperclassman and potential team leader whose unassuming demeanor and ever-present smile belied both a playful side and a quiet intensity.

Bill Parcells 'probably' will take a job with the Falcons

ATLANTA (AP) — Bill Parcells could become the Atlanta Falcons' vice president of football operations, a role that would put him in charge of finding the team's next coach.

Parcells is considering an offer to join the team's front office, a person familiar with the negotiations said on condition of anonymity because talks were ongoing.

The New York Daily News reported Wednesday that Parcells is on the verge of accepting the job, with only a few minor details to be worked out. In a story on its Web site, the paper said a deal could be completed later in the day with Falcons owner Arthur Blank.

"I think I probably will do it," Parcells said. "The job description is to be the football operations overseer. We still have a little work to do, but I don't think it's anything

major. I don't expect any real deal-breaker. I don't think there will be any major hangups."

Parcells said he would not be the Falcons' head coach. He told the newspaper he would plan to hire a general manager and then work with that person to hire a new coach to replace Bobby Petrino, who quit last week 13 games into his first season to coach at Arkansas.

The offer was first reported by ESPN.com.

Rich McKay, the team's president and general manager since December 2003, did not immediately return a phone message on Tuesday night. Blank declined comment when asked about Parcells late Tuesday night.

Parcells' agent, Jimmy Sexton, did not immediately return an e-mail seeking comment.

Emmitt Thomas is 0-1 as Atlanta's interim head coach, a job he inherited when Bobby Petrino resigned suddenly a week ago. Petrino went 3-10 with the Falcons before taking the Arkansas job.

Parcells resigned in January after four years as the Dallas coach. During a 19-year career that also included coaching the New York Giants, New England Patriots and New York Jets, Parcells made it to three Super Bowls, winning twice with the Giants.

Known best for a gruff demeanor and colorful quotes, Parcells left coaching with the ninth-most wins in NFL history and a career record of 183-138-1. He was 34-32 in Dallas, including 0-2 in the postseason.

"I am in good health and feel lucky to have been able to coach in the NFL for an extended period of

time," Parcells said when he left the Cowboys. "I leave the game and the NFL with nothing but good feelings and gratitude to all the players, coaches and other people that have assisted me in that regard."

McKay's future with the Falcons is uncertain. He came to Atlanta with impressive credentials, mentioned as a potential candidate to replace former NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue and considered a successful GM who helped the Tampa Bay Buccaneers win their only Super Bowl in 2003.

In 1996, before the Bucs hired Tony Dungy as a first-time NFL head coach, Tampa Bay owner Malcolm Glazer considered bringing Parcells aboard. McKay, however, told the Glazer family that he would resign if he took the job.

With the Falcons, McKay rec-

ommended that Blank hire Jim Mora, whose fiery demeanor led to his firing last January despite a 26-22 record, and Petrino, who abruptly left the team to return to college last week.

Under McKay and Mora, Atlanta advanced to the NFC title game in the 2004 season, but the Falcons have gone 18-28 while missing the playoffs for three straight years.

Atlanta, which has never had consecutive winning seasons in its 42-year history, played before many empty seats at the Georgia Dome this season.

A federal indictment of three-time Pro Bowl quarterback Michael Vick led to a 23-month prison sentence imposed last week.

Blank, a co-founder and former CEO of The Home Depot, paid \$545 million for the Falcons in a deal that closed in February 2002.

Cowboys put league-high 11 on Pro Bowl rosters

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Forget the standings. The real star power of the Dallas Cowboys was revealed in the list of Pro Bowl selections.

Sure, Terrell Owens made the cut Tuesday, as did Jessica Simpson's new squeeze, Tony Romo. Reliable tight end Jason Witten — remember his long gain without a helmet earlier this season? — and hulking left tackle Flozell Adams were picked, too.

But, get this: Dallas had 11 honorees, matching the franchise record set back in the days when Troy Aikman, Michael Irvin and Emmitt Smith already had won a Super Bowl.

The Cowboys not only had the most selections of any team in the league, they had three more than the headed-toward-perfection New England Patriots.

One of Dallas' picks isn't even a starter. And don't be surprised if at least one more member of "America's Team" makes it to Honolulu for the Feb. 10 game. Actually, a few more could go as four players were told they are first alternates.

"Wow," coach Wade Phillips said. Then, borrowing the trademark line of singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen, he added: "The road goes on forever and the party never ends."

Fan voting certainly helped, as did the fact the Cowboys were 12-1 when rival teams and coaches cast their ballots. Regardless, the announcement made for a nice bit of celebration during a week that's otherwise been filled with talk of Roy Williams' suspension, Romo's love life and bruised hand, and whether the team is starting another December swoon.

"We got our juices flowing again," Phillips said. "I got a real feeling that we got back as a team, (got) over losing the

game. Boom! We're excited about our team, our players, man, were excited for each other. You know, you get that feeling — that's the team part of it, even though it's individuals making it."

Of all the players who made it from both leagues, one name really stands out: Sean Taylor.

The slain Washington Redskins safety was having a great year before being fatally wounded in a shooting at his home in Miami three weeks ago. His memory was honored with his selection.

Perhaps the NFC will take the honor a step further and open the game with 10 players on the field, as the Redskins did in their first game after his death.

"It is well-deserved," Washington center Casey Rabach said. "If he would have been able to finish the season, he would have been in there. It just shows the respect everybody around the league had for him and what a great player he was."

Taylor is believed to be the second person elected posthumously to an all-star game in a major American professional sports league. Philadelphia Flyers goalie Pelle Lindbergh was voted by fans to start in the 1986 NHL All-Star game after he was killed in an automobile accident on Nov. 11, 1985.

Taylor led the NFC with five interceptions at the time of his death, even though he had missed the previous two games because of a knee injury. He also was leading the Pro Bowl voting among fans at the time.

Tom Brady and Randy Moss were among the eight players chosen from unbeaten New England. Linebacker Mike Vrabel was picked for the first time in his 11-year career.

'I hope he shows up, so people can decide for themselves'

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

The topic of his talk to a convention of Texas high school baseball coaches next month was going to be how to stay in shape. It took on a whole new meaning when their guest speaker, Roger Clemens, was given a starring role in the Mitchell Report.

The greatest pitcher of his generation denied again Tuesday that he ever used performance-enhancers of any kind. But Clemens did it from a safe distance again, this time in a statement, issued by his agent instead of his lawyer. Yet he found time early in the afternoon to pick up the phone and call one of those coaches to say he'd still come and talk if they'd have him.

"He said he'd abide by whatever decision we came up with," said Jim Long, who coaches at Brenham High and is president of the association.

But the only thing the coaches agreed on during an executive committee meeting was to postpone making a decision on the invitation. "Right now," Long added, "I think he's coming. He was set up to talk about workout routines and I don't think he'll deviate from that, either. And after all the things he's done for us in the past, I don't see us turning our backs on him."

Just about everybody else, though, already has. Clemens acknowledged as much in his statement.

"I am disappointed that my 25 years in public life have apparently not earned me the benefit of the doubt, but I understand that Senator Mitchell's report has raised many serious questions. I plan to publicly answer all of those questions at the appropriate time in the appropriate way. I only ask that in the meantime people not rush to judgment."

Try telling that to anybody who thinks Barry Bonds took the rap, unfairly, for an entire era of juicers. Those same people wanted a "name" to share the heat, preferably one with the same outsized accomplishments, and considering that race has been a factor in just about every poll measuring how Bonds is perceived, for some of them though it would be even better if that player happened to be white.

Clemens certainly fits that bill of particulars. For all the differences between the charges against both, and the way the cases against them were rolled out, you'll get no argument from me about whether they deserve to be in the same boat. Fair or not, though, Clemens still has a decent chance of getting out.

He's off to a lousy start, having already passed on a

handful of opportunities to refute what appeared in Mitchell's report, beginning with a refusal to talk to investigators even before it came out. He didn't help himself, either, by hiding behind his high-priced help instead of showing his face in public and letting people hear his words instead of read them, and facing the tough questions afterward.

But Clemens is wrong about not getting the benefit of the doubt, at least in a few places. Long said the kids who play baseball for the coaches in his association read the headlines like everybody else, but few of them have rushed to judgment.

"We talked about it a little bit," he said. "There was a little disappointment by some, a little surprise expressed by others and some who didn't pay any attention at all."

"I didn't have to make decisions on any of this growing up, so what amazes me is that with all the stuff society throws at them," he added, "so many of them turn out as good as they do."

Long also noted that in his corner of the world people still want to believe that a pitcher can be blessed with talent, take care of himself and throw smoke into his 40s without breaking the rules of

Cowboys' Williams appeals; QB Romo recovering, likely to play

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Tony Romo took it easy on his bruised right hand Tuesday, throwing nothing more than lobs during practice. During all his down time, he might have gotten a good laugh by looking at the merry-go-round playing out in the Dallas Cowboys' secondary.

On one play, suspended-but-appealing safety Roy Williams was with the first team, with backup Keith Davis right behind him.

On the next play, Davis was with the first team, with Williams waiting in the wings.

Williams was told Monday that he has to sit out Dallas' game Saturday night against Carolina as punishment for his third "horse-collar" tackle this season. He appealed Tuesday and a hearing was set for Wednesday. While the delay gave his defenders more time to prepare their case, it left coach Wade Phillips with less time to prepare his defense. He's already hampered by a shorter-than-usual week.

"We're in a little bit of limbo here," Phillips said. "We just need to get it settled."

This practice was only a walk-through as Phillips didn't want to push his players too hard two days after a game. Tuesday is normally their day off.

Romo was limited because of an injury to the thumb on his passing

hand. He didn't take snaps and might only take them out of the shotgun Wednesday, even though he'll likely have a new center. Starter Andre Gurode hurt his left knee and probably won't play against the Panthers.

Romo didn't speak to reporters Tuesday, but he was seen after practice with his right hand wrapped with ice and a stimulation machine.

"He said he felt better," Phillips said, adding that the bruising and swelling had gone down.

Tight end Jason Witten has no doubt Romo will play Saturday.

"Oh yeah," he said. "He's really tough. I'd be shocked if he didn't."

Romo, Witten and Gurode were among 11 Cowboys chosen Tuesday to the NFC Pro Bowl roster. It tied a team record and was the most among all NFL clubs. Dallas has seven starters and four backups, including Marion Barber, who doesn't even start for the Cowboys.

Phillips called the Pro Bowl announcement a nice mood-lifter for a club dealing with injuries, the Williams suspension and lingering disappointment from a 10-6 loss to Philadelphia on Sunday.

Dallas already has locked up a first-round bye, but no longer has a cushion over Green Bay in the chase for home-field advantage in the playoffs. The Cowboys and Packers are both 12-2,

although Dallas holds the tiebreaker. Still, the Cowboys must win the last two games to guarantee themselves the No. 1 seed; otherwise, they may face a trip to Lambeau Field in late January.

Thus, the trip to Carolina is no longer playing out the string. Dallas also wants to get back to playing at a high level, something it hasn't done the last two games. Phillips' challenge is to figure out how to do that while also trying to set up contingency plans at so many positions.

Besides Williams, Romo and Gurode, Dallas probably will be without Pat Watkins, a backup safety and special teams standout, because of an ankle injury. Then there's Terry Glenn, who hasn't played all year because of two knee operations but is close to returning.

Williams has known since early October that another horse-collar might cost him a game, which could explain why he was angrily bouncing up and down after being flagged for doing it again Sunday against Philadelphia's Donovan McNabb.

Then again, the violation is known as the Roy Williams Rule because it was put in following his takedown from behind of Terrell Owens in 2004. Owens broke his leg and tore ankle ligaments on that tackle.

Milton Bradley says he'll be ready for Rangers opener

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Milton Bradley insists that his recovery from knee surgery is going well and that he will be ready for the start of the season for the Texas Rangers.

"I'll be ready to play in some capacity," Bradley said Tuesday during a conference call, his first since agreeing last week to a one-year free-agent deal worth up to \$8 million.

Bradley didn't elaborate when asked what he was doing now, and if he was running yet.

"I'm ahead of pace of the average person," the 29-year-old Bradley said. "I'm where I need to be. I'll be ready for the start of the season."

While the Rangers expect him to play right field, Bradley could start the season as their designated hitter.

Bradley tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee and damaged cartilage when San Diego Padres manager Bud Black spun him to the ground while trying to keep him from going

after umpire Mike Winters during a confrontation on Sept. 23.

Bradley hit .306 with 13 homers and 37 RBIs in 61 games with Oakland and San Diego. But he also had four stints on the disabled list (hamstring, oblique and calf muscle), and that didn't include the knee injury.

Since playing a career-high 141 games for the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2004, Bradley hasn't played more than 96 games in a season. Bradley has been on the DL 12 times in his eight major league seasons, during which he has hit .273 with 81 homers and 322 RBIs in 691 games for Montreal, Cleveland, the Dodgers, Oakland and San Diego.

"With a full year, I think I can have great numbers," Bradley said.

Project his 2007 totals over a full 162-game schedule, and it comes out to 37 homers and 98 RBIs. Over the past three seasons, his full-season projections average 28 homers and 89 RBIs.

Clemens says he never took banned substances

NEW YORK (AP) — Roger Clemens denied allegations by his former trainer that he took performance-enhancing drugs, calling them "a dangerous and destructive shortcut that no athlete should ever take."

The accusations against the seven-time Cy Young Award winner from former trainer Brian McNamee were the most striking in last week's Mitchell Report. Former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell wrote McNamee said he injected Clemens with steroids in 1998 while with the Toronto Blue Jays, and steroids and human growth hormone in 2000 and 2001, while with the New York Yankees.

"I want to state clearly and without qualification: I did not take steroids, human growth hormone

or any other banned substances at any time in my baseball career or, in fact, my entire life," Clemens said Tuesday in a statement issued through his agent, Randy Hendricks. "Those substances represent a dangerous and destructive shortcut that no athlete should ever take."

"I am disappointed that my 25 years in public life have apparently not earned me the benefit of the doubt, but I understand that Senator Mitchell's report has raised many serious questions. I plan to publicly answer all of those questions at the appropriate time in the appropriate way. I only ask that in the meantime people not rush to judgment."

Another former McNamee client, Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte, said last weekend that he

took HGH twice while rehabbing from an injury in 2002. Mitchell said McNamee told him he injected Pettitte with HGH two-to-four times that year.

"He stands 100 percent behind the accuracy of the information he provided to Sen. Mitchell," McNamee's lawyer, Ed Ward, said in a statement.

Mitchell declined comment. Baseball players and owners didn't have an agreement banning steroids until September 2002. They banned HGH in January 2005.

Clemens' lawyer, Rusty Hardin, first issued a denial last Thursday, hours after Mitchell's report was released. Tuesday marked the first public comments by Clemens, an 11-time All-Star who spent 24 years in the major leagues with

Boston, Toronto, the Yankees and Houston.

"I did not take steroids, human growth hormone or any other banned substances"

— Roger Clemens

The allegations also have the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association reconsidering whether to let Clemens speak at the group's annual convention next

month. The group held an executive meeting Tuesday but postponed making a decision until it could get more information. Clemens spoke with one of the group's coaches before the meeting and said he "is ready to come speak," said Jim Long, president of the association.

"We feel we owe it to our association and Roger himself to give him the benefit of the doubt further," Long said.

The 45-year-old right-hander was 6-6 with a 4.18 ERA for the Yankees this year and may retire. He said he planned to retire after the 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 seasons, only to return each time.

A six-time 20-game winner, Clemens was considered by most to be a first-ballot Hall of Famer before McNamee's allegations.

Sean Taylor makes Pro Bowl nod after being killed in house invasion

NEW YORK (AP) — Pro Bowl voters honored the memory of Sean Taylor.

They also used a lot of votes on Dallas Cowboys and none on the NFC South, which didn't get a player into the league's all-star game.

Taylor, who died Nov. 27 after being shot during a burglary at his home in Florida, was voted the starting free safety on the NFC team. He was having an outstanding season and was one of the leading vote-getters among fans at the time of his death.

"It is well-deserved," Redskins center Casey Rabach said. "If he would have been able to finish the season, he would have been in there. It just shows the respect everybody around the league had for him and what a great player he was."

Taylor is the only player

known to have made an all-star team posthumously in any sport other than goaltender Pelle Lindbergh was voted to the NHL All-Star game in February 1986. He had been killed in an auto accident in November 1985 after playing eight games for the Philadelphia Flyers, for whom he had won the Vezina Trophy as the league's best goalie the previous season.

Both conferences were dominated by players from the teams at the top of the standings, none more than Dallas, which had 11 voted to the team by fans, players and coaches for the game to be played in Honolulu on Feb. 10. Unbeaten New England had eight, including Tom Brady and Randy Moss, but also linebacker Mike Vrabel, who made it to the game for the first time in 11 NFL seasons.

Still, Jacksonville was ignored although the Jaguars are 10-4 and on the verge of clinching a playoff spot in the AFC. So were all four teams in the NFC South, plus Detroit and the New York Jets.

Dallas' contingent included the obvious: quarterback Tony Romo and wide receiver Terrell Owens. And with the Cowboys at 12-2, the fans came out for more of their favorites on "America's Team."

One of the Cowboys, running back Marion Barber, is not a starter for Dallas, although he leads the team with 871 yards rushing. That's 315 more than starter Julius Jones, but is just seventh in the NFC, although Barber does have 11 touchdowns.

Green Bay, tied with Dallas at the top of the NFC, had four players on the

team, including Brett Favre, who will start at quarterback. It is the ninth Pro Bowl for the 38-year-old Favre, his first since 2003.

San Diego, like New England, had eight players chosen. Minnesota was second in the NFC with seven, including rookie Adrian Peterson, who leads the conference in rushing.

Redemption also was a theme.

Jared Allen of Kansas City, suspended for the first two games of the season after multiple drunken driving convictions, will be a starting defensive end for the AFC.

"I was always raised that a man has to have great character," said Allen, whose suspension was reduced from four games to two by commissioner Roger Goodell after he promised to stop drinking.

Litke

Continued from Page 9

the game. Nolan Ryan, after all, is scheduled as the keynote speaker at the Jan. 11 banquet in the middle of that same convention. And if people can't believe in him, Long asked, whom can they believe in?

"Some people go longer

than others. In Texas, we saw it with their own eyes when Nolan was still playing," he said. "Only a few people ever come along in a lifetime who throw hard when they're 18, and through hard work and keeping themselves in condition, can throw hard when they get to 40."

"It can be done. It's a reason to keep trying, and people need that. Nolan's a

great man, he's been a great role model and I think it's been the same way with Roger. It's unfortunate the way this whole thing played out the way it has, but I was encouraged to see his comments today. That's why I'm hoping he shows up for the convention, so people here can decide this for themselves."

That's advice worth heeding sooner rather than

later. Clemens has already taken a pass on answering all the questions most of us have, "at the appropriate time in the appropriate way," and every day that goes by depletes whatever store of goodwill he's built up.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitkeap.org

Cheating scandal could leave Florida St. without top players

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — An academic cheating scandal could leave Florida State without as many as 25 players for its Music City Bowl game against Kentucky on New Year's Eve, coach Bobby Bowden said Tuesday.

It was the latest off-field blow to a once-proud program trying to regain its footing as a national power.

"We have some players not traveling for one reason and some for another, including those who are ineligible for the bowl because of academic issues," Bowden said in a statement released by the university.

"Kentucky would be a tough opponent when we are at full strength so clearly this will make things more difficult. Our staff is in the process of determining what adjustments we must make for the game."

Many of the players who won't be going to Nashville could also be ruled ineligible for some games next season for their connection to a cheating scandal earlier this year.

Federal privacy laws prohibit the school from releasing names.

"We don't know what that number is going to end up being exactly, but we know that's a rough figure," assistant athletic director Rob Wilson said Tuesday. "It's an issue where we're being extra cautious."

Bowden also said he would not use any players redshirted this season in the bowl game. The Seminoles (7-5) finished the regular season unranked for a third straight year.

Previously, Bowden had not answered questions on the scandal that resulted in one full-time academic adviser, Brenda Monk, and a student tutor losing their jobs this summer.

Athletic director Dave Hart Jr., and several of his assistants also left in recent months, although those changes weren't directly related to the present investigation of academic wrongdoing by the school and NCAA.

The university reported its findings in a letter to the NCAA in September after a six-month investigation by the school revealed at least 23 athletes in various sports were implicated for cheating on tests.

At least two football players already have been penalized for their involvement. Defensive end Kevin McNeil missed the season and wide receiver Joslin Shaw missed the first four games.

It was already a year where the program was distracted with off-field troubles.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, Dec. 20, 2007: How you handle yourself this year could be far more important than you might realize. Others will observe how you handle yourself under pressure. Your professional status and your attitude will directly impact your finances. You might be a touch shocked at some people's ideas and reactions. You might be more difficult or demanding than you realize. If you are single, you could meet someone with ease, though because of your life, it might take awhile for the relationship to evolve. If you are attached, you will be making a mistake by focusing on work and not your relationship. Careful. TAURUS works well with you.

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) ★★ The sense of wanting to complete all your holiday errands might be strong. It's true that time is short, yet you do need to rein in your spending. There will be a tomorrow. Sometimes a visit or an experience type of gift could mean much more. Tonight: Off finishing up details, details!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ Your personality melts another's resistances. You have the energy to tackle whatever you want. Someone from a distance might be waiting to hear from you. Tonight: Stop and think who you might not have remembered.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★ Knowing when to back down might be as important as stepping forward. Much that is happening, especially on a domestic level, needs thought. No matter how you look at it, change is in the air. Tonight: Private time.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Aim for what you want. A discussion might be far more important than you realize. Don't get distracted, and remain focused. Your focus could be more pivotal than you are aware of. Flow with the moment. Tonight: Just don't be alone.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Others continue to look to you as a role

House plans vote to stave off expansion of alternative tax

WASHINGTON (AP) — After agonizing for weeks, the House planned to vote Wednesday on legislation that would protect more than 20 million people from seeing their tax bill balloon this year as a result of the dreaded alternative minimum tax.

One of Congress' last acts before it closes shop for the year, passage of the bill providing a one-year stay on growth of the AMT was a political must: Neither party wanted to leave Washington taking blame for a tax increase, averaging \$2,000 a person, that would affect millions. House passage would send the bill to President Bush.

The last-minute nature of the vote on the AMT fix resulted from a fundamental difference between the House and Senate. House Democrats had insisted that the \$50 billion in tax relief resulting from the one-year fix must be paid for by an equivalent amount of revenue elsewhere, mainly by closing a loophole on off-shore tax havens.

Senate Republicans, however, have blocked the Senate from taking up legislation that includes a tax increase, and Bush threatened to veto any bill that raised taxes.

On Tuesday night the Senate for a second time rejected the House-backed approach of a paid-

for AMT bill. The House Democratic leadership, which was committed to paying for the tax relief, had asked the Senate to make one last stab at the issue. The Senate vote was 48-46 for the House bill, 12 short of the 60 needed to approve it.

With that vote, the House had no choice but to take up the Senate bill, which shields some 21 million taxpayers without a means to cover the cost to the Treasury.

"Let me be clear, there is no disagreement between Republicans and Democrats over protecting the middle class from the AMT," House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said. "The question is, will we do so responsibly or charge

tens of billions of dollars to our grandchildren?"

The AMT was created in 1969 to make sure that a small group of very rich people did not totally avoid paying taxes. But the tax, which applies more stringent rules for using deductions in calculating tax obligations, was never adjusted for inflation, and every year more middle- and upper-middle-level income people are hit by the tax.

Congress has responded by passing annual fixes, or patches, to keep the AMT from affecting more people. Without a fix, taxpayers subject to the tax could grow from 4 million in 2006 to 25 million this year.



COURTESY PHOTO

Workshop

Kay Crouch, from left, Carol Peet, Madeline Gawthrop and Sarah Crim, all Pampa Art Club members, recently attended a three-day watercolor workshop with Chuck Danford, center. Danford, of Denver, Colo., demonstrated at the workshop how to pour paint to create backgrounds and how to splatter paint to create detail. The Pampa Art Club artists will show what they learned from the workshop at the club's next Tea and Art Exhibit in May.

Omaha store to get back to business

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Enticing shoppers back into the department store where the deadliest mall shooting in U.S. history took place is the delicate task now facing Von Maur employees.

The apparel store decided to reopen its Omaha location on Thursday — 15 days after a 19-year-old gunman fatally wounded eight people and killed himself at one of its outlets in the Westroads Mall.

Many customers and employees say they're ready, but company officials know that some may question the decision. "There's no perfect answer in a situation like this, and there is no roadmap," said Von Maur spokeswoman Megan Hakes.

Customer Rachael Henderson, who was at the mall when the shooting happened, plans to go to the store's reopening, but just for a quick trip to exchange a purse and perhaps visit her uncle, who works there.

"I'm going to go to the first floor to the purses, and then if my uncle is working I'll go up to the second floor," said Henderson, 33. "I don't know about the

third floor."

Most of the people Robert Hawkins shot with an AK-47 on Dec. 5 were on the third floor of the store. Von Maur officials said that floor would be reopen along with the rest of the store.

The shooting and resulting closings of Westroads and Von Maur happened at the height of the holiday shopping season. But Hakes said the shooting's effects on profits were the "furthest thing from our minds."

Crisis communications expert Joe Marconi said Von Maur should acknowledge what happened in the store — as the company plans to do with a brief ceremony before opening — but shouldn't dwell on it.

"Let's not pretend it didn't happen, but let's also go on living our lives for the living," said Marconi, who wrote "Crisis Marketing: When Bad Things Happen to Good Companies."

Westroads Mall reopened Dec. 8 and mall manager Jim Sadler said the number of shoppers in the days since has been similar to last year's holiday rush.

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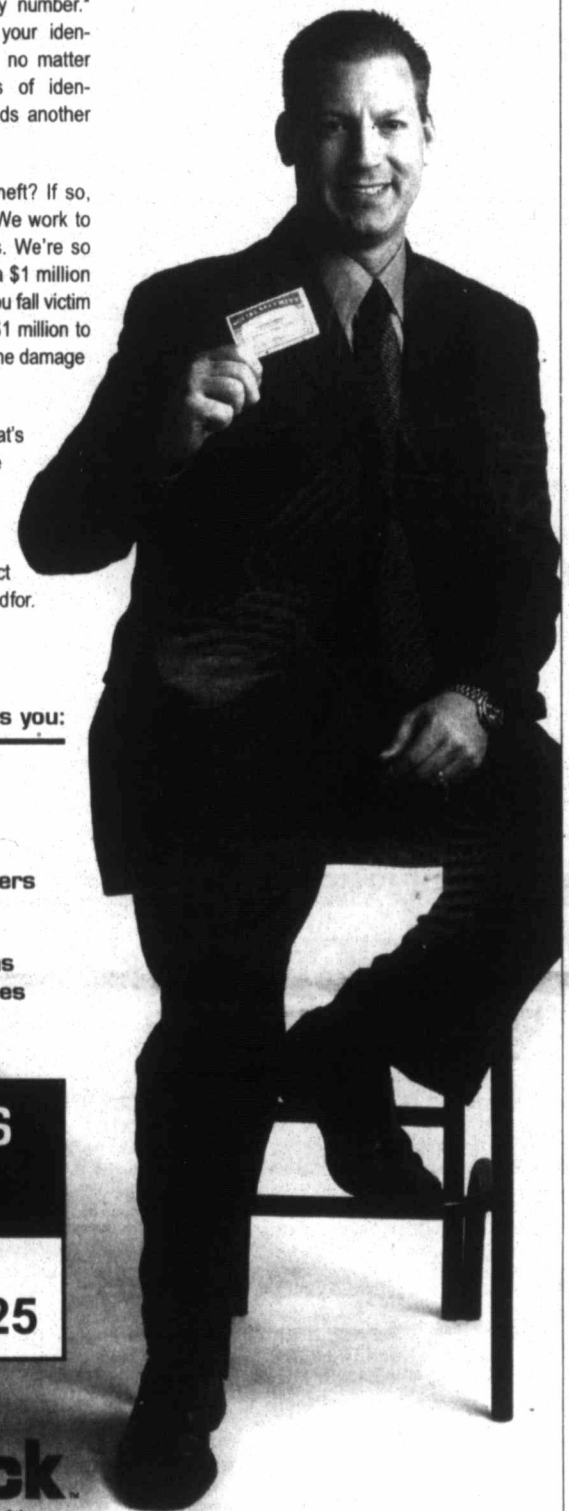
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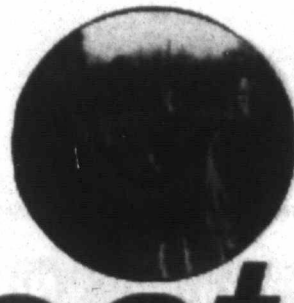
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[Starbucks] general warning:
Caffeine addiction and its effects in our area discussed.
Pg. 4



The Prince is giving a ball: Choir department does outstanding job with Cinderella production. Pg. 7



Preparing for success: Soccer teams start strongly. Pg. 8

The Little Harvester

Vol. 59

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Pampa High School • 111 E. Harvester Pampa, TX 79065

Fighting consequences outlined, specified

Andrew Hatcher
Co-Editor in Chief

Recent events have made several students wonder what happens when a fight occurs. The answer all depends on the circumstances. For all cases, fighting breaks the Student Code of Conduct, which every student signed at the beginning of the year. Some instances seem to have been spoken about often lately because an on campus fight during school is a rare occurrence at Pampa High School.

"Last school year we had about 15 fights, and very few of those resulted in injuries," Seabourn said. "Of course, the goal is to have none, but we try our best."

In comparison to past years and other schools, this number is low.

"I once went to school in Amarillo, and fighting was actually a big problem there," sophomore Kately Jones said. "Here it's not so much an issue because students are more concerned about the dress code."

According to Seabourn, the small fight rate is due to the supervision the school has.

"We have a very low tolerance for fights," Seabourn said. "To prevent them from happening we have campus monitoring by staff; generally speaking, they won't happen if an adult is present."

Students agree that fighting at school doesn't happen frequently because of how easy it is to get caught.

"Fighting on campus is not a smart idea," junior Luis Martinez said.

As for the teachers perspective, it seems that the overall attitude is that of awareness.

"Every fight that happens is significant, but they are rare," biology teacher Lois Parker said.

"Fighting shows a real case of immaturity and lack

of self-control; I think the students could find better ways of handling their anger issues."

Seabourn reports that if a fight does happen, it is a general rule that the fighters get 10 days of I.S.S. Police can get involved, depending on how violent it is, and if there's an injury, the assailant can be charged by the police with assault.

"Certain cases can also result in D.A.E.P., suspension or expulsion, depending on what happens," Seabourn said. "Expulsion can be mandatory or discretionary, but either way it goes through the superintendent who hears all cases within a reasonable amount of time after the misconduct."

Being expelled lasts from at least 20 days to at most a calendar year, and varies from case to case. If the student returns to school, it is at his teacher's discretion whether or not one can make up the work, and if one isn't allowed to or doesn't, this can cause failure.

"In the end, it is the student's fault because he's the one who put himself in the position," Seabourn said.

Overall, the campus is considered a safe one by teachers and students.

"My children feel very safe here and I think the majority of people do," Parker said.

Even freshman, sometimes discouraged by the size of the school, consider it a safe place.

"I do feel safe because there are teachers around every corner," freshman Hannah Smith said. "Even if I did feel threatened, I would probably tell a teacher or a parent."

Reporting the problem seems to be the answer for any student who needs help.

"I would encourage anyone who has an issue they feel justifies a fight to come report it to the office before it happens," Seabourn said.

Consequences for fighting or assault:

Definition of assault:

Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, capital murder, criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated robbery, manslaughter, or criminally negligent homicide, as those offenses are defined in the Penal Code.

Consequences for above listed assault:

A student shall be expelled if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property participates in an assault.



Locked up: A person who gets into a fight at school can be arrested and taken to jail with assault by the police.

Prestigious organization continually raises standards Club celebrates new members at induction



Intellectual thought:
National Honor Society inductees
Juniors
Brenna Albracht,
Diana Mechel and
Chandler Talley socialize with NHS president senior Kristen Dunn after the induction. "I was surprised to hear the requirements [of National Honor Society]," Albracht said. "But I can't wait to represent my school in academics."

Tyler Smith
Staff Writer

A prestigious honor was placed on 22 students on Oct. 29, when they were inducted into the National Honor Society (NHS).

"Approximately 30 students applied to be in NHS," NHS faculty advisor Janice Porter said.

Out of those 30 only 22 made the cut, 4 seniors and 18 juniors.

"It's cool because I didn't get in last year," senior Jesse Finney said. "I worked really hard to get in it this year."

To join NHS students must be either a senior or a junior, have an average of 94% (3.4 GPA), be of good character, complete 20 hours of commu-

nity service in the fall semester, and 15 hours in the spring semester.

"I was surprised to hear the requirements," junior Brenna Albracht said. "But I can't wait to represent my school in academics."

Since NHS was founded in the 1929-1930 school year, the standards have continually been raised.

"At first you had to be in the top 25% of the class and have an 85 average," Porter said. "In the 1970s you had to have a 90 average, and in the spring of 2001 it was changed to a 94 average."

The changes have motivated NHS applicants to work harder than ever.

"I worked really hard through my academic career," Finney said. "This is just a testament to that." 44

"I worked really hard through my academic career. [National Honor Society] is just a testament to that."

Flex scheduling discussed, details being formed

Kavleen Stallings
Staff Writer

At the end of the 2006-2007 school year the administration proposed a program called flex scheduling, in which the high school would offer classes during the evenings. The basic idea of the program is to help students receive their education during a time that may be convenient for them.

The details are still vague about the flex scheduling, but administration is looking at the program under a microscope.

"It's in its infant stage," assistant principal Dale Ammons said. "It's a concept we are working on."

So far, the administration isn't sure when or how these classes are beginning, but they are guessing early in the evening.

"Classes in the evenings are thought to be held from around five o'clock to about seven or eight o'clock," Ammons said. "We will probably be offering core classes to get credit for graduation."

Although flex scheduling isn't taking place during this point in time, it could be possible in the close future.

"I don't know when flex scheduling is going to begin," Ammons said. "But we are trying to identify students who need this program and encourage them to pursue the program instead of dropping out."

People who have a job after school may have problems remembering to study or do their homework.

"It's really hard to remember homework when you have to work right after school," freshman Ciera Cook said.

Some students feel as if they are not giving their full potential in the morning unlike they do in the afternoon classes.

"My morning classes are so hard to concentrate in," senior Morgan Reagan said. "I'm not a morning person and I'm usually tired."

With every new concept there are disadvantages, but students disagree.

"I really can't think of any [disadvantages]," Reagan said. "I don't think flex scheduling would hurt anything."

Students think that there are little, if any, disadvantages to flex scheduling.

"I don't see anything wrong with [flex schedule]," Cook said. "People can have a job and still have time for education."

Teachers also agree that flex scheduling is a good idea.

"It sounds really good," English teacher Kyle Haenisch said. "If my schedule was changed a bit, I would be willing to teach night courses."

Flex scheduling wasn't just an idea; administration has been brainstorming ideas from other schools in our region.

"We are actually modeling after Palo Duro High, who has a full-time staff just for their evening system," Ammons said.

Administration thinks that flex scheduling will help education and keep students in school.

"We wouldn't think about the program if it didn't raise the level of student achievement," Ammons said. 44

Moment's Notice



Pep talk: Girls' soccer ends practice with words from coaches John True and Trent Davis. See pg. 8



Off her feet: Robin Fernuik and Matt Smith, dancers for "Cinderella." See pg. 7



Halloween Boogie: Band members get their groove on at the annual Halloween dance.

Campus

Semester exams are Wed., Thurs.

Odd periods are on Wednesday, and even periods are on Thursday.

- 1st/2nd: 8:00 - 9:05
- 3rd/4th: 9:15 - 10:25
- 5th/8th: 10:30 - 11:40
- 7th/6th: 11:50 - 12:55

*Notice 6th and 8th are switched to allow upperclassmen to finish early.

Local

Pit bull kills young cancer patient's Shetland pony

A Shetland pony was given to a 4-year-old cancer patient as a Make-A-Wish gift. The pony was attacked and killed in Gray County by two pit bulls on Oct. 22. The pit bulls were put down, and charges are being considered.

www.thepampaper.com

National

Wildfires engulf Southern California

300,000 acres were burned in Simi Valley in Ventura County, San Bernardino County, and San Diego County.

Nearly 8,900 firefighters battled 18 blazes in Southern California.

The fires have destroyed more than 1,000 homes and have killed at least 14.

www.cnn.com

Spot Light:



Unique technique for English

Courtney Mann
Co-Editor in Chief

With a new addition of the Haensch family to FUSD, students experience a professional learning environment.

"I became a teacher because I want to help people," English teacher Kyle Haensch said. "I want to help people to think deeper and write better. When I was a kid, I wanted to be a rockstar, but that didn't really pan out."

Many students have experienced the positive impact of his teaching style.

"He really helped me write more academically," senior Brody Russell said. "He helps me with my essays and he seems to really care."

Students appreciate his constructive criticism, and his personality makes him very likeable.

"He's different because he's much nicer than a lot of other teachers," junior Breanna Altrush said. "He gives us a lot of compliments, whereas a lot of teachers just criticize. He really appreciates our effort and doesn't seem as if he wants to embarrass us."

In Haensch's classroom, the concept of focus is emphasized. Whether focusing on a current assignment or focusing content throughout an essay, Haensch's expectations are always clear.

"Before Mr. Haensch, I'd never had a teacher actually sit down with my essay and explain word for word what needs to be fixed," junior Chandler Talley said. "He talks to us as if we're his peers. He takes our comments with intelligence instead of indignity."

Haensch believes in positive attitudes in relation to both the classroom and in real life.

"If I could change anything about our education system, I would stop the attitude that we have to re-ramp and start from scratch every year," Haensch said. "People think we're really far behind Europe and Asia, but they don't realize that those countries only test the best and the brightest, whereas we make everyone test. We really succeed more than we fail."

Surprisingly, Haensch's biggest regret involves finances.

"My biggest regret is that I ever got credit cards and student loans," Haensch said. "Always pay for your education up front. It's so expensive. You'll be paying for [student loans] the rest of your life."

Verbatim

"I don't drink a lot of caffeine because I'll get fat. Even though I'm not in sports anymore, it'll bloat me up. I'm the kind of girl that's worried about my shape, so I don't drink it."

AMANDA HARKINS, junior, about how caffeine isn't a major part of her diet



See page 4

"I was doing it when I was a minor. Now that I'm legal I don't feel that I should have ever started."

JANE DOE, senior, of her tobacco use *Note: name has been changed to protect minor See page 5

"I beat kids up for Ashley in the third grade. They made fun of her because she had no hair."

AMANDA ESTES, in reference to Ashley Akins' past illness



See page 9

Student group serves the local community

Shelby Needham
Staff Photographer

Although ASTRA has started late, they already have multiple activities planned for this year.

"Things are less put together this year," vice-president Bernardo Casanova said. "We got started really late, and it's pretty difficult."

ASTRA is holding parties for the sheltered workshop, which is a place for mentally challenged people to go. They are also helping with the Children's Shopping Tour and doing Hearts for Homes.

"Hearts for Homes is where we build homes for people who need help," junior rep. Nick Millikan said.

The Altrusa Fashion Show is also on the agenda, where all of the members in ASTRA go somewhere and model clothes from that place. The store donates the clothes, and at the show they sell them for half price. The money goes to ASTRA for their projects.

"We are talking about painting a new mural with the money," Millikan said. "We will also send

some of the money to Make-A-Wish."

ASTRA does not have set dates for anything. When the board members decide to have meetings they put up posters.

"We have meetings for board members," Millikan said. "After those meetings, we decide to have meetings for everyone else in ASTRA."

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Little Harvester

Do you have skills in writing, photography, design or business management? The LH is looking for dedicated students willing to put in after-school hours this and next year. Come by room 201 for more info.

Thanks, Shelby:
Get well soon. You have our support!
-the LH staff

Thank you for the tremendous support for the Children's Shopping Tour 2007 by the following Pampa High School Organizations:

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- ASTRA
- National Honor Society
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Staff Editorial

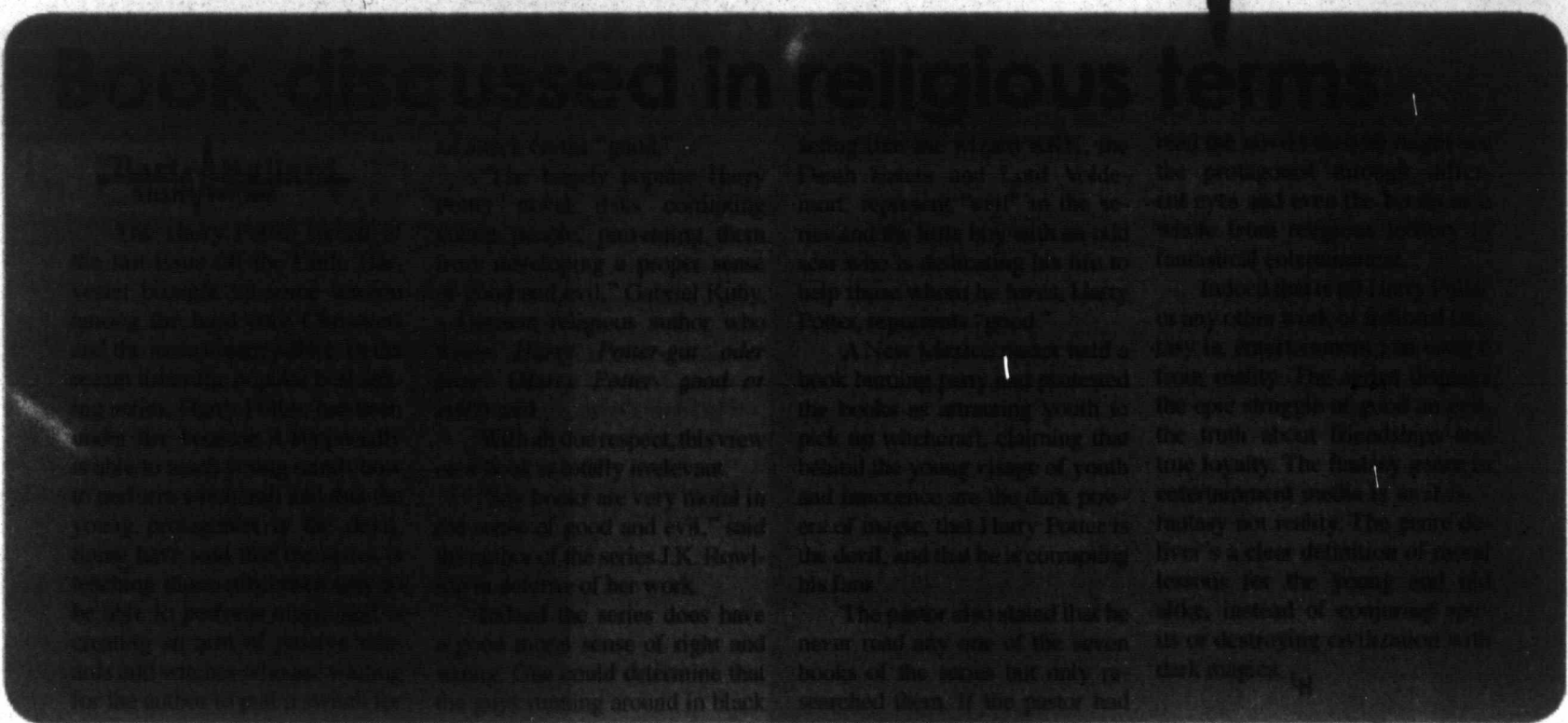
Scheduling idea not yet executed

When the idea of flex scheduling was proposed last year, many students looked forward to its arrival. However, flex scheduling has not yet been executed. Flex scheduling is a set of times when students can come be the relative hours of five and 8 p.m. and take classes at the high school. The implementation of flex scheduling would have allowed students to graduate earlier, and flex scheduling would help students who failed classes to make them up more quickly in order to graduate.

Flex scheduling would aid those who are very tired in the morning and elect to take evening classes. It would also help students who are close to dropping out to graduate on time. Also, many students work where the main open hours are during the school day. For those in need of economic assistance, students would be able to take classes during the evening to optimize their working hours. Overall, flex scheduling would greatly benefit all students.

In contrast, flex scheduling allows for students to be catered to and gives them the sense that everything in life should be at their convenience. Many staff members believe that flex scheduling spoon feeds students and doesn't teach them the concept of responsibility. Operating the flex scheduling program would also cost more because more teachers would be needed. Although some teachers would probably be comfortable with teaching a couple of nights a week, a majority of them would become tired or overwhelmed. A separate night staff would be optimal.

Overall, flex scheduling would give students a variety of learning times and would contour to their lifestyles to help increase knowledge. LH



Tyler Rhoades
Staff Artist

Student discovers time in its infinite waste

Time is infinite. Therefore, on the other hand, time is short. You're time is up. We're running out of time. Time is a mystery to all of us. The amounts we have are always in question. We could have enough to zip up a jacket, or we could have enough to rebuild the Tower of Babel.

I personally hate time. Time has been a cruel mistress to me. But it's there for a reason. Infinity would be much duller. Still, I hate it. I hate it with every fiber of my being. Time is supposed to be constant, and in a scientific sense. But in a different light, time is never the same. Minutes seem like hours one second, then seconds seem like minutes some days.

Sometimes it feels like one's waiting for forever. Waiting on the world to change. The only thing that's changed over time is the way we look and how we fight in wars. A knight with a lance evolved into a soldier with a high-powered assault rifle and a set of hand grenades. People wearing puffy purple robes changed into the modern Hollister sweatshirts and bondage pants from Hot Topic.

Time is merely an illusion, something set up to make us adhere to a schedule and make us organized. Some obviously benevolent force set it up just to watch us run around like rats in a maze trying to find cheese.

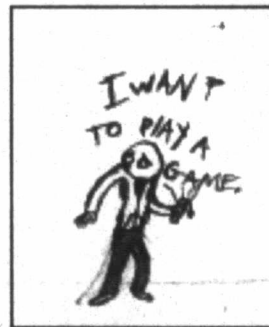
Don't even get me started on Daylight Savings Time, the world's way of making everyone angry. It comes twice a year to put a wrench in the gears of things. It just strolls on up and says, "Hey, I'm gonna screw your day up."

Think of how much time you wasted reading this. It must eat away at you, what you could've been doing instead of reading my editorial. You may be thinking, "Hey, I could've read that nifty article on caffeine." You could've taken a shower. You could've written a sonnet. You could've had a seizure, cleaned out your car, gotten a tattoo, for God's sake. See? Now you hate time.

too. LH

Timmy's Troubles

Tyler Rhoades
Staff Artist



Editor's Desk

In this issue, the topic of flex scheduling was very controversial among staff members. We were split for several reasons. However, more troubling than that was a comment a senior on staff made. He said, "We're seniors. We don't care."

This attitude is my pet peeve. As a school, we see seniors as honorable, since they are given multiple privileges. They get out periods, and the majority of them enroll in non-core classes as a means to lessen overall effort.

Several times, I've heard fellow juniors speak of how "easy" their senior year will be.

I believe the senior year should be a student's hardest year. Theoretically, a student's curriculum should increase in difficulty as the student progresses through his/her school years. That is not the case at Pampa High School. A student's senior year should ultimately be preparing them for college, and, thus, should be the most challenging and time consuming year.

Contrary to popular belief, we are doing our seniors a disservice by enabling them to slack off during their most important year.

If seniors are meeting their graduation requirements this quickly, then those requirements should be upped. There is no reason for a student to have an out-period. LH

Lexicon

algebraometer

a device used to tell the results in a world of less, more, commonly referred to as a calculator.

Author to watch



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Staff Writer
Greg Warner



Staff Writer
Scott Buford



Business Manager
Tyler Smith



Staff Writer
Hanna Baumgartner

Do you have an opinion, complaint or just something you want to get off your chest? If so, tell the world, or at least your classmates. Do it with a letter to the editor, which can be dropped off in a special LH box on the door of room 201. The staff reserves the right to edit any letter submitted and all letters must be signed. Opinions expressed in columns and letters do not reflect the opinions of the LH staff, Pampa High School or Pampa ISD.

WRITE US
PHS Little Harvester
111 E. Harvester
Pampa, TX 79045

OR EMAIL: chelsea.goodwin@pampahs.net

Story of coffee abuse shared, advice given

Courtney Linn
Co-Editor/In-Chief

I've been regularly using caffeine, specifically coffee, for nearly seven years. I never thought much of it when I began drinking a solitary cup of coffee every morning. It seemed normal, and I felt older and more mature because adults notoriously drink coffee.

Through junior high, it was nothing more than an innocent, mild cup of coffee. However, when I began attending high school, everyday challenges and stresses became too much to handle without the aid of caffeine.

As a freshman, caffeine became increasingly necessary as I adjusted to the daily demands of newspaper, homework, and other extracurricular activities.

I began to experience feelings of dependence and would regularly look forward to its consumption. My drink of choice was coffee and all of its variants. From caramel machiatos to lattes, coffee became very important.

My increased consumption in caffeine was easily justifiable. Almost every high school student drinks sodas regularly and the majority of my friends were caffeine fiends as well. During my sophomore year, caffeine was easily accessed since I had a car. Grabbing a cup of coffee after school was easily rationalized in my mind.

Toward the end of my sophomore year, I became extremely stressed due to newspaper, a wedding I participated in, and general end-of-the-year activities. One day, I had a caffeine binge and had nearly seven servings of caffeine. I drank caffeine to stay awake and clarify my thinking; however, it kept me awake and prevented me from being fully alert the next day. The next day, I felt extremely sick. I'm surprised I even made it to school. In addition to an incurable headache, I didn't want to eat for quite some time. I drank lots of water and flushed a lot of caffeine out of my system.

Currently, I drink 1-2 caffeinated beverages on an average day. Although it may sound cliché, I definitely advise strongly against drinking any type of caffeine. Its advantages do not outweigh its unhealthy downfalls. ☐

Caffeine craze among adolescents Caffeine health, prevalence, addiction

Caffeine rates dramatically increase among adolescents, leading to unhealthy youth

Courtney Linn
Co-Editor/In-Chief

Among adolescents, caffeine usage has become increasingly prevalent.

Many students do not drink caffeine because of their involvement in sports.

"I drink more caffeine off season than I do in season," basketball and softball player sophomore Samantha Pearson said.

Other students refrain because of health effects.

"I don't drink a lot of caffeine because I'll get fat," junior Amanda Harkins said. "Even though I'm not in sports anymore, it'll bloat me up. I'm the kind of girl that's worried about my shape, so I don't drink it."

Other students drink excessively.

"I drink a Java Monster every morning, a coke before and after lunch, and I drink another Monster after school," senior Morgan Reagan said. "Monster Javas are definitely my preferred drink."

As most caffeine addicts, Reagan began consuming it at a young age.

"I started it in the sixth grade," Reagan said. "I was really young. I guess it all just kind of escalated."

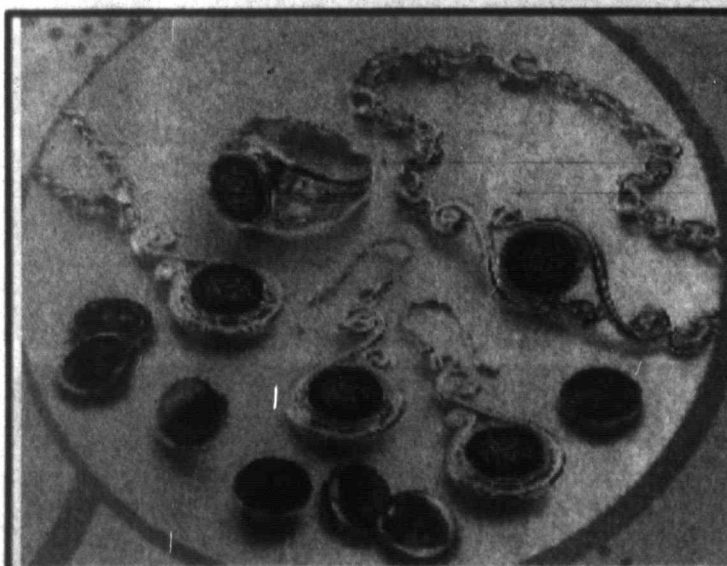
With caffeine comes its side effects.

"I'm terrible sometimes," Reagan said. "I get headaches and kind of snappy at people sometimes."

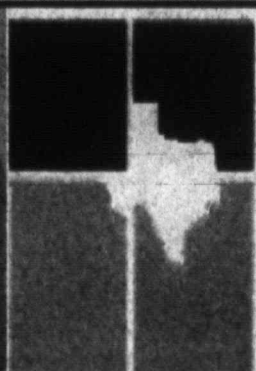
In spite of its side effects, students continue faithful usage.

"It's really not that much of an effect," Reagan said. "I'll worry about my health later." ☐

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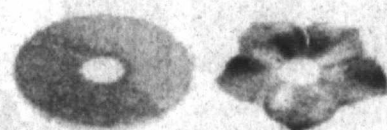
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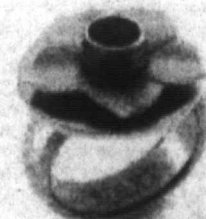
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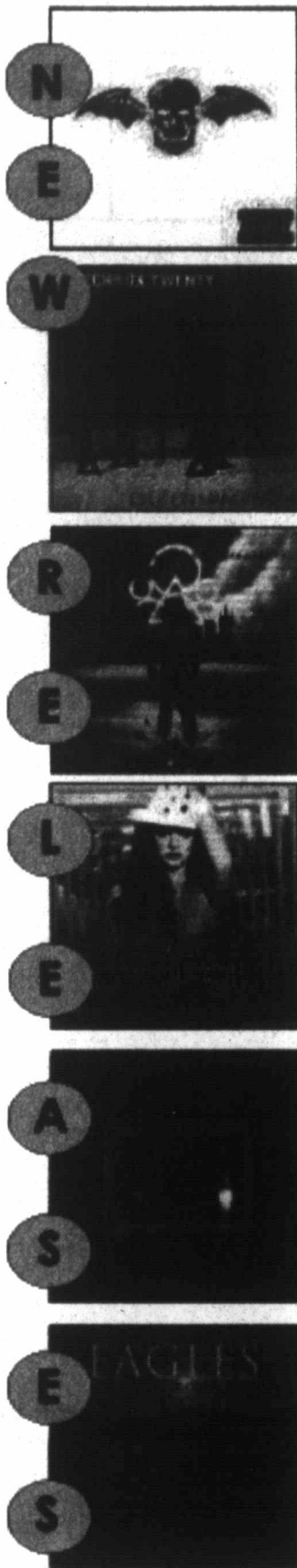


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Avenged Sevenfold
Avenged Sevenfold
 A 7X has changed genre, and furthermore fan base a lot in their history. This new release will not ruffle fans, but it will probably not garner any new ones.

Matchbox Twenty
Edie on mainstream
 With songs like "How far We've come," this album is surprisingly great in every way.

Coheed and Cambria
No world for tomorrow
 Coheed and Cambria are almost too smart and ambitious for their own good—not enough, however, to cancel out the instrumental highs and ear-to-ear charge of the best songs on their fourth album.

Boney M.
Blackout!
 The biggest failure of these songs, and the most confusing thing about this album, are the melodies. This album is a total bust. Nice attempt though.

Sej Tanhien
Blot the Dead
 It sounds like System of a Down. It features members of System of a Down. But it's not System of a Down. This debut album screams literature with the same frenetic metal stylings that made him famous.

The Eagles
Long Road out of Eden
 This album is chock full of all those savvy tunes that made us fall in love with The Eagles in the first place. This new material is the first in 28 years, and it will not disappoint.

Book Review: Special Topics in Calamity Physics

Physics proves to be more than just interesting subject

Courtesy, Lynn Co-Editor

Welcome to the world of Blue van Meer, a highly observant intellectual, daughter to a rarely grounded, remorseless widower and genius poli-sci professor Gareth van Meer.

Through *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*, Marisha Pessl distills her methodical, novel-encyclopedia style, incorporating innumerable references to literary works via over-the-top citations, adding to Blue's precocious personality. The chapters are in a Great Books format, such as "Madame Bovary" when Gareth meets the feigning, aristocratic Hannah Schneider, and "Othello" when the journey begins. Pessl, a savvy actress-turned-playwright/producer, characterizes the "hot young author-chick" syndrome. Being only 27, many critics question whether her voice wouldn't be so high if she hadn't such a "drool-worthy author phat." However, Pessl's quality writing unmistakably outshines her beauty.

The action of this story begins when Blue and Gareth settle into Stockton, N.C., home of the St. Gallaway School, where the buildings sport "gray-topped, heavy brow, wooden teeth, slash hunking" where Blue first interacts with the "Blackbirds" and gives in to their obsession with the teacher Hannah Schneider. When Blue meets her in a "blackback corner" in a grocery store with her father, she becomes obsessed. "She had an elegant sort of romantic, semi-sculpted face, one that took well to both shadows and light. Most extraordinary though was the air of a Chateau Marmont hangover about her, a sense of RKO, which I'd never before witnessed in person." Blue thinks, Hannah teaches film arts at St. Gallaway and is rumored to have an inappropriate relationship with Charles, a Blackbird with "raven eyes, shadowy eyelids, a smile like a hamster" and a silvered, sleepy countenance." When Blue sees Charles and Hannah together she assumes they are "one of those fun, hair-raising 'Blue Laguna' couples (one per high school) who attempted to destroy the bedrock of the classic educational community simply by the muggy way they looked at each other in the halls."

Hannah sets her target on Blue and makes her one of the beautiful, only to the disdain of the other Blackbirds: Jack, the rich, wannabe who leads on middle-aged men for fun; Leilah, "pearl-skinned and ethereal" with fairy like, aloof

elegance, is known for her alcoholism; Hilson, "starey and grin," looks much older than high school age and has a sexual experience with Blue; and boy-ish Nigel is notorious for "thin, tongue-like lies."

Once the Blackbirds take her in, Blue quickly falls into their ways: boozing get-togethers at Hannah's, incessant shopping, and sabotaging teachers. Then, Hannah plans a camping trip with everyone and kills herself in the middle of the woods. She used an electrical cord, her tongue "the cheery pick of a kitchen sponge."

Through the rest of the novel, Blue endures the life of Hannah and her affiliation with Gareth. "A professor is all-powerful," Gareth liked to tell his daughters. He puts "a veritable frame around life," and "organizes the unorganizable. Nimble partitions it into modern and post-modern, renaissance, baroque, primitivism, imperialism and so on. Spice that up with Research Papers, Vacation, Midterms. All that order—simply divine." Although Gareth disappeared soon after Hannah's death, his mantra resounds through Blue's mind, and, thus, the creation of this novel. "Everyone is responsible for the page-turning tempo of his or her Life Story," he tells her.

Special Topics in Calamity Physics was the most enjoyable book I read all summer. Pessl's characterization is what hooked me; I woke each day to thoughts of Blue and told the book everywhere I went. I unreservedly recommend this novel to anyone ready for truly alien characters. And watch out for Pessl; she's on the rise.



Movie Review: The Golden Compass

Needle is pointing in right direction for movie

New film displays exquisite creativity, despite controversy



Greg Warner
 Staff Writer

When I first heard of the movie "The Golden Compass," it appeared to be just another fantasy film in the vein of Lord of the Rings or something. Then I heard about the controversy surrounding the film, and my curiosity could not stand it any longer. I had to see what the commotion was about.

This film is incredible. There is no other word for it. Sheer brilliance. The start of the movie is incredibly involved, leaving the viewer at the edge of their seat throughout. The story of Lyra is very similar to other fantasy epics. She is the "girl from the prophecy" who sets out to save the world from the authority of the Magisterium, a powerful organization that tells people what to do, under the guise that they are helping people who otherwise could not help themselves. Lyra is also one of the only characters in the film who can read the alethiometer, the centerpoint of the

whole film. An alethiometer, otherwise known as a golden compass, is a device used to tell the truth in a world of lies. Lyra's uncle, Asriel, has discovered a parallel world far to the north, and without the Magisterium knowing has tak-



en a trip to discover it. Lyra makes her way north as well, and discovers new places such as the bear king palace, and a lab where children are taken to have their daemons sev-

ered from them. Every child has a daemon, which is the child's soul in animal form that follows them wherever they go. Epic battles keep the movie very interesting, and the plot is a fresh new twist on an old cliché. The action is extremely intense.

The controversy this film has caused is enormous. Many people believe that the film shows anti-church leanings, and wants to steer children away from God. True, the books do mention a church instead of the Magisterium, but the movie shows no discrimination or hatred against any church or religion. In a recent issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, Nicole Kidman, a devout catholic, stated that she agreed to star in the film on the notion that the movie is not anti-catholic, and she wouldn't have starred in the film had it been so.

With that in mind, *The Golden Compass* is a fantastic movie. The plot will keep you entwined throughout, and the end shows a leaning towards the obvious sequels that will be made. You can bet that they will not disappoint. 4

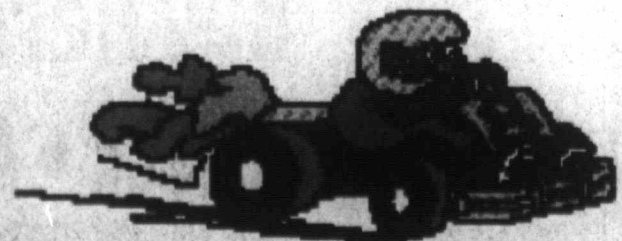


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GUINNESS RECORD: 'Cinderella' Choir rocks

Trilogy of games compared to 'The Godfather' revealed

After the grand finale of *Grease*, *Beauty and the Beast* returns with more songs, including "Beauty and the Beast" by Eric Burdon and the Animals, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" by Olivia Newton-John, and a brand new original "Cinderella" by the show's composers. In this review, we'll see how the level of production in a musical production is a reflection of the level of the production with the show itself. The graphics and sound are stunning and the show is a masterpiece. The production of "The Musical" by Rodgers and Hammerstein is a play in itself, and the show is a masterpiece. The production of "The Musical" by Rodgers and Hammerstein is a play in itself, and the show is a masterpiece.

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Movie Review: Saw IV
Latest Saw flick continues legacy of unbridled terror, mutilation sure to leave audience breathless

Tyler Rhoades
 Staff Artist

"Hello, everyone. I want to play a game."
 Saw IV follows the story of a SWAT commander, called Riggs, (Lyriq Bent) thrown into one of Jigsaw's (Tobin Bell) games, this time spanning throughout the whole city. The path he takes is riddled with victims, and only 90 minutes keeps him between salvation and death. Twists and turns lurk around every corner, and the movie ends with an absolutely ridiculous cliffhanger that will be sure to leave fans good and pumped.

Since the Saw series became popular, more famous actors began to "play the games," so the acting is much more realistic to what is happening to the victims, and the scenery depicts Jigsaw's dark ideas perfectly. The traps are the most brutal by far, and some are even worse than the needle pit in Saw II. Imagine blades to the face, chains around your neck, and

various ways of disemboweling victims. To fans of franchises such as *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil*, it's a dream come true.

But the big question on everyone's mind is "Who's the new Jigsaw?" As close fans of the series already know, Jigsaw and his apprentice, Amanda, are dead. So, who is setting up the traps? Strap your socks on, because they will be blown off of your feet.

Director Darren Bousman said on *OfficialSaw.com*, "I'm excited and honored to be part of such an amazing franchise that keeps on ticking."

Saw IV is rated R, so sorry, underclassmen. Unless you can convince your parents to go to a massive gore-fest, you can't go. **4H**

Illustration by Tyler Rhoades

Choir production shows to be perfect fit

Courtney Linn
 Co-Editor in-Chief

Whether it was *Grease* or *Beauty and the Beast*, the annual choir production is something I always anticipate. With this year's *Cinderella* they've really outdone themselves.

For starters, the casting was impeccable. The chemistry of Brenna Albracht, Jacee Villarreal, and Diana Mechelay brought the story-line to life, being reminiscent of the bouncy dialogue between Aaron Pepper and Michael Foreman during last year's *Beauty and the Beast*. Not only was the dialogue between this year's characters exceptional, but also worth comment was the choreography. Although the stage seemed cluttered and

occasionally lacking in central, dominant action, the overall choreography was smooth and timely in conjunction with the music.

Although the chorus seemed stretched to their vocal range's limit, yet not beyond it. Overall, the chorus needed more exposure; they seemed least important in the production. However, Chandler Talley and Will McKay were quite surprising in the maturity of their voices; I hope to listen to them again in the near future.



The set and backdrops were positively regal. The mood and atmosphere was perfectly magical and lent fantastic undertones that greatly contributed to the musical's success. Acting was well-rehearsed yet felt authentic.

Overall, the musical was enthralling, enjoyable, and nearly flawless, being never a surprise from the choir department. **4H**

"It's possible":
 Members of the choir perform their latest production, "Cinderella". Junior Chandler Talley took the lead role as Cinderella with senior Michael Fernik as her prince.

Heard-Jones

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Pinned down Wrestling ready for competition

Bart Bullard
Staff Writer

The Harvester wrestling team has united together and created an effective coalition ready to compete in this year's wrestling season.

"We have a team roster of around 27 wrestlers this year," head wrestling coach Chad Dunham said. "These students have competed very well so far in the year."

The wrestling team has competed in five meets so far and junior Jeremy Maxwell has gone 12-1 in his weight class of 160 lbs, and sophomore Steven Botello has only lost 2 out of 12 of his matches in the of weight class 135 lbs.

"We have a lot more people who want to wrestle and we are prepared mentally as well as physically for the opposition," Botello said. "The practices are more intense with a lot more conditioning and endurance drills that are helping us improve daily."

Practices have been moved from the no-longer-existing small girl's gym to the turf room in Val Halla, and the transition has not seemed to be problematic.

"The location change has not really affected practice performance or hindered any of our hours," parent liaison Carlos Regalado said. "There is nothing really different from our move and we have the turf room booked from 4-7:30."

The wrestling program as a whole has been renovated from the ground up from new coaching to new location. With more intense practices and a group effort from every coach, the wrestling team is starting off on a great foot.

"All of the coaches have been fantastic with helping with drills and other exercises," Dunham said. "Our team is young with most of the experience on two of our returning contenders, and with all the help and cooperation from coaching we should do great this season." ☐

Kicking & screaming Changes to soccer promise future success

Kayleen Stallings
Staff Writer



Taking possession: Senior David Soto attempts to steal the ball during an after-school practice. To mentally prepare for games, Soto does something common to many athletes. "I sit and listen to music," Soto said. "I try to concentrate on things I need to work on."

The soccer season is on its way and players are preparing for a hopefully excellent season. Many conditioning exercises are being used to help the players become more enduring to running.

There are going to be changes on the team this year that didn't take place last soccer season.

"There is a whole different line up from last year," senior Nicholas Day said. "We just mixed up and we're all playing different positions than before, but it will be better in the long run."

A lot of changes are based on seniority and skills.

"Formations are also based on upperclassmen guys and girls," soccer coach John True said.

Some players are finding the

changes becoming things they need to work on.

"This year I'm starting defense," Day said. "I have to work on the entire aspect of defensive line."

Other players are having other problem spots in their game.

"I really need to work on making more shots," senior Cesar Marrufo said.

Many players prepare for a game or practice in their game.

"I sit and listen to music," senior David Soto said. "I try to concentrate on things I need to work on."

Day finds other ways to encourage the team and himself.

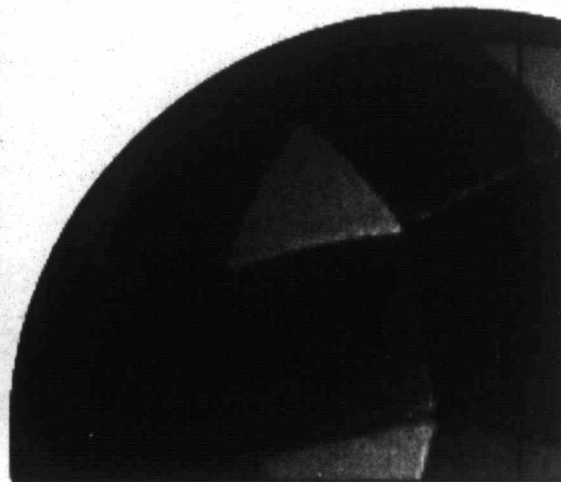
"When I get on the field I like to jump around to get loosened up. It really helps," Day said.

The team seems to be preparing not only together but on their own as well.

"I feel both varsity teams have a lot of potential," True said. "They all seem to be working hard. They all have what it takes to go to play-offs and district." ☐



Key, over here! Senior Erin Hall swings around, kicking the ball to another team-mate during an after-school game of possession. "It's a game we play to help us prepare for the real thing," Hall said.



Season Wrap-ups • Season Wrap-ups • Season Wrap-ups • Season Wrap-ups • Season Wrap-ups

Fall tennis players grow close, finish successful fourth out of district

Kayleen Stallings
Staff Writer

The fall tennis season has come and gone, but several students found it to be a decent year. Students agree the coach Sara Corse has made a positive impact on the team. Senior Megan Barnett thinks that this semester of tennis has been successful.

"I think we did okay, but at the end we didn't pull through quite as well as we wanted," Barnett said. "But the important thing is we learned a lot."

Other tennis students thought that more could have been accomplished, but agreed that it was still a fun season.

"I felt like I could have been better," sophomore Ryan Conner said. "But I really enjoyed being around friends and the coach."

Sophomore Robin Fernuik believes that having friends on the team really makes the team closer and even better.

"I like how at the tournaments we all just supported each other," Fernuik said.

Coach Sara Corse thinks that the tennis team had good times and bad times, but they finished the season off pretty well.

"We did all right, but there were games we could have won that we didn't," Corse said. "In the end, we finished fourth overall, so that was decent." ☐

Football season ends earlier than expected Harvesters miss play-offs with hopes for chance next year

Bart Bullard
Staff Writer

The Pampa Harvesters faced off against the Randall Raiders on Oct. 26. The first half Randall dominated Pampa scoring three touchdowns before the end of the half. Pampa caught up to Randall in the third quarter with the score 21-28. However, the Raiders overcame Pampa and in the end the final score quarter 21-31.

Pampa then went against Dumas on Nov. 2, and play-offs relied on the game. No score was made before the second quarter, where the Harvesters put the first numbers on the board. They were winning 13-7 until three interceptions, thrown by Casey Tremble, caused the Demons to capitalize on each caught ball. The final

score was 13-21 stopping any chance of a Pampa play-off debut.

No matter what the score shows, the team feels confident in their outcome.

"My favorite part of this season was beating Caprock," left tackle Payton Reagan said. "And winning our first district game."

The last game of the season against Palo Duro Dons, followed the Dumas game on Nov. 8. The first half was similar to the previous game, however the Dons scored first with a field-goal. The Dons controlled the game most of the remaining half with the game ending 14-24.

"At times we played well," assistant athletic director and head football coach Andy Caviler said. "At the final, I felt as good about our team as I have all year." ☐

Volleyball girls gain experience, ready to improve

Greg Wariner
Staff Writer

After their first season with a new coach, the volleyball team ends their season ready to improve for next year.

"We can always do better," volleyball coach Tandi Hudson said.

The team played its last game against Randall on Oct. 27. After a rough game, the Raiders came out on top.

"It was a great game," Hudson said. "The girls fought very hard."

In regards to the 2007 season, the team lost more games than they won, but that did not inhibit progress among individual players.

"As a team we started out weak," senior Meagan Crawford said. "But we definitely got stronger. I gained a lot from this season."

With attitudes like this, the volleyball team has nowhere to go but up.

"We will continue to be consistent," Hudson said. ☐

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Standardized testing provides tool for students

Courtney Linn
Co-Editor/In-Chief

As students begin to look at colleges, they find themselves in the unknown realm of timed standardized testing.

"The hardest thing about standardized tests is time," counselor Karla Howell said. "In Texas, we take the TAKS, which isn't timed, so some students have difficulty with time."

Several students prefer the SAT over the ACT.

"I liked the SAT better because the time was short," senior Sarah Smith said. "It made the test go by faster."

Other students liked the SAT better because they are more familiar with it.

"I've taken both tests," senior Claire Boyd said. "My biggest problem was the science portion on the ACT. I didn't feel prepared enough for that portion of the ACT."

Many students strive to meet their college's required scores.

"At the college I'm applying to, Wellesley College, I need to make at least a 600 in each section on the SAT to be accepted," Boyd said. "The other college I'm applying to doesn't consider standardized tests in the admittance process, which is pretty nice."

For many Texas public colleges, if a student is in the top of their class, standardized test scores are waived in the application process.

"If students are in the top 50 percent of their class, a lot of students don't have to take the SAT or ACT," Howell said.

Students find a variety of ways to prepare for standardized tests.

"In my sophomore year, Mrs. Haynes' Merit Gold class gave me lots of preparation for the PSAT, but it really helped me with standardized tests in general," Boyd said.

The school also helps familiarize students with standardized testing.

"A good way to prepare is to take classes, do the books and taking practice tests," Howell said. "Here all sophomores take the PLAN(pre-ACT) test and some students take the PSAT voluntarily."

Many students retest in order to achieve a higher score.

"I plan to retest because when I took it in June I was sick," Boyd said. "I don't think that it allowed for a good representation of my abilities." LH

Battling cancer

Survivor in remission for five years

Shelby Needham
Staff Photographer

As a five year leukemia survivor, sophomore Ashley Akins is not concerned with her past condition. She has recovered from severe fatigue, which was caused by her cancer, with the help from friends and family.

"My condition I had is called ALL, which stands for Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia," Akins said.

Akins was in the third grade when she found out she had ALL. She was in remission until the year 2000. That was when the cancer was considered to be gone.

"I kinda already knew I had ALL," Akins said. "I had some of the symptoms like passing out."

The symptoms of ALL include: fever; fatigue; frequent infections; swollen or tender lymph nodes, liver, or spleen; paleness of pallor; easy bleeding or bruising; tiny red spots under skin; and bone or joint pain.

"Ashley told me stories about how she was in the bathroom and got really weak," sophomore Kaley Jones said. "She passed out and her heart stopped beating."

Leukemia patients have to undergo chemotherapy, and this causes all of their hair to fall out.

"Whenever I go to her house, I see her school picture, and she even took the picture with her hat on," Jones said.

Akins wore her hat to school everyday to cover up her head.

"I beat kids up for Ashley in the third grade," sophomore Amanda Estes said. "They made fun of her because she had no hair."

Akins missed a lot of school from being sick and having to go to her chemotherapy treatments. Even though she was not with her friends at school, they were always there for her and very supportive.

"If Ashley ever got cancer again I would shave my head with her," Jones said.

Not everyone in school treated Akins as well as her friends did.

"Some people made fun of her," Estes said. "Some people treated her like she was special, and others treated her like she was normal."

Having cancer leaves many emotional and physical effects on its patients.

"For my emotional effects I think I believed in God more," Akins said. "As for the physical effects, I couldn't run, and I lost my strength."

The Make-A-Wish Foundation sent Akins to Disney World because of her condition. The foundation is a premier wish-granting organization for children with life-threatening medical conditions.

"The trip was fun, but I couldn't ride all of the rides because of the lack of energy," Akins said.

Akins also went to a cancer camp with Estes.

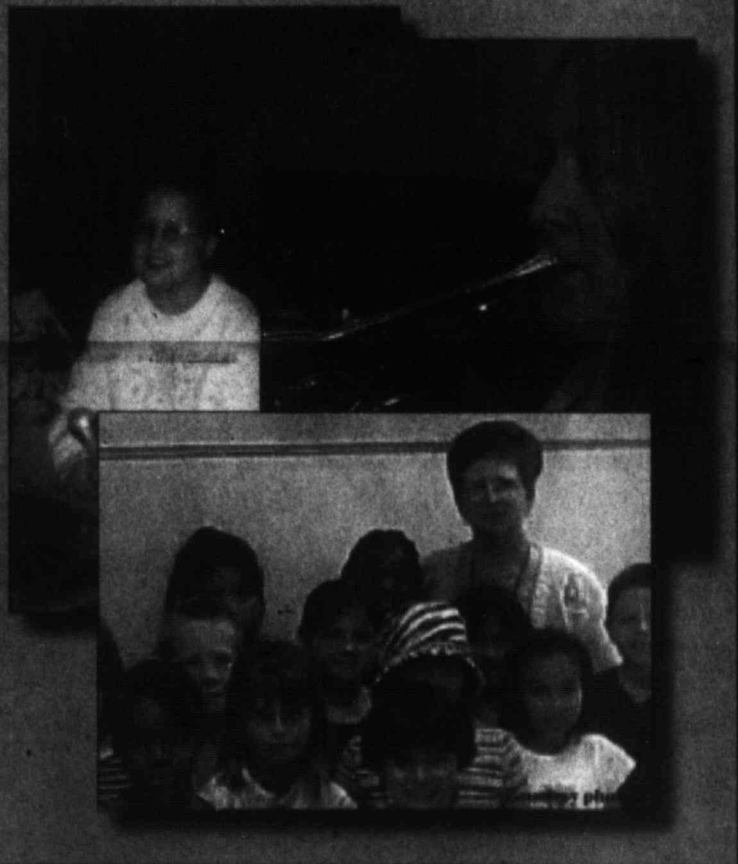
"I took my best friend, Amanda, with me to the cancer camp," Akins said. "The camp was called Camp Alpha."

The cancer has a possibility of coming back, but in Akins' case it is very unlikely.

"I have been in remission for five years, which means I'm a five year survivor," Akins said. "I would be really disappointed if it did come back because I couldn't march." LH



Photo by Shelby Needham



MPAC nearing completion while students annoyed



Digging up trees: The school board decided to save the trees in the back of the school. They are going to put all of the trees in the front of the building.

Greg Wariner
Staff Writer

As the school year progresses on, the on-going construction continues as well. With the MPAC building nearing completion, construction crews have begun work on the patch of dirt where the science wing used to be, moving debris and clearing the area for future work to be done there.

"We're getting the documents to the contractor right now," architect-

ural intern Jeff Reed said.

Recently, Reed and his mentor Richard Minkler, architect, have been surveying the property to draw up documents to be used in the planning stages toward renovation of the high school building. Although the construction has been seen as a generally good thing, some students are finding the construction to be tiresome and annoying.

"It's loud," senior Yesenia Flores said. "You can't concentrate."

The construction has been read-

ily moving along, and shows no sign of slowing down. A deadline for the end of construction has been hard to nail down though.

"We won't know until the contractor tells us something," Reed said. "It'll be completed in phases."

With the work continuing, the construction is bound to create great things for the school.

"In the long run, it will be worth it," Flores said. LH

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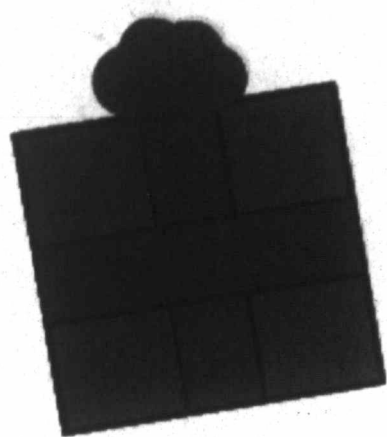
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HOLIDAY



Special

Christmas wishes

Students prepare for exchanging gifts with family, hope to also receive

Kayleen Stallings
Staff Writer

Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, the majority of Americans spend a lot of money each year during this season. This time of year usually means fellowship with family and probably eating more than is of the norm.

Often people spend more money on others during Christmas than any other time of year.

"I spend way too much money," attendance clerk Belinda Elms said.

While many adults spend lots of money, students are spending their fair share as well.

"I spend about three-hundred dollars on Christmas presents," junior Celeste Gonzales said.

Most desired gifts at Pampa High can certainly raise the price of Christmas shopping.

"I really want a new BlackBerry Pearl phone for Christmas," Gonzales said.

Students aren't the only ones wanting expensive technology.

"I wouldn't mind getting a new computer," band director Roger Myers said.

On the other side of expenses there are several different traditions families hold that make the holiday special to them and perhaps worth the money.

"One thing we usually do Christ-

mas morning is make a big homemade breakfast," Elms said.

Some families spend time the evening before Christmas.

"We usually eat together on the twenty-fourth," Gonzales said. "After we eat we open presents with the whole family."

Some families even have present traditions.

"My daughter Holly always gets me some chocolate covered cherries," Myers said. "And my mother-in-law gets me a huge peppermint stick."

As a means of saving money

junior Amber Ebenkamp's family draws names.

"We only give a gift to one person in the family and the limit is usually twenty dollars," Ebenkamp said. "But my grandma gets presents for everyone."

Most students and staff agree the most important tradition and present is family.

"I want most to be with family," Elms said. "And I hope for good health for my family and friends." LH



'And what do you want for Christmas?': Junior Celeste Gonzales has a seat on Santa's lap at the Optimist Club after a morning of volunteering with the annual Christmas Shopping Tour. The tour is set up to help children in need buy each of their family members something for Christmas, so that they get to experience the gift of giving. Gonzales was one of many PHS students that make up half of the tour's volunteers.



'Mark hear the bells': Choir's Christmas concert was on the night of Dec. 13 at First Christian Church. Shown is concert choir performing "What Child is This?" Also on the schedule was women's choir, mixed choir and the show choir. The students had only two weeks to prepare for the concert, but the high attendance showed an overall positive outcome. "Such a low amount of time to prepare is something college choirs only sometimes do, but they did an excellent job of picking up the music and the night's performance went very well," choir director Fred Mays said.



'Jingle Bells': Juniors Olivia Chairez, Dayla Newman, Whitney Sherrill and Rachel Lee ringing bells at United for Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). "It was long and the bells gave me a headache, but I had a lot of fun," Lee said.

Christkindl?

Differences between traditions observed



Hanna Baumgartner
Staff Writer

Christmas is a big thing in Austria, both for the business and for the people. Everybody decorates his house and his yard with Christmas decoration, which is usually done by the beginning of December. Putting up lights is getting more and more popular, but you hardly see as many lights as Americans usually put up. The cities themselves are decorated with lights on trees and lanterns, and sometimes they put up a huge Christmas tree. In some cities, especially big cities, you find a mart called "Christkindl Markt", where you can get typical Austrian Christmas presents, candy, cookies and hot drinks. It is a great place to meet friends or spend the time with your family on Advent weekends.

One very popular custom in Austria is the Advent calendar. Usually every child gets a calendar on Dec. 1. The Advent calendar has 24 windows. Every window has a surprise in it, like chocolate, candy or a little toy. You start opening the windows on Dec. 1 and are allowed to open only one window everyday. The last window is opened on Dec. 24.

On Dec. 6 we celebrate St. Nikolaus. The children get red bags with little presents and candy in it. As we believe in the legend, only the nice kids get presents, otherwise a monster called "Krampus" would come and get them. We usually go to downtown and watch all the "Krampus."

Although we don't believe in Santa Claus, he is quite common in Europe. We believe in an angel called "Christkind." It's a pretty angel with golden hair, bringing the children Christmas presents and a Christmas tree. The Christmas tree isn't put up until Christmas Eve. To tell her what they want for Christmas, the kids write her a letter with their Christmas wishes and then they put it to the outside of the window, hoping the "Christkind" will come and get their letter.

All in all there are a lot of differences between Christmas in the U.S. and Christmas in Austria. LH

