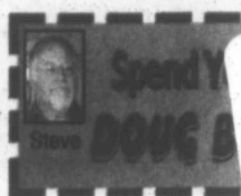




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Mitigator: King willing to plead guilty if death penalty waived

by David Bowser
dbowser@thepampanews.com

Levi King's defense team was in Missouri earlier this week interviewing mitigation witnesses. There are some 30 to 50 witnesses that could potentially have to be brought to Pampa and housed for King's trial, defense lawyers said, but an affidavit filed as part of the court record sheds some light on a proposed plea agreement.

King, 26, is accused of

killing Brian Conrad, 31; his six-month pregnant wife, Michell Conrad, 35 and her son Zach Doan, 14, at their home between Pampa and Interstate 40 in the predawn hours of Sept. 30, 2005.

He pleaded guilty last April in Missouri to the Sept. 29, 2005, murders of Orlie McCool, 70, and McCool's daughter-in-law, Laura Dawn McCool, 47, in exchange for a life sentence in prison without parole.

In March, 2006, a Gray County grand jury indicted King on four counts of murder.

King was returned to the Texas Panhandle in July where he is being held in the Hemphill County jail.

Initially, King's trial in Pampa was set for January, but at a January hearing, 31st District Judge Steven Emmert granted a continuance at the request of lead defense attorney Joe Marr Wilson, who was appointed by the court.

Citing affidavits filed in the case by Cynthia Short, a Missouri mitigation specialist, and Bruce Tiffin, the defense investigator, Wilson said the defense needed more time, although last year Wilson had filed a motion requesting a speedy trial. Judge Emmert denied that motion.

The affidavit filed by Short in January said that King is willing to plead guilty to all charges in the Texas case.

"He is willing to enter pleas of guilty to each capital charge," Short said in her affidavit, "in exchange for the state's waiver of the death penalty."

She said that King is willing to waive all appeals in Texas and Missouri to provide the necessary assurance to both communities that he will live his life inside prison.

Short said that to date, as

King— cont. on page 3

Sheriff appeals to citizens to join in crime fight

Responding to the increased number of citizens wanting to assist law enforcement officials and build a stronger partnership in the fight against crime, Sheriff Don Copeland today announced that Gray County Citizens are being invited to become Associate Members of the Sheriffs' Association of Texas.

Membership invitations will go out in the mail over the next several weeks. Associate Member funding allows the Sheriffs' Association of Texas to provide critical training, technical resources, and legislative support on key criminal justice issues to law enforcement officers across the state.

In addition, dues will be used to support crime prevention and awareness programs, promote public safety, fight drug abuse, provide additional training for sheriffs and their deputies, and provide scholarships for children of law enforcement officers.

Contributions to the Sheriffs' Association of Texas are tax-deductible.

"The Associate Membership Drive helps provide the funding which

is vital to our mission of making our communities safer places to live, work, and play," said Sheriff Copeland.

The Associate Membership Program was created to provide citizens with an opportunity to lend their support to more effective law enforcement and to better help local Sheriffs protect the lives and property of citizens.

"During these economic times, the need for building stronger public-private law enforcement partnerships continues to escalate, and programs such as this continue to grow in importance," said Sheriff Copeland. "I encourage every citizen receiving a membership appeal to consider joining forces with us by becoming an Associate Member. It is a valuable investment in our future."

Citizens not receiving a membership appeal or desiring more information can contact the Sheriffs' Association of Texas at: 1601 S. IH-35, Austin, Texas 78741 or www.txsherriffs.org. Founded in 1874, the Sheriffs' Association of Texas is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit pro-

Appeal— cont. on page 3

Deputies seize 30 pounds of pot

by Rachel Stennett
rstennett@thepampanews.com

A traffic stop was made yesterday (Feb. 25) on Interstate 40, which led to the seizure of over 30 pounds of marijuana by the Gray County Sheriff's Office.

At about 5:30 p.m., Deputies Hudson and Baker stopped a vehicle on a traffic violation on mile post 144.

The deputies made contact with the driver who had suspicious behavior, according to Lt. Joe B. Hoard of GCSO. The driv-

er gave deputies consent to search the vehicle, at which point they found a substance believed to be marijuana.

Andrew Esaul Gomez, 26, of Auburn Ala., was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana greater than five pounds, but less than 50 pounds. Bond was set for Gomez at 20,000 and as of Thursday morning he remained in Gray County Jail. The value of the marijuana has yet to be determined, Hoard said.

McGRUFF AND FRIENDS



photo by Rachel Stennett

Officer Stormy McCullar fingerprints Blas Ruiz, a pre-K student at Community Christian School. The travelling fingerprinting equipment was purchased with funds raised through the McGruff Crime Prevention fund raiser in which the community donated over \$5,000 for a new McGruff costume and the equipment. The fingerprints are printed for the families of students, but not stored by the police department.

Agreements reached in six area cases

by Rachel Stennett
rstennett@thepampanews.com

The disposition of the following cases was reached in the 223rd and 31st Judicial District Court between Feb. 13 and Feb. 25.

Cody Wade Hutchinson was placed on deferred adjudication for evading arrest with a vehicle. Hutchinson was sentenced to serve 24 months at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Institutional Division. The sentence of confinement was suspended and Hutchinson was placed on community supervision for five years. Hutchinson was given a \$2,500 fine.

Josh Guadalupe Magana was found guilty of the felony crime evading

arrest with a vehicle on April 10, 2008. At that time, Magana was sentenced to serve 18 months in TDCJ and pay a fine of \$1,000. The sentence of confinement was suspended and Magana was placed on probation. Probation was revoked from Magana on Feb. 23. Magana then plead guilty to the felony and was placed on the terms of probation previously assessed in the case. Magana was also ordered to confinement in Gray County Jail for 60 days, and fined reimbursement fees. An amount has not been determined.

Bruce Kenneth Vanderburg was found guilty of possession of marijuana on Jan. 3, 2006.

At that time, Vanderburg was sentenced to confinement at TDCJ for five years, pay a fine of \$5,000, and pay restitution in the amount of \$140. The sentence of confinement was suspended and the Vanderburg was placed on probation. On Feb. 23, the court found that Vanderburg had violated his terms of probation, which was then provoked. Vanderburg then plead guilty to the crime and was placed on the terms of probation previously assessed in the case. Vanderburg was also ordered to confinement in Gray County Jail for 30 days, and ordered to reimburse Gray County for fees paid to Cecil Biggers, court-

Court— cont. on page 3

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Critics say tuition relief could hurt schools

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The idea of cutting college tuition has sparked a political grassfire at the Texas capitol. Two out of three senators are for it. Students are staging rallies. And overflow crowds are expected once the legislative hearings begin.

But every populist cause has its naysayers, and in this case the critics say putting the brakes on tuition could cause a big drop in university budgets and ultimately degrade the quality of the diplomas they give out.

The central complaint is that state lawmakers are talking a lot about delivering relief to middle-class parents but are saying precious little about how they'll keep paying for faculty salaries and fund research if tuition dollars start drying up.

"On the one hand they want to cap tuition, and on the other hand they want to starve the institution," said Kevin Hegarty, the chief financial officer at UT Austin. "Something's got to give."

Students are planning to rally Thursday at the capitol before fanning out to lawmakers' offices to drum up support for a tuition freeze. The group has coalesced behind Senate Bill 105, which would put a moratorium on tuition increases for two years, peg future hikes to the cost of living and require that most fee hikes be approved by a majority of students.

Though 22 of 31 senators support a temporary freeze on tuition increases, some influential ones are warning of potentially severe financial fallout. Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, who chairs the Senate Higher Education Committee, is one of three Democrats who haven't caught the tuition moratorium fever.

"The unintended consequences of not funding higher education adequately and of not providing different sources of revenue will be mediocrity and inadequacy and that's not acceptable," Zaffirini said.

"The state has a responsibility to fund higher education at a higher level, not lower."

Direct state assistance from the Legislature for institutions of higher education has continued to decline in real terms in recent years.

At UT, the state's flagship university, annual state support for the academic budget, when adjusted for inflation, has decreased by 1 percent since 1990, figures provided by UT show. It's a similar story at Texas A&M University, where direct assistance from state tax dollars amounted to 44 percent of the school's operating budget in 1993 but only 26 percent in 2007.

Tuition and fees, meanwhile, are rising in importance as a source of revenue growth. It represents nearly half of the revenue used to fund UT's core budget, for example. The cost of education per semester at UT, counting tuition and fees, rose 57 percent, from \$2,721 in 2003 to \$4,266 in 2008.

Facing an ever-higher financial burden, students and parents alike have begun to push back.

"It's time for a change," said Andy Jones, spokesman for the University Democrats at UT Austin. "Nobody should be priced out of higher education. This is the civil rights issue of our generation."

It's also a hot-button political issue. Jones' group has teamed up with the rival UT College Republicans and others to launch a publicity campaign they're calling "Tuition Relief Now!"

The group is behind Thursday's rally, and backing the Senate bill.

The bill would reverse a decision the Legislature made in 2003. Facing a historic \$10 billion shortfall, lawmakers that year allowed universities to raise tuition on their own.

Flying metal chunk maybe just machine part

DALLAS (AP) — The 6-pound chunk of metal that fell from the sky and tore a hole through the roof of a Dallas home might have some rather routine earthly origins.

Police are still investigating but said Thursday they were leaning toward the theory it was a tooth from a tree-mulching machine.

"It may be part of a bit that just shot out," said Dallas Police Sgt. Gil Cerda, noting that a tree mulching business was nearby. No one was home when the metal, with two holes drilled in it, crashed through the roof Tuesday evening. It left a baseball-size hole in the roof and the second floor of the home. No injuries were reported.

Radioactive tests were negative. Several state agencies were notified but none offered a theory about what happened.

Max Corneau, vice president of the Texas Astronomical Society of Dallas and a senior Army space operations officer, told The Dallas Morning News it didn't look like it came from space.

Headline like this

Storyname — cont. from page 1

"My position from the beginning has always been that the state is seeking the death penalty," Switzer said. "I have never wavered from that position."

Switzer said that the statements in Short's affidavit could prove to be a problem in the case, but Wilson said he doesn't think Short's comments concerning his client's guilt prejudices his case.

"I've found to some degree that pretrial publicity doesn't get as deeply into the populace as you think that it does," Wilson said. "Also, we believe that the citizens of Gray County will be fair to Mr. King."

Wilson said this case would revolve around punishment.

The defense attorney said that because of the horrific nature of the crime, Judge Emmert doesn't have any choice other than to allow sufficient resources for the defense. Not too, could cause problems in an appeal and that could end up costing taxpayers even more.

Gray County, as of Feb. 13, has spent \$198,805.05 on defense attorney fees, fact investigator fees, mitigation investigator fees and expert witness fees since Feb. 28, 2007.

"The position from Joe Marr does not surprise me," Switzer said. "They are attempting to use the media to influence the public."

Switzer said that Judge Emmert was not happy with the issue of a plea being put into the affidavit.

"It is my understanding that he told the defense attorneys he was not happy with them doing that," Switzer said. "It was completely inappropriate. Plea issues are not public record and should never be dis-

cussed outside the case."

Wilson said his client would like to resolve the matter in a way that causes the Conrad family and the related families the least amount of trauma, stress and trouble and that does not cost the citizens of Gray County any more time, effort or money than it has.

"He's going to be in prison the rest of his life," Wilson said, "even under the best case scenario."

Wilson, a veteran capital

murder defense attorney, said that death penalty cases take a toll, emotionally and economically.

"If she gets a death penalty," Wilson said of Switzer, "she's just ensuring that her victims' families have about 10 to 15 years to have no closure to this thing. That's how long it will take for them to execute him."

The appeals in a death penalty case are automatic, Wilson said. Although the system has been stream-

Sheriff

appeal — cont. from page 1

the preservation of peace and the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of Texas. Mr. Steve M. Westbrook serves as the Executive Director. Headquarters are located in Austin, Texas. The Sheriffs' Association of Texas does not make solicitations by telephone. If you receive a phone call from someone who uses the Sheriffs' Association of Texas name, please report it to your local Sheriff or County/District Attorney.

Agreements

Court — cont. from page 1

appointed attorney in the amount of \$250.

Stacy Adam Stone was found guilty of criminal mischief on Feb. 24. Stone was sentenced to serve nine months at the TDCJ, state jail division. Stone was also ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine and \$500 restitution to the victim of the crime. The original judgement for Stone's case was reformed. Originally, Stone was ordered to serve a year in confinement at TDCJ, state jail division probated three years and given a fine of \$1,000.

Misty Dianne Moman was placed on deferred adjudication for possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver in a drug-free zone, a first-degree felony. Moman was sentenced to serve five years of deferred adjuca-

tion probation with a \$1,500 fine and \$140 in restitution in exchange for a guilty plea.

Richard Vera Rodriguez was found guilty of aggravated sexual assault on Feb. 24. Rodriguez was sentenced to serve 25 years at TDCJ, institutional division and pay a \$2,000 fine.

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Viewpoints

Today in History

By The Associated Press
 Today is Thursday, Feb. 26, the 57th day of 2009.
 There are 308 days left in the year.
 Today's Highlight in History:
 On Feb. 26, 1870, an experimental air-driven subway, the Beach Pneumatic Transit, opened in New York City for public demonstrations. (The tunnel was only a block long, and the line had only one car.)
 On this date:
 In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from exile on the Island of Elba in Italy.
 In 1907, Congress created the Dillingham Commission to examine the impact of immigrants on America. (The panel later recommended curtailing immigration from southern and eastern Europe.)
 In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure establishing Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona.

'Nothing is more frightful than laughter when it comes to jealousy.'

— Francoise Sagan, French author

In 1929, President Calvin Coolidge signed a measure establishing Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming.
 In 1940, the U.S. Air Defense Command was created.
 In 1945, a mid-night curfew on night clubs, bars and other places of entertainment was set to go into effect across the nation.

In 1952, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Britain had developed its own atomic bomb.
 In 1987, the Tower Commission, which probed the Iran-Contra affair, issued its report, which rebuked President Ronald Reagan for failing to control his national security staff.

Ten years ago: President Bill Clinton, outlining foreign policy goals for the final two years of his administration, urged continued American engagement in the quest for peace and freedom abroad during a news conference in San Francisco.
 One year ago: A power failure later blamed primarily on human error plunged large parts of Florida into darkness. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, visiting Beijing, won a verbal assurance from Chinese officials to use their influence to jump-start the stalled process of dismantling North Korea's nuclear programs. Former Israeli military chief Dan Shomron, the paratrooper who commanded the famed 1976 hostage rescue at Entebbe airport in Uganda, died in Tel Aviv at age 70.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Fats Domino is 81. Political columnist Robert Novak is 78. Country-rock musician Paul Cotton (Poco) is 66. Singer Mitch Ryder is 64. Rock musician Jonathan Cain (Journey) is 59. Singer Michael Bolton is 56. Actor Greg Kinnear is 51. Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine is 51. Bandleader John McDaniel is 48. Actress Jennifer Grant is 43. Rock musician Tim Commerford (Audioslave) is 41. Singer Erykah Badu is 38. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rico Wade (Society of Soul) is 37. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kyle Norman (Jagged Edge) is 34. Rock musician Chris Culos (O.A.R.) is 30. Rhythm-and-blues singer Corinne Bailey Rae is 30. Country singer Rodney Hayden is 29. Actress Taylor Dooley is 16.



Analysis: In Texas, will gambling raise its head?

NEW ORLEANS (AP)— Don't look now, but the recession may be about to take an unexpected bite out of Louisiana's gambling business.

For the second time in recent years, a serious drive is afoot in the Texas Legislature to legalize casino wagering, a move that, if successful, would mean trouble for riverboats and race track casinos that dot Shreveport-Bossier City and Lake Charles. They've cashed in on Texas gamblers since the 1990s.

Last week, some Texas lawmakers proposed establishment of up to 12 casinos, the kind designed to attract players from afar, with retail, meeting and entertainment venues. The measure also would allow slot machines and horse and dog racing tracks in Texas, along with casino gambling on Indian reservations.

"It would be devastating to the Louisiana gaming market," said Wade Duty, head of the Casino Association of Louisiana, an industry and lobbying group. "About 70 percent of the revenue comes from the Shreveport and Lake Charles markets. Louisiana would have to make significant realignments if those markets are lost."

The Texas appeal mirrors the recent shift in casino backers' tactics from the idea of attracting out-of-staters, used in Louisiana 20 years ago, to keeping in-state gambling money within the state, the sort of argument that led to slot machine legalization in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

But something, apparently hasn't changed in two decades, big tax revenue projections that, charitably speaking, might be bordering on the ludicrous, along with the appeal of new jobs in a recession.

Texas backers estimated that 12 state-licensed casinos would pull in \$3 billion to \$4.5 billion per year in state and local tax money. That's an impressive figure, provided it would ever pan out. According to the American Gaming Association, casinos in the 12 states where they are legal, pulled in \$5.8 billion in taxes in 2007, with \$3.7 billion of that coming from five states: Nevada, New Jersey, Louisiana, Indiana and Illinois.

"They are really deluding themselves about the revenue projections. Three to 4.5 billion a year? That's just a fantasy," Duty said. "Texas is an intriguing state but I don't see them neutralizing the entire gaming industry nationwide."

Although the recession might increase the appeal of legalizing casinos in Texas, the downturn also is making it difficult for the industry. In some states, excluding Louisiana thus far, revenue is declining. Nationwide, though, it's the lockdown of the credit markets, and the virtual lockout of the casino business.

At least three major casino building projects have been halted in Las Vegas, representing about \$33.5 billion, while \$11.6 billion in projects outside of Las Vegas have been put

on hold. The New Jersey casino group once owned by Donald Trump is in bankruptcy protection for a third time, buried in debt.

Last month, Pinnacle Entertainment Inc., which says it's bullish on Louisiana, won delays from the Louisiana Gaming Control Board on development schedules for riverboat casino-hotels in Lake Charles and Baton Rouge. Pinnacle officials said that even if they could find credit, it likely would cost the company 15 percent to 18 percent in interest.

"You can't make a casino go with that," Duty said.

Whether Texas will jump on the casino bandwagon remains to be seen. Stout opposition has been promised by Baptists and social conservatives, who killed an earlier move toward casinos. Gov. Rick Perry seems cool to the idea, which would have to be approved by a public vote on a constitutional amendment. And splits have emerged between casino and race track interests.

But money projections aside, even if Texas decides to just put its toe in the water with, say, race track casinos, Louisiana border gambling establishments will feel the pinch.

With constant competition from Mississippi, full-blown casinos in Texas could reduce Louisiana gambling, and its tax revenue, to business patronized almost exclusively by local residents.

Saab needs a break but Sweden offers no sympathy

STOCKHOLM (AP)— Sweden's reluctance to rescue Saab from the junkyard may seem out of character for a welfare state with a long history of meddling in the private sector.

Especially when other European governments, not to mention the U.S., are coming up with costly plans to bail out their auto makers.

But Stockholm's attitude is in line with the hands-off-business approach that Sweden adopted when Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's center-right coalition ousted the left-leaning Social Democrats in 2006.

Barely in office, the four-party government launched a major privatization effort, and has already sold government stakes in Nordic bourse operator OMX, telecoms firm TeliaSonera and the maker of Absolut vodka.

Still, General Motors was hoping for special treatment for its loss-making Saab unit.

Even though it's smaller and less well known than Volvo, the other

Swedish-based car maker owned by Ford, Saab and its suppliers employ about 15,000 workers in Sweden.

It also represents decades of Swedish car-making history, and the Saab brand remains closely associated with the Scandinavian country, even after GM took full control in 2000.

Would Reinfeldt's government allow all that to perish?

The answer, so far, has been "ja." The government insists that Saab's future is GM's responsibility and has rejected the U.S. automaker's request for \$600 million in loan guarantees.

Stockholm says the problem is that GM, facing its own problems at home, wants to get out of Saab by the end of the year.

"The basic problem is that they've set an exit date for their ownership without identifying who will take over," Reinfeldt told Swedish news agency TT on Monday.

The government says GM must

find a buyer, because it doesn't want to get stuck with the break-up costs if Saab goes bankrupt.

Saab last week went into bankruptcy protection in a court-managed reconstruction process that aims to disentangle the brand from GM and make it more marketable. But even if the spinoff is successful, Saab is not likely to get very far as a tiny player in a shrinking global auto market.

"It doesn't have the economies of scale or the deep pockets," said Stephen Pope, Chief Global Market Strategist for Cantor Fitzgerald Europe.

Industry Minister Maud Olofsson, once a Saab owner, has asked GM to present a new business plan for Saab, insisting she will not let taxpayers assume responsibility for the struggling brand.

"It would be very risky to promise to take over a car maker that not even the biggest car maker in the world is ready to put money into," Olofsson said.

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Letters to the editor

Letter to editor,

It is my belief that the reason we are in financial problems brought on us citizens is the federal government, senators and representatives and free trade legislation.
 Kenneth Williams, Pampa

We welcome your letters

To insure publication, please adhere to the following guidelines:
 • Letters should be brief and to the point. All correspondence will be edited for length and clarity.
 • All letters must be signed. Submit your name, address and telephone number with the letter for verification. Only your name and city will be published.
 • Defamatory comments will not be published.
 • E-mail submissions are welcome.



Ford Family Chiropractic of Pampa's professional staff Dr. Jacqueline Weaver, Dr. Samantha Ford, Physical Therapist Josh Link and Dr. Mark W. Ford, Jr. will be presenting \$600.00 to Oklahaven Children's Chiropractic Center Of Oklahoma City, OK. Oklahaven is celebrating its 47th year of nonprofit service to chronically ill children via natural drug free health care. Ford Family Chiropractic's Team Members and patients made donations during Oklahaven's "Have A Heart 2009" Campaign during Valentine Week.

Texas needs to spend money on water

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Gov. Rick Perry says it's time for Texas to put some money into water.

The Republican governor told the Texas Water Conservation Association on Wednesday that lawmakers should spend \$260 million to help speed the building of water reservoirs.

The 2007 Texas state water plan projects that population and the demand for water will increase dramatically over the next 50 years.

Building new reservoirs to handle that demand is projected to cost billions. Perry said the \$260 million would help buy land to get those projects going.



Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: In this day of massive cutbacks and layoffs, please remind your readers that people who have recently lost their jobs need their friends now more than ever.

Having found myself in this situation, I know firsthand that people I thought were my friends truly are not. The phone calls and e-mails stopped almost immediately when word got out that I was laid off. Being treated as if I have some sort of contagious disease has been as bad as losing my job. I know what happened to me is a sign of the times and no reflection on me.

So -- to all of you who have chosen to no longer communicate with me because of my employment status: I am fine. I have a positive attitude. This will not keep me down. I realize that my possibilities are endless. However badly you treat me now, when you are in the same situation, I will be there for you.

To the wonderful man in my life, thank you for standing by me and giving me daily encouragement. To my family, whom I worship beyond belief, thank you for your understanding and continued support. You have made me the person I am, and because of you, I will succeed. -- UNEMPLOYED ... NOT DOWN AND OUT

DEAR NOT DOWN

AND OUT: Thank you for so eloquently pointing out that people who have lost their jobs should not be abandoned, and that the support of friends and family is crucial.

Although family relationships are our primary source of emotional support, the relationships we form at work and our work-related contacts can become like an extended second family.

If these relationships are treated as expendable, it can often be as traumatic as the death of a loved one. When a death occurs, there can be as many as five distinct stages of grief. These are anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance. However, when it comes to job loss, there is also the added element of fear.

This is why I am appealing to you, my readers. No one can ignore the fact that times have grown uncertain. Millions of good, hardworking individuals have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. More bad news may be on the way.

Now is the time for all of us to reach out a hand to encourage and help one another. People who are unemployed should not be made to feel they have been discarded. There is strength in numbers. We will all be stronger if we stand together and observe the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have

them do unto you. -- LOVE, ABBY

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are occasionally invited out to eat at expensive restaurants by a couple with whom we are friendly. The problem is the wife never fails to complain about the food. It's the wrong meal, it was prepared incorrectly, it wasn't what she ordered, etc. Even after her demands have been catered to, she continues to complain throughout the entire meal. It is embarrassing to see the wait staff treated this way. We have become hesitant about joining them, but out of fear of hurting their feelings, we go. Then we regret having had to spend so much money and having been embarrassed once again.

What should we say the next time we are invited? Should we tell the truth or make up an excuse? -- EMBARRASSED IN OHIO

DEAR EMBARRASSED: The next time you are invited to join them, tell the woman you have "other plans." (It's true. You "plan" not to be embarrassed again.) If, after repeated refusals, the woman asks if there is "something wrong," tell her exactly what you have told me. Her behavior is boorish and a bid for attention.

Sudoku

Answer to yesterday's puzzle:

3	9	4	8	7	6	2	1	5
8	6	5	4	1	2	3	9	7
1	2	7	3	5	9	4	6	8
2	7	6	5	9	3	8	4	1
5	1	9	6	8	4	7	3	2
4	8	3	1	2	7	6	5	9
6	5	1	7	3	8	9	2	4
7	3	2	9	4	5	1	8	6
9	4	8	2	6	1	5	7	3

			7					4
				2	9	5		
4				9		7	1	
8	6							
		2				1	4	
	3			6				
6				4	5		2	8
3								
	2		8	9				

Level: Intermediate

Having an event? E-mail your group's news to editor@thepampanews.com

THE UNITED STATES NAVY BAND presents the

Sea Chanters chorus

IN CONCERT

MK Brown Memorial Auditorium
1100 W. Coronado Drive
Pampa, Texas

Monday, March 9 at 7 p.m.
Doors open at 6 p.m.

For up to 6 FREE tickets, send a self addressed, stamped envelope including number of tickets requested to:

Sea Chanters Tickets
The Pampa News
P.O. Box 2198
Pampa, TX 79065

OR

Stop by
The Pampa News office
at 403 W. Atchison Ave.
and receive up to 6 FREE tickets.

For more information call 806-669-2525. Ticket holders must be seated 15 minutes before concert. Unclaimed seats will be released to non-ticket holders at that time.

Sponsored by: **The PAMPA NEWS**
AND THE CITY OF PAMPA

The 2008 "Pride" photo contest winner was this photo of one-year-old Emma Grace Searl, sent in by Linda Searl.

PHOTO CONTEST

The Pampa News' annual amateur photo contest will feature two categories this year - "Family and Friends" and "Gray County Scenes."

Family and Friends
Photos should be non-posed snapshots of people doing things together. They can also be individual shots, but the key is to make them candid photos that show a slice of life in Gray County. The photos that "tell a story" will also be given a higher rating.

Gray County Scenes
Send us your best shots of local scenery. Photos may be sunsets, storms, old buildings, cityscapes, wildlife or domestic animals.

The deadline for entries is 5 p.m. Friday, March 6.

Winners in each category will be selected by our editorial staff. The top photographers in each category will receive \$100 and their photos will be published in the newspaper's annual "Pride" issue to be published in March. Second place winners in each category will receive \$50. Third Place winners in each category will receive \$25.

Any photos submitted to the contest must be taken by the person submitting them and must have been taken in Gray County since Jan. 1, 2008. The photos cannot have appeared previously in any other publication or contest.

You can submit as many photos to the contest categories as you like.

The best way to submit your photo is to send them via E-mail, as an attachment, to editor@thepampanews.com. The photos should be in a .jpg format, preferably shot on the "fine" setting on a digital camera or higher.

Do not edit the photo. We need to make changes in resolution to run photos in the newspaper. If you are entering more than one photo, please send them individually as an E-mail attachment.

Include your name, address, telephone number for verification and a description of the photograph. Identify the people in the photo if possible. Any photo without this information included will be disqualified.

If you would rather submit your entries as prints, send them with the information to: Photography Contest, The Pampa News, 403 W. Atchison Avenue, Pampa, TX. If you wish the prints returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your entry.

The Pampa News will publish the winners and many of the other submissions in a special section of our annual Pride issue in March.

Comics

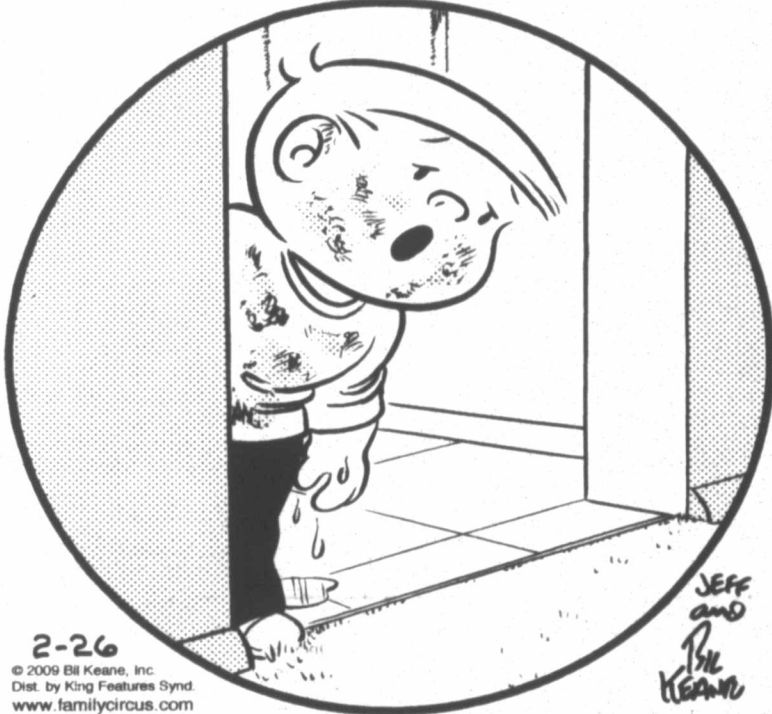
Marmaduke



"I gave him a bigger propeller and he still can't take off!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Did you say wash my hands AND my face?"

Daily Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 2 Chum
 - 1 Go by
 - 5 Unfettered order
 - 10 Heaps
 - 11 Grands, e.g.
 - 12 This is one composer
 - 13 Useful abilities
 - 14 10 points, for example
 - 16 Small
 - 20 Useful abilities
 - 23 Calendar box
 - 24 Lama's land
 - 25 Belfast setting
 - 27 Wonder
 - 28 Tattered
 - 29 Easy to eat
 - 32 At actual scale
 - 36 Classic car
 - 39 Met highlight
 - 40 Smart guys
 - 41 Bloke
 - 42 Cars' scars
 - 43 Jonson works
- DOWN**
- 1 Agreement
 - 3 Diner
 - 4 Chapel
 - 5 "Mephisto Waltz"
 - 6 Caravan stops
 - 7 Common bill
 - 8 Lush
 - 9 Scroll-work
 - 11 Difficulty
 - 15 Riverbed makeup
 - 17 Hepcat's phrase of understanding
 - 18 Writer Grey
 - 19 Took in
 - 20 Wild guess
 - 21 New Zealander
 - 22 Doubter's words
 - 25 Rat's test
 - 26 Way back
 - 28 Divisions
 - 30 Put in office
 - 31 Jockey's garb
 - 33 Furious
 - 34 Fan publication
 - 35 Chow
 - 36 Furious
 - 37 Flamenco call
 - 38 Fox hole

S	P	A	M		P	A	C	T				
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S	A	N	E			N	E	S	T			

Yesterday's answer

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

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								43			

For Better Or Worse



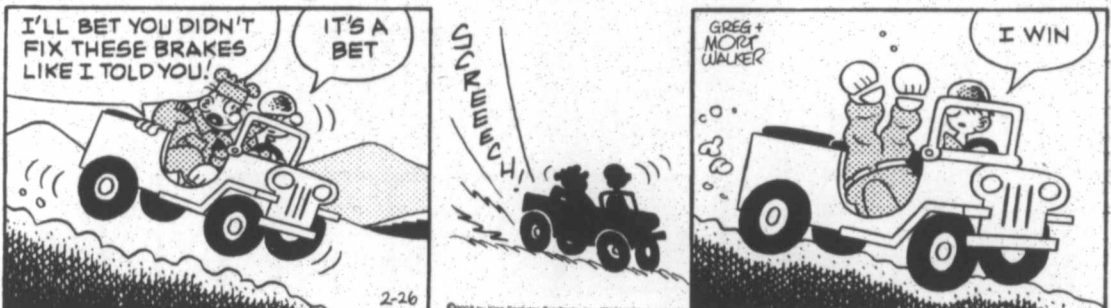
Zits



Garfield



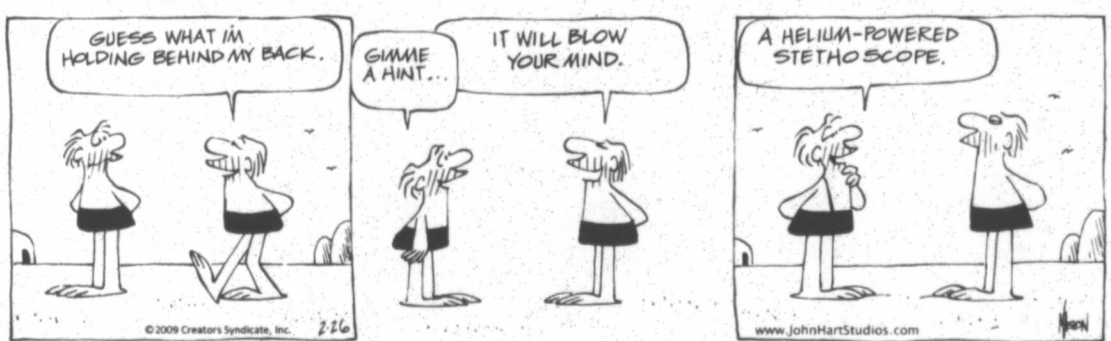
Beetle Bailey



Marvin



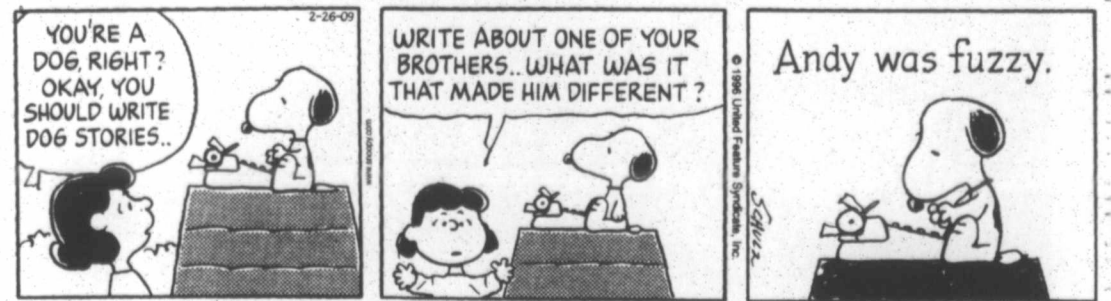
B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



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EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

PAMPA WAL-MART BLOOD DRIVE. ALL BLOOD TYPES ARE CURRENTLY NEEDED! 3 to 7 p.m. Monday, March 2, 2009.

The need is real. There is no substitute for blood. It can only come from volunteer blood donors. Please support the patients of the High Plains Region—Give the Gift of Life! Every eligible donor will receive a Thank You T-Shirt! For an appointment please call 1-877-574-8800.

Pampa Soccer Association spring season registration will begin February 16 and close March 9. The fee is \$55 and includes a uniform. Returning players do not need to register again. You will be placed on the same team as in the fall season. Practices begin March 16. Games will begin in April. For more information: <http://pampasoccerassociation.googlepages.com> or call 486-1646.

Gray County Genealogical Society will

hold their monthly meeting at 7 p.m. the fourth Monday of each month, except for Decemebr. Visitors are welcome.

Members of Crowley, Texas, High School Class of 1989 are organizing a class reunion. For more information, e-mail chs89reunion@gmail.com or contact Nancy Dodgen Dyess (817) 994-0969 or Misty Shewmaker Hollis at (817) 991-8090.

"Live On Stage" Community Concerts of Pampa's final performance planned for the current season will be "Pianafiddle," a combination of familiar tunes by pianist Lynn Wright and violinist/fiddler Adam DeGraff improvising to get toes tapping and hands clapping. Their performance is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. March 6 in M.K. Brown Auditorium.

Pampa Book Club will meet at 10 a.m. the second Wednesday of each month in the Texas Room of Lovett Memorial Library. The 2009 reading

schedule is as follows: Feb. 11, "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortenson and Davie Relin; March 11, "Home: A Memoir of My Early Years" by Julie Andrews; and April 8, "The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls. The May 13 book for review will be announced at a later date. Public welcome.

USS Maddox Destroyer Association Reunion is slated Sept. 9-13 in Phoenix, Ariz. To find out more, call (337) 616-8450 or e-mail cwgilles45@aol.com.

Fawn Lake Press is offering free "Proud to be an American" flag decals to anyone sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Fawn Lake Press, 54 Fawn Lake Rd., Durango, CO 81301. Active servicemen and women need not send a SASE to receive the free 2 x 3-inch color decals. Fawn Lake will pay their postage.

Manhattanville My Soldier is seeking volunteers to "adopt" a deployed

United States Servicemember. To find out more, visit www.mysoldier.com on-line or write to: Manhattanville College My Soldier Department, 2900 Purchase St., Purchase, NY 10577.

T.O.P.S. Club, a weight loss group, is seeking new members. The club meets from 5:30-6:30 p.m. each Monday at 513 E. Francis. New members welcome.

T.O.P.S. Club, a weight loss group, meets at 11:30 a.m. at noon each Monday at St. Paul's Methodist Church, 511 N. Hobart.

Seniors Scramble Hidden Hills Golf Course Feb. 18, 2009

1st Place (59)
R. Parnell
J. Davis
M. Allison
J. Gray

2nd Place (61)
B. King
H. Wells
M. Driver
G. Owens

3rd Place (62)
E. Maxwell
J. South
H. Malone
B. Harwood

4th Place (63)
D. Adams
L. Morris
J. Magrey
D. Clendenn

5th Place (63)
R.D. Stephens
J. Gilbert
B. Henderson
J. Stringer

Cloest to the Pin
R. Parnell (#6)
J. Gray (#15)

CLUB NEWS

Beta Sigma Phi

Beta Sigma Phi held a Valentine Banquet at Pampa Country Club on Feb. 7 at 6:30 p.m. The Chapters preceptor Chi and Preceptor and Preceptor Theta Iota honored their sweethearts for the 2008-2009 year. Preceptor Chi's Sweetheart Moreen Greer was crowned by Teresa Hinds. Preceptor Theta Iota's

Sweetheart Pat Kindle was escorted by her husband Bill Kindle and crowned by Barbara Benyshek. Tammy May presented the program in song.

Beta Sigma Phi met Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Ann Franklin, president, presided. Nancy Broggin, recording secretary took role and read minutes from the previous meeting,

which were approved as read. Janice Hubbard, treasurer, gave treasurer's report.

Correspondence was heard. Committee reports were given. Social Feb. 14 for couples at Red River Steakhouse in McLean. Nancy Broggin gave program. Secret sister gifts for Valentines were exchanged.

Twentieth Century Club of Pampa

Twentieth Century Club of Pampa met Feb. 24 in the home of Nancy Coffee, hostess, with Dorothy Stowers, president presiding. Twelve members attended.

The group discussed

local events, cultural arts, modern science and technology. Myrna Orr gave the program on China, its geography, culture and place in today's world.

The next meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. March

10 in the home of Ruth Riehart. Edna Hickman and Mary McDaniel will give the program on fashion.

ANNOUNCING *New* PRICES

Don't Forget to Pull Around for the Vacuum

OLD PRICE as set in 1999	NEW PRICE with Dryer Effective Nov. 1, 2008
Old Menu	New Menu
Super Wash\$7	\$8.....Super Wash Add Dryer - Old Super
Delux Wash\$6	\$7.....Delux Wash No Dryer - Old Super No Change in Menu
Regular Wash\$5 w/clear coat conditioner	\$6.....Regular Wash w/clear coat conditioner Add Dryer
Regular Wash\$5	\$5.....Regular Wash No Dryer No Change in Menu



Mc's Car Wash

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SAVE NOW ON EVERY SEALY MATTRESS IN STOCK NOW... ENJOY OUR EXPRESS DELIVERY

SEALY "POSTURE PREMIER" FIRM TWIN SET

\$299

FULL SET

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QUEEN SET

\$399

SEALY PLUSH TWIN SET

\$399

FULL SET

\$499

QUEEN SET

\$549

SEALY PILLOW TOP TWIN SET

\$499

QUEEN SET

\$649

FULL SET

\$599

KING SET

\$949

SEALY "COLBERT" POSTUREPEDIC

TWIN SET	FULL SET	QUEEN SET	KING SET
\$599	\$699	\$749	\$1049




T.V. CONSOLES \$449 **ASHLEY SOFAS \$599 • \$699**

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\$599	\$699	\$799

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