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GREASE IS THE WORD



The Pampa High School Show Choir will take you back to Rydell High Friday and Saturday with performances of "Grease". Danny (John Luke Covalt) and Sandy (Brenna Albracht) lead the cast.

by Rachel Stennett
 rstennett@thepampanews.com

The hit musical "Grease" will be performed this weekend by Pampa High School Show Choir, giving audiences the sounds of the fifties and even ice cream floats and intermission.

The musical will have four performances at Pampa Junior High School, April 17 at 8 p.m., Saturday, April 18, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, April 19 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets for the performance will be \$5, which may be purchased at the door. All audience members will receive a free ice cream float at intermission.

Senior Keisha Crowell, playing "Marty" in the production, said that audiences should expect a very good show, as only the show choir is performing and they are the top skill level of PHS choirs.

"It's going to be a great show," Crowell said.

The cast of Grease has been practicing for the show since January. Live music

CHOIR cont. on page 3

County extends burn ban for 90 days

by Rachel Stennett
 rstennett@thepampanews.com

The County Commissioners Court decided in a meeting Wednesday morning to extend the burn ban for Gray County for another 90 days. The ban was supposed to expire yesterday (April 15) but as high winds continue, and low amounts moisture is forecast, fire danger remains high.

"I don't see any real change," commissioner James Hefley said about the dangerous fire conditions. Fire dangers are lower this week in Gray County, as scattered thunderstorms have been forecast, but Emergency Management Coordinator Joe Millican said that fires are still likely.

"We had fires in the Lefors area, even after the moisture this weekend," Millican explained.

The Commission said that there has not been significant issues with illegal burning, but the problem could increase in the spring.

"We would meet to adjust the ban if the dry conditions changed," Hefley said.

A motion to extend the burn ban for 90 days was approved.

The court also discussed a resolution for the county to enter on private property in emergency situations. The resolution would allow emergency personnel to clear any roads blocked due to extreme weather conditions, with permission of the property owner, and with property owner signing release. Commission Joe Wheeley introduced the resolution, saying, "I'm not trying to cause more confusion with this, but it might help in emergency situations."

Wheeley said the resolution would help protect county citizens, who are frequently effected by severe weather conditions, like big snow drifts.

"Rural communis can be in life or death emergency situations, when people in the city aren't even effected by the weather," Wheeley said.

Discussion with Millican revealed that emergency management can already respond to the needs of a person in an emergency situation however they see fit, which might mean property damage for the home owner.

"We have every right to direct equipment however we need in an emergency. We have the right to address the emergency, but it has to be a 911 call or an emergency call for us to respond that way,"

COUNTY cont. on page

Motions heard in six cases

by Rachel Stennett
 rstennett@thepampanews.com

Plea hearings were heard in the Gray County Court for motions to revoke probation on six cases.

A motion to revoke probation was filed against Thomas Brown. Brown was placed on probation for driving while intoxicated on October 17, 2007. Brown violated his probation by leaving Gray County and not informing his parole officer and failing to make monthly payments. He also test positive for marijuana on October 30, 2008, December 30, 2008 and Jan 22, 2009. He failed to attend ACADA classes in January and February of this year.

Brown was given credit for time served and community service hours already completed. Brown's probation was reinstated.

A motion to revoke probation was filed against Garnet Walkup. Walkup was placed on probation for possession of marijuana, less than two ounces. Walkup failed to make monthly payments for courts costs and fines, and failed to perform required community service hours.

Walkup told County Judge Richard Peet that he had struggled to make ends meet, but he did have a new job was was trying to take care of his family, which includes a two-week old newborn. Judge Peet granted a motion of continuance of probation for Walkup, and added six months to his probation

HEARINGS cont. on page 3

Highlights Wednesday from the Legislature

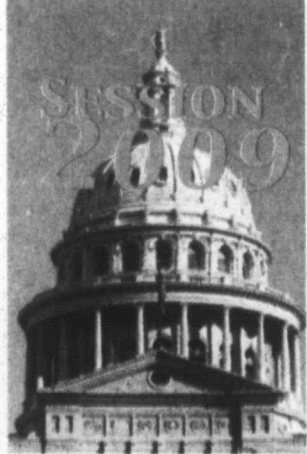
AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Small businesses in Texas say the state's new business tax has been unfairly burdensome on them. Now, the Legislature is working to ease their strain.

The tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee took up more than a dozen bills Wednesday that would tweak the 2-year-old tax, most increasing the exemption to include busi-

nesses making \$1 million or less.

"In economic challenges, recovery occurs and stability occurs through small businesses," said Rep. Dennis Bonnen, R-Angleton, who has proposed a bill that would raise the exemption to \$5 million. "I think it's vitally important that when we're in an economic downturn that we protect small businesses."

The Legislature adopted



the business tax under court order in 2006 to help cover the \$14 billion cost of buying down school property tax rates. But the revenue from the business tax, known as the margins tax, has fallen more than \$1.5 billion short of projections.

By making the tax apply only to companies making at least a \$1 million, more than 130,000 small businesses would be exempt. But it would cost the state

an estimated \$85 million in the first year alone.

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

Texas 18-year-olds can vote for president and go to war, but they wouldn't be able to buy cigarettes under a bill approved by the Senate.

The Senate voted 25-5 to raise the legal age for buying tobacco products to 19.

SESSION cont. on page 3

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PAMPA FORECAST

| Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| 40% | 20% | |
| High 65 Low 44 | High 61 Low 44 | High 44 Low 46 |

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HAS SAID HAIL AND HIGH WINDS ARE PROBABLE THROUGH TONIGHT, WITH A POSSIBILITY OF TORNADOES. PLEASE MONITOR CONDITIONS AND TAKE ANY PRECAUTIONS ADVISED BY AUTHORITIES.

Today: A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Some of the storms could be severe. South southeast wind around 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: Showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 1am. Some of the storms could be severe. Low around 47. Southeast wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New rainfall amounts between three quarters and one inch possible.

Friday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 65. Calm wind becoming south between 15 and 20 mph. Winds could gust as high as 25 mph.

Friday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 44. South southwest wind 10 to 15 mph becoming east. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.

Saturday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 61. North northwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 44. North northwest wind around 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 68. North northwest wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 46. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south southeast.

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Cash Five Texas results

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Results of the Cash 5 drawing Wednesday night:
 Winning numbers drawn: 30-5-18-17-21.
 Number matching five of five: 1. Prize: \$24,606
 Winning ticket purchased in: Big Wells
 Matching four of five: 71. Prize: \$156
 Matching three of five: 2,549. Prize: \$11
 Matching two of five: 26,178. Prize: \$2
 Next Cash 5 drawing: Thursday night.

Winning Lotto Texas numbers

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Results of the Lotto Texas drawing Wednesday night:
 Winning numbers drawn: 39-37-31-41-16-17.
 Number matching six of six: 0.
 Number matching five of six: 19. Prize: \$1,903.
 Number matching four of six: 1,007. Prize: \$53.
 Number matching three of six: 20,145. Prize: \$3.
 Estimated jackpot for Saturday night drawing: \$6 million.

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 several cars for the kids to
 see. A Lam-borghini, Vipers,
 Lotus, etc.

For the Record

Obituaries

Georgia Louise Wohlford

Graveside services will be held for Georgia Louise Wohlford at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 18 in Elmwood Cemetery, Woodward Okla. she died Monday April 13, 2009.

Georgia was born November 19, 1941 in Calexico, Calif. to William and Clara Floyd. She graduated from El Centro High School. she had five children, three boys and two girls.

She is survived by two

sons; roger, of Phoenix, Ariz. and Ronald of Pampa, two daughters; Renee Miller of Lebanon, MO and Robin Scott, husband David, of Miami, Texas, four step sons of Calif. and two step daughters of Dallas. Grandchildren include: Russell Randi and husband Nick, Steven and Sherri, all of Missouri, Jonathon of Oklahoma, and Ryan, Julie James and DesiRay of Texas, two brothers;

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William Bert Jackson and wife aleta of Kansas and John Henry Jackson and wife Bonnie of Oregon and one sister, Shirley Jane Dean of AZ.

She was preceded in death by her mother, father, loving step father, Grover Roy Jackson, husband Raymond and one son, Randy Lee.

Georgia enjoyed spending time with her family

and friends. She moved to Woodward, Okla. in 1981 with her husband and two daughters. With several moves back and forth from Woodward to Pampa, she finally resided in Pampa.

The family requests that all donations of money and time be given to First Baptist Church of Pampa.

John Edward Neslage, 62

John Edward Neslage died in Houston, Texas, on Monday, the 13th of April 2009, at the age of 62.

He was born in Pampa, Texas on the 13th of August 1946, to the late Frederick Joseph Neslage and Dorothy Rita Neslage. Mr. Neslage is a graduate of New Mexico Military Institute, Class of 1966 (Second Lieutenant). He received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1969 from Texas Tech University where he was a member of Beta Sigma Pi. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Houston Bates College of Law in 1972 and was a member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity. Mr. Neslage proudly spent his entire legal career at the law firm of Baker Botts L.L.P., joining the firm on the 1st of December 1972. He became a partner in 1980 and was a widely recognized pension attorney for over 35 years. He specialized in representing major publicly held and privately owned businesses, as well as non-profit and tax-

exempt organizations on the employee benefits issues attendant to public offerings, mergers and acquisitions and related reorganizations. He also represented public pension funds and collectively bargained multiemployer pension funds. Before joining Baker Botts, Mr. Neslage served as First Lieutenant with the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army. For many years, Mr. Neslage devoted his time and talents to the United Way of Greater Houston, including terms as Chairman of the Finance Committee and a member of the Board of Directors. In his leisure time, he enjoyed running and golfing with his best friends, hunting and fishing with his brothers and sons and traveling and hiking with his wife and children.

He leaves behind his loving wife, Christi Neslage, son, John Edward Neslage II and wife Ashley Neslage of Houston, Texas, son, Luke Joseph Neslage of Los Angeles, California, daughter Anne Marie McLeod and husband

Stewart McLeod of Dallas, Texas and daughter Jenna Elizabeth Neslage of Houston, Texas. Other survivors include his three grandchildren Claire Elizabeth Neslage and John Edward ("Jack") Neslage III of Houston, Texas and Kylie Anne McLeod of Dallas, Texas as well as his ten brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews.

The family wishes to extend their sincere thanks to Mr. Neslage's team at The M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, especially Doctors Martin Raber, Morris Groves and Alan Valentine, and gratefully acknowledges the staff of Houston Hospice, whose warmth and wisdom in guiding him through his battle with cancer encouraged and inspired all. Friends are cordially invited to a visitation with the family to be held from five o'clock in the afternoon until nine o'clock in the evening on Thursday, the 16th of April, in the Jasek Chapel of Geo. H. Lewis & Sons, 1010 Bering Drive in Houston.

A vigil service shall commence at seven o'clock that evening conducted by Rev. Don Schwarting. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at ten o'clock in the morning on Friday, the 17th of April, at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, 1111 St. Joseph Parkway in Houston, where Rev. Don Schwarting and Rev. Lawrence Jozwiak will serve as concelebrants. The Rite of Committal will be conducted at three o'clock that afternoon at Oak Bluff Memorial Park, 101 Block Street in Port Neches, Texas, where Rev. Benny Patillo will serve as officiant.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that contributions in John's name be directed to The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, P.O. Box 4486, Houston, Texas 77210-4486 (or <https://www3.mdanderson.org/devoffice/>) or to Houston Hospice, 1905 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77030-4123.

Anne Cannon, 70

Pampa, Texas — Anne Cannon, 70, died April 14, 2009 in Pampa, Texas.

Memorial services will be at 2 p.m. Friday, April 17, 2009, at Carmichael-Whately Colonial Chapel, with Rev. Fines Marchman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Skellytown, officiating. Cremation and arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-Whately Funeral Directors.

Mrs. Cannon was born

January 21, 1939 in Clovis, California. She married Jesse Cannon on February 14, 1990 in Madera, California. She had been a resident of Pampa since 1992. Mrs. Cannon retired as assistant manager at Peggy's Place. She was an avid bingo player.

Survivors include her husband, Jesse Cannon of the home, four daughters; Charlotte Nord of Springfield, Missouri, Peggy Smith and Donanne

Woodruff, both of Pampa, and Barbara Leininger of Fresno, California, two sons: Eric Nord of Pampa and Bruce Konieczka of Madera, California, one brother, Bill Opperman of Orlando, Florida, 13 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

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

Sign the on-line register at, www.carmichael-whately.com



Cannon

Isabel Asencio, 76

White Deer, Texas — Isabel Asencio, 76, died April 16, 2009, in Amarillo, Texas.

Services are pending with Carmichael-Whately Funeral Directors of Pampa.

Mrs. Asencio was born November 5, 1932 in Degollado Jalisco, Mexico to Ramon and Altigracia De La Cerda. She married Salvador Asencio in 1957 in La Rivera Jalisco, Mexico. They had been residents of White Deer their entire married life. She was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church of White Deer. Mrs. Asencio was a very loving and forgiving mother with a heart of gold and a sense of humor like no other. She loved music and cooking, and her family said if you ever were to come to her home, you had better be hungry because you were going to be fed.

Survivors include three daughters; Susie Weeks and husband Russell of Gravette, Arkansas, Sesilia Silva and husband Efrain of Pampa, and Ofelia Marszal and husband Charles of White Deer; 3 sons: Jesse Asencio and wife Annette of Amarillo,

Ray Asencio and wife Darlene of White Deer, and Raymond Asencio and wife Kim of Pampa; 1 sister: Olivia Miranda of Phoenix, Arizona; 6 broth-



Asencio

ers: Ramon De La Cerda, Javier De La Cerda, Rogelio De La Cerda and Jose De La Cerda, all of California. Isaac De La Cerda of Phoenix, Arizona, and Juan Manuel De La Cerda of Houston; 16 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Asencio was preceded in death by her parents: Ramon and Altigracia De La Cerda; her husband: Salvador Asencio; a brother: Enrique De La Cerda; and a grandson: Miguel Villegas.

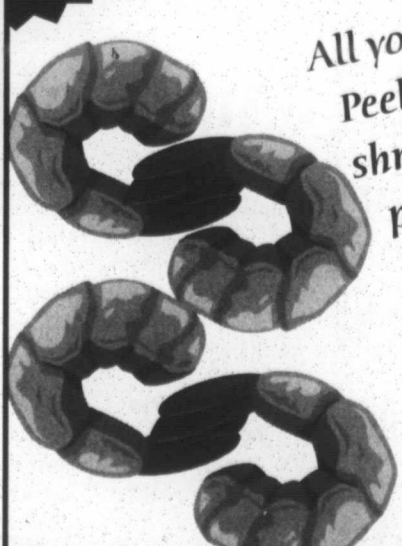
MEMORIALS: BSA Hospice, P.O. Box 950, Amarillo, Texas 79105, or CASA of the High Plains, 315 N. Ballard, Pampa, Texas 79065.

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Grease performances by show choir this week

Choir— cont. from page 1

will be performed by "Gabi and The Gamblers," which Pampa High School band members.

"The fast moving, energetic show will delight it's audiences," Grease director Brianna Bailey said.

Rydell High is the setting for the popular musical as the T Birds and the Pink Ladies give a glimpse of what teenage life was like in the fifties. Danny (John Luke Covalt) and Sandy (Brenna Albracht) meet at the beach during summer vacation and are surprised to find out they are going to the same high school. Danny, the macho leader of the T Birds, isn't sure he wants the other T Birds to know that he had a relationship with a sweet girl like Sandy Dumbrowski.

The cast of "Grease" includes: Brenna Albracht as "Sandy," John Luke Covalt as "Danny," Chandler Talley as "Rizzo," Blake Sieck as "Kenickie," Keisha Crowell as "Marty," Matthew Smith as



2009 Pampa High School Show Choir's cast of Grease will perform Friday and Saturday in the junior high auditorium.

"Sonny," Diana Mechelay as "Frenchy," Will McKay as "Rodger," Mary McKay as "Jan," Coleby West as "Doody," Robin Fernuik as "Patty," Karlie Novian as "Miss Lynch," Kimberly Curtis as "Cha-

Cha," Nolan Burr as "Vince Fortaine," Oscar Retana as "Teen Angel," and Bernardo Casanova as "Eugene."

Members of Gabi and The Gamblers include Gabi Powell and Brianna

Bailey on keyboard, Landon Long, Travis Taylor, and Fred Mays on guitar, Myles Forman on bass guitar, and Dustin Neef on drums.

The show will include "Grease" song and dance

favorites, "You're the One That I Want," "We Go Together," "Hand Jive," "Magic Changes," "Sandra Dee," "Hopelessly Devoted to You," "Summer Nights," and "Greased Lightnin," and

Freddy My Love." Stage manager for the production is Tanner Davis.

Commissioners Court

County— cont. from page 1

Millican said explaining the existing policy to the court.

The court decided the existing procedure was adequate to take care of emergency situations, without creating a new written release.

The court approved a request by Charles Bowers and Taylor Properties to cut and repair a 10 inch hole for oil drilling purposes in the road between Section 82 and 83, about one-half mile south from the intersection of T. Pit Road and Taylor Ranch Road. The road is on farm property, and all work on it will be done by Bowers and repaired by him.

The court also approved two grant applications by the Gray County Sheriff's Office. The U.S. Department of Justice created grant funding under the Recovery Act for Assistance to Rural Law Enforcement to Combat Crime and Drugs. GCSO would use this grant, totaling \$206,000 towards the purchase of two new SUVs with law enforcement packages.

GCSO officials said the vehicles are needed for carrying equipment and supplies to more rural areas in the community, where more drug labs are being built. The grant would also create a full-

time deputy position, including benefits and retirement, for \$45,000. The grant is for two years.

The second grant, the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, would be split evenly with the Pampa Police Department in part of an Interlocal Agreement. The portion for the sheriff's office would be used for videos and recording surveillance equipment in the jail, equipment the Sheriff Don Copeland said is much needed.

Probation hearings

Court— cont. from page 1

charge. Walkup was ordered to pay his fines, which were about \$1,000 within the first six months of probation.

A motion to revoke probation was filed against Latisha Tabbytosavit. Tabbytosavit violated the terms of her probation when she was charged with driving while intoxicated, second, on July 25, 2008. Tabbytosavit was ordered to pay \$1,200 in fines, and 180 days confinement, which was probated for 18 months.

Tabbytosavit waived a jury trial and agreed to plead guilty to the driving while intoxicated charge in exchange for continued probation. Tabbytosavit was ordered to serve 36 hours of community service, taking alcohol education classes, and pay all fees within the time of probation.

A motion to revoke probation was filed against Julia Monden. Monden had been placed on probation for driving while intoxicated. Monden violated the terms of her probation on July 29, 2008, when she was charged with possession of a controlled substance, failure to identify, and possession of cocaine.

Monden had already served 150 days in a Potter County jail on another charge. According to Monden's lawyer, Monden believed she was serving concurrent time for the charge for violating probation in Gray County and the Potter County Charge. Monden was credited time served, as she was only sentenced to serve 60 days for violating probation.

Novelia Monroe plead guilty to harassment. Monroe was placed on

probation for harassment and threatening another through the telephone.

Monroe was placed nine months of deferred adjudication probation, ordered to serve 24 hours of community service, and ordered to pay court costs and fines.

David Kent Cook pleaded guilty to driving while intoxicated, second offense. Cook was charged with driving while intoxicated on June 21, 2008 and May 27, 1986. Driving while intoxicated, second offense, is a Class A misdemeanor.

Cook agreed to waive a jury trial, and pay half of his court costs and fines within six months of probation. Cook was also ordered to have an Interlock system installed on his vehicle.

Texas Legislature highlights

Session— cont. from page 1

It's a move that supporters say would improve public health and help keep cigarettes away from high school students.

According to the Department of State Health Services, roughly one-fourth of Texas high school students smoked cigarettes in 2006.

A similar measure passed the Senate in 2007. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

HONORING FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

The Senate paid tribute to the two Houston firefighters, Capt. James Harlow, 50, and Damian Hobbs, 29, who died while fighting a House fire Sunday.

"When most people see danger, they run away from it. Our police and firefighters run to it," said Sen. Mike Jackson. Jackson, a La Porte Republican who sponsored the resolution with Sen. Mario Gallegos, a Houston Democrat who is a retired firefighter "Firefighting is the most dangerous profession in the country," Gallegos said.

After the resolution was passed, the Senate recessed for 30 minutes to listen to a member of the Austin Fire Department

play "Amazing Grace" on bagpipes in the Capitol rotunda to honor the fallen firefighters.

HONORING COLT

A resolution honoring University of Texas quarterback Colt McCoy turned the normally staid Senate into a group of gushing autograph seekers.

McCoy, who led the Longhorns to a 12-1 record and a Fiesta Bowl win over Ohio State last season, was joined by university President William Powers on the Senate floor during the brief ceremony, then had to entertain a long line of senators who wanted to shake his hand, take pictures and

talk football.

It didn't end there. Once he ducked into a back hallway, McCoy was swamped by more autograph seekers. A group of blushing young women Senate staffers waited their turn for photographs as McCoy kept an 'aw-shucks' smile on his face.

Sen. Florence Shapiro, a Plano Republican who sponsored the honoring resolution, had to wait to get McCoy's autograph. McCoy had given her one a few weeks ago, but Shapiro said she made the mistake of not getting one for all of her grandchildren.

"I asked him to please bail me out!" Shapiro said.

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Viewpoints

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 16, the 106th day of 2009. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:
On April 16, 1789, President-elect George Washington left Mount Vernon, Va., for his inauguration in New York.

On this date:
In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia.

In 1879, St. Bernadette, who'd described seeing visions of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes, died in Nevers, France.

In 1912, Harriet Quimby became the first woman to fly across the English Channel.

In 1917, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin returned to Russia after years of exile.

In 1935, the radio comedy program "Fibber McGee and Molly" premiered on the NBC Blue Network.

"Chaos is the score upon which reality is written."

— Henry Miller,
American author

CBS Evening News."

In 1972, Apollo 16 blasted off on a voyage to the moon.

In 1996, Britain's Prince Andrew and his wife, Sarah, the Duchess of York, announced they were in the process of getting a divorce.

In 2007, in the deadliest shooting rampage in modern U.S. history, student Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life.

Ten years ago: President Bill Clinton defended NATO airstrikes against Serbian targets during visits to Michigan and Massachusetts, saying U.S. involvement in Kosovo was a moral imperative. Wayne Gretzky announced his retirement from hockey.

One year ago: The Supreme Court upheld the most widely used method of lethal injection, allowing states to resume executions after a seven-month halt. Pope Benedict XVI was welcomed by President George W. Bush as only the second pope to visit the White House and the first in 29 years. Mathematician-meteorologist Edward Lorenz, the father of "chaos theory," died in Cambridge, Mass., at age 90.

Today's Birthdays: Pope Benedict XVI is 82. Actor Peter Mark Richman is 82. Singer Bobby Vinton is 74. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 69. Basketball Hall-of-Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 62. Singer Gerry Rafferty is 62. Football coach Bill Belichick is 57. Rock singer-turned-politician Peter Garrett is 56. Actress Ellen Barkin is 55. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 47. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 46. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 45. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 44. Actor Jon Cryer is 44. Rock musician Dan Rieser is 43. Actor Peter Billingsley is 38. Actor Lukas Haas is 33.



Opinions from other Texas editors

Austin American-Statesman on the Texas Legislature and gambling:

For Texas gambling interests, the lucky number is not 7 or 11. It's 100. That's the number of votes needed in the Texas House to pass a constitutional amendment authorizing casino gambling in the state.

Though a constitutional amendment is a gamble, piecemeal gambling bills court an almost sure veto from Gov. Rick Perry. The governor can't veto a constitutional amendment, which would go before the voters. Earlier this week, a committee headed by state Rep. Edmund Kuempel, R-Seguin, heard testimony on a batch of gambling bills, including one sponsored by state Rep. Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio, that would ask voters to bless 12 casinos, racetrack slot machines and legalized gambling on Indian reservations.

The committee is working on a substitute bill that might actually advance to the Calendars Committee, which controls the flow of legislation. It's almost a sure bet that the gambling proposal assuming there is

one will have to have 100 votes or it will be left in Calendars to die.

As usual, proponents of gambling speak of the money and jobs casinos would bring, even though experiences in other states that have embraced gambling are mixed. Nevada, the state that made casinos famous, raked in \$1 billion in tax revenue in 2007 from its 270 casinos. But Nevada's casino revenue is declining this year.

Proponents of Texas gambling say that the 12 casinos they propose will bring in \$4.5 billion.

It's an interesting number but subject to a lot of questions. Among them: How rigorous would the vetting process be before Texas issues licenses? Would the number of licenses be limited and, if so, how would the limit be determined? How large a bureaucracy would be needed for vetting and oversight? Would the casinos contribute to programs to help gambling addicts?

If so, how much?

Even if those questions and many others raised by the possibility of expanding legal gambling in Texas can be answered satisfactorily, a bigger question remains as to just how soon Texas could expect to rake in the cash.

Texas legislators are shooting dice in the dark with gambling legislation. A serious legislative study on gambling and its impact would at least turn the lights on.

Odessa American on guns on campuses

The issue of whether people licensed to carry concealed weapons should be able to do so on Texas college campuses quickly rises to an emotional level with those on both sides tending to go off a little half-cocked with simplistic arguments.

Bills have been filed in both the state House and Senate that would allow weapons on campuses that traditionally been gun-free zones.

Backers point to recent shooting sprees at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University and say those tragedies could have headed off by someone armed and capable of taking out the gunmen. They see a hero riding to the rescue.

Opponents counter that guns and students who tend to be less than responsible

could be a disaster waiting to happen. They envision a drunken dormitory argument getting out of hand.

Actually there are pros and cons that can be cited without going to such extremes.

Someone with mayhem on the mind actually might think twice if others might be armed and ready.

On the other hand, concealed carry requires a good deal of maturity and personal responsibility.

The idea has met stiff opposition at the University of Texas, which has its own history of shooting violence. Charles Whitman's 1966 rifle attack from the top of the university tower killed 16 people and wounded dozens more. It was the worst campus shooting until the Virginia Tech bloodbath. The UT student government, the graduate student assembly and the faculty advisory council have all passed resolutions against the campus guns bills.

This seems to be a measure that needs a lot more thought and study before a rational decision can be reached.

Letters to the editor

Letter to the editor—
I would like to tell a brief story illustrating the great fortune of our community to have the people of Pampa Regional Medical Center as friends and neighbors.

In December 2008, I was called out of reserve status into active duty to serve the US Army with the 345th Combat Support Hospital in Al Asad, Iraq. The time leading up to my departure proved tenuous on my peers in the anesthesia department, the department of surgical services, and the hospital overall in the search for a temporary replacement combined with the logistics involved in staffing this position. This was all handled without complaint and with genuine assurance that I need not worry about the process. Shortly after arriving in Iraq and beginning my service, I was greeted with care package from the hospital full of comfortable reminders of home. The care packages continued to arrive on a very welcome and steady basis throughout my deployment. Imagine my surprise when upon celebrating a birthday far from home, I received almost 20 separate cards, complete with words of congratulations and encouragement, personally penned by employees from every department in the hospital. Finally, after returning

home and starting back to work late last month, I cannot recall a single interaction with hospital staff that was not laden with well wishes, words of thanks, firm handshakes, or big hugs.

It is rare that an individual has the opportunity to become associated with such an outstanding organization, full of people who are willing to be called upon as both coworkers and as friends. I am extraordinarily thankful that people of Pampa Regional Medical Center have given me that opportunity. The next time you come across one of the fine employees of your hometown hospital, be sure to tell them thank you for making one soldier's time away more bearable.

Sincerely,
ILT Gregory Collins,
CRNA
Department of Anesthesia
Pampa Regional Medical Center

Letter to editor,

Putting a \$5 million water park in Pampa is insane, especially since cold weather outweighs the warm days we have. And who would work in it since most places like that hire high school students?

By the census signs, we have 18,000 people and that was before Celanese shut down and the oil fields started laying off as well as other businesses.

If you took \$5 million and gave it to every adult and child in Pampa, they would have a "stimulus check" of \$277 each. Or the Pampa Economic Development could get a big company like a credit card company, insurance firm, etc. from a big city and give 60 employees \$83,333 of the \$5 million they spend on a water park so they can buy one of the many vacant houses we have.

Those people will bring children for the schools and they can pay school taxes to help pay for our

new junior high (which I think is a big waste).

Then the people living here won't have to worry if our property taxes are going to go up to compensate for the people not living here any more because of the economic changes.

Then we could talk about a \$5 million water park.

When the City of Pampa collects the \$1 million fine then we could use that money for street repair since it is budgeted for different departments, but it took a long time to accumulate \$1 million in fines, so apparently they didn't need it in the first place. If animal control collected all the fines owed to that department we might could build two water parks. I know there was one dog owner alone who had over \$3,000 in outstanding fines.

Roxanne Crossman
Funderburk
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.

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Comics

Marmaduke



"You want a student loan for obedience school?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Want me to sing you to sleep, Grandma?"

Daily Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 43 Miseries
 - 1 Spill over
 - 5 Climbed
 - 11 Zorro
 - 12 Bested in
 - 13 Poker
 - 14 Homes
 - 15 Rapid
 - 17 Cartoon
 - 18 Com-
 - 22 Under-
 - 24 Luke-
 - 25 Motor
 - 26 Big
 - 27 Gave the
 - 30 Writer
 - 32 Cook's
 - 33 — de
 - 34 Boastful
 - 38 Russian
 - 41 Sticky
 - 42 Sword-
- DOWN**
- 1 Jazz style
 - 2 Turner of
 - 3 To the
 - 4 Disrobed
 - 5 Shower
 - 6 Picasso,
 - 7 Right
 - 8 Young
 - 9 Summer
 - 10 — Moines
 - 16 Crafty
 - 19 At best
 - 20 Real hoot
 - 21 Writer
 - 22 Flue filth
 - 23 Weather
 - 28 Symbol
 - 29 Make fun
 - 30 Director
 - 31 Bean
 - 35 Shortly, in
 - 36 Occupy
 - 37 Midterm
 - 38 Hog
 - 39 Water
 - 40 Capp and

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Yesterday's answer

- 16 Crafty
- 19 At best
- 20 Real hoot
- 21 Writer
- 22 Flue filth
- 23 Weather
- 28 Symbol
- 29 Make fun
- 30 Director
- 31 Bean
- 35 Shortly, in
- 36 Occupy
- 37 Midterm
- 38 Hog
- 39 Water
- 40 Capp and

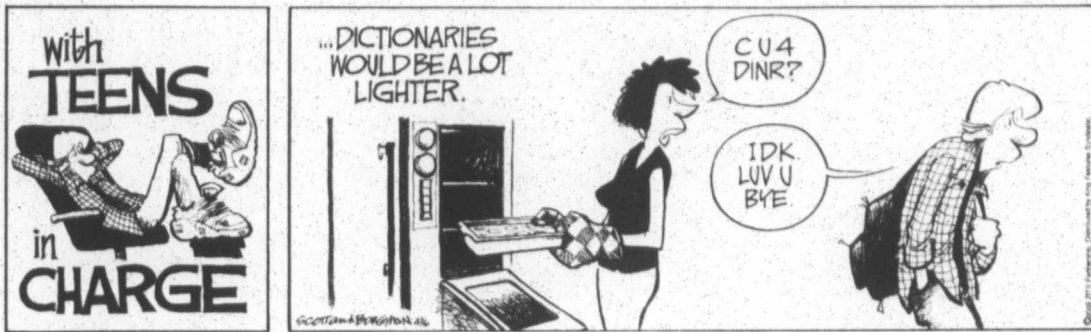
NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

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For Better Or Worse



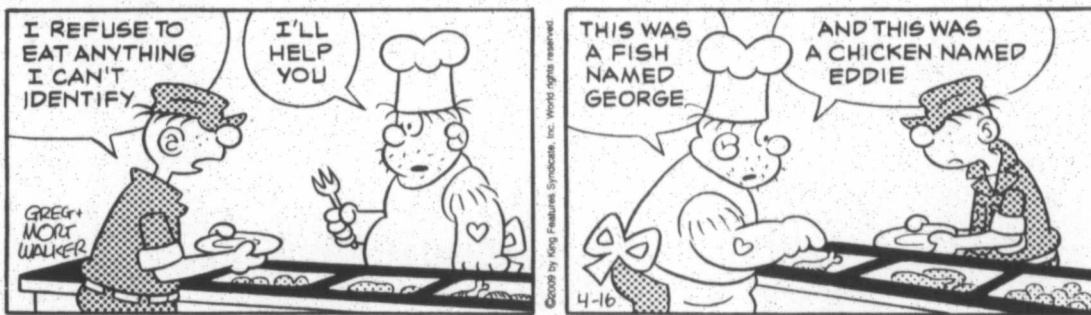
Zits



Garfield



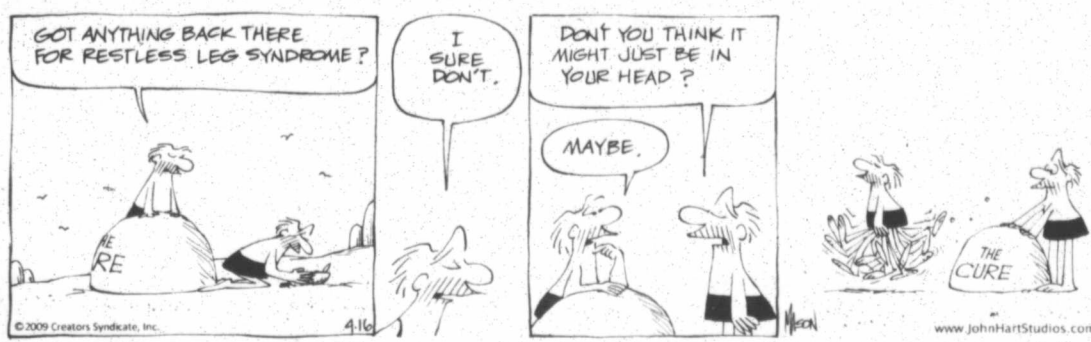
Beetle Bailey



Marvin



B.C.



Haggar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends





Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

SISTER PAYS THE PRICE FOR HER BROTHER-IN-LAW'S DECEPTION

DEAR ABBY: Five years ago, my brother-in-law sent my sister "Rita" and me on an all-expense-paid weekend trip to Canada. He asked me to tell Rita that I had "won" it for outstanding performance at my job and wanted her to accompany me.

To make a long story short, it turned out he did it in order to cheat on my sister. Because we had problems with the arrangements he had made, Rita and I had to return a day early. When she opened her front door and walked in, she caught her husband red-handed.

Ever since that unfortunate incident, Rita has cut off our entire family. She acts as though WE cheated on her, and remains married to this despicable man even though he lives with the other woman.

I don't understand why my sister has pushed away all of the people who love

her while maintaining a relationship with a man who cheats on her. I don't know what to do. Any advice? -- MISSING MY SISTER

DEAR MISSING: Your sister may feel that she deserves the treatment she's getting from her husband, or is still hoping that her wandering spouse will return. Because you were part of the deception, she has displaced the anger she should be aiming at her husband and has directed it at you because it is "safer."

Until she finds the strength and courage to accept that her marriage is over, her behavior will probably continue. I'm advising you to go on with your life until she is ready to change hers.

DEAR ABBY: Most of my extended family are pleasant and enjoy each other's company when we meet at family gatherings

several times a year. But three of them (all from the same side of the family) are just plain rude. Every event becomes an uncomfortable exercise in bracing oneself for the verbal attacks that come from these critical, judgmental people.

We have tried talking about it, but hear the same refrains -- "I'm not changing," "Accept me as I am," and, "You have no choice but to put up with me because we are family!"

I am a younger member of this family who occasionally spends holidays with friends or traveling. When I do, I am severely chastised by these three relatives, who say I have "no right" to skip family gatherings. If they were nicer people, I would want to spend more time with them.

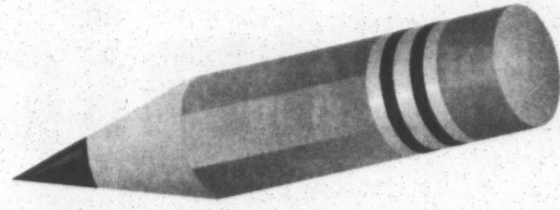
I want to do the right thing, but what do people who have the same ancestry "owe" each other when

there is no connection of friendship or goodwill? -- RELATED IN NAME ONLY IN SAN JOSE, CALIF.

DEAR RELATED: I know of no rule of etiquette that states you are compelled to attend every family event. Good manners dictate that you treat those around you courteously. But that does not mean that you must engage in anything more than casual, superficial chit-chat with those who are critical, judgmental and rude.

Because these get-togethers involve extended family, spend the majority of your time with the relatives who make you feel welcome, supported and loved.

P.S. One thing you do NOT owe these folks is an explanation regarding your absence when you choose to avoid them.



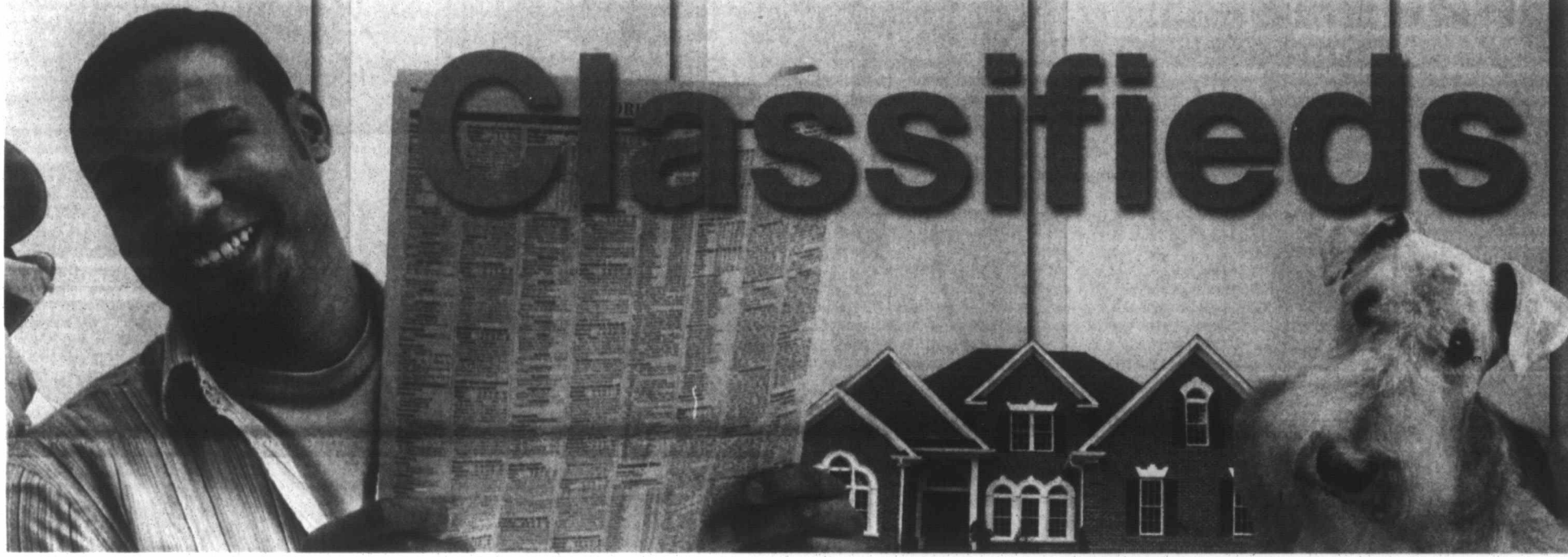
Sudoku

Answer to yesterday's puzzle:

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Level: Intermediate



Advertising Designer

The Pampa News is seeking a creative person for a part-time (20-25 hours per week) position. Skills needed include a working knowledge of Photoshop, QuarkXpress and/or Indesign. Send resume and a copy of your work to: rprbble@thepampanews.com No Phone calls.

VEHICLE AUCTION

SAT. APRIL 18, 10:00 AM

Loc.- PAMPA, TX, 701 West Brown (Hwy 60/152) from Inters. of Hwys. 70 & 60/152 (Brown St.) take Hwy. 60/152 East Approx. 3 or 4 Blks.

EIGHTEEN CARS (07 to 93), EIGHT SUV (01 to 91), THREE VANS (03 to 81), FOURTEEN PICKUPS (00 to 88)-TEN TO FIFTEEN MORE BY SALE DAY

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DAILY HOROSCOPE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, April 17, 2009: Much will change this year. Often you naturally assume the helm of the ship. Your leadership abilities don't work well with relationships. You will learn to juggle the two different interests, knowing ultimately they can be united through a concern in certain areas. If you are single, you are likely to see friendship play a big role in meeting that special person, or a budding friendship could evolve into more. If you are attached, remember, ultimately, people and family mean more than work. Learn to give a lot more time to your sweetie. **AQUARIUS** is your friend.

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) ★★★★★ Handle a heavy responsibility in the a.m. Later, you focus on long-term goals, perhaps a meeting and far more interpersonal dialogue. You might want to take a deep breath, as an emotional issue could resolve itself in the near future. Tonight: Where the action is.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ Look beyond the obvious when dealing with others. Notice what someone leaves out. Examine the limits in your thinking. Open up all areas, and grow. Greet new ideas positively. Tonight: A must show.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ Schedule a meeting for the morning. Detach by the afternoon. People could be acting out on their feelings. Understand what might really be going on. You could be more tired than

you realize. Tonight: Try a new restaurant or nightspot.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Others claim their power. Even if someone thinks you should do more, you don't necessarily need to respond. Your efforts might be very important, though getting acknowledgment might not happen yet. Tonight: Quality time with a special friend or loved one.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Clear your desk and your mind. Start early in order to finish early. A lunch or social occasion could take far more time than you anticipated. Justifying this activity as networking might fool some. Tonight: Listen to the many suggestions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Your imagination steals the show this morning. Taming and disciplining your mind continues to be a high priority. This afternoon, you will face a lot of work and a conflicting need to be free. Prioritize and just do. Tonight: Be careful with money.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★★ You have been keeping to yourself, as so much is on your mind. The reception you have been getting is far from good. This afternoon, events will start to occur that make you more open and ready to talk. Just the same, you need to make that decision. Tonight: What is wrong with allowing more fun into your life?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ Communication causes a problem, in that you simply cannot be everywhere. Finally people start owning up to their issues, views and problems. You have been noticing how others are withdrawn or at least unstable. Tonight: Play

it easy. Head home early.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ Finances can occupy a lot of time, whether you are dealing with a personal matter or a work-related issue. How you talk to someone or the effort you make makes a difference. Give someone space to open up. Tonight: Be a receptive audience.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ Handle key projects immediately. You could be overwhelmed by all the requests and questions coming your way this afternoon. If you are wondering about your role in several areas of your life, relax — the answers will come soon enough. Tonight: Splurge a little.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ Don't plan on acting until you get more information. Your perspective could be off, as you will discover in the a.m. Later today, you walk on steady ground, knowing what you want and how to handle it. Tonight: Whatever puts a smile on your face.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Take an active role this morning. Try not to let details slip through the cracks. Be sensitive and aware to the person who trusts you implicitly. This person counts on you. Be careful with a quick answer or retort. Tonight: Take a personal night.

BORN TODAY
Actor William Holden (1918), journalist Harry Reasoner (1923), communist leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com.
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1 Public Notice

ORDINANCE NO. 1498 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PAMPA, TEXAS, PROVIDING THAT THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF PAMPA, TEXAS BE AMENDED BY ENACTING SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATION OF CHAPTER 12 "TRAFFIC & VEHICLES" REGULATIONS PRESENTLY EXISTING BY AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING ARTICLE 12.09 MISCELLANEOUS DRIVING RULES BY ADDING THERETO SECTION 12.09.006 MOTOR VEHICLE NOISE.
C-64 April 16, 26, 2009

5 Special Notices

ADVERTISING Material to be placed in the Pampa News, MUST be placed through the Pampa News Office Only.

10 Lost/Found

REWARD! Lost on April 3rd, 1800 Banks female Schnauzer. Childs pet. 669-1954.

LOST White Female Red Nosed Pit Bull Tan spots on back leg. Tan freckles on ears. Reward. Please Call 806-440-3891.

13 Bus. Opp.

GREAT Investment opps. Pampa motel. Convenience store. 665-1875, 806-383-1985.

14a Air Cond.

BROWNING Heating & Air Cond., 665-1212. Free esti. on new equip. We service all brands!

14d Carpentry

Carpentry, Roofing, Replacement Windows, steel siding & trim. Continuous gutters. Jerry Nicholas 669-9991, 662-8169

OVERHEAD DOOR REPAIR

Kidwell Construction. Call 669-6347.

14e Carpet Serv.

NU-WAY CLEANING SERVICE Bob Marx Owner-Operator. Call 665-3541.

14h Gen. Serv.

JH Concrete. Driveways, additions, stamp, patios, tile, fences. Free Est. 806-382-5408.

CERAMIC tile work. Remodeling floor, shower, kitchen. Texture, painting, dry wall. Free esti. Call 665-3453 leave message. Jesus Barraza.

HOUSE Cracking? In bricks or walls? Childers Brothers, Inc. 800-299-9563, 806-352-9563

14h Gen. Serv.

COX Fence Company. Repair old fence or build new. Free estimates. Call 669-7769.

14r Plowing/Yard

CLEAN up, landscaping, tree trimming, gardens. All types of jobs. Haul off. Rototilling. Free Estimates. Call 486-1311.

14s Plumbing/Heat

JACK'S Plumbing, 715 W. Foster, 665-7115.

21 Help Wanted

Now seeking a temporary Full/Part Time Dependable Salesperson to operate Pampa store. Duties: Assisting Customers, Maintaining Plants and Operating Cash Register. Starting pay: \$8.00 / hr., 40 hr. work week. No exp. necessary. Hiring begins April 1st. Send resume to D&C Greenhouse 36 Nelson Dr. Spearman, TX 79081

21 Help Wanted

NOTICE Readers are urged to fully investigate advertisements which require payment in advance for information, services or goods.

"Hands On" Patient Care Position in a busy Chiropractic office. Put your "people skills" to work. Fax resume to (806)665-0537

SUBWAY in Walmart needs reliable people to work day, night & weekend shifts. Apply in person.

NEED Weekend RN. Fri. & Sat., 10:30pm.-7am. St. Ann's Nursing Home. Panhandle, 537-3194.



21 Help Wanted

FULL-TIME LVN needed. Competitive Pay & Exc. Benefits. St. Ann's Nursing Home, Panhandle, 537-3194.

NURSES Unlimited

Inc. is seeking enthusiastic & outgoing caregivers in the White Deer area, to assist clients in the home with personal care, meal prep and light house-keeping. P.T. EOE. Call 1-888-467-0674.

21 Help Wanted

CARSON Co. Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for the position of Deputy Sheriff. Current TCLEOSE License is required. Salary is \$32,825.47 per yr. plus overtime pay. Benefits & retirement plan incl. Applications will be accepted thru Apr. 30th. Pick up application at the Courthouse, in Panhandle or call 806-537-3511.

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LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You have been keeping to yourself, as so much is on your mind. The reception you have been getting is far from good. This afternoon, events will start to occur that make you more open and ready to talk. Just the same, you need to make that decision. Tonight: What is wrong with allowing more fun into your life?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ Communication causes a problem, in that you simply cannot be everywhere. Finally people start owning up to their issues, views and problems. You have been noticing how others are withdrawn or at least unstable. Tonight: Play

it easy. Head home early.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ Finances can occupy a lot of time, whether you are dealing with a personal matter or a work-related issue. How you talk to someone or the effort you make makes a difference. Give someone space to open up. Tonight: Be a receptive audience.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ Handle key projects immediately. You could be overwhelmed by all the requests and questions coming your way this afternoon. If you are wondering about your role in several areas of your life, relax — the answers will come soon enough. Tonight: Splurge a little.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ Don't plan on acting until you get more information. Your perspective could be off, as you will discover in the a.m. Later today, you walk on steady ground, knowing what you want and how to handle it. Tonight: Whatever puts a smile on your face.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Take an active role this morning. Try not to let details slip through the cracks. Be sensitive and aware to the person who trusts you implicitly. This person counts on you. Be careful with a quick answer or retort. Tonight: Take a personal night.

BORN TODAY
Actor William Holden (1918), journalist Harry Reasoner (1923), communist leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com.
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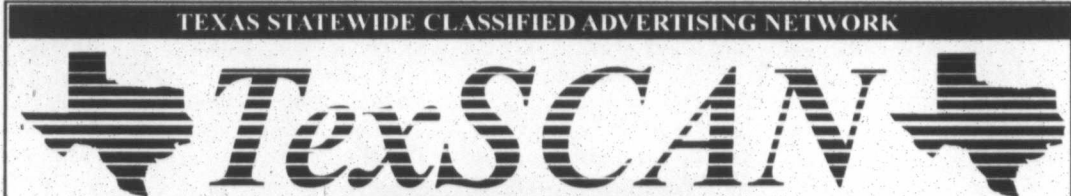
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Perry fires up anti-tax crowd at Austin rally

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Gov. Rick Perry fired up an anti-tax "tea party" Wednesday with his stance against the federal government and for states' rights as some in his U.S. flag-waving audience shouted, "Secede!"

An animated Perry told the crowd at Austin City Hall — one of three tea parties he was attending across the state — that officials in Washington have abandoned the country's founding principles of limited government. He said the federal government is strangling Americans with taxation, spending and debt.

Perry repeated his running theme that Texas' economy is in relatively good shape compared with other states and with the "federal budget mess." Many in the crowd held signs deriding President Barack Obama and the \$786 billion federal economic stimulus package.

Perry called his supporters patriots. Later, answering news reporters' questions, Perry suggested Texans might at some point get so fed up they would want to secede from the union, though he said he sees no reason why Texas should do that.

"There's a lot of different scenarios," Perry said. "We've got a great union. There's absolutely no reason to dissolve it. But if Washington continues to thumb their nose at the American people, you

know, who knows what might come out of that. But Texas is a very unique place, and we're a pretty independent lot to boot."

He said when Texas entered the union in 1845 it was with the understanding it could pull out. However, according to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Texas negotiated the power to divide into four additional states at some point if it wanted to but not the right to secede.

Texas did secede in 1861, but the North's victory in the Civil War put an end to that. Perry is running for reelection against U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, a fellow Republican. His anti-Washington remarks have become more strident the past few weeks as that 2010 race gets going and since Perry rejected \$550 million in federal economic stimulus money slated to help Texas' unemployment trust fund.

Perry said the stimulus money would come with strings attached that would leave Texas paying the bill once the federal money ran out.

South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, also Republicans, have been outspoken against the federal economic stimulus spending and were supportive of tea parties in their states. The protests were being held throughout the country on

federal income tax deadline day to imitate the original Boston Tea Party of American revolutionary times.

In an appearance at the Texas Capitol last week, Perry joined state lawmakers in pushing a resolution that supports states' rights protected in the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He said the federal government has become oppressive in its size and interference with states.

Since then, Perry has been featured on the online Drudge Report, and other conservative commentators and citizens have latched on to his words.

After praising veterans in the cheering crowd Wednesday, he said: "I'm just not real sure you're a bunch of right-wing extremists. But if you are, we're with you."

Perry said he believes he could be at the center of a national movement that is coordinated and focused in its opposition to the actions of the federal government.

"It's a very organic thing," he said. "It is a very powerful moment, I think, in American history."

For her part, Hutchison issued a newspaper opinion piece Wednesday criticizing the Democratic-led Congress for spending on the stimulus bill and the \$1 trillion appropriations bill.

"On April 15 — Tax Day — some in Congress may need a reminder of just



The crowd displays signs during a "Don't Mess With Texas" tea party rally at City Hall Wednesday, April 15, 2009, in Austin, Texas. Protesters gathered at state to kick off a series of tax-day protests designed to echo the rebellion of the Boston Tea Party.

who is underwriting this spending: the American taxpayer. I am deeply concerned over the swelling tax burden that will be imposed on all Texas families," she wrote.

The crowd at the Austin tea party appeared to be decidedly anti-Democrat. Many of the speakers were Republicans and Libertarians.

One placard said, "Stop Obama's Socialism." Another read, "Some Pirates Are in America," and it showed photographs of Obama, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid wearing pirate hats.

Mexican cartels pushed south

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mexican drug cartels are creeping south into Central America, U.S. drug enforcement officials said Wednesday, as the Obama administration put new pressure on drug kingpins ahead of the president's trip to Mexico City.

Drug Enforcement Administration officials said there are growing signs the stepped-up law enforcement efforts on the U.S.-Mexico border are driving the cartels south toward Central America.

"We're looking at what happens south of Mexico as well, because that's just as important as what's happening on our border," said DEA Chief of Operations Thomas Harrigan. "With more and more success the Mexican government has, literally they're pushing these cartels further south and potentially it could be a problem in Central America."

It's already happening, said Anthony Placido, the DEA's chief of intelligence.

There have been significant seizures of cartel weaponry in Guatemala, and shootouts among Mexican cartels with operations in Central American countries. The cartels "definitely have" moved south, said Placido.

"We've seen running gun battles in places like Guatemala and Honduras between rival Mexican cartels," he said.

Last month in an appearance before Congress, U.S. State Department official David Johnson said that Central American officials "have identified gangs, drug trafficking and trafficking of arms as the most pressing security concerns in that region."

The acting head of the DEA, Michele Leonhart, told reporters that more efforts along the U.S.-

Mexico border alone will not be enough to dismantle the cartels.

"A seizure on the border is not going to break the backs of the cartels. What breaks the backs of the cartels are the partnerships with the U.S. and Mexican counterparts in country, in Mexico," she said.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said the DEA's assessment on the cartels moving south is a serious concern. She said the violence moved based in part on enforcement on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

"It is an ever-changing environment that we have to face," she said. Napolitano spoke in El Paso, Texas, where she announced she has picked Alan Bersin, a former federal prosecutor, to take the new post of "border czar" to oversee efforts to end cartel violence along the border and slow the tide of people crossing illegally into the United States.

Separately, the White House on Wednesday announced that three Mexican organizations had been added to a list of suspected international drug kingpins: the Sinaloa car-

tel, Los Zetas and La Familia Michoacana.

The move came a day before President Barack Obama travels to Mexico.

The three Mexican groups were added to the U.S. government's blacklist of drug syndicates, known commonly as the Drug Kingpin Act and aimed at financially cutting off significant foreign narcotics traffickers, their organizations and operatives worldwide.

Those on the list are denied access to the U.S. financial system and all trade and transactions involving U.S. companies and individuals.

La Familia Michoacana, also known simply as La Familia, moves massive amounts of cocaine from Colombian drug dealers, according to U.S. officials.

Los Zetas was formed by ex-military men who became hit men for the other cartels.

The Sinaloa cartel, often referred to as the Mexican Federation, began in the 1970s and now controls most of the seaports along the Pacific coast of Mexico, officials say.

The president has already promised to dis-

patch nearly 500 more federal agents to the U.S.-Mexico border, along with X-ray machines and drug-sniffing dogs.

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