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# The PAMPA NEWS

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

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## Meth lab discovered

Monday afternoon while on patrol, Pampa Police Officer Tyler Jernigan noticed a strong chemical odor, consistent with a meth lab, near the property at 113 West Thut.

Pampa Police entered the property with the consent of the owner.

An active meth lab was found in the residence. Pampa firefighters responded to the scene and made the residence safe for evidence collection.

Bob Griffin, training officer for the Pampa Fire Department, explained that the PFD makes a crime scene safe before other officials can enter it.

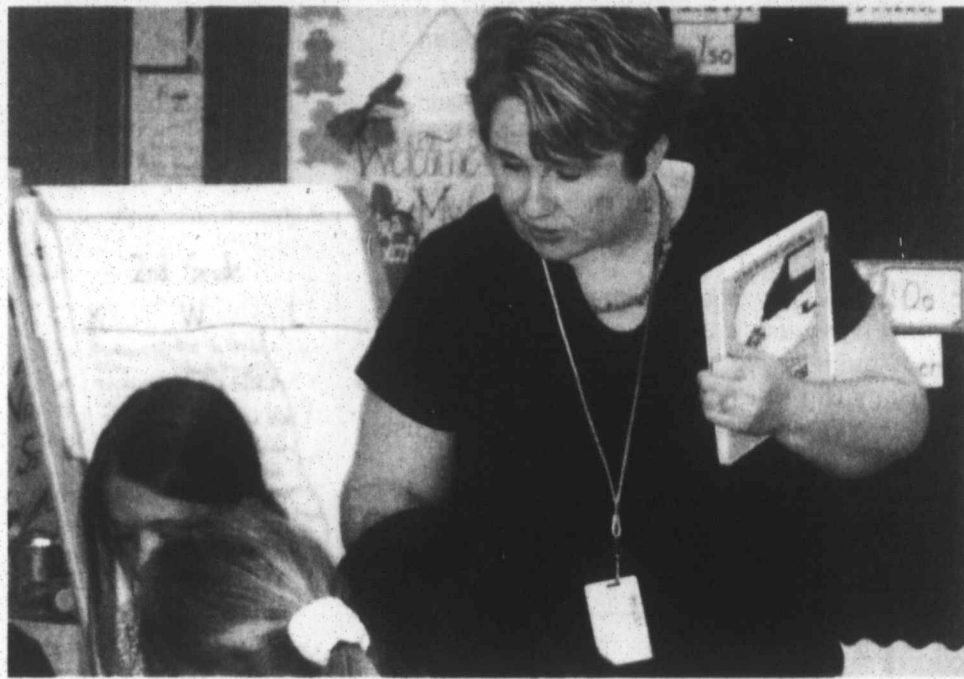
"Due to the nature of the chemicals involved in producing methamphetamine, it creates a hazardous scene," Griffin said. The the process of producing methamphetamine creates a potentially explosive situation.

PFD personnel enter crime scenes before the Pampa Police Department and examines the structure, which may contain potential dangers. If dangers present themselves, as in the case of this meth lab, a positive pressure ventilation fan is set up to push fresh air into the structure until the police department can enter the scene.

"Anytime there is hazmat at a scene, it is our job to make the operation safe, and then we give the scene over to the police department," Griffin said.

The components of the meth lab along with a large quantity (as yet unknown weight) of suspected methamphetamine were removed from the residence. The investigation into the meth lab continues, no suspects have yet been arrested in connection with the incident.

## TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



staff photo by Rachel Stennett

Lena Mendoza, teacher of the year for Wilson Elementary school, explains to her first grade class the difference between lenient and strict people.

## Mendoza is Wilson's Teacher of the Year

BY RACHEL STENNETT  
 rstennett@thepampanews.com

*Third in a series*

Lena Mendoza is first a mother of two girls and second, a first grade teacher at Wilson Elementary school.

Mendoza is in her fourth year of teaching and has taken the unconventional route to get to the place she is at today — teacher of the year.

After raising her children and fulfilling her dream to be a mother, Mendoza decided it was time for her to go back to school and fulfill her second dream of

being a teacher.

"Education is very important. I wanted my two girls to see me do this and know it can be done," Mendoza said of her return to school.

Mendoza said she was "really surprised," to find out about the teacher of the year honor but she feels her differences as a teacher are in the details.

Mendoza makes a point to send home Good News notes with her students

when they do something noteworthy in class. She also informs parents of other details too, like playground scrapes and other struggles.

Even though she has received the award, Mendoza said she struggles like other teachers. Her biggest challenge that of every teacher— trying to figure out how to reach the struggling student. "You can't fix everything," Mendoza admitted.

Her love for the kids make the struggles worth it  
**TEACHER** cont. on page 3

## Highlights from the Texas Legislature

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Senate voted Monday to limit tuition and fee increases to no more than 5 percent a year for most large universities.

The legislation would also permit schools — but not require them — to establish a separate program allowing incoming college freshmen to lock in tuition rates and pay the same amount for four years.

The proposed relief package comes six years after Texas lawmakers allowed universities to raise tuition to make up for declining state appropriations. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, annu-

al tuition and fees rose 86 percent from 2003 to 2009.

But the reforms passed Monday wouldn't simply give that rate-setting power back to the Legislature. Instead, the Senate passed a complicated package of mandates and incentives designed to slowly lower tuition costs.

It would also re-establish a more direct tie between the amount lawmakers appropriate and the tuition and fees parents and students are asked to pay. Schools would have much more flexibility to raise rates, for example, when the Legislature doesn't meet their funding needs.

**SESSION** cont. on page 3

## House approves higher business tax exemption

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Thousands of small Texas companies would get a two-year break from the state business tax under a measure preliminarily adopted in the House on Monday.

The new tax, which businesses are currently paying for just the second time, was designed to fix the state's franchise tax and

school funding system. But small businesses have complained that the tax is hitting them especially hard.

After a chorus of complaints from the business community, the plan by Rep. Rene Oliveira would temporarily increase the exemption to include businesses making \$1 million or less. The exemption cur-

rently stands at \$300,000. "Because Texas and the United States are currently in a severe recession, what we have done here is provided some temporary relief," said Oliveira, D-Brownsville.

But increasing the exemption would cost the state more than \$172 mil-  
**TAX** cont. on page 3

## Church members 'pay it forward'

BY RACHEL STENNETT  
 rstennett@thepampanews.com

Valerie Neves needed was a wheelchair ramp to take her daughter in and out of her home, but the ramp seemed too large and impossible of a request since it was not covered by Medicare.

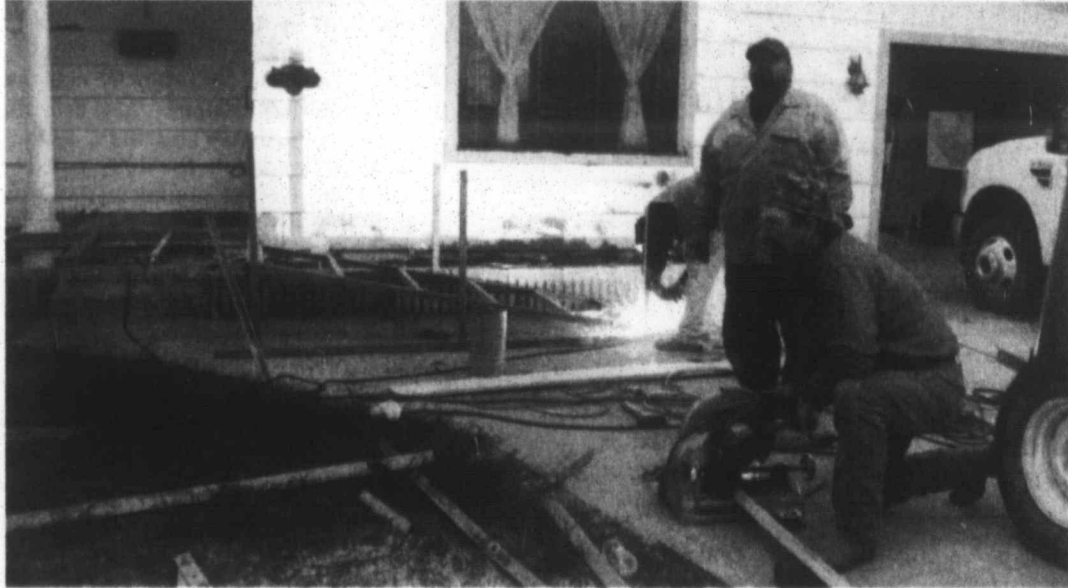
That was until Julio Leija, a total stranger, drove by three weeks ago and saw Valerie struggle, lifting her autistic, wheelchair bound daughter Trinity up the steep stairs of their home.

Trinity was just arriving home from school when Leija drove by and saw Valerie get Trinity off the school bus and carry her inside.

As cars lined up behind the bus carrying Trinity, Leija looked out from his car and watched the struggle unfold.

"I thought to myself, someone should help her," Leija explained. "The Lord told me, I should help her."

Leija made the decision to recruit help for the Neves family. Leija went and told his church, Calvary Baptist, about Valerie and Trinity, and their need for a ramp. With the help of Al and  
**PAY** cont. on page 3



submitted photo

Volunteers from Calvary Baptist church worked together to build a wheelchair ramp for Valerie and Trinity Neves last week. The ramp was a surprise to the Neves family and built free of charge to the family.

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## Pay it forward

cont. from page 1

Cal Ferguson, and other church volunteers, Leija's idea to help was brought to life.

A few members of the group went over to the Neve residence and measured for a ramp and evaluated what supplies they would need to build Trinity a ramp.

Once they supplies were gathered, with materials donated from Frank's Hardware, the group met once again after work last week and got to work on the ramp.

The group came with welding torches, paint, metal, and worked for the next five hours building the ramp for Trinity.

"I was just glad to help somebody that needed a helping hand," Leija said of his work organizing the project. "I just thought this was a good project and it all worked out for the good."

The ramp was nearly

completed the night the group came and worked on it. Only finishing painting touches remain, which Leija said will be finished as soon as dry, warm weather permits.

Leija said that he was able to see the ramp in use today while driving by the residence the same time of day that he originally saw Valerie struggle. Today there was no struggle.

"It was beautiful and so easy," Leija said describing Trinity using the ramp. "I hope if I am ever in that situation someone will come help me out."

Leija said that many people were involved in the project who all did the work for Valerie and Trinity, not for public recognition.

"It's like the pay it forward principal," he said of the group's work. "There is hope and help for people out there in need."

## Tax exemption

cont. from page 1

lion in lost revenue at a time when state revenue is already plummeting.

Lawmakers agreed to make the increased exemption temporary, "in recognition that when we return in the next biennium, estimates are we may be as much as \$12 billion in the hole," Oliveira said. "If that is true, we will have to revisit this."

The Legislature adopted the business tax under court order in 2006 to help cover the \$14 billion cost of reducing 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.

Under the tax structure, companies are taxed at 1 percent — 0.5 percent for retailers — of gross receipts. Companies can

deduct for costs of goods or employee benefits like salary and health care.

Businesses also are lobbying for a measure that would ease their tax burden in years when they're not profitable. But, in recognition of the looming state budget quagmire, more than a dozen proposed amendments to the plan were withdrawn and the legislation was adopted without changes.

The new business tax was intended to overhaul the state's old franchise tax, which was so full of loopholes it was widely considered an optional tax.

Lawmakers spent years trying to fix it, but stumbled over how to structure a new tax within legal constraints that would apply equally to different business structures.

## Teacher of year

cont. from page 1

though, she said. Mendoza described her first grade class as, "funny, with lots of energy, and eager learners." To handle the energy, Mendoza said she tries to have good classroom with management and be consistent with procedures so students will always know

what's expected of them.

Mendoza splits her time between her first grade students and her family, Kayla, 18, Oklahoma State University freshmen, Pampa High School freshmen Margo, and husband, Ruben.

## Energy prices fall one day before crude storage report

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Oil prices retreated from five-month highs Tuesday, a day before the government is expected to report that crude storage levels have reached a new 19-year high.

Benchmark crude for June delivery fell 50 cents to \$53.97 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after jumping \$1.27 on Monday to \$54.47 — the market's highest close since Nov. 26.

Still crude prices have risen nearly 8 percent since last Tuesday and gas prices have begun to tick upward as the driving season approaches and as refineries cut back on production.

A gallon of regular gasoline at retail prices climbed another six-tenths of a cent overnight to a national average of \$2.079, a high for the year but still well below the historical norm, according to auto club AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service.

"You're going to see some higher pump prices," said Tom Kloza, publisher

and chief oil analyst at Oil Price Information Service. "People are going to start noticing it and talking about it."

Oil has traded near \$50 for more than a month as the worst global slump in decades undermined energy demand.

Hints of an economic recovery have pushed prices higher in recent weeks.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke told Congress Tuesday that the economy should exit the recession and begin to grow later this year. That could lead to a rebound in energy prices.

Kloza said he wouldn't be surprised if crude prices flirt with \$60 before Memorial Day.

Dour economic reports have outweighed the positive for months, however, and part of the reason energy prices have been sustained at the current level is the weak dollar. Crude is priced in dollars, which makes it cheaper to buy when the dollar falls.

The U.S. currency has been weakened by the mas-

sive government bailout of banks and automakers.

The dollar fell less than a penny against the euro Tuesday, but is down about 6 cents compared with the beginning of the year.

"Maybe it as simple as the fact that oil has more dollar value in a world where the U.S. government is running up a debt of historic proportions," analyst Phil Flynn said in a client note.

That would go a long way to explain why energy prices are not falling even further.

As trader and analyst Stephen Schork wrote Tuesday, "You can't swing a cat without hitting a barrel of crude oil."

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries meets May 28 to discuss a potential production cut. OPEC has announced 4.2 million barrels a day of output quota reductions since September, but left production levels unchanged at its last meeting in March.

The Energy Information Administration's weekly

report on crude in storage is expected to show a continued build up on Wednesday for the week ending May 1.

Crude stocks rose 4.1 million barrels last week and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve has hit record levels and continues to grow, Schork noted.

Refiners have slashed production, so they are not taking in as much oil. That has led to some comparatively cheap gasoline, though prices are up slightly at the pump because of the cutbacks.

A gallon of regular unleaded gasoline is about \$1.53 a gallon cheaper than it was last year at this time.

In other Nymex trading, gasoline for June delivery fell four-tenths of a cent to \$1.582, while heating oil fell about a penny to \$1.4249 a gallon. Natural gas for June delivery dropped 10.5 cents to \$3.62 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In London, Brent prices fell 41 cents to \$54.17 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange.

## Legislative session

The bill by Sen. Judith Zaffirini, a Laredo Democrat, is a big change from the tuition moratorium and hard caps some proposed at the beginning of the session.

**COCKFIGHTING**  
Texas lawmakers want to expand the ban on cockfighting in Texas.

A measure preliminarily approved in the House Monday would make it illegal to attend cockfights or make money from them.

The proposal by Rep. Wayne Christian, R-Center, also would prohibit owning or selling training equipment.

The House voted 103-33 in favor of the measure.

Christian said cockfights, which have long been illegal in Texas, are often accompanied by illegal alcohol and gambling.

**TEXTBOOKS**

The Texas House has given final approval to a measure that would allow schools to use their textbook allotment from the state to buy approved electronic materials.

That means qualified information could be downloaded to laptops or Kindle electronic readers if schools choose to use the technology.

Branch and other supporters contend that using computers and online material would save the state money because it eliminates the need to regularly replace cumbersome textbooks that have become outdated. With online textbooks, publishers could update their material and correct errors sooner.

Schools would still have the option of buying hardbacks.

**TAKING LAND**

The Senate voted to expand the rights of property owners who face having their land taken by the government.

The bill by Sen. Craig Estes, a Wichita Falls Republican, would limit eminent domain land takings to projects for public use only and would require governments to make a "bona fide" offer for the property before condemnation.

A property owner would be entitled to be paid for any loss of market value if the taking impairs their access to the land they still have. Any land taking would also have to be done by a record vote in a public meeting.

Gov. Rick Perry vetoed in 2007 an eminent domain

bill that addressed diminished access. Perry, a Republican, is now pushing a constitutional amendment to safeguard landowners' rights.

The Senate bill requires property owners be given an initial offer for the land in writing, and prohibits governments from requiring confidentiality agreements. And if a court rules the government did not make a bona fide offer, it could order the government to make another offer and to pay the landowners' legal fees.

Governments would also have to tell the landowner that he or she and their heirs may someday be able to repurchase the land for the price paid to acquire it. That option would kick in if the public project for the land is canceled or no progress has been made in 10 years after the condemnation.

**CLEAN COAL PROJECTS**

The Texas House on Monday tentatively approved giving up to \$100 million in tax credits to three first-come companies that develop and implement clean energy technology in coal-fired power plants.

Supporters said it was an earned incentive that would likely not affect the state's revenue or budget for 5 to 10 years, because the three projects approved for the incentives would have to build the clean coal plants and prove carbon capture and energy production. But Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, said the incentives were money that could be going to consumer relief on property tax and college tuition in a rough economy.

Weatherford Republican Rep. Phil King, one of several representatives backing the measure, said the exemption from the state's franchise tax would be a drop in the bucket compared to the funds it would take to get the plants up and running and the money the companies would generate in the future.

"I truly don't believe we're going to get clean coal technology built in Texas without this," King said of the incentives.

In order for a clean energy project to receive the tax credit, it would have to meet standards including a 200 megawatt production rate while capturing 70 percent of their carbon dioxide emissions.

Monday's passage of the measure rounded out two separate days of lengthy and heated debate on the

house floor about what kinds of clean energy projects would be eligible, where the incentive money should come from and how much should be used for the incentives.

**TECHNOLOGY FUND**

The House voted 142-0 Monday to require the governor to report his use of the Emerging Technology Fund to the Legislature at the beginning of each year.

Earlier this session, lawmakers complained that there was no accountability over the fund after Texas A&M University System received a \$50 million grant from the fund. The fund is divvied up at the discretion of the governor, lieutenant governor and House speaker.

The bill by Rep. Norma Chavez, D-El Paso, would require Gov. Rick Perry's office to post non-confidential activities of the Emerging Technology Fund on his Web site, as well as submit a report to lawmakers. The information would include the total number and amounts of state grants under the fund and who received them.

The measure now goes to the Senate.

The governor's office uses the Texas Enterprise Fund and the Emerging Technology Fund to bring jobs to Texas.

**GOVERNOR'S FLAG**

Gov. Rick Perry and all Texas governors who

cont. from page 1

follow him would get a flag to fly at official functions under a bill given final approval by the Texas House Monday.

The flag would be a dark blue field with four white stars in the corner and a lone star in the center encircled by live oak and olive branches and the words "In God We Trust."

Rep. Jim Dunnam, D-Waco, had originally proposed that the governor take on the 1893 pilot flag of the Republic of Texas. But Weatherford Republican Rep. Phil King suggested that his comrade's choice — consisting of horizontal white, blue and red bands with a lone white star in the center — was too similar to the Russian flag, which lacks only the lone star.

The House voted 127-14 in favor of King's flag, which now heads for the Senate to weigh in on the flag's final appearance. Current state law allows for the governor to have a flag, but no governor has made an official choice.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"I've got to lay out this dyslexia bill now, and I want you to know I know it backward and forward." Rep. Rob Eissler, R-The Woodlands, before laying out a bill on treatment of dyslexia.

## H1N1 flu outbreaks

Here are some key developments in Texas on H1N1 flu outbreaks, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Texas officials. (The total number of confirmed cases includes a Mexico City boy who died in Houston but isn't in the county-by-county breakdown.)

CONFIRMED CASES: 40

- Guadalupe County: 9
- Dallas County: 7
- Tarrant County: 5
- Johnson County: 4
- Fort Bend County: 3
- Comal County: 2
- Starr County: 2
- Harris County: 2
- Bexar County: 1
- Cameron County: 1
- Collin County: 1
- Denton County: 1
- Nueces County: 1

## Texas seeks emergency aid in wake of wildfires

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The state agriculture commissioner is seeking federal relief for Texas farmers and ranchers who suffered \$35 million in losses from March and April wildfires.

Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples is sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Tuesday, asking for assistance. That's after wildfires destroyed more than 220,000 acres of pasture, about 1,500 miles of fence and almost 500 head of cattle and calves.

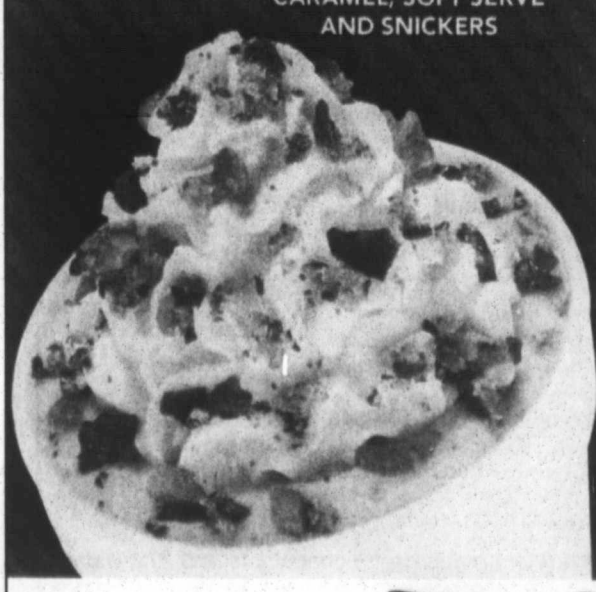
Staples asks that the 18 North Texas counties be declared disaster areas, providing relief funding and open up grazing acreage.

The counties are Archer, Baylor, Callahan, Clay, Cooke, Eastland, Hamilton, Hood, Jack, Montague, Palo Pinto, Parker, Shackelford, Stephens, Wheeler, Wichita, Wise and Young.

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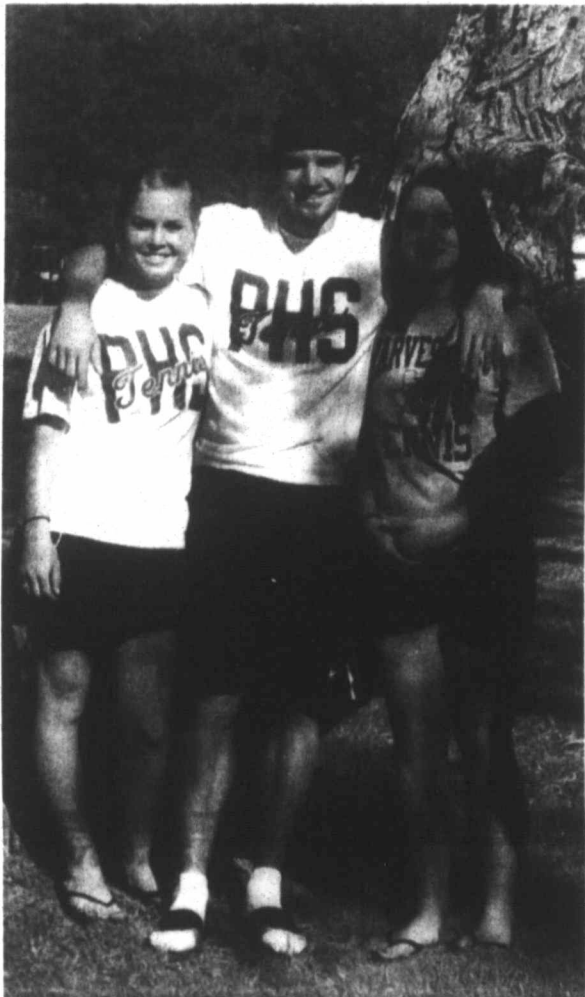
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# Around town

## TENNIS



Coach Donna Turner, Jack Ware, Rachel Lee and Coach Sarah Course at the District Tennis Tournament in Amarillo.



Photos submitted by Debbie Lee Seniors Rachel Lee, Jack Ware and Lauren Coutts at Regionals in San Angelo.

## Mixed doubles team second in regionals

Even though the Pampa High School tennis team has been through a challenging five years, with three different coaches, construction, and other obstacles.

Tennis mixed doubles is the only sport at PHS where both boys and girls compete against each other. The mixed doubles team of Jack Ware and Rachel Lee had a 10-2 district record in the fall. They received second team all-district for their record. They lost out on first team all district to a Canyon team that had an 8-0 record. Ware and Lee beat the same team in the spring and were able to represent the district at the regional meet in San Angelo.

Ware and Lee are seniors and set their sites on going to regionals early in August when they beat a Wichita Falls Rider team.

Several team members joined Ware and Lee in San Angelo to support them.

## OPTIMIST BASEBALL Rotary defeats Clarendon

Rotary Club improved their record to 4-0 by defeating Clarendon in Clarendon by a score of 11-0. The game was halted after 4 innings due to the 10 run rule.

Rotary used 4 pitchers to combine for a 3-hit shutout. Ethan Hunt, Thomas Haley, Cade Engle and Rance Tipps each pitched one inning. Hunt improved his record to 4-0 on the sea-

son. At the plate, Hunt blasted his 2nd home of the season, Haley added a single, Luis Chavez had a single, and Tipps added a single. Engle and Hunt both scored 2 runs. Every player but 1 on Rotary scored at least 1 run. The Pampa Optimist club is a United Way agency.

## Glo-Valve triumphs over Claude

Glo-Valve Service pitched by committee and prevailed over Claude 6-1 Monday at Optimist Park in Pampa Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken League action.

Ryan Powell started for Glo-Valve and was credited with his second win of the season. He allowed one run and two hits. He struck out three and did not walk a batter. Brody Gaines took the hill in the third inning. He struck out five and walked two giving up no runs or hits in two innings. Casey Martindale pitched part the fifth inning walking two batters. Aaron Allen finished up with six consecutive outs including two strikeouts. He threw only four pitches in the sixth inning.

Claude drew first blood in the first inning on consecutive doubles by Zac Pointer and Logan Johnson to take a one-run lead.

Glo-Valve came back with a vengeance. Allen singled to start the bottom half of the first inning for Glo-Valve. He stole second and third and scored on an infield out by Powell. Gains slammed a single to left field and stole second to keep the rally going. He tallied on a single by Martindale. Martindale stole two bases and trotted home on a single to left by Chance Douglas. Douglas also stole two bases and scampered home when Colton Thompson was safe on an error. Glo-Valve led after one inning 4-1.

In Glo-Valve's half of the second inning, Michael Mechelay started things for Glo-Valve by being safe on an error. He went to second on a balk, to third on a wild pitch and trotted home on a double to right field by Jason Velasquez. Velasquez scored after a pair of Claude errors on balls hit by Allen and Powell making the

score 6-1.

Claude threatened in almost every inning but wasted a single by Bailey Morrow in the second inning, a walk to Brice Holland in the third, a walk to Jace Davis in the fourth and walks to Julian Hughes and Ian Ferguson in the fifth.

Starting pitcher Johnson and reliever Davis retired Glo-Valve in order the last three innings.

Davis made the outstanding defensive plays of the game for Claude by throwing a Glo-Valve runner out trying to steal second, by throwing another runner out at home trying to score on a wild pitch and by starting a pitcher to shortstop double play.

Douglas made a spectacular running catch in right field of a fly ball in the sixth inning for Glo-Valve's defensive gem. Powell threw a runner out trying to steal second and started a pitcher to shortstop double play after snagging a line drive off his shoe tops for Glo-Valve's other outstanding defensive plays.

In the early game Ryan Rhoden pitched the final two innings, striking out the last batter with the bases loaded, to be credited with being the winning pitcher, as Cabot Corporation edged Duncan, Fraser & Bridges Insurance Agency 12-10 for its first win of the season.

Pampa Optimist 11-12 Cal Ripken League play continues today when Cabot takes on Glo-Valve at 5:45 p.m. and D.F.B. plays Rotary Club at 7:45 p.m. Glo-Valve and D.F.B. moved its Thursday game to tomorrow at 5:45 p.m. because of a conflict with the All School Band Concert. The Pampa Optimist Youth Club is a Pampa United Way agency.

## Gray County receives grant funds for food and shelter programs

Gray County has been chosen to receive \$4,326 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county. These funds have been made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A; The Salvation Army; United Jewish Communities and, United Way of America. The Local Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the county.

A Local Board made up of Gray County Judge, The Salvation Army, Good Samaritan Christian Services, Inc., Tralee Crisis Center for Women, Inc., Pampa Meals on Wheels, Southside Senior Citizens Center, The Harvest House, Pampa United Way, Catholic Church, City of Pampa Representative, American Red Cross, and a formerly homeless person will determine how the funds awarded to Gray County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds made available through the ARRA.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary non-profits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Gray County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with The Salvation Army, Good Samaritan Christian Services, Tralee Crisis Center for Women, Pampa Meals on; Wheels, Southside Senior Citizens Center, Harvest House participating. These agencies were responsible for providing 5,224 meals and 226 nights of lodging.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for ARRA Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Katrina Bigham at Pampa United Way, 200 N. Ballard #104, 669-1001, or pampaunitedway@clearwire.net for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is May 18.



The Wood Group took the field Monday night again with cloudy skies and a cold wind blowing but that did not stop these 5 and 6 year olds from playing ball. Picture: With the game coming to an end Hayden Henson of the Wood Group makes it to home base with catcher Klair Cambern of Prestige Auto attempting to tag him out.

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PHOTOS WITH PERSONALITY

# Comics

Marmaduke



"I take it your undying devotion lasts only until the next doggie treat?"

## THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"I bet he'd be good at blowin' out birthday candles."

## For Better Or Worse



Zits



Garfield



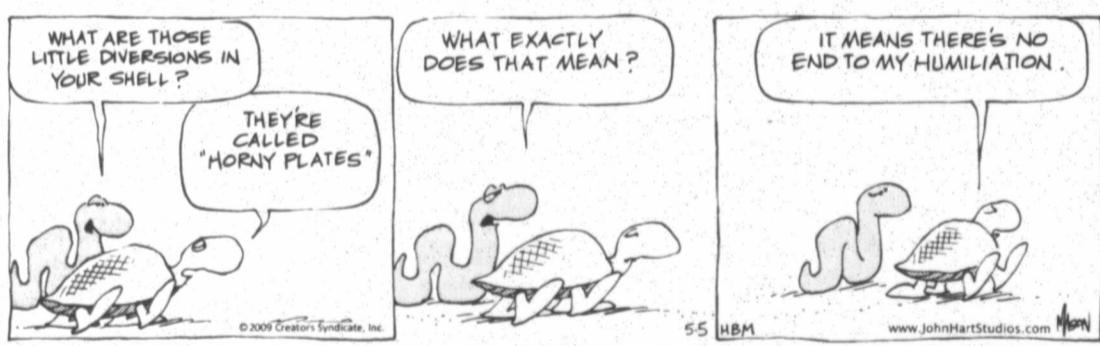
Beetle Bailey



Marvin



B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



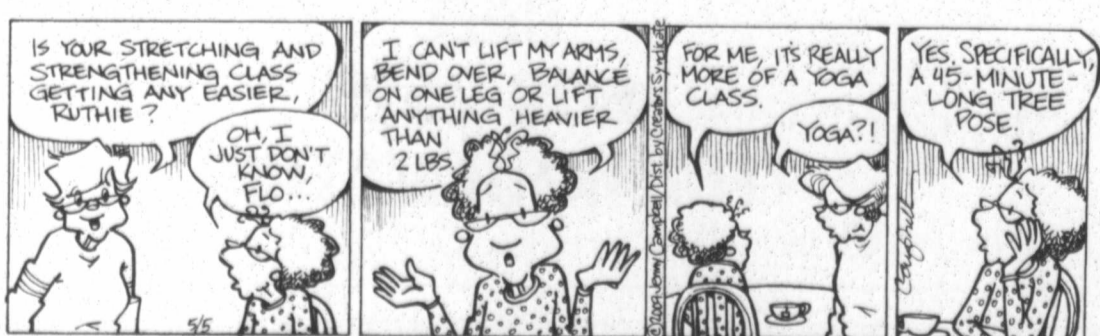
Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



## Daily Crossword Puzzle

### CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Appraised

1 Domestic-

6 Closet

11 Even a

12 Singly

13 Autobiog-

15 Music's

16 Parrot or

17 Regret

18 Legisla-

20 Aykroyd

21 Auction

22 Like some

23 Murdered

26 Attire

27 Minimal

28 Pot fill

29 Do

30 Use a

34 Buddy

35 Syr.

36 Sheep cry

37 Careers

40 General

41 Mirror

42 Takes a

break

DOWN

1 Folded-

2 Be

3 Massenet

4 Sprite

5 Didn't get

6 Play

7 Quarter-

8 Desperate

9 Some

10 Takes

14 Garden

19 Some-

22 Mardi —

23 Scurry

24 "A Perfect

25 Aphids

26 Letter

28 Hardy

30 Bearings

31 German

32 Grazing

33 Moves

38 In shape

39 "—

M	A	N	I	C	A	B	E	T											
E	R	I	C	A	S	I	D	E	S										
L	I	T	E	R	P	O	I	N	T										
D	E	R	A	M	I	F	A	R											
S	L	O	T	M	A	C	H	I	N	E									
					H	E	X	A	C	T	S								
M	A	B	E	L	P	R	E	S	S										
O	N	U	S	T	I	S													
T	I	M	E	M	A	C	H	I	N	E									
I	M	P	A	R	K	N	O	R											
F	A	K	E	R	E	L	A	T	E										
S	T	I	C	K	T	O	N	I	C										
E	N	O	S	S	P	E	N	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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13					14				
15				16				17	
18			19					20	
			21					22	
23	24	25				26			
27					28				
29			30				31	32	33
34			35					36	
37			38				39		
40							41		
42							43		



# Battle continues over honors for soldier

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas legislators want Congress to right a wrong that they say was caused by bigotry — denial of the Medal of Honor to an American war hero with roots in Mexico.

Marcelino Serna served valiantly in World War I and returned to Texas a military legend, but his advocates say he was bypassed for America's highest military decoration because of his heritage and the fact that he spoke little English.

State Rep. Joe Pickett, D-El Paso, last week presented a resolution on Serna's case to the Texas House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs. The resolution would ask Congress to reconsider a Medal of Honor for Serna, who died in 1992 at age 95.

The resolution has already cleared the state Senate and the House committee. It needs final approval from the full House to be presented to Congress.

Serna spoke almost no English when he enlisted in the Army, but after three weeks of training the Army shipped him across the Atlantic.

"Can you imagine that? A native of Chihuahua, Mexico, then Colorado, sent to England," Pickett said.

When Army officers realized that Serna was a Mexican national, they offered him the chance to return home. A friend translated his answer — a firm "no." Serna decided he would stay and fight for the United States.

He carried out his duties with uncommon valor. Army records stated that Serna killed three dozen enemy soldiers and captured nearly the same num-

ber. Serna received a medal for bravery from the French government, the Croix de Guerre, the British Medal of Honor, the Italian Cross of Merit and two purple hearts, among other awards. But the U.S. Medal of Honor, the rarest and most prestigious military decoration, eluded him.

After being discharged in 1919, Serna settled in El Paso and became a U.S. citizen five years later. The legislators' campaign is the latest in a series of attempts to get Serna the recognition they say he deserved all along.

As far back as 1995, former U.S. Rep. Ronald Coleman, D-Texas, introduced legislation in Congress to posthumously award Serna the Medal of Honor, but the bill stalled in committee.

In 2004, Texas state Rep. Juan Manuel Escobar, D-Kingsville, introduced a resolution asking Congress to back Serna for the Medal of Honor. That measure fizzled, too.

Mike Quiroz, a California businessman, discovered Serna's compelling biography while researching the history of his own father, who also migrated from Mexico.

"I think it's ingrained in our country's history that we not forget those who served on the battlefield," Quiroz said.

John Spahr, legislative director of the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars, said Serna's case symbolizes the difficulty many veterans face in receiving recognition for combat valor.

"There's no real advocate for these veterans, especially if it's gone on for years and years," Spahr said.

But the Department of

Defense and U.S. presidents have authorized Medals of Honor decades after the fact.

President Clinton in 2000 awarded the Medal of Honor to former President Theodore Roosevelt 102 years after Roosevelt led his volunteer Rough Riders into battle in the Spanish-American War. In 2001, Clinton awarded the Medal of Honor to Andrew Jackson Smith, a black Union soldier in the Civil War, whose service occurred in 1864.

Clinton said Roosevelt and Smith originally were denied the Medal of Honor because of prejudice. Roosevelt, an outspoken man of privilege, had enemies in high places. Army leaders initially may have declined to honor Smith because of the color of his skin.

Military and political leaders are cautious about bestowing the Medal of Honor. Just 3,447 Medals of Honor have been awarded to combat heroes since the Civil War.

President George W. Bush in June 2008 awarded the most recent Medal of Honor to Army Spc. Ross McGinnis, a 19-year-old from western Pennsylvania, who saved the lives of four buddies in Iraq by diving on a grenade that insurgents threw into their vehicle. McGinnis died in the explosion.

Quiroz said he thinks about today's soldiers as he seeks belated recognition for Serna.

"Those soldiers that are returning and will be returning from the Middle East — we don't want them to believe that any of them would have to wait 100 years to receive recognition, as this man did," he said.

# Texas looking for 10 deadbeat parents

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas authorities want the public's help tracking down the state's top 10 deadbeat parents, who together owe more than \$521,000 in overdue child support payments.

Attorney General Greg Abbott released the 2009 list Monday, selecting parents who officials say can take responsibility for their children but don't. All the men and women on the list are wanted on civil or criminal warrants and face jail time and fines for failing to pay child support. They have missed court-mandated child support payments for at least six months.

"All of them are hiding, purposely eluding," Janece Rolfe, spokeswoman for the attorney general's child support division, said in a story Tuesday in the Houston Chronicle.

Topping the list was Jimmie McCullough, 49, who owes \$133,866

for support of his two children in Fayetteville. He sometimes uses the alias of Randy McCullough and was last known to be in Texarkana. He has the names "Candy," "Mandy," and "Lisa" tattooed on his arms.

Two women are on the list — ranked seventh and eighth. Michelle Falco, 39, owes \$48,413 in payments for her two children in Richardson. Falco, is believed to live in Algonquin, Ill. Angela Keller, 39, owes \$45,017 for her two children in Houston.

Texas recently has had success in ensuring court-mandated child support payments. In the last fiscal year, \$2.6 billion in child support payments were recovered, according to the attorney general's office. Three of last year's top 10 evaders were located, Rolfe said.

# Bill forces sex offenders to register online

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Registered sex offenders in Texas would have to list their e-mail addresses, cell phone numbers and any Internet IDs to law enforcement under a bill moving its way through the Legislature.

The bill is designed to let officials monitor what they are doing in cyberspace and remove the anonymity of the Internet.

"The more secret, the more private they can be, the more they can do their dastardly deeds," said Sen. Florence Shapiro, a Plano Republican who sponsored the bill that passed the Senate on Monday and was sent to the House.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott joined Shapiro and Rep. Aaron Pena, D-Edinburg at a Capitol news conference Tuesday to support the bill. A Republican, Abbott has aggressively tracked sexual predators on the Internet.

Since 2003, Abbott's Cyber Crimes Unit has arrested 105 people trying to arrange sex with investigators posing on the Internet as young children. Another 96 have been con-

victed of child pornography charges.

The registration bill is "another vital tool for cracking down on child predators who are using the Internet," Abbott said.

The bill also requires some high-level offenders, for crimes such as rape and assault of a child, to be banned from using social networking sites such as MySpace or Facebook as a condition of their parole. While some judges currently ban such activity, it is not required under law.

Registered sex offenders are required to give authorities their home address and cell phone numbers. Under Shapiro's bill, the registration form would be expanded to require any

Internet IDs as well as cell phone numbers.

The registry would have to be updated every time an offender gets a new cell phone number, e-mail address or other form of Internet ID, Abbott said.

The cell phone requirement is critical because of rapidly expanding technology that allows cell phone users to access the Internet or send text messages and exchange photographs, Pena said.

The information would be kept with law enforcement and could be shared with Internet providers. It would not be public information.

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## Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: My only child, "Lauren," is 16. Her boyfriend, "Scott," treated her well when they first started dating a year ago. Now he talks down to her, makes fun of her and breaks up with her every other week for a few days. Lauren doesn't talk to us about these break-ups or anything else. She talks to Scott's mom and dad and believes everything they tell her.

Lauren used to be close to my sister and her kids, but now she ignores them. She would stay at Scott's 24/7 if we'd let her. She goes there even when he's not home, and has asked if she could spend the night over there. Of course, we refused.

We're not bad parents. Her friends all tell our daughter how lucky she is. Lauren has a nice car, pretty clothes and just about everything she wants. She doesn't have chores, but she holds down a part-time job for spending money.

I don't know why she allows Scott to disrespect her and why she has forsaken her family. We liked Scott and his family at first -- until they started turning our daughter against us. She'll be 18 before long, and I don't want to lose my daughter. Help! -- TROUBLED MOM IN TENNESSEE

DEAR TROUBLED MOM: Your daughter "has a nice car, pretty clothes

and just about everything she wants." Nowhere in your letter did you mention discipline and accountability. "Chores" are for more than spending money. They reinforce the idea that a child is a contributing member of the family.

Your daughter is 16, thinks she's in love and has no experience. Scott's behavior is emotionally abusive, and he breaks up with her regularly because he wants some freedom. I don't know what your daughter is getting from Scott's parents -- perhaps it's "hope" that their son really is Prince Charming. (Not.)

I applaud the fact that you didn't allow your daughter to spend the night with him. There is still time for you and your husband to impose some rules in your home, and I hope you will do so. Family counseling could help to open the lines of communication, and you should get some right away.

DEAR ABBY: One of my co-workers has been conducting long phone calls with her newly married daughter, who seems to be having marital troubles. The conversations are interesting and quite personal. Sometimes I feel awkward hearing all the uncomfortable details, but the calls are impossible to ignore in our quiet little office.

How do I tactfully let

the offender know she's broadcasting her daughter's private life to the entire office? One would think her many personal calls would weigh upon her conscience, but she seems oblivious.

Should I send an anonymous note, let the office manager deal with it or let it go? I'm ashamed to admit it, but I can't wait to hear the next installment of "My Daughter Is Too Incompetent to Handle Her Own Life." -- HOOKED

### ON THE DRAMA

DEAR HOOKED: How well do you know your co-worker? If you're at all friendly, do her a favor and tell her the phone calls have become a topic of conversation in the office. If you are not close and the calls keep you from getting your work done, then say something to the office manager because what the woman is doing is unprofessional.

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Sudoku

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

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

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