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SHOP PAMPA



staff photo by Mollie Bryant

Rayn Dunigan browses for clothes at Beall's on Monday. Beall's was among the local retailers reporting strong Christmas shopping sales in Pampa in 2011.

Local retailers report strong season

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

Even though many holiday shoppers have already rushed home with their treasures, area retailers expect sales to maintain an upward trend into the new year, particularly after December sales that outpaced last year's.

"Sales have been good," said Derrick Thompson, manager of Pampa's Walmart branch. "They're definitely up from last year. It looks like the economy has rebounded, and people are spending more, which we're glad to see."

He noted that electronic items, like tablets, were particularly popular this year.

"We sold a lot of toys,

but even toys are transitioning into electronics," said Thompson.

Seth Stribling, manager of Wayne's Western Wear, also reported a strong holiday season, encouraged by developments within the local industry sector.

"With our business, (sales are increasing) because of the oil boom," he said. "Our biggest item is work boots."

Stribling said that workwear and work boots make up the bulk of the store's sales, especially during the winter season.

"Until April, (sales are) steady if it's cold, because people replace their boots," he said. "They don't want holes in their boots in the winter."

Gift item sales stood out this year to Ermelinda Fernandez, store manager of Beall's at the Coronado Center.

"We seemed to get a lot of new merchandise in this year, and we sold a lot of gift items," said Fernandez, who included lanterns, flashlights and backscratchers among the new items in the store's inventory.

Pampa retailers expect sales to stay up for the rest of the season, at least until January hits.

"Today looks like Christmas in the store," said Thompson. "The next week it will continue to be busy, and steady out in the next few weeks."

Registration down at Clarendon

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

The Pampa campus of Clarendon College has seen slow registration for the upcoming spring semester, with a 15 percent drop from last year, but Raymond Jaramillo, Vice President of Pampa Center and Dean of Workforce Development, is optimistic that the numbers will pick up.



Jaramillo

"It's still early, so there's still time to get enrollment up. Students can register through January, but we don't want them to get a late start if they can help it," said Jaramillo. "We're going to beat the bushes to get recruitment."

The school will hold a registration event after the holiday season comes to a close. Students can pre-register until Tuesday, January 17, when classes and late registration begin. The last day to register for classes is Friday, January 27.

Upcoming highlights for the college include a new class of students entering the one year nursing program, which runs from January through December.

"A new class is fixing to start, so we're pushing that program," said Jaramillo, who estimates that the previous class started with almost 80 students, about 50 of which completed the program.

Jaramillo also encourages students to consider the welding program, which has high job placement for those who complete it.

"There's a strong demand for welders, but we're not getting the students we need," he said. "The industry in Pampa is waiting to turn out welders."

Jaramillo expects Clarendon **CLARENDON** cont. on page 12

NWS says no more snow in Pampa until 2012

ARNIE AURELLANO
 editor@thepampanews.com

While Pampa got a light dusting of snow over Christmas — an inch, according to the National Weather Service in Amarillo — Gray County isn't due for more snow for the rest of the year.

"What you've got for Christmas is pretty much what you're going to have," said meteorologist Steve Bilodeau of the Amarillo NWS office.

Pampa was spared from much of the precipitation that the southern part of the Texas Panhandle received. Amarillo got 4.2 inches of snowfall, .4 of inch shy of the city's record for Christmas, set in 1939. Clarendon received four inches and Hereford two and a half.

"There was a storm system that came

through New Mexico on Friday that brought a little more precipitation than we were expecting," Bilodeau said. "It didn't hit as far up as McLean or Shamrock, places like that, but it did hit us down here (in Amarillo)."

If the weather service's prediction holds true, that would put a cap on Pampa's 2011 snowfall at 17.3 inches on the year, according to Darrell Sehorn, who records Pampa's precipitation for the NWS. That's easily over Pampa's normal average snowfall, which Sehorn put at about 12 inches.

Most of this year's snow came on one day, as Pampa received 12.9 inches on Feb. 9, Sehorn said.

"It was very unevenly distributed (that day), depending on where you measured it," Sehorn said, "but that was our biggest now of the year."

That day's snowfall comprised the city's entire snow total in February. Other active snowfall months in Pampa included October, with two inches, and December, which saw 4.2 inches fall.

As for the present road conditions, a few Pampa residents traveling to and from Amarillo on U.S. Hwy. 60 reported some slick patches of ice along the way on Monday morning, and the Texas Department of Public Safety issued a pair of releases regarding two fatal accidents due to icy conditions in Potter County on Christmas day. According to Bilodeau, though, the fairly mild temperatures over the course of the week should curb the ice buildup and make highway travel for Pampans and other Panhandle residents safer.

SNOW cont. on page 12

Have you made yours yet?
Nominations for Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year
 are due by 4pm this Friday

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PAMPA FORECAST

Tuesday Wednesday Thursday



High 48
Low 23

Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 48. Wind chill values between 15 and 25 early. West northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south southeast.

Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 23. Wind chill values between 13 and 18. South southeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north northwest.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 49. Wind chill values between 12 and 22 early. Northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 28. West southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 59. West wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 30. West wind between 5 and 10 mph.

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Mexico extradites suspect in US consulate slaying

MEXICO CITY (AP) - Mexico says it has extradited another suspect in the 2010 killing of a U.S. consulate employee, her husband and another man to the United States. Suspect Joel Abraham Caudillo faces charges of racketeering, drug trafficking, money laundering, and obstruction of justice. Caudillo is alleged a member of the Barrio Azteca gang, which allegedly killed consular employee Leslie Ann Enriquez Cation and her husband in the border city of Ciudad Juarez. The Attorney General's Office said Monday that Caudillo was extradited Dec. 20. It said he allegedly helped cover up or destroy evidence in the killings. A U.S. grand jury indicted a total of 35 gang members in the crime, almost all of whom have been arrested.

Alien giant prawn threatens native Gulf shrimp

HOUSTON (AP) - A gigantic, alien species of prawn is beginning to appear in Texas coastal waters, posing a threat to native species of shrimp and crab. The Asian tiger prawn is a foot-long crustacean that not only devours the same food as their smaller shrimp but also dine on their smaller cousins, as well as crab and young oysters. The Texas Sea Grant pro-

gram at Texas A&M University reports three tiger prawns have been found in Aransas Bay north of Corpus Christi, one in Sabine Lake at the Louisiana border, and one in the Gulf of Mexico 70 miles off the Freeport coast. Leslie Hartman of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department tells the Houston Chronicle that "it has the potential to be real ugly, but we just don't know."

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Obituaries

Aleen Rogers, 88

LEFORS - Aleen Rogers, 88, died Saturday, Dec. 24, 2011 in McLean. Services will be held at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011, in Carmichael-Whitley Colonial Chapel in Pampa with Rev. Lewis Ellis, Baptist minister, officiating. Burial will be in Memorial Heights Cemetery in Lefors. Mrs. Rogers was born April 23, 1923 in Boaz, AL to George and Lula Turner. She married Freeman Wilemon in 1939, and he preceded her in

death. She has been a resident of Gray County since 1952. Aleen worked as a nurses' aide at Groom Hospital and Highland General Hospital in Pampa for many years. She was a member of First Baptist Church of Lefors. In her spare time, she enjoyed sewing and crocheting. Survivors include one son - Danny Wilemon and wife Jo of Pampa; two brothers - Gene Turner of AR and Guy Turner of AL; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. Aleen was preceded in death by 5

brothers and sisters. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society, c/o Gerry Caylor, 2130 Charles, Pampa, TX 79065. Sign the online register book at www.carmichael-whitley.com.

Mary Preston, 87

Mary E. Preston, 87, died December 26, 2011 in Pampa. Services are pending with Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors.

Final goodbye: Roll call of some who died in 2011

ATLANTA (AP) - They lived by the sword, both inspiring fear and acts of bloodshed around the world. And in the end, they both suffered violent deaths befitting their fearsome reputations. Perhaps no two deaths in 2011 transfixed the world more than those of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden and Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi. Bin Laden became the most wanted man in the world after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that killed almost 3,000 people. Nearly a decade later, he was shot dead by U.S. commandos in May after being tracked to his hideout in Pakistan. His body was buried at sea. For Gadhafi, the end came after he was captured by rebels, his final moments shown in gruesome, shaky handheld video that was seen across the globe.

If relief and even celebration by many greeted their demise, the deaths of other notables in 2011 brought reflection on lives of achievement. The world of science and innovation lost Steve Jobs, the Apple founder who invented and marketed sleek gadgets that transformed everyday technology from the personal computer to the iPod, iPhone and iPad.

Science also said goodbye this year to Christian J. Lambertson, Norman Ramsey, William Nunn Lipscomb, Jr., Boris Chertok and Ralph Steinman.

Political figures who died in 2011 included R. Sargent Shriver, Warren M. Christopher, Jiri Dienstbier, Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Geraldine Ferraro, Max van der Stoep, Necmattin Erbakan, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, Leonidas Kyrkos, Hugh Carey, Garret FitzGerald, Betty Ford, Vaclav Havel and Kim Jong Il.

In entertainment, the world lost Elizabeth Taylor, a woman whose sultry screen persona, stormy personal life and enduring fame made her one of the last of the classic movie stars. The year also saw the passing of soul singer Amy Winehouse, whose death at age 27 left many wondering what works of musical brilliance the world might have seen from the troubled, young star.

Others in the arts and entertainment field who died include: Peter Falk, Jane Russell, Clarence Clemons, Pinetop Perkins, Annie Girardot, Harry Morgan, Ferlin Husky, Susannah York, Randy "Macho Man" Savage, David Nelson, Sidney Lumet, Richard Hamilton, Bil Keane, Poly Styrene, M.F. Husain, Heavy D, Jackie Cooper, Robert Tear and Betty Garrett.

Here is a roll call of some of the people who died in 2011. (Cause of death cited for younger people if available.)

JANUARY: Maj. Richard "Dick" Winters, 92. The man who fought in several major battles in World War II and whose quiet leadership was chronicled in the book and television miniseries "Band of Brothers." Jan. 2. Jiri Dienstbier, 73. A reporter turned dissident who joined Vaclav Havel to help topple one of Eastern Europe's most repressive regimes, then served under Havel in Czechoslovakia's first post-communist government. Jan. 8.

Peter Yates, 81. A British film maker who sent actor Steve McQueen screeching through the streets of San Francisco in a Ford Mustang in "Bullitt." Jan. 9.

Margaret Whiting, 86. A sweet-voiced performer known for sentimental ballads who sold millions of records in the 1940s and 1950s. Jan. 10. David Nelson, 74. He starred on his parents' popular American television show "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet." Jan. 11. Colon cancer.

Mississippi Winn, 113. A former domestic worker believed to be the oldest living African-American in the U.S. and the seventh oldest person in the world. Jan. 14.

Susannah York, 72. One of the leading stars of British and Hollywood films in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Jan. 15. Cancer.

Don Kirshner, 76. A rock promoter who helped launch performers such as Prince, the Eagles, Lionel Richie and Ozzy Osbourne. Jan. 17.

R. Sargent Shriver, 95. First Peace Corps director, ambassador and leader of the War on Poverty in the U.S. but best known as a Kennedy in-law. Jan. 18.

Ed Mauer, 94. The oldest living member of a 101st Airborne Division company that became known as the "Band of Brothers" and fought some of the fiercest battles of World War II

but kept his Army service secret even from his family. Jan. 21. Pancreatic cancer.

Jack LaLanne, 96. The fitness guru who inspired U.S. television viewers to trim down, eat well and pump iron for decades before diet and exercise became an American obsession. Jan. 23. Respiratory failure due to pneumonia.

FEBRUARY: Maria Schneider, 58. A French actress who was Marlon Brando's young co-star in Bernardo Bertolucci's steamy "Last Tango in Paris." Feb. 3.

J. Paul Getty, 54. The troubled grandson of one of the world's richest men who lost an ear in a grisly kidnapping in Italy. Feb. 3.

Maria Altman, 94. A refugee from Nazi-occupied Austria whose successfully fought to recover Gustav Klimt paintings looted from her Jewish family. Feb. 7.

Christian J. Lambertson, 93. A scientist and doctor who invented a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus used by the military in World War II and later coined the term "scuba," an acronym by which such systems are widely known. Feb. 11.

Betty Garrett, 91. The vivacious Broadway star who played singer Frank Sinatra's sweetheart in two MGM musicals before her career was hampered by Hollywood's blacklist in the 1950s. Feb. 12.

George Shearing, 91. A British-born jazz pianist who wrote the standard "Lullaby of Birdland" and headed a famed quintet. Feb. 14.

Suze Rotolo, 67. Artist and girlfriend of singer Bob Dylan, who was his lyrical muse when he came to prominence in the early 1960s. Feb. 25.

Duke Snider, 84. Baseball Hall of Famer for the "Boys of Summer" who helped the Dodgers bring their only World Series crown to Brooklyn. Feb. 27.

Frank Buckles, 110. The last surviving American veteran of World War I who also survived being a civilian prisoner of war in the Philippines in World War II. Feb. 27.

Jane Russell, 89. The voluptuous actress who starred in the controversial film "The Outlaw" and who, as a pin-up girl, set GIs' hearts to pounding during World War II. Feb. 28.

MARCH: Mikhail Simonov, 81. An aircraft designer whose heavily armed and far-flying Sukhoi fighter jet became the star of the Soviet defense industry and a cash cow for post-communist Russia. March 4.

Alberto Granado, 88. He accompanied Ernesto "Che" Guevara on a journey of discovery across Latin America that was immortalized in Guevara's memoir and on the screen in "The Motorcycle Diaries." March 5.

Joe Morello, 82. A legendary American jazz drummer whose virtuosity and odd time signatures made him an integral part of the Dave Brubeck Quartet on such recordings as "Take Five." March 12.

Michael Gough, 94. The British actor best known for playing Bruce Wayne's butler in a series of Batman movies. March 17.

Ferlin Husky, 85. A pioneering American country music entertainer in the 1950s and early '60s known for hits like "Wings of the Dove." March 17.

Farley Granger, 85. The 1950s American teen screen idol who starred in Alfred Hitchcock classics such as "Rope" and "Strangers on a Train." March 20.

Pinetop Perkins, 97. Grammy-winning bluesman, who for years played the rickety bars of the Mississippi Delta and performed with musicians such as Ike Turner, Sonny Boy Williamson and slide guitarist Robert Nighthawk. March 21.

Mayhew "Bo" Foster, 99. A World War II U.S. Army pilot who transported Nazi official Hermann Goering for interrogation in an unarmed, unescorted plane. March 21.

Elizabeth Taylor, 79. The violet-eyed American film goddess whose sultry screen persona, stormy personal life and enduring fame and glamour made her one of the last of the classic movie stars and a template for the modern celebrity. March 23.

Warren M. Christopher, 85. The attorney-turned-envoy who tirelessly traveled to Bosnia and the Middle East on peace missions as U.S. secretary of state in the Clinton administration

March 25. Complications from bladder and kidney cancer.

Geraldine Ferraro, 75. A relatively obscure Democratic congresswoman who became the first woman on a major U.S. party ticket when she ran for vice president in 1984 and emboldened American women to seek office. March 26. Complications from blood cancer.

Harry Wesley Coover Jr., 94. Known as the inventor of the popular adhesive Super Glue. March 26.

Robert Tear, 72. A versatile Welsh tenor who appeared in opera houses around the world and made more than 250 recordings. March 29.

APRIL: Dr. Baruch S. Blumberg, 85. He shared the Nobel Prize in medicine for his discovery of the hepatitis vaccine April 5.

Sidney Lumet, 86. The award-winning director of such American film classics as "Network," "Serpico," "Dog Day Afternoon" and "12 Angry Men." April 9.

William Nunn Lipscomb, Jr. 91. A Harvard professor who won the Nobel chemistry prize in 1976 for research on the structure of molecules and chemical bonding and mentored several future Nobel laureates. April 14. Pneumonia and complications from a fall.

Pietro Ferrero, 47. Chief executive of the Ferrero Group holding company that produces Nutella, Tic-Tac mints and other confections and a scion of one of Italy's richest families. April 18. Fall from a bicycle.

Hubert "Hub" Schlafly, 91. A key member of a team that invented the teleprompter and rescued soap opera actors, newscasters and politicians from stumbling over their words on live television. April 20.

Jess Jackson, 81. The founder of the Kendall-Jackson winery and owner of two most widely recognized thoroughbreds in recent years. April 21.

Norio Ohga, 81. As chairman he transformed the Japanese electronics maker Sony into a global software and entertainment empire. April 23.

Max van der Stoep, 86. A former Dutch foreign minister and a U.N. human rights representative who became a thorn in the side of the late Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. April 23.

Ernesto Sabato, 99. An Argentine writer who led the government's probe of crimes committed by the military dictatorship. April 30.

MAY: Henry Cooper, 76. One of Britain's most popular sportsmen who was best known for knocking down Muhammad Ali when he was still known as Cassius Clay. May 1.

Osama bin Laden, 54. Terrorist leader whose money and preaching inspired the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. May 2. Killed during a raid by U.S. Navy SEALs in Pakistan.

Jackie Cooper, 88. One of the most popular child movie stars of the 1930s who later had a successful career as a television director and still appeared in films. May 3.

Arthur Laurents, 93. The director, playwright and screenwriter who wrote such enduring productions as "West Side Story" and "Gypsy" as well as the film classics "Rope" and "The Way We Were." May 5.

Claude Stanley Coules, 110. The last known combat veteran of World War I who had a 41-year-military career that extended into World War II. May 5.

Seve Ballesteros, 54. A five-time major champion whose incomparable imagination and fiery personality made him one of the most significant figures in modern golf. May 7. Complications of a cancerous brain tumor.

Robert Stempel, 77. A former General Motors chief executive and engineer who led the development of the catalytic converter but was ousted in a boardroom coup. May 7.

Wallace McCain, 81. A billionaire frozen food mogul and philanthropist who helped turn a small Canadian french fry plant into the global McCain Foods empire and later went on to control meat processor Maple Leaf Foods. May 13.

Harmon Killebrew, 74. The baseball slugger for the Minnesota Twins and for many years the face of the team. May 17. Esophageal cancer.

(Editor's Note: Due to the length of this list, we will feature the rest of this article in tomorrow's issue.)

MORNINGRUSH

3.3 quake reported in Oklahoma

CROMWELL, Okla. (AP) - Some Oklahoma residents may have felt their homes shake on Christmas Day, but it wasn't because reindeer had landed on the roof.

The U.S. Geological Survey reports a 3.3-magnitude quake struck around 8:10 a.m. Sunday 5 miles northwest of Cromwell. A Seminole County Sheriff's dispatcher said the office didn't receive any reports of injuries or damage from the temblor, which happened about 55 miles east of Oklahoma City.

The state was jolted Nov. 5 by a 5.6-magnitude tremor that was the strongest ever recorded in Oklahoma.

A foreshock to that tremor and an aftershock two days later had magnitudes of 4.7, but most earthquakes since then haven't been as strong.

Geologists say quakes with magnitudes of 2.5 to 3.0 are generally the smallest felt by humans.

Party boat burns on Austin lake

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - A 70-foot-long double-deck party boat is rubble after its propane tanks exploded and sent the burning empty vessel adrift for several hundred yards on Austin's Lady Bird Lake.

No one was hurt in the Sunday fire. The boat that had been moored at a marina next to a downtown Austin hotel.

Fire Department Battalion Chief Thayer Smith says no cause was determined immediately but arson was a possibility.

Damage is estimated at \$1 million. The explosion and fire also damaged two smaller vessels and the dock where they were berthed.

Firefighters waded into the lake, using a hook attached to a long pole to grab the drifting boat and pull it to shore. Smith told the Austin American Statesman the owner would be responsible for removing the wreckage.

Texan pulls gun on wrong guy

SAN ANTONIO (AP) - A Texas man apologized after pulling a gun on another guy and chasing him 10 miles into a police station believing it was the man who tried to rob him during a drug deal.

The San Antonio Express-News reports Saturday the armed man blurted "Oh, man, that's not the right guy" as he was being arrested.

Officer Louis Esquivel says he was just leaving when two cars sped into the parking lot.

A man in the second car got out, and hit the ground after officers threatened to shoot.

Police say he told them he initially believed the man in the other car had tried to rob him during a heroin deal. He asked them to apologize for the confusion.

Police say he may be charged with deadly conduct.

Speeding driver shot after wreck

HOUSTON (AP) - Houston authorities say a police sergeant feared for his life when he shot and killed a driver of a speeding car who became combative after a wreck Christmas night.

Police spokesman Kesse Smith said Monday the sergeant saw the speeding car strike another vehicle and then crash into a ditch. The driver got out and began walking away. When the officer ordered him to stop, the man initially refused, then appeared to comply when the sergeant pulled his gun.

Smith says a struggle broke out as the officer was escorting the man to the patrol car.

The man's name was not immediately released. The *Houston Chronicle* reported the sergeant was placed on administrative leave, a standard procedure after an officer-involved shooting.

Counties may e-mail tax bills

FORT WORTH (AP) - Texas property owners may get their next tax bills by email because of a new state law that gives counties that option.

Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector Ron Wright says it's a "step into the 21st century for the tax office."

Rep. Charlie Geren pushed the measure unopposed in the Legislature. The Republican whose House district is north and west of Fort Worth credits Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price with the money-saving idea when she was the tax collector-assessor.

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reports Monday that several counties are considering implementing the service because it's cheaper to send the bill electronically than through the mail, which requires printing and postage costs.

Scott Porter, president of the state's Tax Assessor-Collector Association, said many counties are working out the details before deciding.

Gay privacy victor dead at 68

HOUSTON (AP) - The Texan whose gay privacy case led to a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling that granted privacy rights to gay men and lesbians has died at the age of 68.

John G. Lawrence died in Houston Nov. 20, according to Sarah Wilson of R.S. Farmer Funeral Home in Silsbee, Texas. His partner, Jose Garcia, says Lawrence died of a heart condition.

Mitchell Katine, a Houston attorney who represented Lawrence in the case *Lawrence vs. Texas*, said he learned of his client's death Saturday while inviting him to an April celebration of the ruling.

Lawrence and Tyrone Garner were arrested in 1998 at Lawrence's home near Houston by sheriff's deputies who found them having sex. The 2003 Supreme Court ruling struck down the Texas state law that made sodomy a crime.

Call 669-2525 today to get THE PAMPA NEWS with all the local news you need delivered right along with your daily mail

Remind lawmakers of their job

TERRY SAVAGE
Creator's Syndicate

Have you been rushing to get everything done this holiday season? Perhaps you're headed off to a vacation in warmer climes — or maybe it's just getting prepared for a few days at home with your family. In either case, you know the feeling of trying to get everything done in the last few days.

But while you'll get all the important stuff at work finished because your boss is watching, Congress seems to have no such incentive. We, the people, are their boss — and Congress couldn't seem to care less.

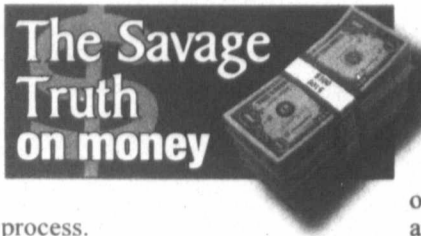
You won't be able to hide the year-end project under a stack of other stuff and leave work with a clean conscience. But members of Congress seem completely capable of postponing their real work for a couple of months while they go on vacation. Do they think we won't notice?

It took until Saturday to pass a year-end \$1 trillion spending bill to keep the government operating. Perhaps the ultimate pressure of returning home to face the electorate finally got to them.

But they can't agree on extending the payroll tax cut.

And still up in the air is an extension of unemployment benefits and reimbursement rates for physicians who see Medicare patients — two issues that have a real impact if they are not dealt with immediately.

Of course, part of this is the process of jockeying for political and public relations supremacy in an election year. Even projects that both sides agree would be good for the economy are held hostage to the



It's time for the bosses — us — to speak up and force them to do the job that we're paying them to do. Here's how to make your voice heard, no matter what your take on the issues:

Go to ContactingtheCongress.org. Then just fill in your address and ZIP code to be sent to the page with your U.S. representative and two senators. Click on each name, and you'll find a link to a "contact form." It takes only a minute to fill out that form with your name, address and e-mail and then a category for your comment.

Then post a message to be sent directly to each of them.

It will take only a few minutes to contact each of your representatives. They may not listen to any one message, or reply with a pre-formatted e-mail — but if we all send a similar message, the impact will be huge. Remember, you're paying each of our senators and representatives \$174,000 a year — not to mention health care and retirement benefits, and paid vacation!

Let's make sure we're getting our money's worth from each of them. The only way to do that is to remind them they owe us some attention to their job, just as our bosses demand of us. You'll have the final word at the ballot box — but it can't hurt to remind them who's their boss. And that's The Savage Truth.

Terry Savage is a registered investment adviser and is on the board of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. She appears weekly on WMAQ-Channel 5's 4:30 p.m. newscast, and can be reached at www.terrysavage.com. She is the author of the new book, "The New Savage Number: How Much Money Do You Really Need to Retire?"

NM ski areas welcome wave of storms

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) - A steady stream of December storms has given New Mexico ski resorts some of the best early conditions in the country, and tourism officials are scurrying to make sure that translates into a banner season.

"What we are trying to do is get the word out about how great the snow is," said George Brooks, executive director of Ski New Mexico, which represents the state's eight downhill and two cross-country ski areas.

Brooks said the association was working with the state Tourism Department to tout the excellent conditions, which had given most New Mexico ski resorts 40-plus-inch bases going into the Christmas holiday.

The state's ski resorts can generally count on being full for Christmas regardless of how much snow is on the ground.

But Brooks said publicity about the storms, as

well as the fact that New Mexico resorts are starting the season with better bases than the usually more reliable early season mountains in Colorado and Utah, should translate into bookings that carry over into January and February.

"We really needed this," said Dave Dekema, marketing director for Angel Fire Resort, noting that last year "La Nina kept all the storms north of us and what we were getting was a lot of wind. All those resorts had a fantastic opening."

Forecasts were for more of the same this year, but so far "we are 100 percent different than where we were, sitting a year ago."

Two years ago was one of the best seasons for the industry since 2000-2001, Brooks said. But then the numbers "receded quite a bit. Last year was not a good year."

Adding to this year's boon, he said, is that many of the storms have carried over to the Texas

Panhandle, reminding the key Texas market the snow is falling in New Mexico.

Dekema said the phones started ringing after the state got hit with its first big storm Dec. 4 and 5. "We had a huge spike after that," he said. "And then once again after we opened and people saw what percentage was open early, and then, with this storm, our phones have been ringing off the hook."

Angel Fire got a foot in one day early last week with the blizzard that hit much of northeastern New Mexico.

Taos Ski Valley has had more than 100 inches of snow this season, and Sandia Peak Ski Area at the edge of Albuquerque is off to a good start so early in the season with a 63-inch base.

Heading into the holiday weekend, another storm socked much of New Mexico and a few ski areas were again able to reap the benefits. Sandia was the big winner with

17 inches in a 24-hour period. Southern New Mexico's Ski Apache had 16 new inches and Parajito Mountain Ski Area near Los Alamos followed with 14.

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Chipmunks (G)
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Man gets bike frames returned 30 years later

LUFKIN (AP) - One Texas man got four dream bikes for Christmas - and they're 30 years old and have no wheels.

For Mike Maberry, unexpectedly tracking down four of the light-weight BMX Blazer bicycle frames he crafted with his own hands in the early 1980s and bringing them home have made this a special Christmas.

"It will remain forever

among our fondest memories," Maberry told the Lufkin Daily News.

Maberry began building the bicycle frames, which became known as some of the lightest-weight BMX Blazer frames in the racing arena, in 1981. But within two years he and his partner stopped producing the frames made of aircraft tubing. And the limited production frames

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Viewpoints

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 27, the 361st day of 2011. There are four days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 27, 1968, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.

On this date:

In 1831, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle.

In 1904, James Barrie's play "Peter Pan - The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up" opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London.

In 1945, 28 nations signed an agreement creating the World Bank.

In 1970, the musical play "Hello, Dolly!" closed on Broadway after a run of 2,844 performances.

In 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin, who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.

In 1981, composer and bandleader Hoagy Carmichael ("Stardust") died in Rancho Mirage, Calif., at age 82.

In 1985, American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death.

In 2007, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Pakistan by an attacker who shot her after a campaign rally and then blew himself up.

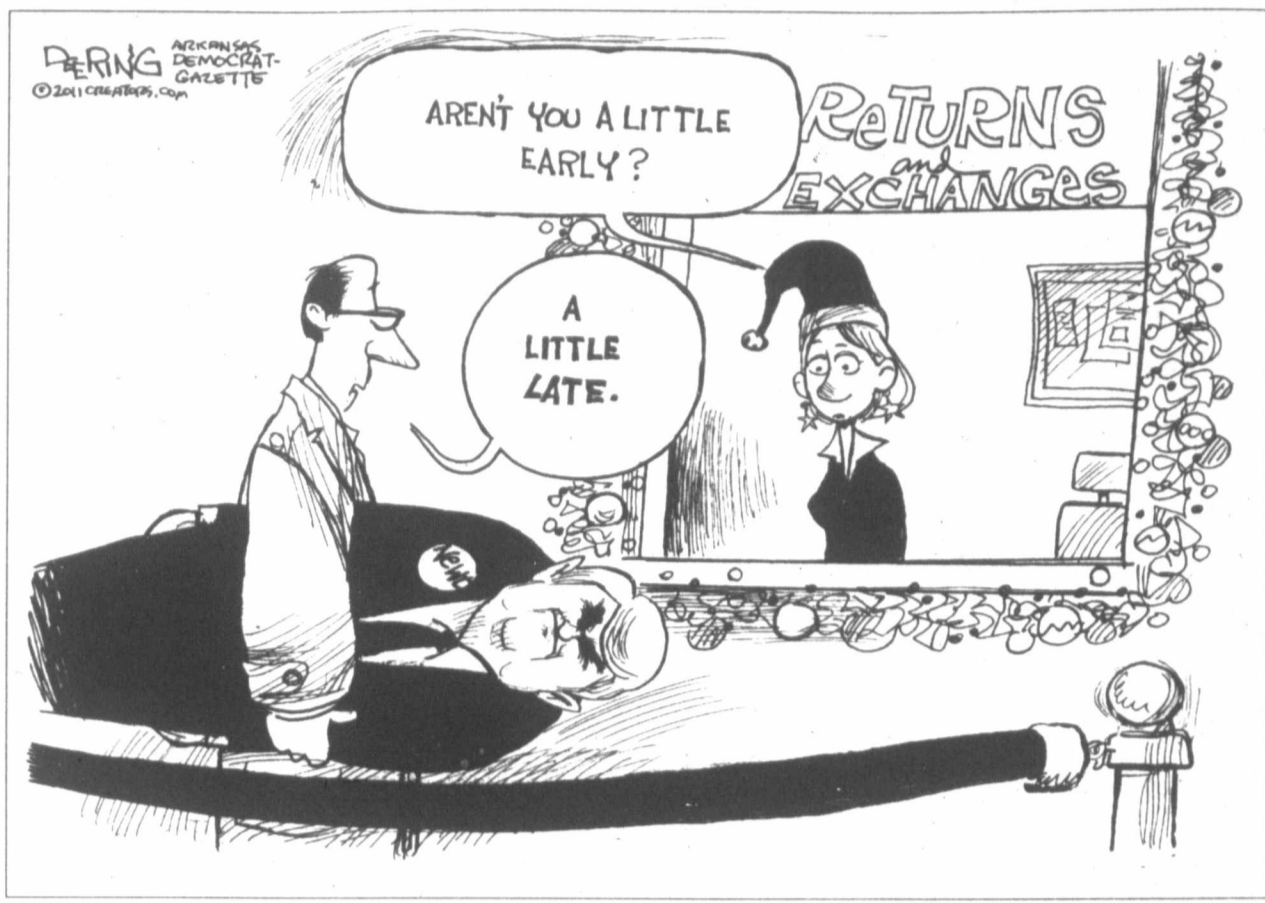
Ten years ago: Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners would be held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. President George W. Bush extended permanent normal trade status to China.

Five years ago: Saddam Hussein urged Iraqis to embrace "brotherly coexistence" and not to hate U.S.-led foreign troops in a goodbye letter posted on a website a day after Iraq's highest court upheld his death sentence.

One year ago: A Russian court found imprisoned oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky guilty of stealing nearly \$30 billion in oil from his company, Yukos. (His supporters have charged that Khodorkovsky's prosecution was politically motivated.)

Today's Birthdays: Rockabilly musician Scotty Moore is 80. Actor John Amos is 72. Actress Charmian Carr is 69. ABC News correspondent Cokie Roberts is 68. Rock musician Mick Jones (Foreigner) is 67. Singer Tracy Nelson is 67. Actor Gerard Depardieu is 63. Jazz singer-musician T.S. Monk is 62. Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff is 60. Actress Tovah Feldshuh is 59. Rock musician David Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 59. Journalist-turned-politician Arthur Kent is 58. Actress Maryam D'Abo is 51. Country musician Jeff Bryant is 49. Actor Ian Gomez is 47. Actress Theresa Randle is 47. Actress Eva LaRue is 45. Actress Tracey Cherelle Jones is 42. Bluegrass singer-musician Darrin Vincent (Dailey & Vincent) is 42. Rock musician Guthrie Govan is 40. Musician Matt Slocum is 39. Actor Wilson Cruz is 38. Singer Olu is 38. Actor Masi Oka is 37. Actor Aaron Stanford is 35. Actress Emilie de Ravin is 30. Christian rock musician James Mead (Kutless) is 29. Rock singer Hayley Williams (Paramore) is 23.

Thought for Today: "Man has an incurable habit of not fulfilling the prophecies of his fellow men." - Alistair Cooke, Anglo-American journalist and broadcaster (1908-2004).



Economy to pick up but still vulnerable

DEREK KRAVITZ
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The U.S. economy will grow faster in 2012 - if it isn't knocked off track by upheavals in Europe, according to an Associated Press survey of leading economists.

Unemployment will barely fall from the current 8.6 percent rate, though, by the time President Barack Obama runs for re-election in November, the economists say. The three dozen private, corporate and academic economists expect the economy to grow 2.4 percent next year. In 2011, it likely grew less than 2 percent.

The year is ending on an upswing. The economy has generated at least 100,000 new jobs for five months in a row - the longest such streak since 2006.

The number of people applying for unemployment benefits has dropped to the lowest level since April 2008. The trend suggests that layoffs have all but stopped and hiring could pick up.

And the economy avoided a setback when President Barack Obama signed legislation Friday extending a Social Security tax cut that was to expire at year's end. But Congress could agree only on a two-month extension.

The economists surveyed Dec. 14-20 expect the country to create 177,000 jobs a month through Election Day 2012. That would be up from an average 132,000 jobs a month so far in 2011.

Dean Maki, chief U.S. economist at Barclays Capital, says the U.S. economy remains vulnerable to an outside shock. A big threat is the risk that Europe's debt crisis will trigger a worldwide credit freeze like the one that hit Wall Street in late 2008.

A shock to the U.S. economy, he says, might not be as dangerous if it were growing at a healthier 4 percent

to 5 percent annual pace. But when growth is stuck at 2 percent or 3 percent, a major global crisis could stall job creation and raise unemployment.

Beyond Europe, troubles in other areas could also upset the U.S. economy next year, the economists say. Congressional gridlock ahead of the 2012 elections and unforeseen global events, like this year's Arab Spring protests, could slow the U.S. economy. Three economists said rising nuclear tensions with Iran are a concern.

Even without an outside jolt, the economists expect barely enough job creation in 2012 to stay ahead of population growth and the return of discouraged workers into the labor force.

"I just don't know if it's going to be enough to bring the unemployment rate down," says Chad Moutray, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers.

The AP economists expect the unemployment rate to be stuck at a recession-level 8.4 percent when voters go to the polls in November. Unemployment was 8.6 percent in November.

A majority (56 percent) of the economists say the economy will get a lift from Federal Reserve policies. The Fed has said it plans to keep short-term interest rates near zero through at least mid-2013 if the economy remains weak. The central bank also has begun a campaign to try to push down mortgage rate and other long-term interest rates through next June.

Those surveyed also think the economy is strong enough to withstand higher oil prices. At near \$100 a barrel, oil prices are up 10 percent from a year ago. But only two of the economists AP surveyed expect the higher prices to slow the economy "a lot."

The economists expect the European economy to shrink 0.5 per-

cent in 2011 - and fall into a recession. Europe is slowing as heavily indebted countries slash spending and banks exposed to government debt curtain lending.

Among the gravest fears is that a major country like Italy will default on its debt, wiping out some banks with large holdings of European government bonds. A worldwide credit crunch like the one that followed the 2008 failure of Lehman Bros could follow.

Twenty-one of the economists listed Europe as a threat to the U.S. economy next year.

"If it were a big enough downturn given the size of Europe, it could bring the world economy down into recession," says Allen Sinai, president of Decision Economics.

But overall, the economists see only an 18 percent chance that Europe's debt troubles will cause a recession in the United States.

The economists are divided over which one step European policymakers should take now to bolster the 17-country eurozone.

More than one-fourth say the European Central Bank should aggressively try to lower the borrowing costs of the Italian and Spanish governments by buying their bonds.

Nearly one-fifth say European countries should jointly issue "Eurobonds" to help finance weaker countries.

And 17 percent say European governments should slash spending.

Still, the economists expect European policymakers to find a way to prevent the crisis from escalating into a global financial panic.

If Europe can stabilize its economies, the U.S. stock markets would rally sharply, economists say, and prospects for U.S. economic growth would brighten.

"Europe appears to be the only real impediment to keeping this recovery from happening," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economics.

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Texas lawmakers: patients need better protection

DALLAS (AP) - Two Texas lawmakers say they want to pass laws to better protect mental-health patients in the state after allegations emerged that employees at Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital had been abusive of patients.

The Dallas Morning News reports Saturday that State Sens. Judith Zaffirini and Jane Nelson will work to pass legislation ensuring caregivers handle patients safely. Nelson is chairwoman of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Zaffirini says she wants new training and hiring standards for psychiatric technicians and stronger sanctions for hospitals that break the rules.

The Dallas Morning News has reported that Parkland staff have used dangerous restraints on patients without the proper supervision, and failed to report at least 10 abuse allegations since 2007. The hospital has come under federal scrutiny.

Christmas card rests for first time in 61 years

WHITEHOUSE (AP) - A Christmas card that has crisscrossed the country as part of an old joke between two Texas men will rest this holiday for the first time in 61 years.

Acker Hanks said he mailed the card to his former neighbor and good friend Lee Kelley in 1950. Kelley, a prankster, mailed it back a year later.

"I probably didn't even read what was on the card," Hanks, 89, told the Tyler Morning Telegraph. "We were constantly pulling jokes on one another."

And so began a tradition that continued even after Kelley died; his widow loyally put the tattered message in the post for more than a decade. Last year, though, the card returned to Hanks unread. He believes Kelley's widow, Rose Ann, has moved to a nursing home.

The worn card is decorated on the outside with a Christmas tree and a holiday message.

The inside has a list of years and places, documenting the card's journey as it followed Kelley, who worked for the U.S. Forestry Service, from post to post.

Pennsylvania. New Hampshire. Washington, D.C.

All places Kelley lived, while Hanks remained in Texas.

Next to many of the dates and places are brief updates of what was going on in each man's life.

About 15 years ago, Hanks and his wife, Bobbi, travelled to Wisconsin to visit the Kelleys. Two years later, his friend died.

Now the card will be framed, a memorial to a lifelong friendship.

"I always looked forward to getting the card," Hanks said. "I don't think it'll ever leave me now."

Murderous gunman shows up as Santa

GRAPEVINE, Texas (AP) - Six members of a Texas family apparently opened Christmas presents just before a relative dressed as Santa Claus showed up, opened fire and killed them before killing himself, police said Monday.

Grapevine police spokesman Sgt. Robert Eberling said the shooter showed up in the Santa outfit shortly before gunfire erupted and was a member of the family. The identity of the shooter and the victims will be released after autopsies are conducted Monday, he said.

Police went to the apartment midday Sunday after receiving a 911 call in which no one was on the other line. They found four women and three men, aged 18 to 60, dead. A motive for the shootings remains unclear.

Investigators worked overnight, meticulously

searching the apartment, along with three vehicles parked outside.

"It appears they had just celebrated Christmas. They had opened their gifts," Grapevine Police Sgt. Robert Eberling said Sunday, adding that the apartment was decorated for the holiday, including a tree.

Two handguns were found near the bodies, and it appears all died of gunshot wounds, he said.

Grapevine Police Lt. Todd Dearing said investigators believe that the victims were related, though some were visiting and didn't live in the apartment. He said police are looking for other relatives to inform of the deaths.

"Seven people in one setting in Grapevine, that's never happened before. Ever," Dearing said.

Police and firefighters first rushed to the Lincoln Vineyards complex after receiving the open-ended

911 call at about 11:30 a.m., Eberling said.

"There was an open line. No one was saying anything," he explained.

So police went into the apartment, located in the middle-class neighborhood of Grapevine, not far from the upscale Fort Worth suburb of Colleyville. The apartment was at the back of the complex, overlooking the athletic fields of Colleyville Heritage High School.

Many of the nearby apartments are vacant, and police said no neighbors reported hearing anything on a quiet Christmas morning when many people were not around.

Jose Fernandez, a 35-year-old heavy equipment mechanic who moved to the complex with his family about six months ago, said he always felt safe in the area, but is now afraid to let his 10-year-old son play

freely outside.

"This is really outrageous especially on Christmas," said Fernandez, who was visiting family for the holiday and returned to find several police cars parked outside his home.

"This has shocked everybody. It has scared everybody. I guess something like this can happen anywhere, but seven people dead. It's just very scary," he added.

Eberling agreed the area is fairly quiet, saying the shootings involved the first homicides in Grapevine since 2010.

Christy Posch, a flight attendant who moved to the complex about six months ago so her son could attend the high school, said she lives a few buildings away and did not hear any gunshots. "It's all families. That's why I moved here. No burglaries, no nothing," Posch said.

Texans rescued from snow recovering

HOUSTON (AP) - The Higgins family is spending Christmas at a Colorado hospital rather than being on a ski vacation, but the Texans are just thankful to be alive.

Days after being rescued from their snow-covered SUV in New Mexico, the only family member still in the hospital is Yvonne Higgins, who is expected to fully recover from the bout of pneumonia she caught while struggling to stay alive in frigid conditions for nearly two days, her husband, David Higgins told the Houston Chronicle.

David Higgins was released from a New Mexico hospital on Thursday after being diagnosed with pneumonia. The couple's 5-year-old

daughter, Hannah, was given a clean bill of health hours after the family was rescued at about 1:30 a.m. Wednesday. Yvonne Higgins was transferred to a hospital in Pueblo, Colo.

"We say 'God bless you and thank you' to the New Mexico state troopers, the police department and the New Mexico National Guard," David Higgins said. "We were completely entombed in ice."

The family's ordeal began Monday when they left Texas for a vacation in New Mexico. Within hours, they got stuck in a large blizzard on U.S. Highway 412, just west of the Texas border, and could no longer drive. Their vehicle became buried under

four feet of snow.

Due to cloud cover, the Higginses had spotty cell phone coverage - unusual, they later found out, in the area where they were stranded. This allowed them to give responders enough clues to find their general location. Using probes, the rescuers began searching in a snowbank and after a few tries, hit the car.

"We were pretty much out of oxygen and it had started to get cold in there," David Higgins said.

Now, the family is together in Colorado, with Higgins' parents, Jim and Betty Higgins, who have come to spend Christmas with them.

Santa, though, won't be visiting until they

return home to League City, Texas, a town about 25 miles southeast of Houston.

"We've already explained to Hannah that Santa understands the situation," David Higgins said. "When we get home, we'll have our big Christmas."

Uncertainty over rebuilding after Texas wildfires

BASTROP (AP) - Concrete foundations that have been cleared of rubble sit eerily empty amid charred remains of once majestic loblolly pines. Driveways, some still complete with patio furniture and basketball hoops, snake their way to nothing but a slab of stone.

More than three months after record-setting wildfires roared through this otherwise charming corner of central Texas, many of the hardest-hit areas stand largely abandoned by homeowners who have moved elsewhere. Others left homeless are starting to rebuild bigger and better houses or vow to do so soon even as the memories of the raging blazes remain fresh.

"I get to kind of build my dream house, I just haven't been in the spirit yet," said Denise Rodgers, a hospice chaplain. She was among an estimated 5,000 people displaced by the flames that killed two people, destroyed 1,673 homes and charred 53,000 acres of land.

more than twice the size of Manhattan in and around Bastrop, about 30 miles southeast of Austin.

Some parts of town are in the midst of a rebuilding boom, with streets crammed with trucks hauling in lumber or earthmoving equipment and carting away debris. Even ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" show got in on the action, taking a week to build a 2,500-square-foot home for a volunteer firewoman and her family who lost their bungalow.

But other areas have made little recovery. No one knows for sure how many residents have moved away already or still could.

"Certainly there are going to be a lot of people leaving," Bastrop Mayor Terry Orr said. "But we certainly want to encourage people to rebuild."

The city of Bastrop and surrounding county of the same name are home to 80,000 people, Orr said, meaning about 7 percent of residents lost homes.

In the days after the wildfires, some displaced families snapped up vacant homes for sale in the area. Others have moved in with friends or relatives, or rented homes while they decide what to do permanently.

Rodgers is living in a vacant home lent by a friend with only some rented basic furniture. "I have stuff only for one drawer," she said her New Year's resolution is getting her new home built and that she may put a pool and garden where her original house stood and build on an adjacent lot.

"In the beginning, I was so horrified, I couldn't think of living there," Rodgers said of her home, which was reduced to ash and clumps of melted belongings. "But you get used to seeing certain things and you change ideas."

Returning after the fire, she remembers, "I sat in the driveway and wailed. There was nothing that I could see and recognize."

A Buddha statue, a cross, an angel Christmas ornament missing only a broken wing and a Hindu goddess statue survived the flames.

"Is it uncanny that an eclectic, non-denominational hospice chaplain would find only spiritual icons in the debris? I think not," Rodgers said. "These

were all divine signs that all would be OK."

Some have already begun building improved homes, fitted with energy-efficient technology and other upgrades.

Marvin Beck and his wife Anne spent two years beginning in 1992 building their home largely by

Frames

became something of a sensation among hardcore BMX bikers.

And so, when Maberry got a phone call a couple of weeks ago from one of his factory riders, he was surprised to hear he had found a frame online that was still in the box. With a bit of research, Maberry tracked the frame down to a Shreveport, La., shop that had shut down years ago.

Maberry and his wife, Terri, drove down to Shreveport to buy back the frames and bring them home, determined

to save at least one for their two-year-old grandson.

"It was a strange feeling for both Terri and me to be holding a Blazer frame that I had personally painted, decal and packed into this box," Maberry said.

When they returned home, they dug up the old records, retrieving the UPS shipping receipt for the last bike frame shipped to Jimmy's Bike Shop in Shreveport on Feb. 4, 1981.

"On the bottom left corner was the signature

of the UPS counter girl, T. Gilliland, my wife," Maberry said.

cont. from page 3A

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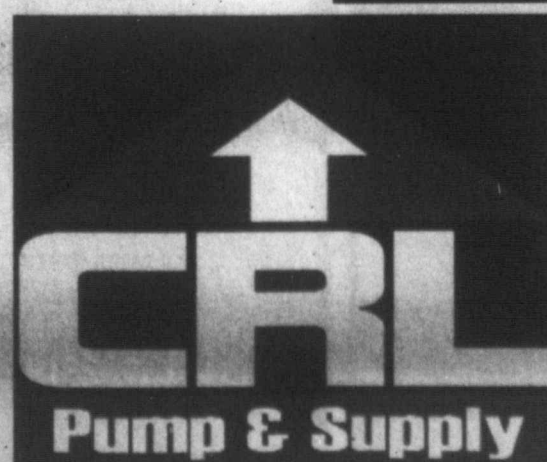
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Police task force focuses on Mexican Mafia gang

AUSTIN (AP)— Four men are awaiting trial on murder charges and more than a dozen others have been sent to prison with federal drug convictions in what court documents show is a result of a crack-down by federal, state and local authorities on a gang born in Texas prisons.

FBI Special Agent Stephen Hause told the Austin American-Statesman in a story published Monday that two FBI agents and 17 state and local officers comprise a task force that for two years has been investigating the Mexican Mafia. It's one of the law enforcement group's biggest cases in recent years.

"If you let a group like (the Texas Mexican Mafia) grow and prosper, it's just a matter of time before the violence increases," Hause told the newspaper. "In San Antonio, the Mexican Mafia is strong, and they control neighborhoods. ... There have been a lot of gang-related murders. ... We just hope not to let that happen here."

A federal affidavit shows investigators using taps on gang members' phones caught a break in September 2010 when a conversation revealed plans to move a murder victim's body. The information was passed to authorities in the Austin area who pulled over a pickup truck driven by two suspected gang members.

In the bed of the truck was the body of 35-year-old Walter Capello, of Lockhart. He'd been stabbed 63 times. Authorities believe Capello was killed because gang members believed someone close to him had been working with police.

Four men have been charged with his slaying. "You are talking about people with skills in the drug trade, who are willing to do violence, acting as one unit," Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Cottingham said. "You want to keep them from getting out of control."

A 63-page affidavit with some details of the investigation was unsealed earlier this month after a federal judge sentenced 16 suspected gang members to prison. Nine of them have received sentences of at least 20 years.

Hause said it's not clear whether the gang's influence will continue to grow. Its ranks on the outside world are dependent on the release of members from Texas prisons, where the gang was formed in the 1980s to provide protection to those who join. Once outside, they deal in drugs, contract killings, prostitution, robbery, gambling and weapons. Its president, Heriberto Huerta, is serving life at a federal prison in Colorado but investigators believe he's still able to give orders.

Authorities say the gang is bankrolled by a tax, known on the street as "the Dime," which it imposes on drug dealers not affiliated with the gang.

BLM chief in NV wants more eyes on roundups

RENO, Nev. (AP)— The head of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Nevada is appealing to agency employees to step up and blow the whistle on any abuse of mustangs.

Amy Lueders said that's the best way to stop horse protection advocates from undermining the agency's roundup policies with video footage of the mistreatment of the animals and making it harder for federal land managers to win the public's trust.

"Regardless of title, whether you are a contractor or law enforcement or public affairs, that's everyone's responsibility," she said in an interview with The Associated Press.

In the past year, BLM has been taken to task by its own internal auditors, independent reviews, a U.S. district judge and camera-toting horse advocates.

A BLM task force that reviewed a roundup near the Nevada-Utah line in July found some mustangs were whipped in the face, kicked in the head, dragged by a rope around the neck and repeatedly shocked with electrical prods.

Twice this year, BLM has issued reports or statements pledging reforms to ensure humane treatment only to have videos of new incidents of mistreatment surface within days.

In the most recent case, this month, Ginger Kathrens was pointing her camera at the wranglers who appeared to be repeatedly shocking several burros with an electrical prod.

The practice, called "hot-shooting," is used to help move them into a pen or trailer and it was being employed the same day BLM chief Bob Abbey issued a report pledging more changes.

Among other things, the report said electrical prods should be used only as a last resort when human or animal safety is in jeopardy, and that they should never be used on a horse's head or genitals.

"I thought it was ironic that while Bob Abbey was announcing the reforms I was filming the hot-shooting of the burros," said Kathrens, an Emmy-award winning filmmaker who is the executive director of the Colorado-based Cloud Foundation, a nonprofit horse advocacy group.

Kathrens said she was about the length of two football fields away when, zooming in with her professional lenses, she captured the footage. The video showed the end points on the prods producing a shock when a wrangler lifted it into the air.

Most disturbing to Kathrens was that officials for the U.S. Agriculture Department and BLM were standing near the wranglers and witnessed the shocks but did nothing to interfere.

Kathrens said BLM officials told her privately they shared her concerns in that regard.

That's where Lueders said agency workers have to do a better job.

Lueders delivered that message to several dozen

employees in a video teleconference involving all of Nevada's BLM offices last week, saying there's no excuse for turning the other way if they get wind of any inhumane treatment of animals.

Lueders said, however, that it may be easier said than done when it comes to persuading workers to step up in what is often a controversial, and emotionally charged, situation.

But she said she believes her message got through.

"I made it very clear that is my expectation," she said. "We have a lot of committed, passionate people here who care very much about the resource and the animals themselves. You can tell by that passion and professionalism that everyone takes it very seriously."

Lisa Ross, a public affairs specialist for the BLM in Winnemucca, said Lueders' words have been well received and will be taken seriously.

"It's a very important message to hear," Ross said. "It doesn't mean that everything was wrong and now we are making it right. It's just that it is important and everybody needs to be on the same page on this."

About 33,000 wild horses freely roam 10 Western states - about half in Nevada. Another 41,000 are kept in government-funded facilities, including one in Herriman, Utah, that came under fire as a result of more video footage taken by horse protection advocates last spring.

A BLM task force asked

to investigate issued a report in September confirming "unacceptable" conditions at the overcrowded facility where horses were forced to stand in a 4- to 8-inch deep mixture of mud and manure. BLM has since moved those animals elsewhere.

It was videotape of a helicopter either nudging or getting extremely close to a mustang in August during a roundup in northeast Nevada near the Utah line that prompted U.S. District Judge Howard McKibben to give BLM a stern lecture.

McKibben granted a temporary restraining order requiring helicopters to keep their distance from the galloping mustangs.

Lueders said it is important to remain open to criticism.

"I think we all learn more from each gather," she said. "Each gather gives us another opportunity to improve what we do."

Kathrens is among those who believe BLM officials are sincere and is optimistic real reform may soon follow on the range.

But Anne Novak, executive director of Protect Mustangs, based in Berkeley, Calif., isn't so sure. She said there should be a moratorium on roundups until the agency proves they have mechanisms in place to guarantee safe and humane treatment of the horses.

"The BLM must take responsibility to train their contractors before turning wranglers loose with whips and cattle prods," she said.

Fires

cont. from page 5A

hand. The fire destroyed it, so the 79-year-old architect drew up new plans and bought a new plot 12 miles from the old one.

Construction will begin in January - though this time the couple is letting professional builders handle it.

"We had hoped the last house would be our last house," Beck said with a wry chuckle. "Hopefully this one will be."

The Becks said they had far too many friends in Bastrop to think of leaving. But they also conceded that going back to the same spot where their home once stood was too painful.

"We couldn't digest that," Beck said.

Insured losses from the fire should reach \$325 million, according to the Insurance Council of Texas, making it the costliest blaze in state history. About 3,080 residents have applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, said spokesman Ray Perez, and the agency has paid out close to \$9.4 million in housing and other relief funds. FEMA provided trailers to 52 displaced families across Bastrop County.

Eric and Cyndi Poe lost everything and wanted to stay but were undecided about rebuilding on their same lot - until the builder who constructed their original home told them he could do it again in record time. The couple moved into a new home the week before Thanksgiving, barely 10 weeks after the fire.

"It didn't seem possible," Cyndi said. "That's how lucky we've been."

Except for charred trees in the yard, it's now hard to tell the fire even hit the Poe's house. Their new house is virtually identical to the old one, except the Poes asked for a larger garage and said they could do without a bathtub in the master bathroom.

And, of course, their possessions are gone. Cyndi said that on Thanksgiving, she instinctively opened a cabinet expecting to see a family

heirloom.

"I reached up to get the turkey platter we've used all of my life and it wasn't there, and I had a little moment where I was sad," she said.

The Poes live in Tahitian Village, a sprawling subdivision where the fires claimed 282 homes. Some 240 owners whose homes were destroyed have sought refunds for their water deposits - meaning they won't rebuild.

Still, many leaving the subdivision could move elsewhere in and around Bastrop. Among them is Victor Gonzalez, a 59-year-old attorney who has yet to clear all the rubble of his Tahitian Village home because there's still hope sifting could turn up spared valuables.

The fire leveled dozens of pines and melted a BMW in the driveway. Only the swimming pool survived.

"We had a very secluded portion of heaven," Gonzalez said. "Now we've got a moonscape."

In response to the law-

Stallion castration plan on hold until court rules

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Federal land managers have agreed to postpone a precedent-setting plan to castrate hundreds of wild stallions in eastern Nevada pending a federal court's review of the issue.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management's decision came a week after a coalition of conservationists and wild-horse defenders sued the government in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., to block the plan's implementation.

Under a compromise reached by both sides and approved by the court Thursday, the agency will be allowed to begin a long-term removal of roughly 1,800 wild horses from the sprawling Pancake Complex near Ely beginning Jan. 12 as scheduled.

But the BLM agreed to put on hold until next July 1 its plan to castrate 200 wild stallions before releasing them back to the complex.

"That is supposed to give the court time to hear this case," BLM spokeswoman Heather Emmons told The Associated Press.

BLM officials said they view the pilot program as another way to reduce growing horse herds that are damaging western rangelands to the detriment of native wildlife.

In response to the law-

suit, the agency also agreed to drop its plan to remove all 100-plus mustangs in the Jakes Wash Herd Management Area within the 855,000-acre complex, Emmons said.

"We're not going to remove more than 50 percent of the horses in that area," she said.

The suit challenged the BLM's plan to "zero out" the Jakes Wash area for wild horses, while continuing to authorize thousands of sheep and cattle to graze the same public land there.

The plaintiffs also criticized the agency's plans to reduce the complex's horse population from about 2,200 to 360 over the next six to 10 years, and to replace 200 wild stallions with castrated males there over the same period.

"The proposed actions are precedent-setting and permanent in nature, and we firmly believe the court

will find them in violation of the law," said attorney Katherine Meyer, who represents the plaintiffs.

"The agency's agreement to delay these radical management actions will avoid the need to seek an emergency injunction over the holidays, and will allow the court time to review the considerable merits of our lawsuit."

The suit, filed Dec. 14 by the Western Watersheds Project, the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign and the Cloud Foundation, follows the BLM's decision in July to back off a similar plan to castrate hundreds of wild stallions in Wyoming.

BLM officials said they plan to remove horses from the Pancake Complex in phases over the next six to 10 years because the agency

lacks sufficient space in its holding facilities.

Activists complain the agency's ongoing mass removal of mustangs from public lands has resulted in the stockpiling of horses in long-term facilities in the Midwest at growing taxpayer expense. Captured horses are put up for adoption, but sent to government-funded facilities if they attract no owners.

There now are more horses in holding facilities - 41,000 - than free-roaming horses in 10 Western states - 33,000. Over the 2011 fiscal year, holding costs accounted for nearly 50 percent of the BLM wild horse and burro program's \$75.8 million budget. Nevada is home to about half of the West's wild horses.

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Public lines up for new low-cost appliance that slashes heat bills

Amish craftsmen vow to keep up with rush for brand-new Hybrid-Thermic™ 'Miracle Heater' that uses about the same energy as a coffee maker per hour, so just plug it in and never be cold again

BY: SAMUEL A. JAMES
Universal Media Syndicate

(UMS) — Everyone hates high heat bills. But we're all sick and tired of turning the thermostat down and freezing our buns off.

That's why Sears knew they had a home-run on their hands with the first-ever low-cost appliance with Hybrid-Thermic™ heat technology. And no other heater anywhere has it.

The brand-new portable L.E.D. Heat Surge HT sips so little energy, you can run it for a full 12-hour day or night for just about a buck.

This modern marvel, hailed as the zone heating 'Miracle Heater,' caused such a frenzy at Sears stores, one shopper refused to leave until she got one. Since there were none in stock, store managers were forced to hand over the store's only floor model, against store policy.

So today, immediate action is being taken to give more people, more ways to get them.

Beginning at 8:30 a.m., today's readers are allowed to phone in or snag one online. Heat Surge even posted a 2-Day Double Coupon which has been reprinted on this page for today's readers to use.

By using this coupon, everyone who calls is being rewarded with \$227. That makes this remarkable new home appliance a real steal at just \$299. Since this is a Double Coupon Deal, it not only gives you an extraordinary discount, but also entitles you to free shipping and handling, totaling \$227 off. So now everyone has a fair shot at getting one.

"Folks are saving money everywhere by zone heating with the new Heat Surge HT," said Kris Rumel, the company's analyst tracking the impact Heat Surge is having on consumer heat bills.

This all started when Sears wanted the world-famous 'Amish Miracle Heater' that everyone was asking for.

The shy but now famous Amish craftsman said Sears made the most sense. "I'd reckon they're the oldest and most trusted in the country," one of the Amish craftsmen known as Melvin said.

"We've been saving folks money, big money. And we know it because we're hearin' about it," he said.

"They know about our quality. No particle board, just real wood. Fully-assembled cabinets by our hands and we're making them right here in the good ole USA," Melvin said.

Director of Technology David Martin explained, "The Heat Surge HT is a revolutionary appliance that can easily roll from room to room. But we didn't want it to look like some metal box that just sits there. So we turned to our Amish craftsmen and now each one is made to look like a sleek, slim fireplace that has no real flames."

"The peaceful flicker of the 'Fireless Flame' is so beautiful, everyone thinks it's real, but it's totally safe to the touch. All you do is just plug it in," Martin said.

People from Texas to Minnesota and even Florida and Arizona are flocking to get them because they are finally able to give their central heat a rest during this long, frigid winter.

According to the avalanche of consumer reviews, people absolutely swear by them, repeatedly saying, "it saves money," "looks beautiful," and "keeps you warm head to toe, floor to ceiling." And the word is getting out. That's why people are clamoring to get them.

But Martin said right now the real problem is making sure the Amish craftsmen can keep up with the lingering winter rush.

That's why the Double Coupon expires in two days.

So for readers hoping to get the new Heat Surge for themselves and take care of gifts for others, there is good news.

You can use the 2-Day Double Coupon more than once. But there is a catch. You can only get away with it for the next two days from the date of today's publication by calling the National Appliance Center at 1-800-618-8510.

Then, when it arrives, you'll be rushing to turn down that thermostat. Just plug it in, watch your heat bills hit rock bottom, and never be cold again. ■



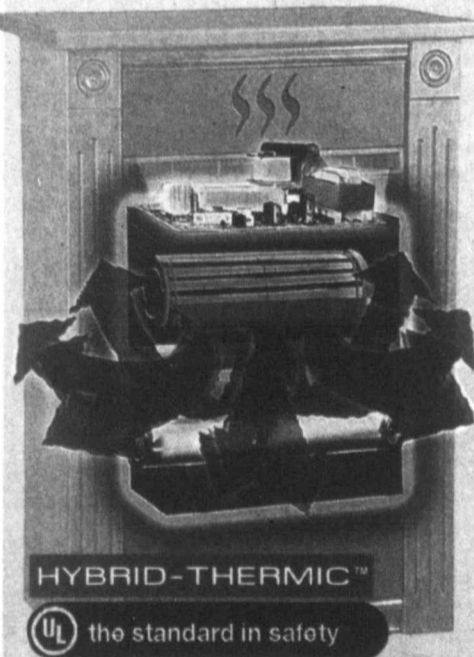
■ **GOTTA HAVE ONE:** People are flocking to Sears stores everywhere to get the brand-new Heat Surge HT. An eager crowd remained respectful as Jonas Miller stages a promotional delivery event. "I heard so much about the Amish Miracle Heater but couldn't find where to get one," an excited Mary Straughn said. That's why a National Appliance Hotline has been set up for today's readers who can't rush out to get one. Readers who call the Hotline at 1-800-618-8510 will get free delivery with an extraordinary 2-Day Double Coupon that has been reprinted below.

■ **SAFE:** The beautiful L.E.D. Fireless Flame on the new Heat Surge HT is so stunning, everyone thinks it's real, but it's actually safe to the touch. It's so safe, it's where the kids will play & the pets will sleep.

■ **BLANKET FREE COMFORT:** "We just couldn't take another winter of always being cold. And we also got one for the kids to help them with their heat bills," Julia White said.



How It Works: You get 74° of bone-soothing room heat even when the home thermostat is turned down to 59° with the first-ever Heat Surge HT



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■ **MODERN MARVEL:** The revolutionary Heat Surge HT micro-furnace fits in any room because it's packed inside a small Amish-built cabinet that measures just 25" high, 18" wide, and 12" deep.

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not at Home Depot®, and none of the Club Stores. "Accept no imitations. If it does not have the Heat Surge name on it, it is not real Amish and it is not Hybrid-Thermic™. I repeat, if it does not have the Heat Surge name on it, you are getting ripped off," said Heat Surge Chief Compliance Officer, Bob Knowles. The Heat Surge has earned the coveted Underwriters Laboratories certification and is protected by a limited full year replacement or money back warranty and 30-day Satisfaction Guarantee.

How to get the Double Coupon Deal: Phone in to use coupon now

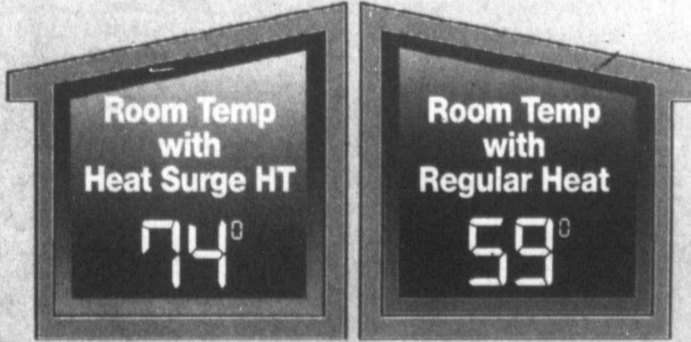
■ **JUST 2 DAYS REMAIN:** An extraordinary \$227.00 Double Coupon Deal has been authorized for today's readers. To use the \$227.00 coupon and get the Heat Surge HT for just \$299, you must call the National Appliance Center at 1-800-618-8510. Because it's a Double Coupon, it entitles you to FREE Shipping and Handling, but only for those that beat the deadline.

This is the revolutionary Heat Surge HT, the first-ever appliance with Hybrid-Thermic™ heat technology. Hybrid-Thermic heat technology is an engineering genius so advanced, it actually uses a micro-furnace from the Coast of China and a thermal heat exchanger to perform its miracles. The thermal heat exchanger acts like the rays of the sun to heat you, the kids, the pets and everything else. The micro-furnace then heats all the surrounding air. Together, this Hybrid-Thermic heat technology warms both you and the air around you, taking care of all the cold spots. In fact, it actually produces bone-soothing heat to help you feel good.

This modern marvel uses L.E.D. technology and just a trickle of electricity and saves you money based on a U.S. average that says it uses only about 9¢ of electricity an hour on the standard setting, yet it produces up to an amazing 4,606 British Thermal Units (BTU's) on the high setting. But here's the big surprise. It's not just a metal box that belongs in a basement. The Heat Surge HT is a showpiece in any room. That's because it has the ambiance of a real fireplace, but it has no real flames. Its Fireless Flame® technology makes it safe to the touch.

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Home thermostat set at 59°



■ **ZONE HEATING SLASHES HEAT BILLS:** Notice how the home thermostat is turned down to 59°. The left shows the Heat Surge Hybrid-Thermic 'Miracle Heater' blanketing the whole-room with 74° of warmth.

An avalanche of unsolicited consumer reviews gives the company the reason to boast an overwhelming Consumer 'Best Buy' on the HeatReport.com website. Consumers should be aware of the fakes out there. This Hybrid-Thermic 'Miracle Heater' can never be found at Wal-Mart®, not at Lowe's®, not at Home Depot®, and none of the Club Stores. "Accept no imitations. If it does not have the Heat Surge name on it, it is not real Amish and it is not Hybrid-Thermic™. I repeat, if it does not have the Heat Surge name on it, you are getting ripped off," said Heat Surge Chief Compliance Officer, Bob Knowles. The Heat Surge has earned the coveted Underwriters Laboratories certification and is protected by a limited full year replacement or money back warranty and 30-day Satisfaction Guarantee.

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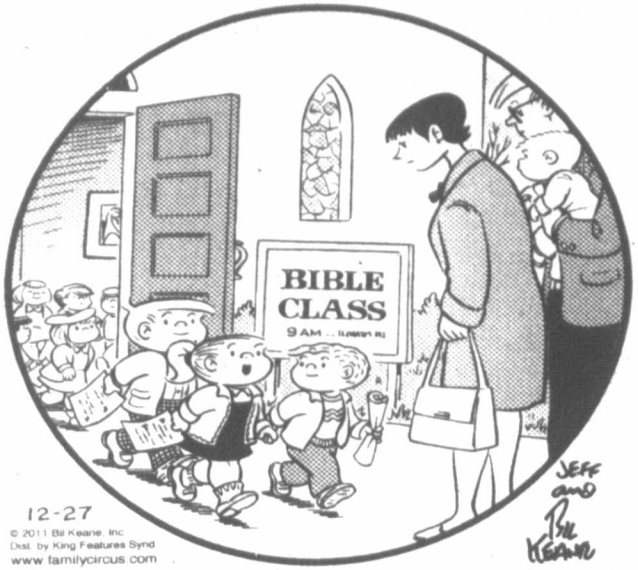
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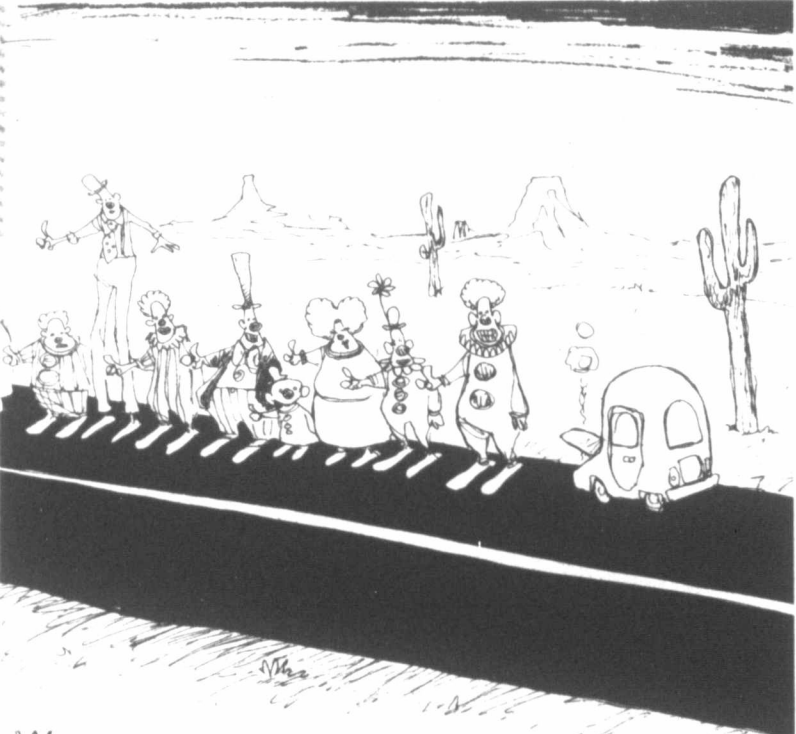
comics PAGE

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



12-27
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"We learned the fourth commandment: 'Humor thy father and thy mother.'"

Non Sequitur



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Nest Heads



daily horoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011:

This year you tend to be slightly more bohemian and intuitive about certain decisions. You easily could make an investment that to others might look fraught with risks. Truth be told, you have done your homework. Your mind always seems to be thinking, rethinking and analyzing. Consider a yoga class or some other relaxing pastime. If you are single, your antenna is up. Trust your intuition. You will learn much more about a person in the first few encounters than you think. If you are attached, share some of your inner chatter with your sweetie. Perhaps he or she knows how to distract you! **AQUARIUS** pushes the envelope.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Gossip and information swirl around you. Knowing what to believe and what to discard will take more than talent. Recognize the importance of getting feedback from associates. You want and need to know what is fact and what is gossip. Tonight: Where your friends are.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ You want to stay on top of your game. How you deal with another person and what occurs at this time could make a big difference. Your sense of humor emerges when having an important conversation. Get all the necessary facts from an associate. Tonight: Know that you will make the right choice.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Bridge a problem by detaching and understanding what set it in motion. You might feel that someone doesn't care. Be direct when dealing with others, but do whatever you need to do in order not to get into a convoluted situation. Tonight: Let your imagination wander.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Deal directly with a partner who can be cantankerous. You'll finally have a conversation that helps clarify what is happening. Open up a conversation involving a work-related matter. Many different ideas come up. Tonight: Continue a talk over dinner.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You find others to be unusually responsive and touchy. Use the moment to have an important meeting. Allow an associate to have equal say. This person's feedback triggers ideas. If you are single, an encounter might be light yet worthwhile. Tonight: Say

"yes."
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ You have so much ground to cover, you could be startled by feedback from someone close. Your mind is everywhere but on your domestic life. You are right to complete one project before moving on to another. Still, make room for a pending personal talk. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise and center yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Keep asking questions, making calls and reaching out for someone you care about. You could discover that a child or loved one wants to share more of his or her feelings. You hold up your hand, trying to slow down this person's pace. Verbalize and set a better time in the next 24 hours. Tonight: Opt for fun.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Listen to forthcoming news. You might feel a little odd, as you don't have the control you desire. Involvement in a personal or domestic issue circles around finances. Focusing on other matters could be close to impossible. Tonight: Your treat.

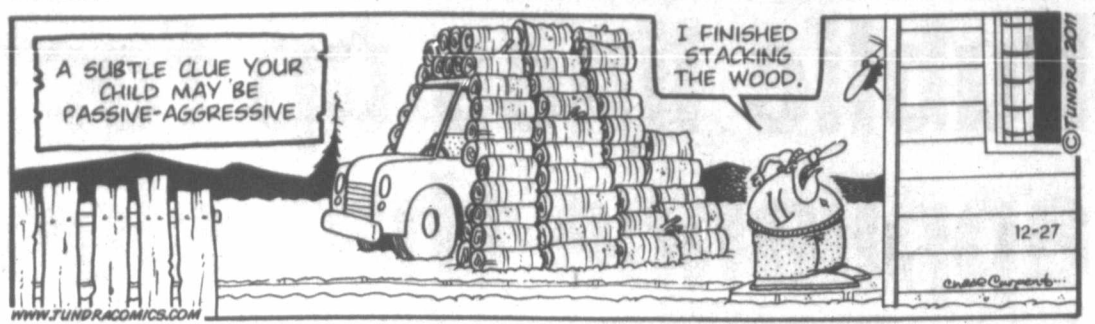
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ You will communicate what you think to an audience — just be sure it is the right audience. You have kept so much pent up that now you are the opposite — an ongoing verbal waterfall. You'll gain balance by tapping into your excellent listening skills. Tonight: Meet friends at a favorite haunt.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Use care when dealing with your finances. Any pressure you might feel could be self-inflicted through a judgment you are making. Test out some of your judgments to see if they are grounded. Your instincts guide you with a risk. Tonight: Enjoy the moment.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Apply yourself to the issue at hand, and you'll come out ahead. Your focus and ability to handle feedback mark your success. A group gets together to celebrate recent events, a long-wished-for success and the impending advent of 2012. Tonight: Any excuse to be with your friends seems to work.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Kick back as soon as you can. A conversation with someone in charge could be important. You cannot get around the issues involved. You might choose to listen more than talk. Others follow your thinking more than you realize. Tonight: Take a much-needed timeout.

Tundra



Shoe



Mother Goose and Grim



Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Sports

A look back at 2011 in Pampa HS basketball, soccer

ANDREW GLOVER
aglover@thepampanews.com

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. That just about sums up the 2011 season for the basketball Harvesters.

After the Harvesters missed the playoffs in 2009-10, they worked in the offseason on improving their work ethic and improving their game. Pampa saw the results immediately as it won the opener against Dumas in dominating fashion. The Harvesters won the River Road Tournament and were runner ups in the Caprock Tournament.

In district, Pampa finished with a 6-3 record and clinched the title against its rival Borger. The Harvesters journey continued in the playoffs. Then-junior Latigo Collins made a buzzer beating layup to carry Pampa past Midland Greenwood in the area round. The Harvesters then defeated El Paso Fabens and Wichita Falls Hirschi before falling to Burkburnett to finish as regional runner ups. This was the farthest Pampa advanced in the playoffs since its last state championship in 1996.

Collins, then-juniors Reid Miller and Cole Engle and then-senior Garrett Ericson earned first-team All-District selections. Then-seniors Zach Murray and Jonathan Polasek were honorable mentions. Ericson and Murray got to play in the Golden-Spread All-Star game.

The Lady Harvesters were hoping a drop to 3A would result in a second straight playoff berth, but they found out otherwise. Pampa only returned three players from the previous varsity team. The Lady Harvesters opened the season 0-7 and lost 14 of their first 15. In district, Pampa only won two games. Then-juniors Kirsten Kuhn, Caitlin Sieckand Delaney Clendening earned first team All-District. Then-seniors Cori Cook and Kayla Hughes and then-junior Kailyn Troxell were honorable mentions.

The 2011 soccer season didn't yield too many victories for Pampa. The Harvesters won one game and finished 1-15-2. Then-junior Wes Rivera earned a second team all-district selection. The Lady Harvesters finished 1-13-2. Their only win was by forfeit because Azle played an in-



The Pampa News file photo

Reid Miller dribbles against a Midland Greenwood defender in the area round. The Harvesters advanced to the regional finals last year.

eligible player. Then-senior Crystal Garcia earned a first team all-district selection. Then-junior Ellen Cambren and then-senior Meganne Fraser earned a second-team selection.

The 2011 season was head coach John True's last because he took an assistant coaching job at Wylie East.

Pampa teams hope to get jump start from Caprock tourney

ANDREW GLOVER
aglover@thepampanews.com

Last year, the Caprock Tournament jump-started the Pampa Harvesters' and Lady Harvesters' seasons. This year, both teams hope for similar results when they return Wednesday.

"It got our season going last year," Senior Caitlin Sieck said. "We hope to do better this year and start better."

The Lady Harvesters (6-9) won two out of three games in last season's tournament, winning the consolation bracket. Pampa then won its next two games. The Lady Harvesters open the tournament 1:30 p.m. Wednesday with Paducah at Lubbock High School. Senior Kailyn Troxell said the team has to play its best.

"If we come out and play hard like we have been, we should be fine," Troxell said.

Head coach Gene Valentine said Paducah likes to slow the game down adding it is a good match for his team.

"I think we can do what we did to Miami and play them hard man-to-man," Valentine said. "I think they have only won one or two games. Perryton beat them by 20 and Clarendon beat them by 30."

The Lady Harvesters lost to Clarendon by 12 in the River Road tournament and played within 15 against Perryton last season.

The Harvesters (7-4) made it to the championship game last season before falling to Wall. This year, Pampa opens its tough portion of the bracket with Colorado City 12 p.m. Wednesday at Lubbock Coronado. In the second round, it could face Meadow, who is ranked 20th in 1A Division II. Olton is fourth in 1A Division I. Wall is ranked tenth in 2A.

Senior Reid Miller said he is looking

forward to the competition.

"They are going to be competitive," Miller said. "It's going to give us a great look at what we'll see in the playoffs."

Boys basketball head coach Dustin Miller said he likes how the brackets is set up.

"I think it's set up nice again for us to make a run at the championship again, if we play well," Miller said.

Senior Latigo Collins said he doesn't much about the opponents but thinks they will be a good challenge.

"I couldn't tell you very much about who we will play," Collins said. "I want to play Midland Greenwood."

Pampa beat Midland Greenwood in the area round last season. The two teams could meet for the championship game.

The Lady Harvesters could face 2A No. 18 Tulia in the second round on Wednesday. Also in their half of the bracket is Lubbock Christian Trinity, who is

ranked 10th in the large school private school rankings, and Merkel who is second in 2A.

Valentine said he thinks his team will play Tulia if it wins the first round but could see them playing Sundown.

"I talked with Panhandle's coach and he said Sundown is pretty good, too," Valentine said. "(Sundown and Tulia) are both 10-5. I don't know who we will get."

If the Lady Harvesters win their first game, they will play the Tulia-Sundown winner at 9 p.m. Wednesday at Lubbock Coronado. If they lose, they will play the loser of the previous mentioned match up 10:30 a.m. Thursday at Lubbock Cooper.

If the Harvesters beat Colorado City, they will play the winner of Meadow and Morton 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Lubbock Monterey. If they lose, they play at 9 a.m. Thursday against the loser of Meadow and Morton at Lubbock Monterey.

Rough start, but we're hoping for a bowl prediction bounceback

I have to admit, my predictions got off to a rough start. Those first bowl games were tough to predict. If anyone saw Florida International or Louisiana Lafayette play before last week, let me know. Hopefully, on the rest of my predictions, I can go Tebow Time and nail them.

Champs Sports Bowl, 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Florida State (8-4) vs. Notre Dame (8-4)

Back in the day, this would have been a high profile 1-vs.-2 matchup. Today it's just two big schools playing in a mediocre bowl.

The Seminoles are among the top half in passing. Junior quarterback EJ Manuel has thrown for 2,417 yards and 16 touchdowns. His main targets are Rodney Smith and Rashad Greene. The two receivers have combined for over 1,000 yards and 10 touchdowns.

The Irish also have a strong passing attack led by Tommy Rees. Rees is a little less accurate than his counterpart, with 12 interceptions to Manuel's eight. Michael Floyd is Rees' go-to receiver with over 1,106 yards and eight touchdowns.

Both teams are strong in passing but Florida State is stronger on defense and should be able to make the key stop. 31-21, 'Noles.

Alamo Bowl, 8 p.m. Thursday, Washington (7-5) vs. Baylor (9-3)

Baylor won't have far to travel, unlike its counterpart. The Bears enter this game on a five-game winning streak, that included victories over Oklahoma and Texas. This will be one of the final chances Heisman

winner Robert Griffin III will get to impress NFL scouts.

The Huskies are a middle-of-the-road team. Washington will rely on its sophomore quarterback, Keith Price, to lead them down the field. Price has thrown 29 touchdowns to 11 picks. Chris Polk should provide some balance, as he's rushed for 1,341 yards. The Huskies could put up some numbers as they will face the 109th defense in the NCAA.

Despite Baylor being weak on defense, look for RG3 to go out with a bang. 35-24, Baylor.

Armed Forces Bowl, 11 a.m. Friday, BYU (9-3) vs. Tulsa (8-4)

The Cougars, in their first year as an independent, quietly arrived at nine wins. BYU played competitively with Texas and TCU. The Cougars are stacked with runners, as five backs have 65 or more carries. BYU has one of the top defenses.

In his first season as a college coach, Bill Blakenship has carried his success from coaching Tulsa Union High School to the college game. All of Tulsa's losses have been to top ten schools. The Hurricane are a fairly balanced offense with quarterback G.J. Kinne throwing for 2,876 yards and Ja'Terian Douglas and Trey Watts leading the rushing attack. Tulsa isn't as strong on defense but some of that is due to their schedule. The Golden Hurricanes' offense

should get the points they need for a 30-23 victory.

Pinstripe Bowl, 2:20 p.m. Friday, Rutgers (8-4) vs. Iowa State (6-6)

The Scarlet Knights were an average team in the Big East, entering this game winning three of the last four. Rutgers is in the top half of the nation in passing, led by quarterback Gary Nova, who has thrown for over 1,500 yards. Interceptions are a problem with him. The Scarlet Knights are below average in scoring, but are one of the best defensive teams.

The Cyclones are one of the reasons that my Red Raiders aren't playing in a bowl game, and I witnessed that firsthand. Iowa State is led by its multi-threat quarterback, Jared Barnett. Sophomore running back James White is a threat in the backfield. The Cyclones aren't a strong passing team. If they get in long yardage situations, could be a long day. The best defense wins, 29-18, Rutgers.

Music City Bowl, 5:40 p.m. Friday, Mississippi State (6-6) vs. Wake Forest (6-6)

This bowl should be renamed the "Mediocre Bowl." The only thing impressive about the Bulldogs is they are ranked in the top 20 in defense. Wake Forest had a strong season in conference to become bowl eligible. Their greatest strength is their passing game. Junior receiver Chris Givens has

caught 74 passes for 1,276 yards and nine touchdowns. The Bulldogs will win with their defense, 28-20.

Insight Bowl, 9 p.m. Friday, Iowa (7-5) vs. Oklahoma (9-3)

The only reason the Sooners are in this game is, much to my delight, they didn't show up for the first half against Texas Tech and forgot about beating Oklahoma State to win the Big 12 title. Oklahoma is solid on both sides of the ball, and it would take a near perfect game to beat them. That's something I don't think a mediocre Iowa team can do.

34-20, Boomer Sooners. Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas, 11 a.m., Saturday, Texas A&M (6-6) vs. Northwestern (6-6)

This is another bowl game that shouts loudly, "THERE ARE TOO MANY BOWLS!" The Aggies are in a state of transition moving to a new conference and a new coach. Texas A&M is strong offensively but weak defensively, which has been its Achilles heel. The Wildcats are in the top half offensively. Dan Persa is one of the leaders on offense with 2,163 yards and 17 touchdowns. Northwestern has four people that can run the ball. Despite A&M's problems on defense, they should prevail, 39-29.

Sun Bowl, 1 p.m., Saturday, Georgia Tech (8-4) vs. Utah (7-5)

The YellowJackets strength is their rushing offense. Junior Tevin Washington leads the team with 890 yards rushing and 14 rushing touchdowns. Utah is not a very strong

offensive team and has been carried by its defense. Georgia Tech is going to win easily, 42-17.

Liberty Bowl, 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Cincinnati (9-3) vs. Vanderbilt (6-6)

The Bearcats enter the game playing their best football with a 5-2 conference record. Cincinnati has a strong rushing attack led by senior Isaiah Pead, who has rushed for over 1,000 yards for a second consecutive season.

The Commodores enter the game winning two of their last three. Vanderbilt has slumped in conference. The Commodores rushing attack is also pretty good with Zac Stacy leading their attack. Cincy has the better offense and will prevail 40-26.

Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl, 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Illinois (6-6) vs. UCLA (6-7)

Honestly, this bowl should be renamed to the "Donald Trump 'You're Fired' Bowl." Both teams are looking to end a dismal 2011 on a high note.

The Illini are led by their receiver A.J. Jenkins who has caught majority of the passes and scored seven touchdowns. Illinois is strong on defense only giving up 20 per game.

The Bruins' are led by junior running back Johnathan Franklin who could reach 1,000 yards in this game. UCLA is one of the weakest defenses in the nation and won't be able to outscore the Illini. 32-20, Illinois.

Chick-fil-A Bowl, 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Virginia (8-4) vs. Auburn (7-5)
The defending champion

Tigers scraped together a winning record in their first season without Cam Newton. Sophomore running back Michael Dyer is leading the rushing attack with 1,242 yards rushing and 10 touchdowns.

The Cavaliers have held their own in the tough competition of the ACC, knocking off No. 12 Georgia Tech and No. 25 Florida State. Virginia is in the middle of the pack offensively and above average defensively. While the Cavaliers look like the stronger team on paper, I'm going for the upset, 24-23 Auburn.

TicketCity Bowl, 11 a.m., Monday, Houston (12-1) vs. Penn State (9-3)

This bowl game is Houston's consolation prize for not remaining undefeated. This will be Case Keenum's final game to lead the Cougars' high octane spread attack. Like its opponent Houston is going through a coaching change. However, the Cougars know the direction their program is going under Tony Levine.

Penn State is still recovering from the aftermath of the Sandusky scandal. The Nittany Lions are 1-2 since Joe Paterno was fired. Starting quarterback Matthew McGloin was recently released from the hospital after a fight with a receiver Curtis Drake. The Cougars will easily get past the dysfunctional Nittany Lions, 63-14.

My predictions conclude in the weekend edition.

Andrew Glover is The Pampa News sports reporter. He can be reached online at aglover@thepampanews.com



Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: As a clinical psychologist, I believe your advice to "Protective Mom in the Midwest" (Oct. 26) was oversimplified. You told her she was right in not permitting her husband's brother, a registered sex offender, to visit the family during the holidays. She didn't want her 10-year-old daughter around him.

You have made the common mistake of seeing everyone who carries the "registered sex offender" label as alike. They are no more alike than are people who drink too much. Some alcoholics get drunk, angry and violent, but most do not. Some sex offenders act like Ted Bundy, but most do not. Some are guilty only of having a younger girlfriend.

Many do not directly injure anyone because they only download illegal sexual images. Some do not use force, threats or physical violence. I do not minimize what they do. They all have a mental illness and/or addiction and need intervention and treatment.

Mom and her husband should talk to the brother about what he did and what kind of rehabilitation has occurred. They can then make a better decision about a visit and what safety measures might be appropriate. — DR. WILLIAM S. IN MIAMI

DEAR DR. S.: Your point about lumping all sex offenders together is well-stated. Another reader pointed out that something like urinating outdoors could result in this classification. However, most readers agree with me that the safety of the 10-year-old must be the primary concern. Their comments:

DEAR ABBY: Stand your ground, "Protective Mom"! As a victim of abuse, I can tell you that the abuser is sick. She should not leave it up to her daughter to find out if the uncle could still be a predator.

My stepfather's abuse 30 years ago was never reported to the police. He supposedly got "counseling" and was "a changed man." Well, he's currently serving prison time for having molested his granddaughter a year and a half ago. — KNOWS THE SCORE IN ANAHEIM, CALIF.

DEAR ABBY: If Mom allows Jake in the house, local child protective authorities will consider it failure to protect the child,

putting the girl at risk of being removed from the home. I am a former child protective worker who went to homes to inform parents of this. I also had to keep my own daughter away from my former in-laws because they allowed a sex offender to visit while she was there. It was difficult being the only one willing to stand up for her safety, but I will never regret knowing I did everything I could to keep my daughter safe. — ANOTHER PROTECTIVE MOM IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR ABBY: All children should be educated as early as they can understand about issues of trust. Mom will have to watch her daughter every second Jake is around, but she shouldn't deny her husband the right to have

his family come for the holidays. Perhaps he could arrange for his brother to stay at a hotel. Mom can't be with her child 24/7, so kids need to know how to handle adults who are dangerous. — GLORIA IN CLEVELAND

DEAR ABBY: I am a sex offender and have learned through therapy why I did what I did and how to not go around where "it" may happen again. Would Jake even accept an offer to stay over? If he's like me, he'd say, "Thanks, but no thanks," and not put himself in a situation where someone could cry rape or accuse him of unwanted fondling. — MOVING ON

DEAR ABBY: We have a registered sex offender living in our neighborhood. Despite the fact that I have young children,

I am not concerned that he presents a threat. When he was 19, he had sex with a 17-year-old girl. He was tried and served his time, but he now gets to spend the rest of his life on "the list." If he had been 40, or the girl 12, I'd be concerned. Without knowing the particulars of the crime, it seems rash to sentence Uncle Jake to family purgatory. — ANDY IN LOUISIANA

Sudoku

Answer to yesterday's puzzle:

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

Level: Intermediate

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

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

12-27 CRYPTOQUOTE

F G F J G Y X A N B T L L N K R
Q T A A X F K J . F P F C L D B G
L T A N N S S N B P F U N P G Z K
R F N P F K J . — Q F Y Y F Z L H T Q N Y Y

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: HARD WRITING MAKES EASY READING. EASY WRITING MAKES HARD READING. — WILLIAM ZINSSER

BANANAGRAMS!

Each set of letters below is arranged alphabetically, and the ? is in the correct alphabetical position. Figure out what letter the ? represents and rearrange the letters to spell a six-letter word. For example, in A?ENTV the ? could be an A, B, C, D or E. Here it represents a D, which can be combined with the other letters to spell ADVENT. The first letter is placed to get you started.

LEVEL

1. A M O O T ? A C E E T ?
T F

2. A L ? S U W B D E H I ?
W B

3. ? E L O T Z A H M R ? W
Z W

Yesterday's Answer: PLAGUE, ENERGY, VOYAGE, TWELVE

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Negotiate a price
 - 7 Crime boss
 - 11 First name in aviation
 - 12 Track shape
 - 13 Site of New Year's Eve celebration
 - 15 Really dug
 - 16 Prepares for war
 - 18 Sighed cry
 - 21 NFL players
 - 22 Would-be loser
 - 24 Objective
 - 25 Chum
 - 26 Tall tale
 - 27 Platter spinner
 - 29 Set of cards
 - 30 Diner order
 - 31 Diamond corner
 - 32 Matt of "Today"
 - 34 Math class topics
 - 40 Resting on
 - 41 One-celled creature
 - 42 Siestas
- DOWN**
- 1 Pillbox, for one
 - 2 "How — to know?"
 - 3 Sparkler
 - 4 Sparkles
 - 5 Rosters
 - 6 Comfort
 - 7 Twosome
 - 8 Gardner of "Mogambo"
 - 9 Golf goal
 - 10 Bullfight cry
 - 14 Partridge's cousin
 - 16 Zodiac ram
 - 17 Juliet's love
 - 19 Travel aid
 - 20 Paris river
 - 21 Spot to jot
 - 22 Calendar box
 - 23 Sunburnt
 - 25 Half of a '60s rock group
 - 28 Minty drinks
 - 29 Docking site
 - 31 Former NYC mayor
 - 33 Golden Spike state
 - 34 Shoe hue
 - 35 "Give — rest!"
 - 36 Unruly do
 - 37 Rebel general
 - 38 Flow out
 - 39 Utter

C	R	A	B	S		C	A	S	T	S
S	A	M	O	A		O	M	A	H	A
T	W	I	X	T		N	Y	L	O	N
					C	U	P	S		T
P	U	T	U	P	J	O	B			
E	T	A	T		S	L	O	G	A	N
W	A	T	T	S		E	X	I	L	E
S	H	E	E	T	S		C	R	E	E
					R	E	P	E	A	L
A	C	E			P	A	L	M		
F	O	R	T	S		B	E	G	A	N
A	D	I	E	U		O	R	A	T	E
R	E	C	A	P		W	A	G	E	D

- Yesterday's answer
- 17 Juliet's love
 - 19 Travel aid
 - 20 Paris river
 - 21 Spot to jot
 - 22 Calendar box
 - 23 Sunburnt
 - 25 Half of a '60s rock group
 - 28 Minty drinks
 - 29 Docking site
 - 31 Former NYC mayor
 - 33 Golden Spike state
 - 34 Shoe hue
 - 35 "Give — rest!"
 - 36 Unruly do
 - 37 Rebel general
 - 38 Flow out
 - 39 Utter

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	
								12			
13							14				
					15						
		16	17				18		19	20	
21							22			23	
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27								29			
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							32				
34	35	36							37	38	39
40								41			
42											

12-27



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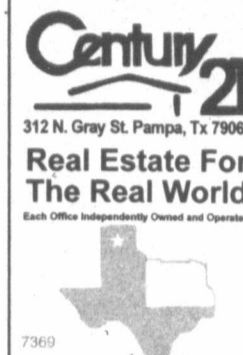
120 Autos

LEFORS ISD will be accepting bids on a **2008 Thomas C2 71 Passenger Bus**, MBE 900 (210 hp) engine, air brakes, A2500 automatic transmission, 20,000 mile range. Features: 160 amp alternator, rear ride suspension; Bendix AD-9 air dryer with heater, 100 Watt engine block heater, cruise control, tilt / telescopic steering column, air operated entrance door, air driver's seat, full length acoustic headliner, 78" headroom. Heated exterior mirrors, plywood floor, dual rear wheels, 11R22.5 tires, tow hooks, tinted windows. **This bus will include:** *Mechanical and cosmetic refurbishing *Seats and foams repaired or replaced (no rips or tears) *Completely serviced: lube, oil and filters *90 Day drive train warranty / 30 day bumper to bumper *Black top driven only equipment *50% or better tires and brakes *Custom lettering to schools' specifications *New exterior paint Mail Bids to Lefors ISD, P.O. Box 427 Lefors, TX 79054. 806-835-2333. Bids will be opened January 3, 2012

128 Aircraft

25% Membership in Cessna 172 for sale. Call 440-1347 for details.

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- Donna Courter.....595-0779
- Katrina Bigham.....898-8510
- John Goddard (BKR).....595-1234
- Sandra Schuneman (BKR).....662-7291

AUSTIN SCHOOL DISTRICT North and Northeast

1 Cyress Point Rd.....	\$225,000	3/2/2	- 1849 SF/GCAD
2200 Dogwood Ln.....	\$192,500	4/2/2	- 2629 SF/GCAD
1130 Williston St.....	\$147,900	4/2/2	- 2711 SF/GCAD
2541 Christine St.....	\$129,500	3/1.75/2	- 2050 SF/GCAD
1901 Fir.....	\$110,000	3/1.75/2	- 2102 SF/GCAD
1612 Evergreen St.....	\$94,900	4/1.5/0	- 2320 SF/GCAD
1307 Charles St.....	\$38,000	2/1/0	- 1132 SF/GCAD

TRAVIS SCHOOL DISTRICT West and Northwest

8463 Western St. + 6.33 acres.....	\$225,000	2/1/2	- 1225 SF/GCAD
916 Crane Rd.....	\$150,000	3/2/2	- 1710 SF/GCAD
919 Sierra Dr.....	\$149,000	4/2/2	- 1761 SF/GCAD
1424-1426 Dwight.....	\$149,000	2/7/4	- SF/GCAD Duplex
2113 Lynn St.....	\$122,995	4/2/2	- 2077 SF/GCAD
1829 Zimmers St.....	\$95,000	3/2/2	- 1511 SF/GCAD
1609 Dwight St.....	\$91,000	3/1.75/2	- 1550 SF/GCAD
1824 Christy St.....	\$84,900	3/1.75/1	- 1870 SF/GCAD
977 Cinderella Dr.....	\$82,000	4/1.75/2	- 1553 SF/GCAD
2125 Lynn St.....	\$79,900	3/1.75/2	- 1521 SF/GCAD
1612 Sumner St.....	\$67,900	3/2/2	- 1073 SF/GCAD

WILSON SCHOOL DISTRICT Southeast Pampa

533 Powell St.....	\$69,900	3/1/2	- 1372 SF/GCAD
612 Powell St.....	\$55,000	3/1/0	- 1166 SF/GCAD

OTHER AREAS Outside Pampa City Limits

612 Ware Av, Groom.....	\$130,000	3/1.75/4	- 1637 SF/GCAD
503 Ware Av, Groom.....	\$128,000	4/2.75/1	- 2828 SF/GCAD
804-805 W. Jackson Ave, WD.....	\$120,000	4/2/2	- 2536 SF/GCAD duplex
400 S. Popham, WD.....	\$67,900	3/1/0	- 1494 SF/GCAD
600 W 3rd Av, WD.....	\$67,500	3/1/1	- 1100 F/GCAD
609 Gulf, Lefors.....	\$34,995	2/1/1	- 898 SF/GCAD

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY & LAND

Perryton Parkway.....	\$2,503,828	9.58 acres east of hospital
120 S. Gillespie St.....	\$4,100/mo	For Lease - 7,372 SF/GCAD
11756 Hwy 152.....	\$2,500,000	12 acres, 2 bldgs 25,000 SF each
30th & Charles St.....	\$1,400,000	45.9 acres of land N of Walmart
FM 14 Rd, Lefors.....	\$530,000	530 acres w/water well
30th & Charles.....	\$435,600	5 acres in city limits
220 N Ballard.....	\$395,000	Lt. Comm. 4 bath 6,782 SF/GCAD
500 W Harvester Av.....	\$350,000	Lots south of United
748 S Price Rd.....	\$350,000	3 Ac. + 14,400 warehouse offices
302-308 W Foster.....	\$309,900	4 Retail Outlets 10,874 SF/GCAD
117 - 121 Ballard.....	\$230,000	24,500 SF/GCAD
1801 Alcock St.....	\$185,000	Office Building, 3,100 SF/GCAD Café
845 S Hobart/900 Wilks St.....	\$175,000	4 Lots + 10' on north
420 W Foster Av.....	\$165,000	Houston Lumb & Gas Station
Harvester St.....	\$150,000	60 x 110 Bldg Lots
FM 2300 & 1-40, Groom.....	\$145,000	Quonset & 6+/- acres
1435 Alcock St.....	\$135,000	2 Bldg 3,200 SF/GCAD; 1,020 SF/GCAD
1421 Hobart St.....	\$105,000	Smoke House 1816 SF/GCAD
523 W Foster Av.....	\$85,000	7,598 SF/GCAD
301 & 305 W Foster Av.....	\$75,000	3,500 SF/GCAD each
23rd & Crescent Dr.....	\$65,000	Lot 4 Blk 1 North Crest Sec 1
405 W Foster Av.....	\$65,000	2,000 SF/GCAD C/H/A
220 E Francis.....	\$57,500	1/1 745 SF/GCAD Comm.
401 W Foster Av.....	\$47,000	2,500 SF/GCAD w/basement & overhead doors
Chaumont Addition.....	\$35,000	Lots 1 & 2 Block 2
Dogwood Ln.....	\$22,000	Lots 15-17 & 40' of 18
Wall St.....	\$15,000	1/2 Block
Fraser Annex #3 28th.....	\$10,000	Lot 8, W45' Blk 71
Holly Lot 10.....	\$10,000	Residential Lot 85' x 120'
Dogwood Ln.....	\$9,000	Lot 2 & 40.35' of Lot 1
Jupiter St.....	\$9,000	Lot 3 Blk 4 Country Club Heights
Jupiter St.....	\$6,500	Lot 7 Blk 3 Country Club Heights

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Massage Advantage
Trena Moore, LMT
701 N. Price Road
(806) 665-7261

Massage Therapy

Magic Moments Massage
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Want to list your salon? Call Beverly at 806-669-2525 for information.

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Mexico's cartels build national radio system

MEXICO CITY (AP) — When convoys of soldiers or federal police move through the scrubland of northern Mexico, the Zetas drug cartel knows they are coming.

The alert goes out from a taxi driver or a street vendor, equipped with a high-end handheld radio and paid to work as a lookout known as a "halcon," or hawk.

The radio signal travels deep into the arid countryside, hours by foot from the nearest road. There, the 8-foot-tall (2-meter-tall) dark-green branches of the rockrose bush conceal a radio tower painted to match. A cable buried in the dirt draws power from a solar panel. A signal-boosting repeater relays the message along a network of powerful antennas and other repeaters that stretch hundreds of miles (kilometers) across Mexico, a shadow communications system allowing the cartel to coordinate drug deliveries, kidnapping, extortion and other crimes with the immediacy and precision of a modern military or law-enforcement agency.

The Mexican army and marines have begun attacking the system, seizing hundreds of pieces of communications equipment in at least three operations since September that offer a firsthand look at a surprisingly far-ranging and sophisticated infrastructure.

Current and former U.S. law-enforcement officials say the equipment, ranging from professional-grade towers to handheld radios, was part of a single network that until recently extended from the U.S. border down eastern Mexico's Gulf coast and into Guatemala.

The network allowed Zetas operatives to conduct encrypted conversations without depending on the official cell-phone network, which is relatively easy for authorities to tap into, and in many cases does not reach deep into the Mexican countryside.

"They're doing what any sensible military unit would do," said Robert Killebrew, a retired U.S. Army colonel who has studied the Mexican drug cartels for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. "They're branching out into as many forms of communications as possible."

The Mexican army said on Dec. 4 that it had seized a total of at least 167 antennas, 155 repeaters, 166 power sources, 71 pieces of computer equipment and 1,446 radios. The equipment has been taken down in several cities in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz and the northern states of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas.

The network was built around 2006 by the Gulf cartel, a narcotics-trafficking gang that employed a group of enforcers known as the Zetas, who had defected from Mexican army special forces. The Zetas split from the Gulf cartel in 2010 and have since become one of the nation's most dominant drug cartels, with profitable sidelines in kidnapping, extortion and human trafficking.

The network's mastermind was Jose Luis Del Toro Estrada, a communications expert known as Tecnico who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine in federal court in Houston, Texas, two years ago.

Using millions of dollars worth of legally available equipment, Del Toro established the system in most of Mexico's 31 states and parts of northern Guatemala under the orders of the top leaders in the Gulf cartel and the Zetas. The Gulf cartel boss in each drug-smuggling territory, or plaza, was responsible for buying towers and repeaters as well as equipping his underlings with radios, according to Del Toro's plea agreement.

Del Toro employed communications specialists to maintain and run the system and research new technology, according to the agreement.

Mexican authorities, however, presented a different picture of the cartel radio infrastructure, saying it was less monolithic than the one described by U.S. authorities. A Mexican military official denied that the army and navy have been targeting one network that covered the entire Gulf coast. The operations had been focused on a series of smaller, local systems that were not connected to each other due to technical limitations, he said.

"It's not a single network," the official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic. "They use it to act locally."

In recent years, reporters traveling with the Mexican military have heard cartels using radio equipment to broadcast threats on soldiers' frequencies. The military official told the AP that the signals are now encrypted, but cartels are still trying to break in.

At least until recently, the cartel's system was controlled by computers that enabled complex control of the radio signals, allowing the cartel to direct its communications to specific radios while bypassing others, according to Grupo Savant, an intelligence and security consulting firm in Washington that has firsthand knowledge of Mexico's cartel operations.

The radio system appears to be a "low-cost, highly extendable and maintainable network" that shows the Zetas' sophistication, said Gordon Housworth, managing director of Intellectual Capital Group, LLC, a risk- and technology-consulting firm that has studied the structure and operations of Mexican cartels and criminal groups.

Other Mexican criminal organizations maintain similar radio networks, including the Sinaloa cartel, based in the Pacific coast state of the same name, and the Barrios Azteca street gang, which operates in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas, a U.S. law-enforcement official said. The Zetas' system is the largest, however, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitiv-

ity of the topic.

The Mexican raids are "a deliberate attempt to disrupt the business cycle of the cartels," said one former law-enforcement official with direct knowledge of the network. "By going after command and communications you disrupt control."

Law-enforcement officials and independent analysts described the operations against the Zetas' communications system as significant short-term victories in the fight against the cartel.

"The seizures show that the organization is scrambling," said Steven Dudley, co-director of InSight, a group that analyzes and investigates organized crime in Latin America.

The longer-term impact is unclear. The cartel has had little difficulty in replacing radio gear and other equipment seized in smaller operations in recent years. And contacts among the highest-ranking Zetas operatives tend to take place in highly encrypted communications over the Internet, according to Grupo Savant.

Certainly, cartel radio equipment is a near-ubiquitous presence for Mexicans living along the front lines of the drug war.

In the state of Tamaulipas, across the border from eastern Texas, many antennas are concealed in the foliage of the rockrose, an invasive shrub that has spread across much of the state's open land.

Even from a few feet (meters) away it's nearly impossible to see the towers or their power cables.

In Nuevo Laredo, the Zetas' first stronghold, antennas sprout from rooftops and empty lots. One soldier told the AP that even when authorities took down an antenna there, it was swiftly replaced.

Mexico: Ally's arrest is blow to 'El Chapo'

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican authorities said Monday that they had dealt a blow to the country's most powerful drug cartel with the capture of a top lieutenant — but didn't say if they were any closer to capturing the gang's elusive leader.

Felipe Cabrera Sarabia, known as "The Engineer," allegedly ran operations for the Sinaloa drug cartel, Mexico's most powerful, in the northern state of Durango and in part of the northern state of Chihuahua, Chief Army spokesman Gen. Ricardo Trevilla told a news conference. Cabrera, wearing a bulletproof vest, was paraded before the news media in what has become a common practice for law enforcement authorities following major arrests.

Many experts and law-enforcement officials believe the reputed leader of the Sinaloa cartel, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, has been hiding in the mountains of Durango. Authorities say Guzman is Mexico's top drug lord, while Forbes magazine has included him on its list of the world's richest men, reportedly worth more than \$1 billion. He has eluded authorities since his 2001 escape from prison in a laundry truck, and has a \$7 million bounty on his head. Trevilla offered no information about the hunt for Guzman. He only said that Cabrera's capture "will affect the structure and leadership of the Sinaloa cartel."

Cabrera was nabbed without a shot being fired Friday in the capital of Sinaloa state, headquarters of the cartel, army officials first announced Sunday night.

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Snow

cont. from page 1

"That'll be pretty much done," he said of the ice on area highways. "They're drying out as it is because of how warm it is. Even (today), we're looking at it getting well into the 40s, so it's not looking like it's going to continue to be an issue."

Temperatures over the course of the week are expected to reach highs near 59 degrees between Thursday and Saturday.

Clarendon

cont. from page 1

College's wind energy program to grow, especially with construction underway on transmission lines that will transport wind energy from the Panhandle into major metropolitan areas across the state.

"The wind energy program started out strong, and numbers have dropped off, but now that there is some wind energy work in Gray County, we expect it to pick up," he said.

Dollies

7374