

The Brackett News

How to Help Tsunami Victims

See Below

16th year, No. 48

Serving the communities of Brackettville, Fort Clark Springs, Spofford and Kinney County

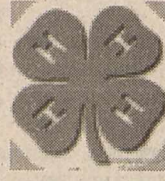
1 Section, 6 Pages

Livestock show set for Jan. 14, 15

The 50th Annual Kinney County 4-H and FFA Livestock Show will be held Friday and Saturday, Jan. 14 and 15 at the Kinney County Civic Center. The event begins with the weigh in of all market animals from 7:00 a.m. to noon on Friday.

Showing begins Friday with rabbit classes at 2 p.m., steer classes at 4, meat goat doe kids at 4:30, commercial ewe lambs at 5 and swine at 5:30.

Showing continues on Saturday with market lamb classes



at 8 a.m. and market goat classes at 9:30 a.m.

The livestock show includes a barbecue lunch at noon on Saturday, followed by awards presentations at 1:30 and the premium sale at 2.

"We value your continued support for all of our 4-H and FFA exhibitors in Kinney County and look forward to seeing you," Robert Elledge, Kinney County Extension Agent said, inviting the public to attend.

EMS extends contract with Ambulance Billing Systems

At the recent Kinney County Commissioner's Court a billing agreement/contract between Ambulance Billing Systems, Inc., and Kinney County EMS was signed.

The agreement is the second edition of a contract that began in December 2003.

The Commissioner's Court reviewed and re-awarded the contract to Ambulance Billing Systems, Inc., of San Antonio for another one year term.

According to Joe Scialdone of ABS, during 2003, "We have been able to optimize the Kinney County EMS collection activity for their ground ambulance transports, while working with patients regarding their EMS bill," Scialdone explained.

"In 2005, we anticipate a continued good working relationship with your county, and will begin allowing patients to use credit cards to pay their portion of an ambulance bill," he added.

ABS bills all insurance companies on behalf of the patient following an ambulance transport.

Some points Scialdone made in favor of ABS to benefit the county were lowering overhead, spreading liability, saving money and with an industry leader.

Kinney County EMS Executive Director Steven Burch said "I contacted ABS, visited with the owner, Joe, and felt that they were

a viable alternative to our current billing company.

"The first month ABS generated Kinney County \$17,000 in revenue from current bills and past collections from the prior billing service. Of course that amount has not since been that high. Another advantage of ABS is the ability to generate custom reports for EMS and the auditor. We are very satisfied with their service and performance."

Scialdone noted that smaller economies come into play when dealing with ambulance billing. "Our professional staff has years of experience billing exclusively for ambulance companies. Our structured, systematic processes ensure your calls are currently being worked. Let us worry about the payroll, overtime and 941 taxes for your billing activities," he said.

He also noted that "At ABS we keep up on the current changes in the ambulance industry and pass these changes onto our clients."

"We are members of the American Ambulance Association, the North American Ambulance Alliance, the Health Care Compliance Association and the Healthcare Financial Management Association.

"We receive numerous emails weekly concerning changes in our industry. Additionally, ABS, Inc. maintains a professional liability insurance policy."

Tigers named 'Team of the Year'

A dozen named to All Southwest Texas Team



Named to the Uvalde Leader-News All Southwest Team are the Tigers' front row from left Lito Escamilla and Clyde Adams. Middle row from left, Cody Edwards, Noe Talamantes, Tillman Davis, and Brand Wylie. Back row from left, Charlie Slaughter, Whitney Massingill, Leon Woolsey, Kody Yeager, Tres Rueda and Gumaro Martinez.

The Fighting Tigers 2004-2005 was named "Team of the Year" in the Uvalde Leader-News' All-Southwest Area Football.

The announcement made this week also named 12 of the Black

and Gold to the All-Southwest Area Football team.

The Tigers boasted a 10-0 regular season. The Tigers made it to the Region IV finals before being stopped by Shiner, who would eventually win the Class

A State title.

The Tigers named to the All-Southwest Team included Kody Yeager, quarterback; Noe Talamantes and Charlie Slaughter, running backs; Leon Woolsey, tight end; Whitney

Massingill and Gumaro Martinez, offensive linemen. Clyde Adams, defensive lineman; Lito Escamilla and Tres Rueda, linebackers; Tillman Davis, Cody Edwards and Brand Wylie as defensive backs.



Standing Tall

Luisa Morales, the only female laborer who helped construct the Kinney County Detention Center, stands proudly in front of her work. Morales was assistant foreman for the project and has worked as a laborer on Calderon Elementary School, the Del Rio Civic Center, Vista Verde Medical Plaza and a host of other construction projects.

RGEC spreading Christmas cheer

Submitted by Cindy Edwards

Rio Grande Electric Cooperative's crew members presented "Tommy Tumbleweed's Dream", a West Texas Christmas story to students at Jones Elementary before the Christmas Holidays.

Participating in the program were Area Operations Manager Danny Samaniego, Apprentice Lineman Jorge Villarreal, Apprentice Lineman Daniel Garza, Area Office Clerk Stephanie Gomez, 2nd Class Lineman Jaime Muniz, and 2nd Class Lineman Gilbert Villarreal. (Standing) Line Foreman David Meyer, 1st Class Lineman Nacho Aguirre, Meter Reader Kyle Rose, 1st Class Lineman Severo Martinez.

Santa Claus and his elves visited children at local Head Start centers just before Christmas.

"Santa" Severo Martinez, 1st Class Lineman, and elves Gilbert Villarreal, 2nd Class Lineman, and Daniel Garza, Apprentice Lineman celebrated with Head Start Program children.

The RGEC Employees' Club purchased materials for 15 complete holiday meals, which were distributed to deserving families.

The meals included holiday favorites such as yams, cranberry sauce, stuffing, corn, green beans, fresh fruit, mashed potatoes, gravy mix, a baked chicken, and pumpkin pie.

The Employee Club also donated \$50 to the St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church to go towards the purchase of toys for the Casa Esperanza Orphanage in Ciudad Acuña, Coah., Mexico.

Members of the club pay monthly dues, which are used to support worthy charities.



Members of Rio Grande Electric Cooperative spread Christmas Cheer last year with public school children.



INSIDE

G.G.

Everyone who knows me is aware that one of my many weaknesses are sweets — candy, cookies, pies or cakes. Love them all in all forms and fashions. With that in mind, I'm going to share occasionally some "Watch Out" recipes. Community/Page 4

Chuck Hall

It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. So very much has happened to me in the past year that I never dreamed were in the making. Opinion/Page 2

Donald Smith

Over several weeks of counseling Josie was able to face the issue of having been raped as a child. Religion/Page 5

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BRIEFS

Ladies Golf

Fort Clark Ladies Golf League Dec. 28, 2004, game was tee to green score. Winners were Betty Lee, first; Marian Weber, second and Carol Benfield, third. League play is at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays. Join the fun!

Tax News

First for teachers, the \$250 page one deductions for out of pocket expenses has been extended for two more years.

Second, for all Texans that can itemize their deductions, sales taxes can once again be taken as an itemized deduction. If you have not saved receipts, there will be a chart to use in lieu of actual taxes paid, you can add large items like vehicles, RVs, boats and trailers to that amount.

4-H Meeting

There will be a Junior and Senior 4-H meeting Sunday, Jan. 9 from 4-5 pm. Officers meet at 3:30 pm at the Fort Clark Springs Service Club. For more information call the Extension Office at 563-2442.

One-time show

"The Magic Medallion," is presented by the Canyon School of Dance at the Janey Slaughter Briscoe Grand Opera House Saturday, Jan. 8. The one-time only performance is at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 each. For information call at 830-278-4184.

How to donate to Tsunami victims

In the wake of disaster, media can greatly assist relief efforts by letting the public know that the most effective way to help is to make cash donations to known organizations.

This point is always emphasized by relief workers, national voluntary organizations active in disaster, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM).

Here are some reasons why cash donations to known organizations are more efficient and effective than donations of material goods:

- Cash donations provide flexibility to help victims of disasters in situations that may be changing rapidly.
- Cash donations minimize problems involved in transport,

delivery and storage. This is especially important for areas where bridges, roads, warehouses and other infrastructure have been destroyed.

• Cash donations keep relief workers focused on their work with survivors, instead of diverting their efforts to sorting, storing, tracking and distributing goods.

• People in foreign nations may have cultures that are very different from ours, so it is important for relief workers to have cash to purchase food, clothing and other materials that are culturally acceptable.

More information is available at the following web sites: Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster for Texas can be reached at: www.txvoad.org. Also the National VOAD website can be reached at: www.nvoad.org.

I firmly resolve to . . .

Happy New Year!
It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. So very much has happened to me in the past year that I never dreamed were in the making. Events that occurred have changed my life forever. I will never be the same. All of those happenings have made me closer to my God. I have several anniversaries coming up. A wedding anniversary, a birthday, an anniversary of the starting of this column, and others. I hope I remember them all. Like many other folks, I have also made some new year's resolutions. I have been loved more than I have loved. I need to settle the scores. I need to do more acts of random kindness. I need to deepen my appreciation towards my fellow man. And lastly, I need to write better articles. But I could be wrong.



But I Could Be Wrong
Chuck Hall

Thinking. That's a good one. Yep, I'm going to do more thinking. But I also have to do some serious resolving. I have some scores to settle. There are some people I need pay back. I owe lots. I have been shown more goodness that I have shown. I have been loved more than I have loved. I need to settle the scores. I need to do more acts of random kindness. I need to deepen my appreciation towards my fellow man. And lastly, I need to write better articles. But I could be wrong.

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The Brackett News welcomes and encourages letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 350 words. The editor reserves the right to refuse or edit all letters submitted for length, potentially libelous statements and accuracy of information. All letters must be signed and include a mailing address and phone number for verification purposes. All writers must provide proof of identity. The Brackett News will not publish letters sent via e-mail. Letters published and viewpoints of columnists do not necessarily reflect the editorial beliefs of this newspaper.

Big Mama Sez!
Today, find a way to make changes in yourself instead of someone else. Sometimes the results are the same.

The Brackett News
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A whole new year



Yo Shanae Shanae Simmons

The stars glittered across a velvet sky as everyone danced and sang, waiting for that moment when everything would be different. Some were looking forward to that midnight kiss, or just came to socialize with their friends about the current gossip. But what really everyone needed and wanted was that moment that all the woes and fears of last year were forgotten, and the dreams and resolutions of a new life could begin. This New Year's Eve, I spent the evening with some friends. We all collected ourselves over at one friend's ranch, and chattered about what to do before the clock struck 12. We wondered what would keep us busy until that exciting moment. Before the party, I had dressed up much fancier than normal. I wore a satin skirt that flowed freely to about mid-calf, a brown velvety shirt, and a jean jacket, all gifts from a particularly generous Christmas. I also carried a new digital camera, my most favorite gift, and prepared myself for much picture taking. The evening started about fair enough. We all relaxed and waited for everyone to arrive, as our generous host bustled about making cheese dip and other snacks. Slowly everyone arrived and we

played some pool, ping pong, and watched TV. Everyone was congenial, and many came up and felt my skirt. At first I was a little iffy about whether wearing a skirt would be a good idea, but now I was feeling that it was working out well. I thought, "Well, it's a new year and I'll try being a new Shanae." After awhile we decided to shoot off fireworks. After hearing this, I was very excited because I have always had a flare for fire and firecrackers (which has led to some pretty interesting situations in the past), and they seemed pretty stocked up with the goods. We hopped into two trucks and drove out into some fields. There was where all the fiery magic was going to happen. We exited the vehicles excitedly, and turned up some music. We scrapped at the packages trying to unwrap their tightly bound exteriors. Some were trying to light punks with matches,

but found their efforts were in vain, because the wind had picked up a bit. Others tried using the cigarette lighters from the trucks, but found it was equally difficult. Finally our host (the brains of the operation) thought of sitting inside of the trucks and lighting the punks with the matches. It was a success and we began to shoot off fireworks. "Don't forget, stay in the green!" our host yelled, afraid that someone would hold a sparkler too close to dry grass and set us all on fire. Of course, even after hearing this warning several times, someone lit the grass on fire (probably with a sparkler). It was just a small fire and one of my friends, standing almost right in it, stood swirling about holding sparklers, not even noticing the changed temperature in her boots. I ran over, pushed her aside, and stepped on the fire with my flip flops. I later sat and laughed at my friend's unawareness. Then we all began to dance. I was dancing the Macarena with some girls and giggling like crazy. My friend was standing right in front of me and filmed, as I danced in the headlights, and everyone watched as we acted like dorks. Suddenly, as I was looking

at the camera and dancing, someone ran behind me and swooshed my skirt up. I screamed and dropped my hands to push it down, looking like an awkward, overgrown Marilyn Monroe. When I realized who it was, I ran after them, and was determined to seek revenge. Later, I watched the film, and was unpleasantly surprised that it was all caught on camera. At that moment I felt like maybe it wasn't the greatest idea to wear a skirt. By the end of the evening, when everyone was about to head home, we said our goodbyes and smiled at the night's little adventure. We had had our fun, some had got their midnight kiss, and others were juiced up on the vacation's gossip. In the end, we realized we hadn't even counted down for that moment that was supposed to change everything. But internally, we could feel the change that each of us had made over the short vacation. We had all grown a bit just after weeks of being out of school, and most of us, being seniors, had made the realization that things were about to change, because we were changing. In the end, those woes and fears of last year could be forgotten because it was a whole new year.

New attack on the Declaration

They just won't go away, and, unfortunately, it's illegal to kill 'em! If you think the attacks on the Boy Scouts were bad, how about the school principal, Patricia Vidmar, of Stevens Creek School, in Pasadena, California, who has apparently decided that the Declaration of Independence is unconstitutional because it contains the word "God?" Yep, that's right; Vidmar issued orders to Stephen Williams, a social studies teacher, to stop using the Declaration of Independence and other historical documents in his classroom because they contain the word "God." Explain to me, please, the logic behind this nitwit decision. How can a social studies teacher teach about the social and ideological reasons for the formation of the United States without mentioning the most important documents in American history? This is so stupid as to defy description. These people, in their rabid hatred of God and anything pertaining to God, are willing to destroy themselves and the United States, rewrite history, and deny reality to... to do what? What possible purpose could this have? They are beyond reason and logic. They have passed out of sanity, beyond absurdity, and into the realms of insanity. It is

insane to expect anyone would abide by such inane, insane, illogical, unprincipled, demonstrably anti-Christian and anti-American edicts. Christian Educators Association International (CEAI) Director Finn Laursen was shocked. "I find it frustrating that so many of our well meaning administrators totally misunderstand the intent of the First Amendment which meant to inhibit governmental interference in religious expression and not launch governmental roadblocks," Laursen said. "The Establishment Clause was never written to establish a God-free zone in the public arena." Amen Finn! Give 'em heaven son! But I seriously doubt the well meaning administrators part. Laursen also said, "We receive dozens of complaints monthly from public school educators, who happen to be Christian by faith, demonstrating similar circumstances." Is it possible that so many of our school administrators have been lobotomized? Have they all become mental midgets as well as liberal eunuchs and stooges? Why can they not stand up to the liberal, anti-God crowd and say, "Back off jerks! We teach the truth here!"? This kind of lunacy must be stopped! This nation is a nation



The Way I See It Steven R. LaMascus

of God-fearing men and women, which was founded by God-fearing men and women, and we are allowing a tiny, vocal, seemingly indefatigable, godless minority to dictate to us how we will raise and educate our children. In many instances one or two malcontent, misanthropic atheists have dictated policy to literally hundreds of Christians. This is still a nation of majority rule, but we have to fight for that right. If we just roll over and acquiesce we are going to be run over by the immoral minority. We are the moral majority and we don't have to accept their evil ideas and morally bankrupt lack of values. If we want to pray before a high school football game, we should danged well be able to pray before a high school football game. If we want to hang the Ten Commandments on the wall in the court house or the classroom, we should have that right. There is nothing in the Constitution that denies us that right. If the atheists don't want to pray they don't have to. If they don't want to read the Ten

Commandments they don't have to. The Constitution does give them that right; but it does not give them the right to deny us ours! That's the truth and nothing anybody can say or do will change that. Anything else is a bald-faced lie. Every time some hair-brained moron states that we can't do something because it has to do with God, it is a lie and it is illegal, and I don't give a hoot what liberal court puppet says differently. God is real! God is alive! God rules! God is the creator of the universe, and the giver of rights. I challenge any liberal atheist to deny me my rights! I'm through turning the other cheek! People it is time to fight! Every time we allow this to happen without a battle we are at fault. We need to meet these godless oafs, challenge for challenge, lawyer for lawyer, at every turn. It is time to do something. In fact it is far past time to do something. Give no more ground; retreat no more. Stand firm, stand tall, put on the armor of God and do battle! Romans 8:31, 32 - "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" NIV

Tort reform would be a great New Year's resolution

By Nathan Tabor Contributing Writer
The right to seek justice in a court of law is fundamental to our American way of life. If a person has been wronged, cheated, or hurt by the actions of another, whether intentionally or negligently, the injured party is entitled to just compensation. That's only fair. So I hold a deep respect for the right of individuals to access our civil courts. But like President Bush, I still believe that we must make reforming our system of civil litigation a top priority in 2005. We need common-sense reforms that will restrict frivolous lawsuits, abolish joint and several liability provisions, and limit outrageous punitive damage awards that are completely out of proportion to actual losses. The number of civil lawsuits filed in our courts has tripled over the past 40 years. Often these lawsuits have no real merit but are used simply to extort

cash payments from the person or business being targeted. (The Reverend Jesse Jackson is an expert at this kind of race-based extortion) And many times, even if the plaintiff is in the right, the 'boxcar damages' awarded by juries are completely out of proportion to the actual harm suffered. Interesting fact: almost half of the money won in malpractice lawsuits ends up in the pockets of the plaintiff's attorneys. Maybe that's why the American Trial Lawyers are so adamantly opposed to tort reform. Often innocent businesses have to settle such lawsuits even when they are in the right. Unfortunately, this whole process costs us jobs. When a business is forced to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars defending against frivolous lawsuits, it has less money to expand its operations, invest in research or hire more employees. This whole corrupt practice

isn't about evil corporations and their hapless victims who need legal protection. It is nothing more than legalized larceny, and it needs to be stopped! Nowhere is this truer than in the medical profession. The rapidly escalating cost of liability insurance has reached unaffordable levels for an increasing number of medical practices. Some doctors have to pay as much as 50 percent of their gross income for malpractice insurance. Yet in our litigious society they can't afford to be without it. Many OB-GYN's today find themselves forced to cease delivering babies altogether. Personal story: My wife and I have a baby due in January. However, because of rising malpractice insurance our midwife can no longer deliver our baby. Every day, the cost of health care in America increases because physicians feel compelled to practice 'defensive medicine,' often prescribing unnecessary

but expensive tests, operations or medicines, rather than risk a lawsuit. North Carolina's Senator John Edwards campaigned for Vice President on the theme that he came from a poor working family but pulled himself up by his own bootstraps to become a self-made millionaire. What hypocrisy. We need to stop these frivolous lawsuits and put caps on disproportionate punitive damages. Or even better yet, move to the English model. There, if you sue somebody and lose, you pay the legal fees for the other side. This might be a simple solution to a complicated problem. One thing for sure, tort reform would be a great gift for the American people! Nathan Tabor is a conservative political activist based in Kernersville, North Carolina. He has his BA in Psychology and his Master's Degree in Public Policy.

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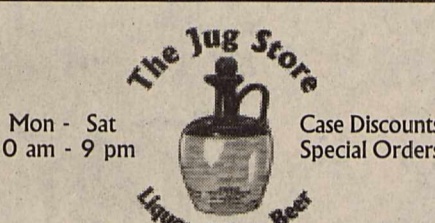
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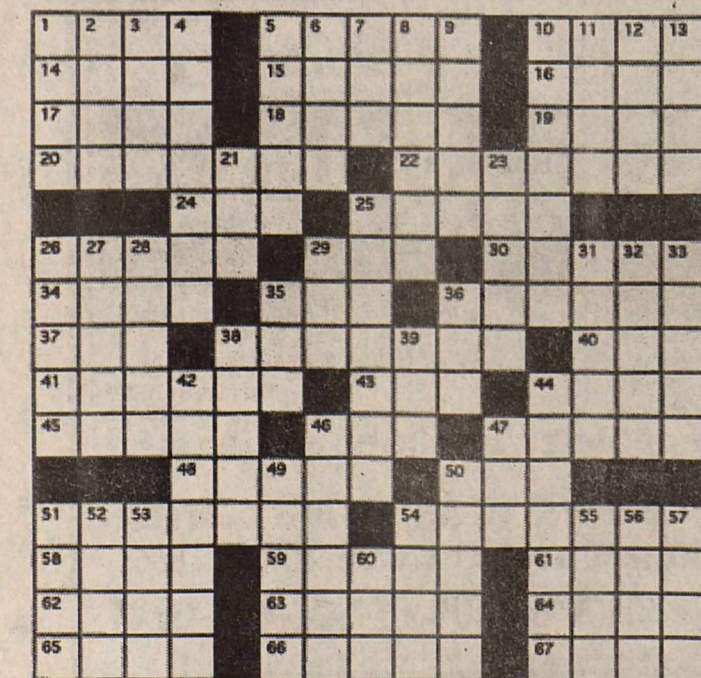
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ACROSS 1 Skin problem 5 Lessen 10 Fisherman's catch 14 Hipbones 15 Shows boldness 16 Singer 17 Intimidation 18 Meanies 19 Even 20 Moderates 22 Bugs 24 Cadiz cheer 25 Punitive 26 Sewing article 29 Pa Cartwright's youngest 30 Kid 34 Alert 35 Stupid person 36 Not uniform 37 History book 38 Made of a smooth-barked wood 40 Equip 41 Organic compounds 43 Underground discovery 44 Tierney or Rayburn 45 Minute 46 Consonants 47 23 Down's domain 48 Item in a tail center-piece 50 Prefix for cation or function 51 Portion 54 Members of the service 58 News article 59 Sharp growth 61 Help, when you shouldn't 62 Scottish language 63 Of one of the senses 64 Goose egg 65 Like a sloth 66 Common-place; dull 67 Scatters hay DOWN 1 Separation 2 Direction for 54 Across 3 Thailand, once 4 Piercing weapon 5 Worship 6 Grocery containers 7 Timetable abbr. 8 Portable shelter; var. 9 German city 10 Fighter 11 "I cannot tell" 12 Brit. money 13 Turis 21 Part of a building 23 Evil one 25 Theater purchase 26 Winsome 27 Split a sentence 28 Preach 29 Jolt 31 Broadcast 32 Parisian river 33 Margins 35 Family member 36 English letter 38 Canyon National Park 39 Time periods; abbr. 42 Made into law 44 Noble 46 U.S. president 47 Yokohama yes 49 Like bar beer 50 Macho 51 Lazarus, for one 52 River in Spain 53 Go higher 54 Fern. titles 55 Double-reed 56 Split 57 Holy miles. 60 Spanish gold



ROARING TWENTIES

In the grid below, twenty words can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each word that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Words can be found in all directions: forwards, backwards, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find today's 20 words?

Today's Category: FOREIGN CAPITALS

Grid for Roaring Twenties puzzle with letters B Y X C P T O K Y O X L and words listed to the right: 1. Rome, 2., 3., 4., 5., 6., 7., 8., 9., 10., 11., 12., 13., 14., 15., 16., 17., 18., 19., 20.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Jan. 7.....Jose A. Cabello Jan. 7.....Juan M. Flores Jan. 7.....Michael Garcia Jan. 7.....John Osborn Jan. 9.....Linda Barrett Jan. 9.....Xavier R. Herrera Jan. 9.....Stan Somers Jan. 10.....Monico Cole Jan. 10.....Jose Cole Jan. 10.....Monica Falcon Jan. 10.....Milo White Jan. 11.....Hawkins Huey Jan. 11.....Jean Somers

Roaring Twenties Solution: 1. Bern 2. Bogota 3. Brasilia 4. Brussels 5. Cairo 6. Dublin 7. Hanol 8. Havana 9. Lisbon 10. London 11. Nairobi 12. Oslo 13. Ottawa 14. Paris 15. Prague 16. Quito 17. Rome 18. Sofia 19. Tokyo 20. Vienna

HOROSCOPES

by Charles Cooper

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Although a close friend is having problems, you don't have to take them to heart. You want to help, but you can't interfere. Stay out of this one. PISCES (February 19 to March 20) It's a good time for some introspection. Establishing new goals and implementing plans is favored. Later, you focus on friends and family. ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You're on the horns of a personal dilemma this week. Unfortunately, this affects your concentration at work. Try to keep the two separate. TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) It's a good time to take stock of where you're going career-wise. Now is the time to make any changes, or not, as you deem fit. Later in the week, a family member needs some reassurance from you. GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Winter close-out sales have you tempted. However, your budget isn't up to it after the holidays. Resist temptation! CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You don't have to go it alone at home. Enlist the cooperation of family members. Together, you accomplish a lot more. LEO (July 23 to August 22) It's a good week to tap into your creativity. Those with literary talents in particular find their muse. Over the weekend, take a much-needed break. VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Advice on a work matter comes from an unexpected source. However, you're wise to listen closely. Later in the week, someone close to you is moody. LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) You're a bit sensitive this week. However, do be careful. No one is being intentionally insulting, and you're overreacting. SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) You're still in a partying mood this week. However, it's time to roll up your sleeves. Tackle the most difficult assignments first. SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Avoid a tendency to get in over your head with a new business deal. Only agree to do what you know you can accomplish. This way, no one winds up being disappointed. CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) You need some rest after the whirlwind of the holiday season. If possible, schedule some down time for yourself. This weekend, pay attention to relationship concerns. (c) 2004 DBR Media, Inc.

