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Howard College women upend OC'S Wranglers



See Page 1B

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BIG SPRING

HERALD

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 4, 2007



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 3 COPYRIGHT 2007 50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

Filing begins

Four file as primary candidates; Crooker opts not to run again

□ A list of offices up for election is located on Page 3A.

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Monday was a mad dash for area political hopefuls looking to participate in the March primary elections, as four area residents filed on the Republican ticket.



Among those filing to run for office was former Big Spring Police Department officer Stan Parker, who hopes to earn his party's nod for a shot at the Howard County sheriff's



job, currently held by incumbent Dale Walker, who is finishing his second term as sheriff.

"I was born and raised here. I've lived here all my life. I grew up in the county, and I understand what their needs are. I've always been active in the school," said Parker. "I have the experience and the education to run the sheriff's office and my last seven years with the police department were in the administrative end of it. I handled budgeting, staffing and things like

See **FILING**, Page 3A



Nancy Newell, left, talks with Clarence Hartfield during the Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Business Before Hours event at the First Bank of West Texas' Scurry Street location Tuesday morning.

Got lights?

Decorating contest entry forms available

By JOHN A. MOSELEY
Managing Editor

Are you one of those people who goes the extra mile during the Christmas season — spending plenty of time and the resources available to decorate your home and/or business?

If you are ... if you've got lights and other decorations ... it's time to turn them on and let everyone ValVerde see!



Howard County is well known throughout West Texas a great place to view Christmas lights, thanks to the Festival of Lights, the Big Spring VA Medical Center's outdoor display, not to mention those brightly colored poinsettias adorning the Comanche Trail Park dam and other locations. Now's your chance to "shine" as well, in the annual Christmas Decorating Contest.

Sponsored by the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, *Big Spring Herald* and KBST/KBTS, the contest has three categories: Residential, commercial and non-judged. There is no entry fee.

"This year, like last year, there will be no inside judging," explained Debbye ValVerde, the Chamber's executive director. "It has to be outside lights or a window display, but nothing inside. That was a request from the judges."

Those wishing to partic-

See **CONTEST**, Page 3A

FISD officials pleased with state indicator report

By STEVE REAGAN
Staff Writer

The latest review of Forsan public school academic indicators has officials smiling.

Based on figures released by the Texas Education Agency in its annual Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report, Forsan students consistently performed above state average in several academic areas.

From test scores to graduation



rates to college preparedness, AEIS figures showed Forsan students in a very favorable light, Superintendent Randy Johnson said.

"As a snapshot of our school district, it shows there are areas here that are real strengths, but it also shows there are areas that remain real challenges,"

Johnson said.

Scores from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) standardized test show Forsan students outpacing their statewide counterparts in most areas.

"I'm particularly proud of TAKS scores at the elementary level, where we had more than 90 percent of the students pass in all subject areas, except science," Johnson said. "That's well above

regional and state scores.

"It shows that our people are doing a wonderful job across the board," he added. "Not just in those grades that were tested, but in the others, as well."

Junior high and high school scores also topped state average, so school officials had a lot to smile about in those areas. But Johnson also noticed a reason to

See **FISD**, Page 3A

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www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us:
Please call 263-7331. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call (432) 263-7335 before 7 p.m. weekdays and noon Sunday.



BYKES FOR TYKES

The Cossacks Motorcycle Club has scheduled a fund raiser benefiting its annual "Bykes for Tykes" Christmas Toy and Food Run for Friday at the Eagles Lodge at 703 W. Third St.

Hamburger plates will be available for \$5 per plate from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Live music will be provided by "Texas Raw" from 8 p.m. until closing.

Tickets for the dance are \$5 per person.

ORNAMENTS

Keep Big Spring Beautiful has Keep Texas Beautiful Christmas Ornaments on sale for \$20 each at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce office.

These ornaments were designed by Nelda Laney, wife of former State Rep. Pete Laney. Ornaments from 2006 and 2007 are available.

REFINERY DINNER


The Alon USA Big Spring Refinery will hold its annual 25 Year Dinner and Induction meeting at 6:30 p.m. Friday in the East Room of the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum on the Howard College campus.

According to Alon officials, valet parking will be available for those attending the affair.

The valet service will be available on the northside of the coliseum.

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Sports

BIG SPRING HERALD

Do you have an interesting sports item or story idea? Call Jonathan Hull at 263-7331, Ext. 237. Email results to: sports@bigspringherald.com

Page 1B
Tuesday, December 4, 2007

IN BRIEF

YMCA seeking referees for youth basketball league

The YMCA is seeking individuals interested in being a referee for boys and girls youth basketball league games.

Anyone interested can attend a refing clinic being held at 6 p.m. Wednesday at the YMCA.

Call Robert Smith at 816-8161 for more details.

Big Spring High School schedules fall sports banquet

The Big Spring High School booster clubs have scheduled a fall sports banquet for Saturday, Dec. 15 at 6 p.m. in the high school's cafeteria.

Male and female athletes that participated in football, volleyball, cross country and cheerleading will be recognized.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased from Kay Cook at the Athletic Training Center.

Call Denise Carillo at 816-1685 with any questions.

Individuals needed to referee area basketball games

Individuals are needed to referee area subvarsity basketball games for the 2007-08 season.

Anyone interested should call Adam Rodriguez at 517-0300.

Crossroads region varsity sports weekly calendar

Here's a look at the upcoming Crossroads varsity sports schedule:

TODAY

Big Spring girls basketball at Midland High, 6:30 p.m.

Big Spring boys basketball at Greenwood, 7:30 p.m.

Forsan boys and girls basketball at Borden County, 6:30 p.m.

Coahoma boys and girls basketball at Grape Creek, 6:30 p.m.

THURS.-SAT.

Big Spring boys basketball at Midland Tall City Oilman's Tournament held at South Oak Cliff.

Big Spring girls basketball at Clyde Tournament.

Coahoma boys basketball at Stanton's Hooptown Classic.

Forsan boys and girls basketball at Borden County Tournament.

Grady boys and girls basketball at Water Valley Tournament.

FRIDAY

Coahoma girls basketball vs. Wellington at Idalou, 6:30 p.m.

DEC. 11

Big Spring boys basketball at Midland Lee, 7:30 p.m.

Big Spring girls basketball at Pecos, 6:30 p.m.

Forsan boys and girls basketball vs. Grady, 6:30 p.m.

Coahoma girls basketball at Colorado City, 7:30 p.m.

Coahoma boys basketball vs. Reagan County, 7 p.m.

HC women cruise by Lady Wranglers

By JONATHAN HULL

Herald Sports Editor

It's strange to call games must win this early in the basketball season. However, the Howard College women's basketball team was in that type of situation Monday night against Odessa College's Lady Wranglers at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

Odessa College held a 4-point lead early in the first half, but quickly relinquished it to the Hawks. Howard led by six with 8:15 left in the half and then went on runs of 9-0 and 14-2, extending the advantage to 34-20 with 4:15 remaining before halftime.

From there, Howard dominated and eventually won, 97-55. Howard Head Coach Earl Diddle noted how pivotal this win could be.

"This was an awfully big game," Diddle said. "This was a must win game. It's an important win for us. The girls were ready to play. We came out and we didn't surrender the lead once we took it. We didn't let them back in the game."

Howard forced 23 Odessa College turnovers, converting the mishaps into 28 points. Diddle admitted Howard's defensive intensity was the key component to the lopsided win.

"I thought we swarmed them defensively. The girls really upped the burners and we created a lot of easy baskets for ourselves," Diddle said. "I think the defense attrib-

uted most to the score."

Offensively, the Hawks' scoring was spread out with five players reaching double figures. Aqueelah Watkins had a game-high 18 points with 16 of them coming in the first half.

Monica Jones finished with 14 points and led Howard with eight rebounds. Rachael Driver and Jotosha McDonald each scored 13 points and Danielle Cota scored 12.

Howard used a lot of ball movement to create open field goal attempts as the Hawks shot 52.8 percent. Howard was also more active on the boards, outrebounding Odessa College 42-29. The Hawks had 19 offensive rebounds, allowing them to register 19 second-chance points.

Diddle was proud of the way the Hawks rotated the ball around the floor and never let up on the Lady Wranglers.

"We're a little smaller than most teams and the equalizer in size is movement," Diddle said. "I thought overall we moved the ball well. Anytime you're up, you want to work on building that lead and we did a good job of that."

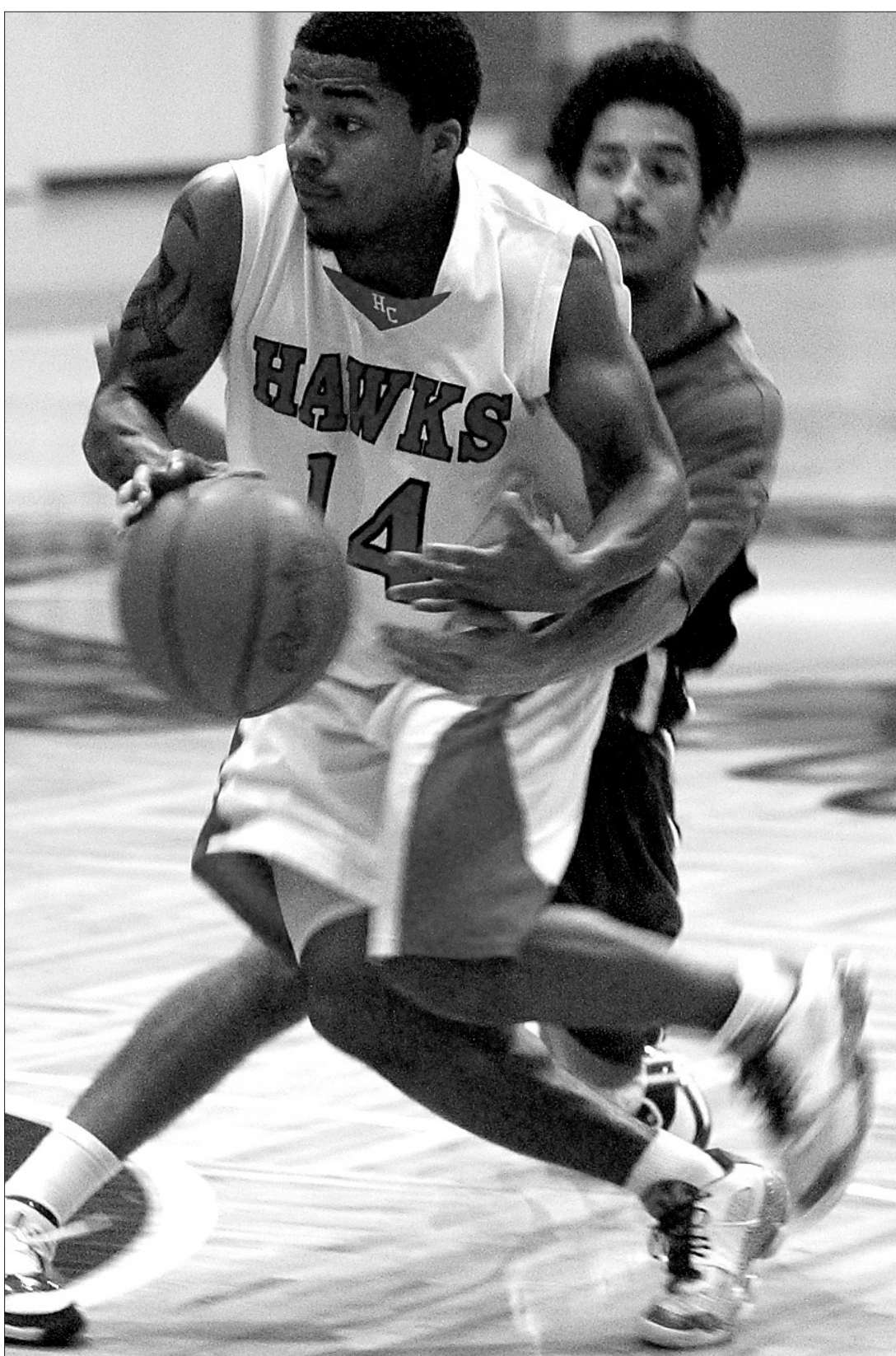
Howard plays its second consecutive conference game at home at 5:30 p.m. Thursday with Frank Phillips College coming to visit.

Contact Sports Editor Jonathan Hull by calling 263-7331, ext. 237, or by e-mailing him at sports@bigspringherald.com.



HERALD photo/Jonathan Hull
Howard College's Monica Jones lays the ball in for two points Monday night at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. Jones had 14 points in the Hawks 97-55 win over the Odessa College Lady Wranglers.

Hawks dominate Odessa College



HERALD photo/Jonathan Hull
Howard Hawks point guard Denzel Barnes dribbles past Odessa College's Roderick Bombard in the Hawks' decisive, 103-76, victory Monday night at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

By JONATHAN HULL
Herald Sports Editor

Statement made.

The Howard College Hawks announced their arrival to the Western Junior College Athletic Conference title race Monday night at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum with a resounding, 103-76, victory over Odessa College's Wranglers.

The Hawks scored the first 14 points of the game with the Wranglers not hitting the scoreboard until the 15:12 mark in the first half. Corey Allmond hit two three's and made three free throws in the first five minutes of the game, helping Howard blow the game wide open.

Allmond finished with 22 points in the first half, including five 3-point field goals. Sean Watson had 19 by halftime as the Hawks led 63-29 at the intermission.

Monday's first half total topped Howard's 60 points in a complete game against Midland College Thursday. Howard Head Coach Mark Adams gave a simple explanation for the Hawks' offensive prowess.

"We made shots tonight. That was the big difference in tonight's game compared to the Midland College game," Adams said. "I told the Odessa coach that we might've beat the Celtics with the way we shot the ball. We came out prepared to play and we stuck to our game plan. We didn't play 40 minutes, but probably 30 minutes of really good basketball."

Howard shot just 31.3 percent from the field

against Midland, but made 48.5 percent of its shots against Odessa. The Hawks made 10 of 20 3-point field goals, including a seven of 10 behind the arc performance by Allmond. He led all scorers with 29 points. Watson finished with 28 points, had four assists, swiped three steals and pulled down seven rebounds.

Markeys Deans finished with 13 points and led the Hawks with eight boards. DeMarcus Richard had 11 points, six rebounds and four assists.

Defensively, Howard utilized a full court press and a high-pressure half court strategy to force 27 Odessa College turnovers that the Hawks converted into 44 points.

"Our full court pressure gave them a lot of problems," said Adams. "Then in the half court, we kept applying the pressure and it took them out of a lot of their sets."

The Hawks are now 1-1 in conference play and host Frank Phillips College at 7:30 p.m. Thursday night at the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

"This was a must win for us to stay in the conference race," Adams explained. "No one has gone through this league with more than three losses and won it. This win puts us back in the hunt. We've got to take care of business Thursday, beat Frank Phillips and keep winning."

Contact Sports Editor Jonathan Hull by calling 263-7331, ext. 237, or by e-mailing him at sports@bigspringherald.com.

Obituaries

Stella L. Arnold



Stella L. Arnold, 78, of Big Spring, died Monday, Dec. 3, 2007, in a local hospital. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, 2007, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with Ralph Anderson, minister of Birdwell Lane Church of Christ, officiating. Interment will follow at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

She was born April 3, 1929, in Big Spring and married Cecil Arnold Oct. 6, 1946, in Midland.

Mrs. Arnold was raised in Big Spring and graduated from Big Spring High School, where she was a member of the National Honor Society. She was a member of Birdwell Lane Church of Christ.

Survivors include her husband of 61 years, Cecil Arnold of Big Spring; a son, John "Pinky" Arnold of Big Spring; a daughter, Carla Arnold of Big Spring; three sisters, Ozelle Tynes Wright, Lenna Tynes Wyman and Mildred Vaughn, all of Big Spring; five grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; two brothers, Hunter Harold Tynes and Fisher P. Tynes; and two sisters, Frances Tynes Taylor and Geraldine Tynes Harris.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at: www.npwelch.com

Robert McClure

Robert McClure, 93, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2007, in a local hospital. His services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Ada Freeze Gresham

Ada Freeze Gresham, 83, of Odessa, formerly of Big Spring, died Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007, at her residence. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Charley Upton

Charley Upton, 87, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2007, at the Veterans Administration Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Take Note

- Pediatric flu vaccinations for children ages 6 months to 35 months are now available at the Texas Department of State Health Services clinic in College Park Shopping Center. Cost is \$10, although no one will be turned away for inability to pay. For more information, call 263-9775.

- St. Mary's and friends of St. Mary's are holding a lap blanket drive to place approximately 400 lap blankets in the hands of every nursing home patient in Big Spring. Blankets can be taken to the church office, 1001 Goliad, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday or call Connie Fowler at 267-2713.

A beginning crochet class is being held at 6 p.m. Wednesday in the church's Parish Hall.

- Bring joy and kindness to others by becoming an Odyssey Healthcare volunteer. Help those at the end of life's journey. Make a difference in someone's life. Call 263-5999 to begin your journey.

- All creatures Sanctuary and Rescue has an account set up with Big Spring Salvage at 3608 N. Hwy. 87 for all types of metals and aluminum cans. Please tell them that your donations are for All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue. All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue is also still taking weight circles off of all Purina brand dog foods. Send your Purina Weight Circles, to A.C.S. & R. at P.O. 871, Coahoma 79511. All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue is still accepting old and used cell phones and ink jet cartridges, for drop off locations in Big Spring and Coahoma, Call Melanie at 267-7387.

- Christ Community Fellowship is collecting infant car seats and carriers. These are given to new mothers who cannot afford them. To donate your old or new car seats and carriers, call Karen Allen at 263-3517 or leave a message at Christ Community Fellowship, 263-love. All donations are appreciated.

- Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call Nancy Koger at 267-7809.

- New Life Ministries Church of God In Christ is holding a soup kitchen every second and fourth Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 204 N.W. 10th. The meal is free. Call 264-0771 for more information.

- The Pet Patrol helps locate lost pets and owners of found pets. To volunteer or for more information, call Melanie Gambrell at 267-PETS (7387).

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Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 7 a.m. Monday and 7 a.m. today:

- **ROGER EDWARDS**, 51, of 807 E. 16th Street, was arrested Monday on a local warrant.
- **JESSE ALVAREZ**, 30, of 609 Holbert, was arrested Monday on two local warrants and a local capias warrant.
- **ELDA BERNAL**, age not provided, of 1502 Sycamore, was arrested Monday on a local citation.
- **TRACY GONZALES**, 22, of 2707 Hernandez Road, was arrested Monday on 13 local capias warrants.
- **SAMANTHA D. CASTRO**, 22, of 538 Westover Road Apt. 235, was arrested Tuesday on two local warrants and two local capias warrants.
- **RONNIE LEE BELL**, 43, of 907 N. Gregg Street, was arrested Tuesday on two local warrants.
- **THEFT** was reported:
 - in the 1700 block of Harvard.
 - in the 2300 block of Wasson.
 - in the 900 block of Willia.
 - in the 1800 block of Gregg Street.
- **CRIMINAL TRESPASS** was reported in the 300 block of Owens.
- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported:
 - in the 500 block of Birdwell Lane.
 - in the 1800 block of Alabama.
 - in the 1900 block of 25th Street.
 - in the 2600 block of Dow.
 - in the 2700 block of Central.
- **ASSAULT BY THREAT** was reported in the 1400 block of Highway 87.
- **AGGRAVATED ASSAULT** was reported in the 100 block of 22nd Street.

Sheriff's report

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity:

- Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 69 inmates at the time of this report.
- **ERIC MICHAEL GATES**, 25, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of evading arrest/detention using a vehicle and accident involving damage to a vehicle.
 - **JAMIE LEE ATKINSON**, 39, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of terroristic threats.
 - **CHRIS TREVINO PENA**, 26, was arrested Monday by DPS on charges of bail jumping - failure to appear (two counts).
 - **JOSE ALFREDO MELENDEZ**, 24, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a motion to revoke probation for driving while license invalid and a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid - enhanced.
 - **JESSICA BLANCO**, 25, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid - enhanced.
 - **JAMEY SCOTT JOHNSON**, 44, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of criminal trespass.
 - **JOHN WILSON**, 36, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of possession of cocaine, failure to identify as a fugitive from justice and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.
 - **CARLOS ELOY MEDRANO**, 20, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of unauthorized use of a vehicle.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

Support Groups

TUESDAY

- The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministeries, 1209 Wright St.

- Dual Recovery Anonymous meetings have been canceled. They will no longer take place at the Howard County Library. If you have questions, call Deidra F. at (432) 816-3033.

- Life Recovery, a non-denominational Christian group of recovering alcoholics and addicts, meets at 7 p.m. at the St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. and closed discussion meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

- Al-Anon, 615 Settles for family members and friends of alcoholics meets at 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

- RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at 264-1213 for more information.

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Bulletin Board

If you have items for the Bulletin board, contact the Herald news room at 263-7331 or email editor@bigspringherald.com

TODAY

- Gospel Singing in the Kentwood Activity Center at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.
- Order of the Eastern Star No. 67 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 221 Main.

WEDNESDAY

- Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Senior Circle meets at 10:30 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for Sit and Be Fit Chair Aerobics. Those 50 years and older are invited to attend. Call 268-4721.
- Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge at 703 W. Third.

THURSDAY

- Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.
- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.
- League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information, contact John Ybarra at 264-1628. The public is invited.
- Genealogy Society of Big Spring meets at 7 p.m. in the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.
- Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

- Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.
- AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant.
- Greater Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.
- Dance at the Senior Center to Monroe Casey and the Prowlers, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Weather

Tonight...Mostly clear. Lows around 40. Light and variable winds.

Wednesday...Mostly sunny. Highs around 70. North winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the east in the afternoon.

Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s. Southeast winds around 10 mph.

Thursday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s. South winds around 10 mph.

Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s.

Friday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s.

Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows around 50.

Saturday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s.

Saturday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows around 50.

Sunday...Mostly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s.

Sunday night...Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 40s.

Monday...Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 60s.

Lottery

AUSTIN (AP) — Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 11-16-19-27. Bonus Ball: 32. Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: 2. Prize: \$200,000

Winning ticket(s) sold in: Van Alstyne, Houston.

AUSTIN (AP) — Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 3-7-8-11-23. Number matching five of five: 0.

AUSTIN (AP) — The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 1-6-5-0. Sum It Up: 12.

AUSTIN (AP) — The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 7-4-2. Sum It Up: 13.

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BCS guilty of bad business

If McDonald's or any other company got only one out of every four orders right, the place would be empty the next day.

Not the Bowl Championship Series.

Business has never been better. The people in charge have more money to throw around, more of their pals at the chambers of commerce are sharing in the take and their TV partner couldn't be happier, largely because the suckers who pay the freight by tuning into the games aren't going anywhere.

Meanwhile, college football's national championship is more "mythical" than ever.

Since hijacking the game's postseason in 1998 with the promise of matching No. 1 vs. No. 2 in the title game, the BCS has delivered exactly twice. Once in 2002, when undefeated Miami and Ohio State met, and again in 2005, when Texas and Southern California did the same.

This year? Don't ask.

Befitting a season that began with a colossal upset and got more unpredictable as it unfolded, Ohio State will play LSU on Jan. 7 in New Orleans. The Tigers' appearance marks the first time a two-loss team made the championship game. That means any of the four other two-loss

teams that are ranked among the top seven — Virginia Tech, Oklahoma, Georgia and USC — could win their bowl game and make a plausible argument about being national champs.

Still, when it comes to tortured logic, they'd all have to take a back seat to the BCS.

"I don't think that it's so much the system as it is the year," BCS chief and Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive said Sunday night, in a classic case of blaming the victim.

It's not the teams' responsibility to sort themselves out, Mike. That's what championships are for.

The difference is that just about every other sport at every other level decides those on the field, without worrying about whether it's good for tourism, Fox Sports, their cronies, apologists and hired computer geeks.

But their cynicism doesn't end there.

In the past, the BCS fended off demands for a playoff by "tweaking" the format — a half-dozen times in its brief tenure — only to find another tweak or two is needed the following year. What they've done the past two years to escape the blame for the mess they've made is suggest they might be ready to change.

"What I find interesting about this year ... is this year an anomaly or is this year a precursor to what we might see in the future," Slive said. "And then trying to analyze that question leads us to the discussion we have

had on numerous occasions about whether this format needs an adjustment."

Slive and his pals back at headquarters already know how the "format" should be adjusted — and have from the beginning: a playoff of some sort. That's why a fifth BCS game was tucked into the current TV deal that runs through the 2011 bowls. Known as a "plus-one," it could be played after the four BCS games as a kind of college football Super Bowl.

Yet when Slive was asked during a conference call how soon it might happen, this is how he answered (keep in mind that he's a lawyer by training):

"We have to put this one in the mix and look at it. If you go to a plus-one, you're going to have years in which it is just very, very appropriate. You're going to have years where it may not be so appropriate. ... The only way to solve that is to have a flexible format and just make sure that we look at the standings and then decide how to finish the year."

Translation: We ain't changing any time soon. We like things exactly the way they are and as long as we have the TV rights and the backing of the university presidents from the power conferences, we'll keep making it up as we go along.

If the truth-in-advertising laws applied to college football this season, the BCS would just go ahead and cancel the title game.

There's no clear No. 1 — Ohio State hasn't beaten a Top 10 team and lost



Oklahoma Sooners' quarterback Sam Bradford quarterbacked the Sooners to an 11-2 record and a Big 12 Championship, defeating the then No. 1 Missouri Tigers in the process. Still, the No. 3 Sooners won't have a chance to show they're the best team in the country.

to Illinois, which was unranked when it beat the Buckeyes and is No. 13 in the current BCS rankings. There's no clear No. 2, either. LSU lost both its games in triple overtime — but against teams that finished 8-4 (Arkansas) and 7-5 (Kentucky) and outside the BCS Top 25. The cases for all the other contenders get even weaker from there on out.

College football's national champions were "mythical" long before the BCS inserted itself into the process. Teams played in bowl games based on conference ties,

and afterward, writers weighed in and people argued over their handiwork for decades.

All the BCS has done is take over the tabulating, add a dose of pseudo-science — check out the three computers that

ranked Missouri ahead of Oklahoma, even though the Sooners beat the Tigers twice, once on a neutral field — and pocket a nice chunk of the profits.

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College Bowl Schedule

| Date | Bowl | Matchup | Time (TV) |
|---------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dec. 20 | Poinsettia Bowl | Utah vs. Navy | 9 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 21 | New Orleans Bowl | Florida Atl. vs. Memphis | 8 p.m. (ESPN2) |
| Dec. 22 | PapaJohns.com Bowl | Cincinnati vs. Southern Miss | 1 p.m. (ESPN2) |
| Dec. 22 | New Mexico Bowl | New Mexico vs. Nevada | 4:30 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 22 | Las Vegas Bowl | BYU vs. UCLA | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 23 | Hawaii Bowl | East Carolina vs. Boise State | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 26 | Motor City Bowl | Central Michigan vs. Purdue | 7:30 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 27 | Holiday Bowl | Arizona State vs. Texas | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 28 | Champ Sports Bowl | Boston College vs. Michigan St. | 5 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 28 | Emerald Bowl | Maryland vs. Oregon State | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 28 | Texas Bowl | TCU vs. Houston | 8 p.m. (NFL) |
| Dec. 29 | Meineke Bowl | Connecticut vs. Wake Forest | 1 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 29 | Liberty Bowl | Mississippi State vs. UCF | 4:30 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 29 | Alamo Bowl | Penn State vs. Texas A&M | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 30 | Independence Bowl | Colorado vs. Alabama | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 31 | Armed Forces Bowl | California vs. Air Force | 12:30 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 31 | Sun Bowl | South Florida vs. Oregon | 2 p.m. (CBS) |
| Dec. 31 | Humanitarian Bowl | Fresno State vs. Georgia Tech | 2 p.m. (ESPN2) |
| Dec. 31 | Music City Bowl | Florida State vs. Kentucky | 4 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 31 | Chick-fil-A Bowl | Clemson vs. Auburn | 7:30 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Dec. 31 | Insight Bowl | Indiana vs. Oklahoma State | 7:30 p.m. (NFL) |
| Jan. 1 | Outback Bowl | Wisconsin vs. Tennessee | 11 a.m. (ESPN) |
| Jan. 1 | Cotton Bowl | Missouri vs. Arkansas | 11:30 a.m. (FOX) |
| Jan. 1 | Capital One Bowl | Michigan vs. Florida | 1 p.m. (ABC) |
| Jan. 1 | Gator Bowl | Virginia vs. Texas Tech | 1 p.m. (CBS) |
| Jan. 1 | Rose Bowl | Southern California vs. Illinois | 5 p.m. (ABC) |
| Jan. 1 | Sugar Bowl | Hawaii vs. Georgia | 8:30 p.m. (FOX) |
| Jan. 2 | Fiesta Bowl | West Virginia vs. Oklahoma | 8 p.m. (FOX) |
| Jan. 3 | Orange Bowl | Kansas vs. Virginia Tech | 8 p.m. (FOX) |
| Jan. 5 | International Bowl | Rutgers vs. Ball State | Noon (ESPN2) |
| Jan. 6 | GMAC Bowl | Tulsa vs. Bowling Green | 8 p.m. (ESPN) |
| Jan. 7 | National Championship | Ohio State vs. LSU | 8 p.m. (FOX) |

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|--|---|
| <p>December 3 * Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEET & GREET - 2:00 - 3:30 PM • Blackout Bingo & Treats - ?? <p>December 4 * Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8:00 AM • Coffee @ PRL - 10:00 AM • Supper Club "Spanish Inn" - 5:30 PM <p>December 5 * Wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Appreciation Day - 11:30 AM <p>December 6 * Thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8:00 AM • Just Peachy - 10:00 AM • BUNKO - 5:00 PM <p>December 7 * Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch Bunch & Birthdays "Just Peachy's" 11:30 AM <p>December 10 * Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games - 1:00 - 3:00 PM <p>December 11 * Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8:00 AM • Supper Club "Cowboy's" - 5:30 PM <p>December 12 * Wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Appreciation Day - 11:30 AM • LUNCH-N-LEARN - 11:30 AM <p>December 13 * Thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8:00 AM • Just Peachy Cafe - 10:30 AM | <p>December 14 * Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIDLAND SHOPPING - 9:00 AM - ? <p>December 16 * Sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cinderella - 1:00 PM RSVP EARLY <p>December 18 * Tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8 AM • Supper Club "KC Steakhouse" - 5:30 PM <p>December 19 * Wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Appreciation Day - 11:30 AM <p>December 20 * Thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall Walking - 8:00 AM • Just Peachy Cafe - 10:00 AM • BUNKO - 5:00 PM <p>December 21 * Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Party Pot Luck & Presents 11:30 AM |
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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
 Today's Libra moon makes personalities peace-loving, whether that means avoiding negative people or feeling extra conciliatory during conflict. When we're rubbed the wrong way, a polite nod or gracious exit is the ultimate Libra brush off, keeping harmony intact. This moon dismantles distressing vibes without forgetting her manners.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Dreams are not just for nighttime. It's your daydreams that will have the most impact on what happens this week. Dare to make them vivid and as far out of reality as you can push them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The view of the world you've become so comfortable with is now

shaken and stirred. You don't have to agree with new opinions, but they change the way you see things either way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Being serious about your hobbies is rewarding. Avoid being a dilettante. If you dabble in, talk about or try but never master your skill of choice, it undermines your personal power.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your aim is to make money. New methods are available. Research. Ask around. Be open to adding a few technical skills to your repertoire. The answer is rings out.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The mystery of partnership is illuminated. Now you see exactly how one of you picks up where the other leaves off. Do what you're great at, and let your partner do the same.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're in a helping mood. Whatever money you spend on bailing someone out should be matched with money spent doing something very special just for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A certain relationship will have its denouement. The end of an era is always bittersweet, but you can be assured that once you get closure, a new day will dawn.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Money matters are important, and you'll be pleased to see a bit more of it coming in. When you feel great about yourself, you radiate "sexy." Someone is watching.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Fashion choices could affect your attitude. Think ahead — make sure that you are dressed in a way that makes you feel comfortable among the well-heeled.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're in a James Bond mood and will attract the sophisticated accoutrements along your way. Aries and Gemini are well-matched partners in adventure.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Freedom is doing what you want. Happiness is loving what you do. You're relaxed and friendly, with more relationships than you know what to do with, but you'll find a role for all of them.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You know that there's a method to your madness, but you'll have to be more communicative with loved ones — or expect to be met by eyes filled with question marks.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I am a Gemini born May 22, 1974, and to put it plainly, Holiday, I have

just been having the worst luck for the past two years. I've already given up on my dream of becoming an actress and don't have much faith at all anymore. Do you see anything positive for me: marriage, children, family, happiness?"

Happiness is: moving on. The universe has sent you this message for two years, which tells me you're persisting at something that's clearly not working. I'm not suggesting you give up your dream, but if you hold onto it for dear life, you'll choke it — wasting precious energy you could be devoting toward developing other areas/interests in your life. Saturn squares your sun and then your moon until spring 2008. Cut your losses to move ahead. Spend some time addressing your emotional needs: Your Gemini moon needs a constant diet of ideas and stimulation. Pull within to reconnect the dots. If you haven't considered other ways to use your talents (screenplay writer?), explore them. Release your dreams so they can fly back, returning in a different form. Be patient around the why or how of it.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Actress Kim Basinger has Sagittarian versatility. Sultry, serious, coy or dangerous, Kim's too restless (and easily bored) to be typecast. Sagittarians are moody, but they're not emotional — they just need the right stimulation to engage their expansive energy. Kim could access her higher self by sharing what she's learned about divorce and motherhood with other women.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.
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ANSWERS

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News in brief

President Bush, congressional Democrats locked in public relations battle on Iraq money

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush and congressional Democrats are locked in a struggle over Iraq spending, with neither side budging and each calculating that their argument will be the one to resonate with voters.

For both sides, this rhetorical tug-of-war has become a question of leadership on national security issues and who is more committed to the troops.

"It's unconscionable to deny funds to our troops in harm's way because some in Congress want to force a self-defeating policy, especially when we're seeing the benefits of success," Bush said in a Rose Garden speech on Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid wasted no time in responding.

"We could have already given our troops what they need in Iraq and funded our critical needs at home if not for the stubborn refusal of President Bush and his Republican enablers to work with us," he told reporters at a Capitol Hill news conference.

Philly police say young couple financed enviable lifestyle through identity theft

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — They were young, rich and in love. But the jet-setters financed their fun on the credit cards of unsuspecting neighbors in their high-end apartment building and other identity-fraud victims, police said Monday.

The fraud scheme paid for jaunts to Paris, London and Hawaii and a stop at a tony salon for \$1,700 worth of hair extensions, police said.

Drexel University student Jocelyn Kirsch, 22, and beau Edward K. Anderton, a University of Pennsylvania graduate, were charged Friday with identity theft, forgery, unlawful use of a computer and a laundry list of other counts.

"They were two young people that were given many gifts in life," said Detective Terry Sweeney, who spoke of the couple's supportive families and private schooling. "And the very best thing they could do was victimize other people."

A police search of the couple's \$3,000-a-month apartment turned up a book titled, "The Art of Cheating: A Nasty Little Book for Tricky Little Schemers and

Their Hapless Victims," as well as a 2005 article from Penn's campus newspaper on "How to Spot Fake IDs."

British teacher arrives home from Sudan

LONDON (AP) — A British teacher jailed in Sudan for letting her students name a teddy bear Muhammad as part of a writing project arrived home Tuesday after being pardoned and said she was "very upset to think that I might have caused offense to people."

Gillian Gibbons told reporters after arriving at London's Heathrow Airport that she was looking forward to seeing her family and friends.

"I'm just an ordinary middle-aged primary school teacher. I went out there to have an adventure, and got a bit more than I bargained for," Gibbons said at a brief news conference.

"I don't think anyone could have imagined it would snowball like this," she added.

Gibbons, 54, jailed for more than a week, was freed after two Muslim members of Britain's House of Lords met with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and the teacher sent the president a statement saying she didn't mean to offend anyone with her class project.

FILING

Continued from Page 1A

that. I know what it means to have to work within the budget and I think that's something very important right now.

"I know the jail budget has increased two-fold. It's \$1.19 million right now, and when the current administration took office, it was a little more than \$400,000. That's a tremendous increase, and with the new jail coming, it needs to be heavily monitored and run well within — if not under — that budget."

Parker, who lost his job with the police department more than three years ago after being arrested for driving while intoxicated, said his arrest was a springboard into a better life.

"I've been in law enforcement for a little more than 19 years," said Parker. "I had the blip in my career where I got in trouble, and I accept full responsibility for my actions on that night. But I worked through that, and it was a bittersweet thing because it made me realize I had a problem and I got help for it. The bitter part of it was that I got into the trouble, the DWI arrest."

"I had a drinking problem and my reality at that

time was I thought I didn't have a problem. It was like slamming into a brick wall, waking up and realizing what I had done. As a result of that, I lost my job with the police department. Those guys (with the police department) did their job that night, and they are still very dear friends of mine. It's actually turned me into a much better person and I've been able to rebuild my relationship with my family — I'm ready to pick up now, and move on.

"Once I realized I had the problem with alcohol, I went and got help for it," he added. "I haven't had a drink in 3-1/2 years now. Hindsight is always 20/20, but I look at the destructive nature of my problem, and I created a lot of problems with my wife and kids. Since that time, I've been able to rebuild those relationships to what they need to be."

Parker said he hopes area voters will give him a chance to earn their respect.

"I have experience that starts on the streets, to investigations, to school resources and crime prevention," said Parker. "I know what it is to staff an office and to lead. To me, you have to lead by example. And it's also important to me to earn the respect of the community."

You have to get in there and have a working relationship, not just with the people in the office, but also with the community."

Walker said he plans to run for re-election, but hasn't yet filed. Walker has run as a Democrat in both of his past elections.

Parker wasn't the only area candidate taking advantage of the opening day to file Monday, as Howard County Tax Collector and Assessor Kathy Sayles and Justice of the Peace Bennie Green both filed for re-election on the Republican ticket, according to Margarita Durand-Hollis, party chairman.

Durand-Hollis said she received a fourth filing Monday, with local resident Jimmie Wayne Long set to seek the Republican nod for Precinct 3 seat on the Howard County Commissioner's Court currently held by Bill Crooker.

Long said his decision to run has been many years in the making, and if elected he hopes to be able to use his background in business to help the residents of Precinct 3 and the rest of the county.

"I've been following county politics very closely the past 15 months, but I've been interested in it for more than 20 years," said Long, who is co-

owner of Faith Builders and vice president of Fort Worth-based Alemat Corporation. "And now I feel compelled to run for office."

"I have a lot of background in business. We're doing work locally with Faith Builders, and I have plenty of experience with Alemat, which is a packaging and fastener distribution company. I hope to bring some of that background to the table."

Crooker has indicated he does not plan to run for re-election, which will bring to a close a 40-year tenure as commissioner.

"I know Bill Crooker very well," said Long. "And he's done a good job over the past 40 years. You don't stay in that seat for 40 years and not do a good job. Have I always agreed with his vote? No. But I don't believe everyone is going to agree with every one of my votes if I'm elected. He's done a great job, and I just hope to build off what he's started in the precinct."

The deadline to file to run in the March primaries is Jan. 2. For more information on filing, contact your party's chairman.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com.

Offices up for election in March Primary

Among the offices up for election during the March primaries and November election are:

- Howard County Sheriff (four-year term)
- Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Place 1 (four-year term)
- County commissioners, Precincts 1 and 3 (four-year term)
- Tax Assessor-Collector (four-year term)
- County Attorney (four-year term)
- Constable, Precinct 1 (four-year term)
- District Attorney (four-year term)
- County Attorney (four-year term)
- Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals (six-year term): W. Kenneth Law, 3rd Court of Appeals; Alma L. Lopez, 4th Court of Appeals; Brian Quinn, 7th Court of Appeals; Richard Barajas, 8th Court of Appeals; Steve McKeithen, 9th Court of Appeals; James T. (Jim) Worthen, 11th Court of Appeals; Adele Hedges, 14th Court of Appeals.
- Seven members of the State Board of Education, including Districts 2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14 (four-year term).

- All 150 state representatives, including incumbent District 85 Rep. Joe Heflin.
- Fifteen state senators, including District 31 Sen. Kel Seliger.
- Three members of the Court of Criminal Appeals (six-year terms): Thomas Price (Place 3), Paul Womack (Place 4) and Cathy Cochran (Place 9).
- Two members of the Supreme Court (six-year term): J. Dale Wainwright, Place 7; and Phil Johnson, Place 8.
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (six-year term), Wallace Jefferson.
- Railroad Commissioner (six-year term), Michael Williams.
- All 32 United States Representatives in Texas (two-year term), including Congressman Randy Neugebauer.
- U.S. Senator (six-year term), John Cornyn.
- President of the United States (four-year term), George W. Bush.

CONTEST

Continued from Page 1A

ipate can obtain an entry form at the Chamber's offices, 215 W. Third St.

Residential entries can choose between religious, lights only, original homemade and "other." Commercial entries can

pick either show windows only or lights only. Non-judged entries can be residential or commercial.

Entries are due by 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 14. Judging will be held Monday, Dec. 17, beginning around 6 p.m..

"Once again, we will have a list of everyone who enters and will compile that for the public so

that they can drive by and see the lights," said ValVerde. "So, if you don't want to enter as a competitor but would like to let others know about your lighting display, enter the non-judged division and we'll all know where you are."

"We hope that everyone will enter," said ValVerde. "It's open to

everyone. We want the community to get involved."

For more information, call the Chamber at 263-7641.

Contact Managing Editor John A. Moseley at 263-7331 ext. 230 or by e-mail at editor@bigspringherald.com.

FISD

Continued from Page 1A

frown — secondary school scores in science fell below statewide numbers.

"That's an area we need to continue working on," he said. "We're not performing, as far as those scores are concerned, and we need to keep fighting until we get to a higher level."

TEA figures show that more than 95 percent of the FHS class of 2006 either graduated or received GED certification, a figure well above state and region average. A reason for concern,



however, comes in the area of college preparatory work. A review of results on the ACT college prep test showed that only 15.4 percent of FHS students met or passed state criterion. Also, 59 percent of FHS students have taken either the SAT or ACT, a figure below

state averages. "We'd certainly like to see those numbers improve," Johnson conceded.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331, ext. 234 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com.



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James Woodall, 72, died Thursday. Graveside services will be at 2:00 PM Tuesday at Coahoma Cemetery.

Ada Gresham, 83, died Saturday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Charley Upton, 87, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the Editorial Board of the Big Spring Herald unless otherwise indicated.

Ron Midkiff
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Drive-Through Nativity is real weekend must

Another of Big Spring's traditions of the Christmas season will be unveiled Friday night when the First Church of the Nazarene Drive-Through Nativity opens for a 21st consecutive year.

The nativity will hold nightly performances from 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday on the church's grounds at 1400 Lancaster. Admission is free, but any donations visitors would like to make are greatly appreciated by the church and its congregation.

Featuring live characters and animals, the nativity portrays 17 scenes from the life of Jesus, from his birth through his death and resurrection.

Visitors will be handed a compact disc or audio tape which will provide the narration to each scene. Tapes are also available in Spanish.

More than 130 people have been involved in this year's project, and the nativity is staffed by two shifts.

The story behind the nativity, as well as how the performers present that story, is what brings so many people to the church grounds each Christmas season.

Live characters bring the story a sense of reality for many visitors. And the sheer size of the nativity is awe-inspiring. It's one of the largest, if not the largest nativity in Texas.

Anyone needing additional information can contact the church by calling 267-7015.

As we have noted before, Big Spring celebrates the Christmas season in a manner that can be matched by few communities anywhere, and the Drive-Through Nativity is an integral part of the Yuletide's festivities.

The season got under way last weekend with the Community Christmas Parade and the First United Methodist Church's Living Christmas Tree. The Drive-Through Nativity takes center stage this weekend prior to the start of next week's debut of the Festival of Lights.

So, we encourage everyone to make the Drive-Through Nativity a part of their weekend plan.

We believe it's an event that without question will warm your heart, as well as provide a poignant reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.

You won't be sorry. We're sure of that.

How To Contact Us

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions. In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail Managing Editor John A. Moseley at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

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 - We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
 - We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
 - Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
 - Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

When we feel something is close to impossible, Lord, may we turn it over to You, because You can do the impossible.
Amen

The great man in the race

Last week's CNN-YouTube debate began with a ditty by Chris Nandor of Snohomish, Wash., on the eight GOP hopefuls. Sen. John McCain, Nandor sang, "is loved by many, but hated by the rest."

Why do so many Republicans loathe John McCain?

No Republican candidate has been better in pushing to make sure that the sacrifices made by U.S. troops in Iraq are not made in vain — and there is no issue more important than this war. McCain spent Thanksgiving visiting the front, and he carried back the message he heard from those serving: "Let us win."

McCain has spared no one — including President Bush and his administration — in his righteous desire to do right by the troops. "I am the only one on this stage," McCain noted, "that said the Rumsfeld strategy was failing and was doomed to failure. I'm the only one on this stage that said we've got to have a new strategy, and that's the strategy we're employing now."

Maybe that's part of the problem. When I asked Bill Whalen, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and former adviser to ex-Gov. Pete Wilson, why so many Republicans hate McCain, Whalen saw two main reasons: Much of McCain's reputation "has come at George Bush's expense," and, "He's too beloved by the media."

Too bad the media are a fickle crew, who this go-round are smitten with the cuddly conservative, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. It's more than a bit bizarre. When McCain called the Rev. Jerry Falwell an agent of "intolerance" in 2000, the media loved him. When McCain appeared next to Falwell at Liberty University last year, pundits labeled the event — a savvy

political move to reach out to Falwell's values voters — a sellout to the religious right. So who's their new crush? An ordained Southern Baptist minister. Go figure.

GOP voters resented profligate spending under the now-dethroned Republican leadership in Congress. They should love McCain, who crusaded against earmarks and pork-barrel spending when it didn't win him many friends in power circles.

Perhaps the problem is that McCain is not just talk. When Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist asked the candidates if they would sign the group's pledge not to raise taxes, McCain said no: "My pledge and my record is up to the American people, not up to any organization."

The Norquist exchange may signal a sea change in Republican politics. Huckabee, Mitt Romney and Tom Tancredo of Colorado said they would sign the ATR pledge, and have. Rudy Giuliani said he would, but hasn't. (In October, an aide told me that Giuliani "doesn't sign pledges.")

Because it is now clear that no-new-taxes pledges don't tamp down government spending, McCain — and Republican rivals Fred Thompson, Ron Paul and Duncan Hunter — said they oppose tax hikes, but refused to sign a pledge they are not 100 percent certain to keep.

Republican readers often tell me that they will never forgive McCain for his 2002 campaign finance reform bill that restricts political advertising. Come on. Thanks to well-heeled lawyers, the courts are gutting McCain-Feingold. To them I say: Let go of it. There are more important issues — like a war.

Americans say that they are looking for strong leaders. In McCain, you see a man who doesn't shift his positions just to please people, yet is realistic enough to realize when it is right to bend.

McCain still was wrong when he argued that this year's failed Senate immigration bill would not have provided "amnesty" to illegal immigrants. But he has had the good sense to let voters know that he has heard their outrage and understands that border enforcement must precede any measures to set a path toward legalization for qualifying illegal immigrants.

My position on immigration reform is closer to those of Romney and Giuliani — but who do they think they're kidding as they preen about how tough they've been on the issue? In a different time, they had a more forgiving attitude toward illegal immigrants. McCain is simply more honest about why he has changed.

I want the government to be much tougher on enforcing immigration policies with employers, but I also want a president with a heart. Or, as McCain put it, "We need to sit down as Americans and recognize that these are God's children, as well."

Maybe McCain's problem is that he tells people things they don't want to hear.

I still say that now-Attorney General Michael Mukasey was right to tell the Senate that he would not classify waterboarding (simulated drowning during interrogation) as illegal. That said, when McCain, who was tortured during his five years in a Vietnamese POW camp, says that as commander in chief, "We will never allow torture to take place in the United States of America," I'll salute.

New York Times columnist David Brooks described McCain as the only great man from either party in the race. As McCain said of his support of the Senate immigration bill, "I came to the Senate not to do the easy things, but the hard things." But do voters want the hard things?

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@sfchronicle.com.
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Drugs, the other stupid war

Every country relishes its own destructive obsessions. Japan, for example, craves whale meat; France tortures geese to improve the flavor of their livers; Zimbabwe and Myanmar just torture people; certain African nations genitally mutilate little girls to prevent them from later enjoying sex. Thoughtful, that. And Saudi Arabia doesn't let women drive, cleverly keeping them at home to do the work.

In this country we prohibit drugs. Just this year our governor vetoed a bill that would have allowed hopeless pain sufferers to smoke marijuana when all else fails. Still, even if she'd signed it, the feds could have come in and pinched patients, docs, growers, and anyone else actually involved in treatment.

But as ridiculous as this prohibition of pot for pain may seem, the prohibition of pot for pleasure is worse. It's much more discriminatory than the old prohibition of booze. That bummer was enforced by raiding speakeasies, generally frequented by whites. Saner heads eventually prevailed and Prohibition was sent to dry out in the archives.

Drug laws are more insidious; they aim purposely at blacks. Selective enforcement is targeted to minority neighborhoods, and

long mandatory sentences are common. These make sure that non-whites populate our prisons out of all proportion to their percentage in the population. There are even heavily-used laws adding additional years in jail for drug possession merely because one was near a school, housing project and senior center. Guess who lives in those neighborhoods. One such alleged dealer in our town just had these Jim Crow charges thrown at him the other day. He's 19. By-bye, Baby.

The beauty of this system is that vast numbers of non-whites become felons, and felons can't vote. Not while in jail and often not for a long time thereafter. In some states, never. Since most of these "criminals" are poor, they harbor a natural tendency to vote Democratic on those rare occasions when they actually possess the franchise. Thus the continued existence of overbearing drug laws is the best thing to happen to the Republican Party since Ronald Reagan. Maybe Abraham Lincoln.

Consequently Republicans prosecute the War on Drugs with religious ferocity. Anyone proposing rational discussion is tagged as "soft on drugs," and these days, as "aiding terrorism." No epithet is off the table. The police are mired in the conflict too. Their departments collect forfeitures, often cars and cash, which were used in drug dealing. All this makes for a powerful integrated lobby. Not to mention the prison guards and prison builders.

Of course it's all stupid. Addicts are better treated as patients, just like alcoholics, rather than as crooks. Connecticut's and America's jails brim over with these mandatory sentences, often forcing some real bad guys to be released prematurely to make room. The cost in taxes is huge too. All this just so shameless politicians can stay in office by raising hysteria and suppressing the minority vote.

Opposing this mania, San Francisco, no stranger to addicts, is eyeing a new tack. Well, new at least in the U.S. Eight other countries do it already. The scheme is to offer the serious heroin addict a clean safe room and a clean safe needle. In Europe they even offer clean safe heroin. No cops, no HIV, no Hep-3, no charge, no questions; but medical care and treatment upon request.

You'll be astonished to learn that in such dens of iniquity overseas, crime is down, health is up, and drug usage has declined. Such a plan has little future in this country however. But a lot of those mangy addicts, when treated like people instead of maggots, tend to hike up their britches, find part time jobs, shoot up less often, and worst of all, vote. Not in our blessed country they won't, by God!

Columnist William A. Collins is a former state representative and a former mayor of Norwalk, Conn.
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Bird Poop: 'Trophy' hunting claims the life of beautiful hawk

"Will you be there for a while?" asked the game warden. When told I would wait on him, he indicated it would be a few minutes. By the way he came speeding into the parking lot and jolted to a stop, I could sense something was out of the norm.



BEBE McCASLAND

Expecting him to reposition the heavy belt with his revolver as he exited the vehicle, I was surprised to see him slam the door and walk hurriedly into the building. Only after entering my office did he lift and shift the heavily laden part of his uniform.

"Need you to identify a bird," he said tersely. When he hadn't started the conversation by asking for a cup of coffee, I knew he was troubled. As we walked to his pickup, his usual gift for gab was silent. Unable to imagine what was wrong, I followed him to the back and watched as he lowered the tailgate.

"What is it?" he asked angrily. Upon seeing a part of a hawk lying on the bed of the truck, I immediately asked, "Where is the rest of the bird?" "In the storage bin," was his reply. From being puzzled, I suddenly felt horror and disgust in trying to identify a raptor from only its feet and legs.

Looking at the size of the feet and talons and knowing that this specie

See **HAWK**, Page 6A



Courtesy photo

Identifying a Swainson's hawk may be difficult because of its light and dark color phases, individual variations, molts and plumage. An abundance of insects and rodents, prevalent during seasons of high rainfall and temperatures, tempt the raptors to prolong their visits before migrating to South America.

Parent's Corner:

Even a resume and job application can be funny

Do you ever take the time to look around and see the humor in life? Just to watch folks as they drive around or sit at the mall and people gaze?

college from August 1880 — May 1984. I have excellent memory; strong math aptitude; excellent memory; effective management skills; and very

good at math. "My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned. I couldn't concentrate. Then I worked in the

woods as a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe. After that, I tried to

See **RYAN**, Page 6A



DARRELL RYAN

People do interesting things. This is demonstrated by a resume I received the other day. It was sent in humor (thank goodness) and was certainly entertaining.

It read like this:
"Please accept this letter as my resume: My objective for employment is to have my skills and ethics challenged on a daily basis. I will take the chaos of your office and reform it into a semblance of simple disorder. I have proved my ability in my self-employment and developed it into a fiasco. You will always find me to be an extremely trying person. I seek challenges that test my mind and body, since the two are usually inseparable.
"As far as my college experience, I attended

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box. Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

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

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Rising to the Occasion

East dealer.
East-West vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 5 4
♥ A Q 3
♦ A 10 9 6
♣ 10 9 6 4

WEST
♠ J 9 2
♥ J 10 8 7
♦ 7 4 3
♣ A 8 2

EAST
♠ Q 10 7 6 3
♥ K 6 4
♦ K 5 2
♣ 7 5

SOUTH
♠ A K 8
♥ 9 5 2
♦ Q J 8
♣ K Q J 3

The bidding:
East South West North
Pass 1 NT Pass 3 NT
Opening lead — jack of hearts.

Assume you're in three notrump and West leads the jack of hearts. How would you play the hand?
It may be tempting to finesse the queen of hearts, but this is demonstrably the wrong play — and in the actual deal would prove fatal. Instead, you should go up with the ace. You should reason that if West has the king of hearts and has led the jack from a suit headed by the K-J-10, dummy's queen will serve as a

second stopper later on. And if East has the king, the queen is surely the wrong play.

After rising with the ace, you should then attack clubs, forcing out the ace. In the actual deal, West has the ace, but he cannot harm you, whatever he returns. If he shifts to a spade, you win and take the diamond finesse. East has the king, but, whatever he leads next, you have nine tricks in the till.

If West returns a heart after taking the ace of clubs, you are on perfectly safe ground. If he plays the ten of hearts, you cover it with the queen to establish a second heart trick with your nine; if he leads a lower heart instead of the ten, you follow low from dummy to accomplish the same result.

For practical purposes, the contract can be guaranteed by going up with the ace of hearts at trick one. You assume from the opening lead that West has the ten of hearts, and that he is also the one with the heart length. If these suppositions are correct, nothing can stop you from making three notrump.

The deal demonstrates once again that you don't take a finesse merely because it's there. There often are other factors to consider.

Tomorrow: An unusual defensive play.

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Laura on Life: Dealing with the differences in gender

There have been many stand-up comics whose best material had to do with the differences between the genders. That's because there is so much material of this kind to work with.

We're simply on different wave lengths. I don't think that any interstellar theories like the pop-



LAURA SNYDER

ular Venus/Mars thing can completely explain the crossed wires that can occur between men and women here on Earth. In fact, I

would go so far as to say that if both males and females inhabited Venus and Mars, they would pretty much have the same problems. Venusian Male: Where do you want to go to eat? Venusian Female, primping her horns: I thought either Lobster Haven or Pastas 'R Us, you choose.

Venusian Male: I'm taking you out, you choose. Venusian Female: You never make a decision. I want to go where you want to go. Venusian Male getting into the SHoVeT (Space Hover Vehicle Transport): "Okay, Pastas 'R Us", he said, his five stomachs growling. Venusian Female:

Great! Pasta it is!" After a few minutes of silence in the SHoVeT the female says: "Does Pastas 'R Us serve crab?" So they SHoVeTed to Lobster Haven. Why didn't she just tell him she wanted to go to Lobster Haven? Just to see if he was thinking the same thing she was? I think we've established

here that that particular phenomenon only happens while in the dating stage. "Oh migosh! We have so much in common! We even finish each other's sentences! We're like two parts of a whole! Sometimes we even wear the same clothes!" See LAURA, Page 7A

HAWK

Continued from Page 5A

had not migrated in late August or September because of unseasonably warm weather, I answered, "Swainson's hawk." "Are you sure?" was his next question. Asking that he let me see the rest of the remains, I felt I could be positive by looking at the feathers. From the metal box next to the cab, he raised a plastic bag. Spreading

its contents, I noted the broad chest band of dull brown highlighted by the white chin and throat above and the white belly beneath. With what was left of the light brown mantle and the grayish tail with narrow bands, I knew it was a Swainson's. "You sure it's not a red-tailed hawk," he asked. My answer was a firm, "Yes." Knowing that the warden needed the identification to present his case in court, I asked if he

had been able to catch whomever had killed the hawk. "The men are in jail right now. The judge is waiting on your answer," he added. When the officer had seen an old pickup parked in the grass next to a fence as he was answering a complaint in the county, he radioed the license plate number to the sheriff's office. Immediately, he was advised to bring the driver and his passenger to the courthouse. The warrants for their arrest

were lengthy. Only when he approached the vehicle did he see the legs and feet of the bird of prey hanging from the rear view mirror. Not only were the men wanted by the county, they would also have state and federal charges filed for killing and possessing a wild migratory bird. Since the raptor appeared to have been shot, I asked what he thought had happened. "Guess they needed a trophy. There will also be charges with shooting

from a vehicle, no hunting license, hunting out of season, trespassing, etc." he added. Since the Swainson's hawk is tame-like when perched on utility poles or fence posts, the culprits could have easily approached the curious bird. No longer would its strong, graceful flight grace the West Texas plains. The medium-sized hawk, with a quick thrust of its foot, would seldom miss its prey. Having seen the birds

walk and run on the ground while seeking grasshoppers, and knowing they would take mice and rabbits, I was saddened that this beneficial bird had been taken from nature. Our only consolation for the death of the Swainson's was the removal of two individuals from society for a number of years. *Bebe McCasland is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.*

RYAN

Continued from Page 5A

be a tailor, but I just wasn't suited for it — mainly because it was a sew-sew job. Next, I tried working in a muffler factory, but that was too exhausting. Then, I tried to be a chef. I figured it would add a little spice to my life, but I just didn't have the thyme. I attempted to be a deli worker, but any way I sliced it, I couldn't cut the mustard. My best job was a musician, but eventually I found I wasn't very noteworthy. "I studied a long time to become a doctor, but I

didn't have any patience. My next job was in a shoe factory, but no matter how I tried, I just didn't fit in. I became a professional fisherman, but discovered that I couldn't live on my net income. I managed to get a good job working for a pool maintenance company, but I soon had to quit; the work was just too draining. So then I went to work in a workout center, but they said I wasn't fit for the job. "After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a historian, until I realized there was no future in it. My last job was working in

Starbucks, but I eventually quit because it was always the same old grind. "I am classified as a very smart person and I proved it by graduating in the top 100 percent of my class. I am married and I have eight children. I really would prefer a position that requires frequent travel. (From this point forward, notice the words carefully.) Please be aware that I am sicking an entry level position. I am a quick leaner, dependable and easily manipulated. I want you to know that you hold in your hands the resume of a truly outstanding candidate with

qualifications that should be overlooked. You are highly privileged to receive my resume. Hope to hear from you shortly."

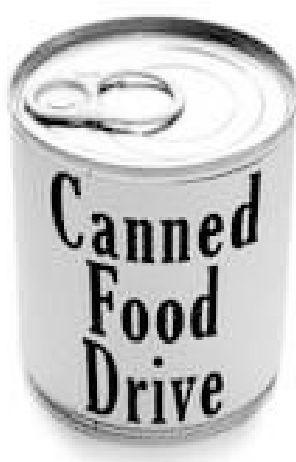
Now how could an employer pass on such an interesting person as this? Really makes you won-

der, doesn't it? *Darrell Ryan is director of federal programs for the Big Spring ISD.*

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DENNIS THE MENACE



"Shouldn't YOU start bein' good for Christmas pretty soon, Mr. Wilson?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

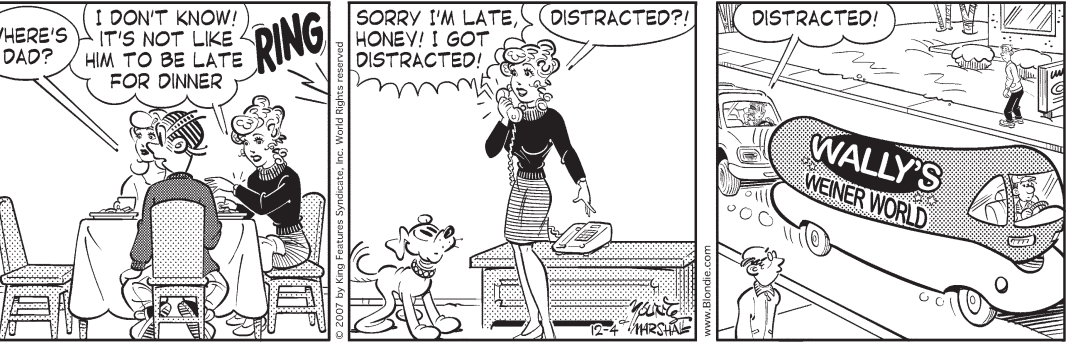


"Where do you think I should go, Mommy?"

HAGAR



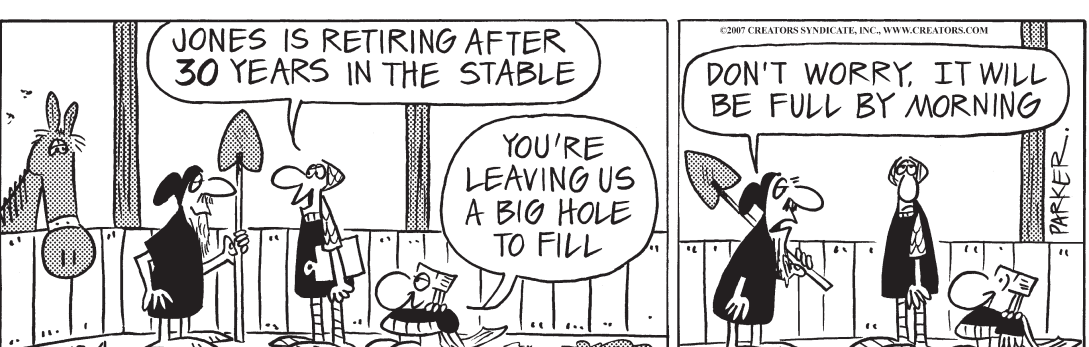
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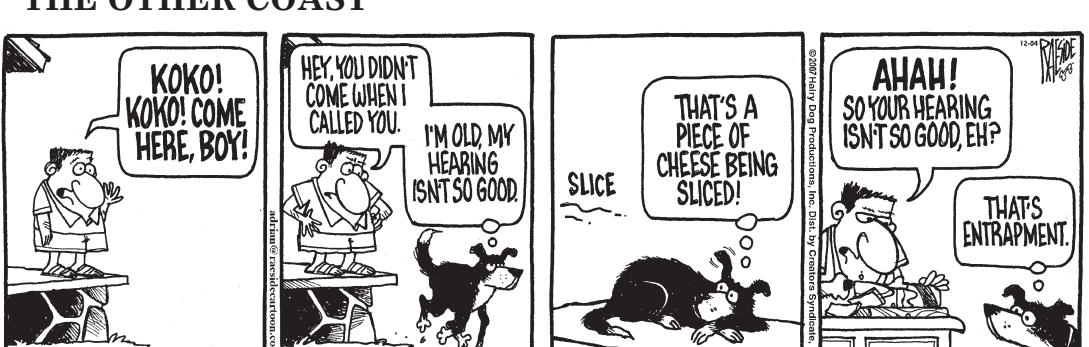
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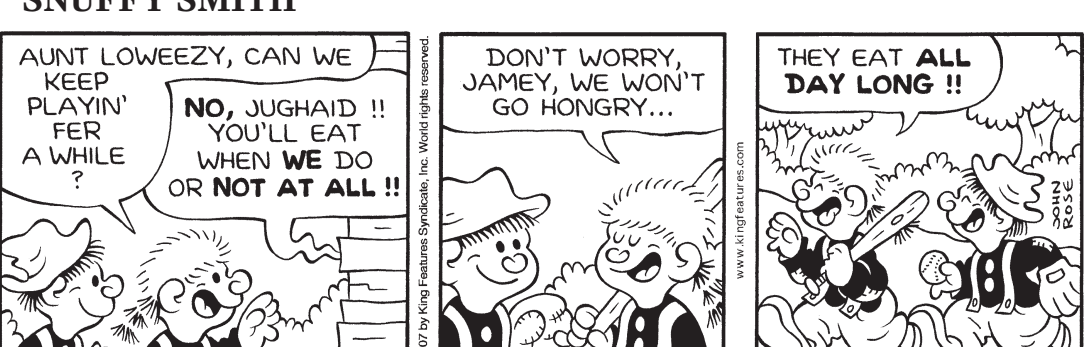
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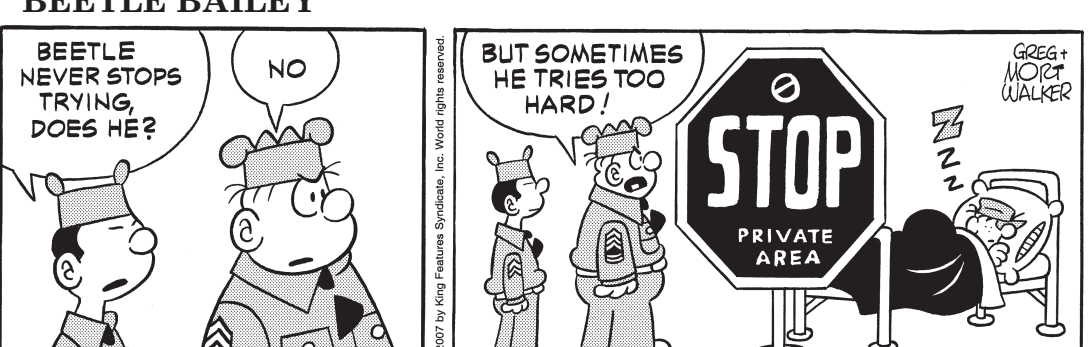
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

By The Associated Press Today is Tuesday, Dec. 4, the 338th day of 2007. There are 27 days left in the year. The Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah, begins at sunset. Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 4, 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York. On this date: In 1816, James Monroe of Virginia was elected the fifth president of the United States. In 1875, William Marcy Tweed, the "Boss" of New York City's Tammany Hall political organization, escaped from jail and fled the country. In 1918, President Wilson set sail for France to attend the Versailles Peace Conference. In 1942, U.S. bombers

struck the Italian mainland for the first time in World War II. In 1942, President Roosevelt ordered the dismantling of the Works Progress Administration, which had been created to provide jobs during the Depression. In 1965, the United States launched Gemini 7 with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Commander James A. Lovell aboard. In 1977, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, ruler of the Central African Empire, crowned himself emperor in a lavish ceremony. (Bokassa was deposed in 1979; he died in 1996 at age 75.) In 1978, San Francisco got its first female mayor as City Supervisor Dianne Feinstein was named to replace the assassinated George Moscone. In 1991, the original Pan American World Airways ceased operations. In 1996, the Mars Pathfinder lifted off from Cape Canaveral and began

speeding toward Mars on an odyssey of 310 million miles. (It arrived on Mars in July 1997.) Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Deanna Durbin is 86. Game show host Wink Martindale is 73. Actor-producer Max Baer Jr. is 70. Actress Gemma Jones is 65. Rock musician Bob Mosley (Moby Grape) is 65. Singer-musician Chris Hillman is 63. Musician Terry Woods (The Pogues) is 60. Rock singer Southside Johnny Lyon is 59. Actor Jeff Bridges is 58. Rock musician Gary Rossington (Lynyrd Skynyrd; the Rossington Collins Band) is 56.

Answer to previous puzzle grid with words like HASAT, NASA, SMOG, ELATE, ELAL, HALO, RANON, WENT, AIDE, SIGN, JACKHORN, EMIT, ODES, GOSTAG, LAUD, TAM, AVOID, PANG, ARLO, FARMER, IN THE DELL, FLEE, ENDS, AHEAD, ESL, ELKS, PRETTY, OILY, PANS, MISSMUFFET, IPOD, ADES, PIES, EVADE, PERU, OREO, MELON, SAISE, NETS, USERS.

Newsday Crossword

PUT IT TOGETHER by Gail Grabowski Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Clues include: 1 Not many, 5 Castle protection, 9 Business bigwig, 14 Italian capital, 15 Part of the foot, 16 Like Humpty Dumpty, 17 Duration, 19 Hotel prices, 20 Sneaky, 21 Soda-bottle size, 22 Not quite right, 23 Walking stick, 24 Italian city, 26 In the know, 28 Home plate, for one, 29 That woman, 32 A couple of times, 33 Bullring "Bravo!", 34 Theater production, 35 Solemn vow, 36 Of few words, 38 Not wild, 39 Chinese-food staple, 40 Sailor's "yes", 41 Loose-leaf filler, 42 To the ___ degree, 43 Snow glider, 44 Fraternity members, 45 Church doctrine, 47 Bicyclist's challenge, 48 Cook's cover-up, 50 Pay hike, 52 By way of, 55 Brutish sort, 56 Catalog page to fill in, 58 Allude (to), 59 Docking spot, 60 Molecule part, 61 Unable to sit still, 62 Talk back to, 63 Nevada city, 7 High point, 8 Winter undergarments, 9 Team spirit, 10 Illinois senator, 11 Become more fit, 12 Takes advantage of, 13 Minus, 18 Distress signal, 23 Hidden supply, 25 Words of understanding, 26 Look forward to, 27 Sorcery, 28 Not at all interested, 30 Residences, 31 Wide-spouted pitcher, 32 Ripped apart, 34 Stable compartment, 36 Folk story, 37 Pupil-dilating liquids, 41 More ashen, 43 Military guard, 44 Penny pinchers, 46 Valentine flowers, 47 Stays out of sight, 48 Magic-spell opener, 49 Hammer part, 51 Opera solo, 52 Cast a ballot, 53 Household appliance, 54 Bullets, briefly, 57 Miles away.

Study: Honey out-performs cough medicine

By CARLA K. JOHNSON

Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A teaspoon of honey before bed seems to calm children's coughs and help them sleep better, according to a new study that relied on parents' reports of their children's symptoms.

The folk remedy did better than cough medicine or no treatment in a three-way comparison. Honey may work by coating and soothing an irritated throat, the study authors said.

"Many families are going to relate to these findings and say that grandma was right," said lead author Dr. Ian Paul of Pennsylvania State University's College of Medicine.

The folk remedy did better than cough medicine or no treatment in a three-way comparison. Honey may work by coating and soothing an irritated throat, the study authors said.

The research appears in December's Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.

Federal health advisers have recently warned that over-the-counter cough and cold medicines shouldn't be used in children younger than 6, and manufacturers are taking some products for babies off the market.

Three pediatricians who read the study said they would tell parents seeking alternative remedies to try honey. They noted that honey should not be given to children under age 1 because of a rare but serious risk of botulism.

For the study, researchers recruited 105 children with upper respiratory infections from a clinic in Pennsylvania.

Parents were given a paper bag with a dosing device inside. Some were empty. Some contained an age-appropriate dose of honey-flavored cough medicine containing dextromethorphan. And some contained a similar dose of honey.

The parents were asked about their children's sleep and cough symptoms, once before the bedtime treatment and once after.

They rated the symptoms on a seven-point scale.

All of the children got better, but honey consistently scored best in parents' rating of their children's cough symptoms.

"Give them a little time and they'll get better," said Pat Jackson Allen, a professor at Yale University School of Nursing.

The study was funded by a grant from the National Honey Board, an industry-funded agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The agency had no influence over the study design, data or results, Paul said.

On the Net:
Archives: <http://www.archpediatrics.com>

LAURA

Continued from Page 6A

Remember that time? What happened? It's as if we uttered the words "I do" and somehow became completely rewired.

A woman can go into a drug store, in broad daylight, and buy a can of Barbasol for her man, but if a man runs out of shaving cream, he'll grow a ZZ Top beard before he'll stoop to using his wife's moisturizing, raspberry-scented shaving cream or a pink razor in the privacy of his own bathroom.

That is why women buy pink shaving cream and razors.

We think differently about most things, too. After being disillusioned by so many so-called diets that didn't work, I finally settled on one that made more sense. All the experts say that you merely have to take in less calories than you are spending. Well, I had no

idea how many I was spending because my body did not come equipped with a calorie gauge. So I decided that simply eating half of what I wanted to eat would do the trick.

I told my husband of my plan in hopes for his support during this undoubtedly fleeting

interim of diet hell.

He said, "So that means that if you want a candy bar, you're going to buy two but only eat one, right?"

"No, it means that I only eat half a candy bar. But thank you so much for opening up that loophole for me."

"Then who gets the

other half?"

"I could give it to you." "Bad idea. I'm going to be as big as a house if I have to eat my candy bar plus half of yours."

I'm not sure if I just illustrated crossed wires or a loose screw.

Contact Laura Snyder by e-mail at lsnyder@la-raonlife.com.

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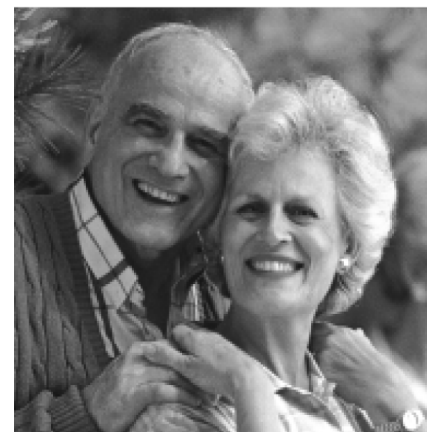
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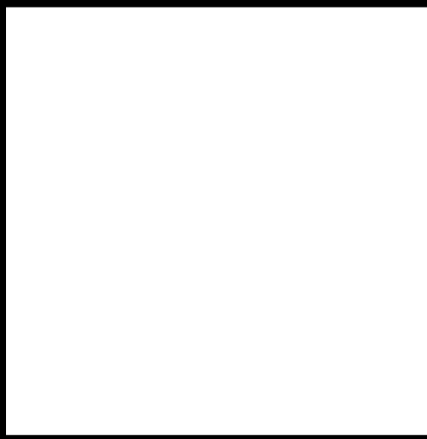
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Map showing the location of Livingston Hearing Aid Center at 211 Johnson Street in Big Spring, Texas. Landmarks include Big Spring Abstract Title Co., Leonard's Pharmacy, District Court, Howard County House, 1st. United Methodist Church, Wells Fargo, Movie Theater, and 7-11.

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News in brief

Judges hear appeal from convicted agents

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Federal prosecutors may have overreacted in their case against two Border Patrol agents who were sentenced to lengthy prison terms after jurors convicted them of shooting a fleeing drug suspect and hiding evidence of the incident, an appeals court judge said Monday.

Judge E. Grady Jolly, one of three judges from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals hearing the case of Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean, questioned whether the two agents would have been charged if they had reported the shooting.

A federal jury in Texas convicted Ramos and Compean of assault, obstruction of justice and civil rights violations in the wounding of Osvaldo Aldrete Davila on the Texas border near El Paso in 2005. A federal judge sentenced Compean to 12 years in prison and Ramos to 11 years.

The agents' attorneys are asking the 5th Circuit to throw out the convictions. The judges didn't indicate when they will rule on the appeals.

TYC urged to limit use of pepper spray

AUSTIN (AP) — Advocates for juvenile inmates on Monday urged the Texas Youth Commission to reject a proposal they say would boost the use of pepper spray against inmates, arguing that it should be used only as a last resort if at all.

Several advocacy groups argued against the proposed rule at a public hearing. A decision whether to adopt the rule could be weeks away, TYC

spokesman Jim Hurley said.

The pepper spray issue has been the latest point of contention for a juvenile prison system racked by scandal over the past year. State lawmakers voted earlier this year to revamp the agency after allegations of sexual and physical abuse of inmates by staff.

The agency recently settled a lawsuit filed by advocacy groups as use of pepper spray spiked at more than 1,220 so far this year compared to 196 in 2006. Under that settlement, use of pepper spray was clarified to be one of the last options available to staff.

Texan pushes bills to curb crimes against children

WASHINGTON (AP) — If all goes well for him this week, Texas Rep. Nick Lampson will secure House approval of two bills aimed at curbing crimes against children and restore some credibility to a lawmakers' group criticized during last year's congressional page scandal.

Lampson, a suburban Houston Democrat, expects votes this week on bills authorizing a \$30 million increase in the budget for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and toughening sanctions against Internet service providers that fail to report users possibly committing crimes against children through cyberspace.

The bills should easily pass with other legislation considered non-controversial on Wednesday. But their approval will be key for Lampson and other members of the House Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus who have had to quell some fallout from Congress' failure to deal promptly with its own child cyber solicitation scandal.

300 inmates sickened at South Texas prison

BEEVILLE (AP) — An infected inmate working in the McConnell Unit's cafeteria was thought to be the cause of an outbreak of a gastrointestinal virus that infected about 300 inmates, officials said.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokeswoman Michelle Lyons said the virus had spread to about 100 inmates

by Saturday and 300 by Monday.

"Fortunately, this is not common," Lyons said. "(The virus) can spread quickly — it would be similar to folks living in a dorm or other area where there is close quarters."

Officials identified the sickness as a norovirus, which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and nausea. The symptoms of a norovirus-associated illness usually last from two to five days.

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