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BIG SPRING

# HERALD

**MONDAY**  
DECEMBER 31, 2007



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 25

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## Word to wise: Don't drink and drive

By **STEVE REAGAN**

Staff Writer

Law enforcement officials want area drivers to have a safe — and sober — New Year's Eve celebration tonight.

But those officials added that those who might be tempted to celebrate a bit too much tonight should reconsider.

Area police, sheriff deputies and state troopers will be out in force tonight, and they will not be looking kindly on those who are drinking and driving.

The Department of Public Safety has adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward drunk drivers as part of their annual holiday oversight operation, which

has been in effect since the Christmas holiday season began earlier this month.

DPS troopers will be looking for unsafe drivers in general, and three offenses in particular: speeding, driving without seat belts and driving while intoxicated.

Officials emphasize that the

agency's zero-tolerance stance extends toward both DWIs and driving without seatbelts. Absolutely no warnings will be written for either, because troopers anticipate traffic will be very heavy this season, leaving no room for these type of mistakes.

Big Spring Police Department

officials said the agency will not have additional officers patrolling the streets tonight, but will be on the lookout for apparent drunk drivers.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at [reporter@bigspringherald.com](mailto:reporter@bigspringherald.com)

## High court weighs in on voter ID law

By **MARK SHERMAN**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The dispute over Indiana's voter identification law that is headed to the Supreme Court next week is as much a partisan political drama as a legal tussle.

The mainly Republican backers of the law, including the Bush administration, say state-produced photo identification is a prudent measure to cut down on vote fraud — even though Indiana has never had a prosecution of the kind of fraud the law is supposed to prevent.

The opponents, mainly Democrats, view voter ID a modern-day poll tax that disproportionately affect poor, minority and elderly voters — who tend to back Democrats. Yet, a federal judge found that opponents of the law were unable to produce evidence of a single Indiana resident who had been barred from voting because of the law.

The Supreme Court, which famously split 5-4 in the case that sealed the 2000 presidential election for George Bush, will take up the Indiana law on January 9, just as the 2008 presidential primaries are getting under way.

A decision should come by late June, in time to be

felt in the November elections in Indiana and in Georgia, the other state with a strict photo ID requirement, as well as in a handful of other states.

The justices will be asked to decide whether the law is an impermissible attempt to discourage certain voters or a reasonable precaution among several efforts aimed at cutting down on illegal voting.

"There's more than a little bit of irony in going to the Supreme Court and asking them to rise above partisan politics in election cases," said Richard Hasen, an election law expert at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

The court's decision in the disputed 2000 election is partly responsible for the ensuing increase in election-related lawsuits and the loss of confidence by some groups in the voting system, Hasen said. Yet, the other branches of government seem more politicized than ever, leaving the court as the best option despite the 2000 election dispute, he said.

Indiana argues that demands for identification are frequent in today's society, and producing a photo ID at polling places is hardly onerous.

See **COURT**, Page 3A

## HAVING A BLAST



HERALD photo/Steve Reagan  
Triston Seay, left, and Michael Mathews apparently find the Kidz Zone playground to their liking Sunday afternoon. Many people took advantage of warm weather to flock to Comanche Trail Park last weekend.

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## Transportation Chairman Williamson dead at 55

By **MATT CURRY**

Associated Press Writer

DALLAS — Texas Transportation Commission Chairman and former long-time state lawmaker Ric Williamson died Sunday of an apparent heart attack, officials said. He was 55.

Williamson died at Weatherford Regional Medical Center just after 1 a.m., Texas Department of Transportation spokesman Chris Lippincott said.

"It is a great shock, everyone is very surprised to hear this news," Lippincott told The Associated Press on Sunday.

"He certainly left his imprint on the commission and on the state with the vision he had for transportation."

Gov. Rick Perry said Williamson was a longtime friend who will be greatly missed. The two were conservative Democratic colleagues in the Texas House during 1980s. Both later joined the GOP.

Williamson served in the Legislature for more than 20 years.

"Ric's passion to serve his beloved state of Texas was unmatched and his determination to help our state meet its future challenges was unparalleled," Perry said in a written statement. "He

will be missed beyond words. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Williamson family during this very difficult time."

Perry named Williamson to the transportation commission in 2001, and he became chairman in 2004. The five-member commission oversees the Texas Department of Transportation.

State lawmakers heavily criticized state transportation policy on toll roads and private contracts during this year's legislative session.

The agency has traditionally been a

See **WILLIAMSON**, Page 3A

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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

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## IN BRIEF

### Individuals needed to referee area basketball games

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

Anyone interested should call Adam Rodriguez at 517-0300.

### 2007-2008 NCAA Division I-A college bowl schedule

#### TODAY

**Armed Forces Bowl**  
At Fort Worth, Texas  
Payout: \$750,000  
California (6-6) vs. Air Force (9-3), 11:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Sun Bowl**  
At El Paso, Texas  
Payout: \$1.9 million  
South Florida (9-3) vs. Oregon (8-4), 1 p.m. (CBS)

**Humanitarian Bowl**  
At Boise, Idaho  
Payout: \$750,000  
Fresno State (8-4) vs. Georgia Tech (7-5), 1 p.m. (ESPN2)

**Music City Bowl**  
At Nashville, Tenn.  
Payout: \$1.6 million  
Florida State (7-5) vs. Kentucky (7-5), 3 p.m. (ESPN)

**Insight Bowl**  
At Tempe, Ariz.  
Payout: \$1.25 million  
Indiana (7-5) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6), 5 p.m. (NFLN)

**Chick-fil-A Bowl**  
At Atlanta  
Payout: \$2.9 million  
Clemson (9-3) vs. Auburn (8-4), 6:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**JAN. 1**  
**Outback Bowl**  
At Tampa, Fla.  
Payout: \$3.1 million  
Wisconsin (9-3) vs. Tennessee (9-4), 10 a.m. (ESPN)

**Cotton Bowl**  
At Dallas  
Payout: \$3 million  
Missouri (11-2) vs. Arkansas (8-4), 10:30 a.m. (FOX)

**Capital One Bowl**  
At Orlando, Fla.  
Payout: \$4.25 million  
Michigan (8-4) vs. Florida (9-3), Noon (ABC)

**Gator Bowl**  
At Jacksonville, Fla.  
Payout: \$2.25 million  
Virginia (9-3) vs. Texas Tech (8-4), Noon (CBS)

**Rose Bowl**  
At Pasadena, Calif.  
Payout: \$17 million  
Southern California (10-2) vs. Illinois (9-3), 3:30 p.m. (ABC)

**Sugar Bowl**  
At New Orleans  
Payout: \$17 million  
Hawaii (12-0) vs. Georgia (10-2), 7:30 p.m. (FOX)

**JAN. 2**  
**Fiesta Bowl**  
At Glendale, Ariz.  
Payout: \$17 million  
West Virginia (10-2) vs. Oklahoma (11-2), 7 p.m. (FOX)

**JAN. 3**  
**Orange Bowl**  
At Miami  
Payout: \$17 million  
Kansas (11-1) vs. Virginia Tech (11-2), 7 p.m. (FOX)

# Buffs, Wildcats claim holiday titles

By JONATHAN HULL

Herald Sports Editor  
STERLING CITY — Holiday champions. It has a nice ring to it. Only two Crossroads basketball teams can make a claim to that title, though.

Four area squads made into the finals of their respective tournaments, but only the Forsan Buffaloes and Grady Wildcats prevailed.

Forsan won a hardwood Battle of the Buffs over Stanton Saturday night with the Sterling City Holiday Tournament title on the line. The game came down to the last shot, but Stanton's Chase Pinkerton missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer, giving Forsan the 52-50 win.

"That was a great game for us to build off of," Forsan Head Coach Terry McDonald said. "Stanton is a tough team and they're going to be very competitive in their district. It was great for our kids to pull this game out at the end."

Grady found a familiar foe in Rankin's Red Devils standing in the way of winning its home tournament, the Cotton Classic. While Rankin's Garrett Avalos gave the Wildcats fits on the hardwood much like he did on the gridiron during football season, Grady found a way to pull out a 9-point victory, 45-36.

The other Crossroads team to compete in a championship game was Coahoma's Bulldogettes, who made it to the finals of the West Texas Invitational against the host Slaton Lady Tigers.

Unfortunately for the Bulldogettes, their offense never got in a flow and they fell, 37-23.

There was also good news Saturday for the Buffs', Wildcats' and Bulldogettes' high school counterparts. Forsan's Lady Buffs, Grady's Lady Wildcats and Coahoma's Bulldogs each won the consolation bracket in the respective tournament they participated in Saturday.

Garden City's Lady Bearkats finished third in the Big Lake Tournament courtesy of a dominant 57-27 win over Irion County.

Big Spring's Lady Steers went in search of their first victory of the season Saturday, but Sundown's Lady Roughnecks had other plans. The Lady Roughnecks thwarted Big Spring, 60-21.

### Forsan 52, Stanton 50

Forsan led by as many as 7 points in the first half, but Stanton never let the White Buffaloes get out of reach.

Trailing 17-10 heading into the second period, Stanton slowly erased the deficit over the course of the stanza. Finally, Tyler Fulton picked up a loose ball at the top of the arch and nailed a 3-pointer to tie the score at 27 just as the buzzer sounded, ending the first half.

Stanton held the advantage more than Forsan in the second half, but never led by more than 4 points. However, Forsan retook the lead, 44-43, with 4:56 remaining in the third period courtesy of two big plays by Cameron Parker.

Parker hit a trey to pull Forsan within 1 and then stole the ball on Stanton's ensuing possession. Parker passed to Jeremy Robbins, who missed a layup, but Blake Grantham snuck inside for the offensive rebound and an easy put back.

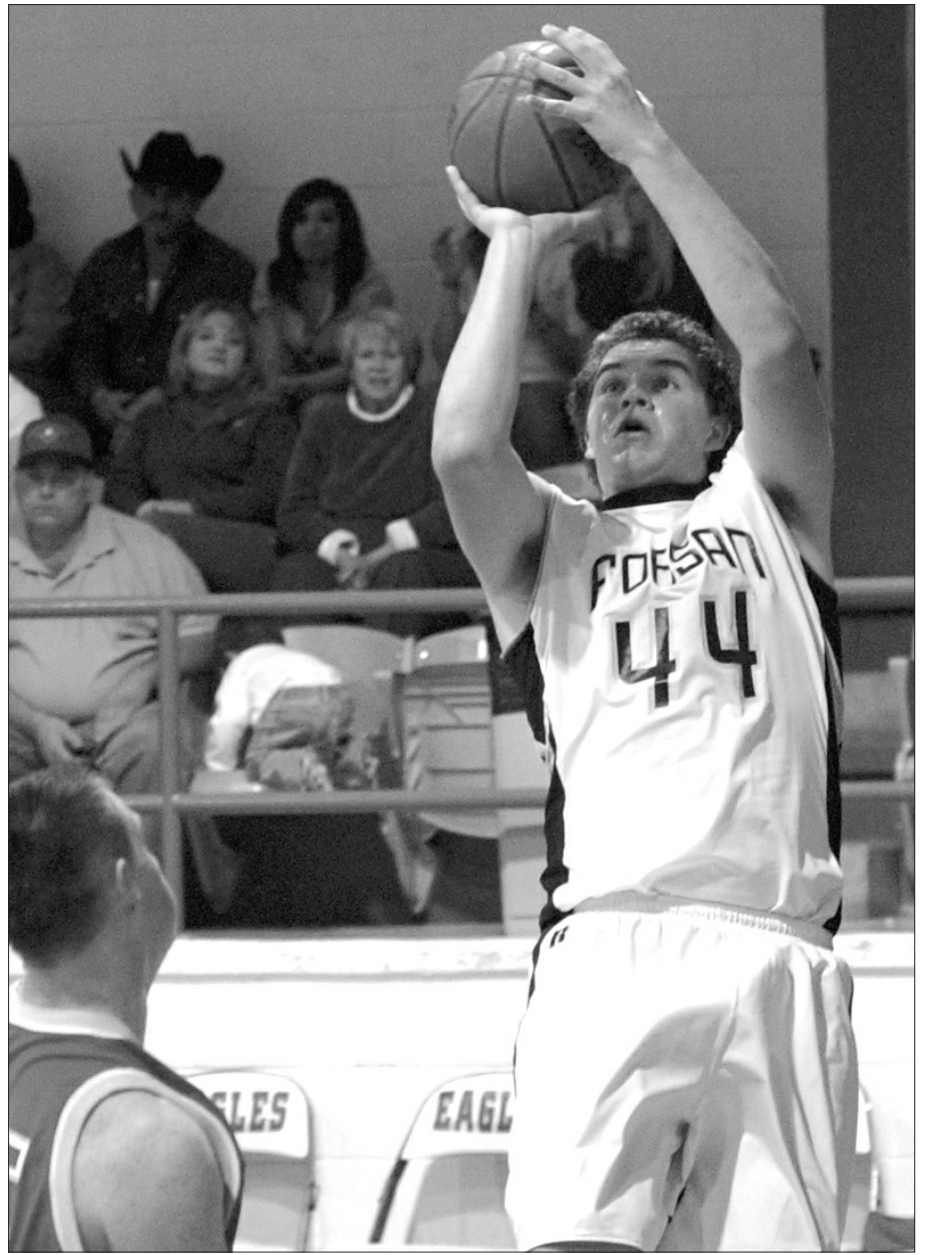
That 5-0 run turned into an 11-3 streak for Forsan, giving the Buffs a 52-46 advantage with 1:37 left to play. However, Stanton still wasn't done.

The Buffs from Forsan found it difficult to secure a defensive rebound and Stanton eventually pulled within 2, 52-50, with 50 seconds on the clock.

Unfortunately for the Red Buffaloes from Stanton, they never got another good look at the basket and Pinkerton's three fell just short.

Adam Bailey secured the Tournament MVP award. Despite having a tough night shooting, he scored 10 points and pulled down 15 boards.

"Adam was off a bit tonight, but he got his teammates involved and they stepped up



HERALD photo/Jonathan Hull  
Forsan's Nathan Atkerson pulls up for a jumper against Stanton in the Buffs' 52-50 victory Saturday night in the finals of the Sterling City Holiday Tournament.

their game," McDonald said. "Cameron's really been playing great for us lately. He's a very good spot shooter from behind the arch and hit some big shots for us."

Parker led Forsan with 17 points and was named to the all-tournament team. Jeremy Robbins joined Parker on that team.

For Stanton, Garrett Fulton scored a game-high 22 points and Pinkerton had 11. Fulton and Adam Evans each made the all-

tournament team.

Forsan plays the state's No. 1 ranked private school Midland Classical Friday in Midland. Last season, Classical dropped the Buffs by 12 points.

Stanton 10 17 12 11—50  
Forsan 17 10 12 13—52

Stanton: Garrett Fulton 22, David Erives 3, Tyler Fulton 5, Justin Hinojosa 3, Chase Pinkerton 11, Adam Evans 8.

Forsan: Jeremy Robbins 3, Adam Bailey 10, Cameron Parker 17, Alex Huckabee 8, Nathan Atkerson 8, Blake Grantham 6.

See HOLIDAY, Page 2B

# The best part of a new year



MCT photo  
Texas Tech quarterback Graham Harrell throws a pass in action from earlier this season against the Texas Longhorns. Harrell leads the Red Raiders into Jacksonville, Fla., Tuesday to take on the Virginia Cavaliers in the Gator Bowl.

What is New Year's Day without bowl games? Seriously, would the holiday

even feel the same? It wouldn't for me.

I know I'm a bowl-crazed sports guy who won't stop blatantly using his section in the *Herald* to support his addiction, but I seriously wouldn't enjoy New Year's without the traditional Jan. 1 bowl games.

For most, New Year's brings thoughts of new beginnings or partying until the sun comes up. Well, I'm too busy following sports for anything to seem new and I despise alcohol. So for me, New Year's makes me think of cotton, roses, sugar, gators and credit cards.

Honestly, the only party I'm caring to see around New Year's is the Fiesta Bowl. I'll get my fill of alcohol thanks to hundreds of beer commercials that will be broadcast throughout the day. That's the closest I come to imbibing the brutal substance, anyway.

My hangover occurs once the bowl season is complete. There's a bit of a lull for me that first day after the BCS Championship game.

No longer will there be a football game on every night of the week. It changes my lifestyle completely. Although, some would argue that the change is for the better.

Is it really that obvious I'm single?

Oh well, here's a look at Tuesday's non-BCS bowls.



JONATHAN HULL

Happy Bowl Da ... I mean, Happy New Year's Day everybody.

### Gator Bowl

Texas Tech (8-4) vs. Virginia (9-3)  
Noon Tuesday (CBS)

### Last bowl appearances:

Texas Tech 44, Minnesota 41 (OT) (2006 Insight); Virginia 34, Minnesota 31 (2005 Music City).

**Synopsis:** There's no secret to what Texas Tech is going to try and accomplish offensively. The Red Raiders are first nationally in passing offense and dead last in rushing.

Quarterback Graham Harrell has thrown for more yards than anyone else in the country and is fifth in passing efficiency. Harrell's favorite target is play-making wide receiver Michael Crabtree.

Crabtree, a redshirt freshman, has set freshman records in receptions, receiving yards and touchdowns. Not bad for a player who was originally being recruited by Tech to play basketball for Bobby Knight. Opposing defenses know where Harrell wants to throw and still can't stop him.

However, neither of those players are the biggest key for who wins this game. Instead, the pressure is on the Tech offensive line, which will face the best pass rush it's seen this season.

Virginia has the best pure pass rusher in the country in defensive end Chris Long. Long, the son of NFL Hall of Famer Howie, has 14 sacks and 19 tackles for loss this season. He does this in a 3-4 defense, which generally prevents defensive ends from racking up large sack

See BOWLS, Page 2B





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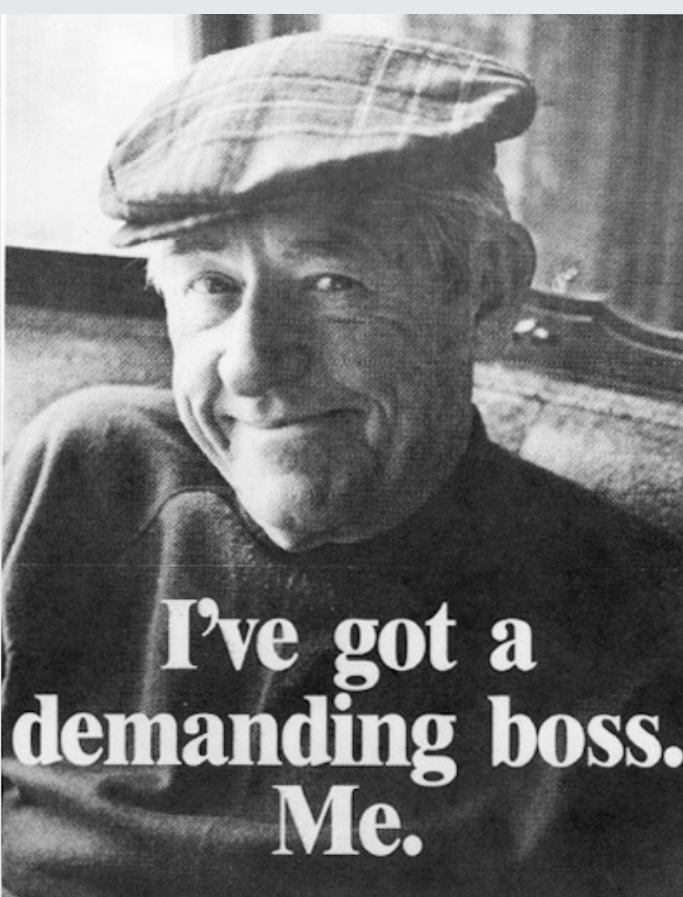
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HERALD









NUTRITION WISE

Cuts of steak; about saccharin

Q: Are some cuts of steak lower in fat than others?

A: Steak can be high in saturated fat, the type of fat that raises blood cholesterol and therefore risk of heart disease.

For example, a standard three-ounce serving (roughly the size of a deck of cards) contains about 8 grams (g) of fat and 170 calories if the outside fat is completely trimmed off.



KAREN COLLINS MS, RD, CDN

Obviously as the portion increases, so do the fat and calorie content.

Some restaurants pride themselves on steak portions so large they're equal to five standard servings;

In the end, however, the negative health effects of consuming large amounts of red meat go beyond the soaring fat and calorie calculations.

Consequently AICR recommends limiting red meat to no more than 18 ounces a week.

Q: Do herbs and enemas that cleanse the colon protect against colon cancer?

A: No well-controlled, scientifically accurate studies offer any convincing evidence to support such suggestions.

Q: Does saccharin cause cancer?

A: No. Saccharin (commonly referred to by its brand name Sweet'N Low) is a zero-calorie sweetener used in tabletop sugar substitutes as well as in reduced-calorie baked goods.

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Enjoy some creamy vegetable soup

If your only exposure to vegetable soup a watery, high-sodium canned version, it's time for an update.

This recipe calls for first roasting its vegetables. Although a bit time-consuming, the end result helps each vegetable retain its unique flavor and it intensifies the depth of flavor of the overall dish.

Cruciferous vegetables are well represented in this soup. The cauliflower and broccoli add bulk to the dish thanks to their fiber.

While there are many versions of garam masala, they nearly always include cinnamon, clove, cumin, nutmeg and cardamom.



- 2 cups broccoli florets
2 cups cauliflower florets
1/2 fennel bulb, cut in 1-inch pieces
1 medium red-skin potato, diced
2 large shallots, quartered
1 medium tomato, seeded and cut into 6 wedges

\* Or make your own mixture of 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon, plus 1/8 tsp. each ground allspice, coriander and black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Coat two baking sheets with cooking spray.

On one sheet, place the garlic, bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower, fennel, potato, shallots, tomato and zucchini. Coat liberally with cooking spray.

bake 10 minutes longer, or until slightly soft.

Transfer the vegetables to a large, deep saucepan. Add the spice mixture and 3 cups cold water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer until the vegetables are very soft, about 20 minutes.

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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.

Contract Bridge By Steve Becker Famous Hand East dealer. Neither side vulnerable. NORTH: K 9 8 5 4, A 5 3 2, 8 6, 6 5. WEST: A 10 7 6, K J 9 4, 7, K Q J 4. EAST: Q J 3 2, Q 10 8, A 5, 9 8 7 3. SOUTH: 7 6, K Q J 10 9 4 3 2, A 10 2.

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MONDAY

Table with 24 columns (stations) and 12 rows (times) listing program schedules for Monday, Dec 31, 2007.

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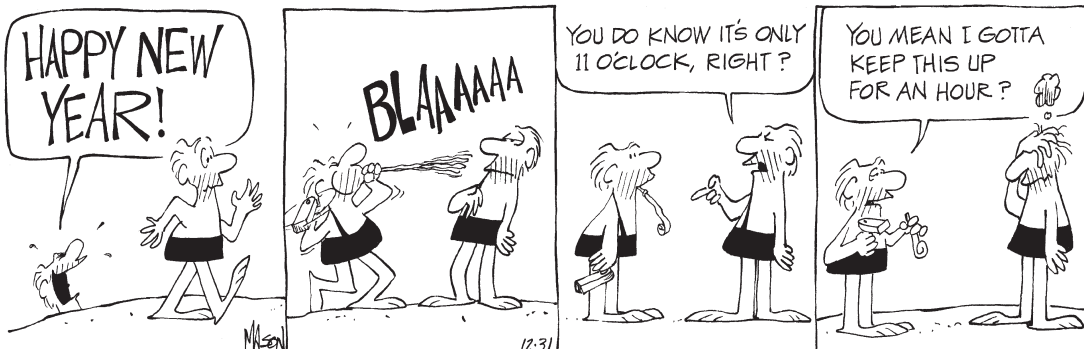
"DON'T JELLY BEANS COUNT AS A VEG-TABLE?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I guess it's time we looked at these family newsletters we were too"

BC



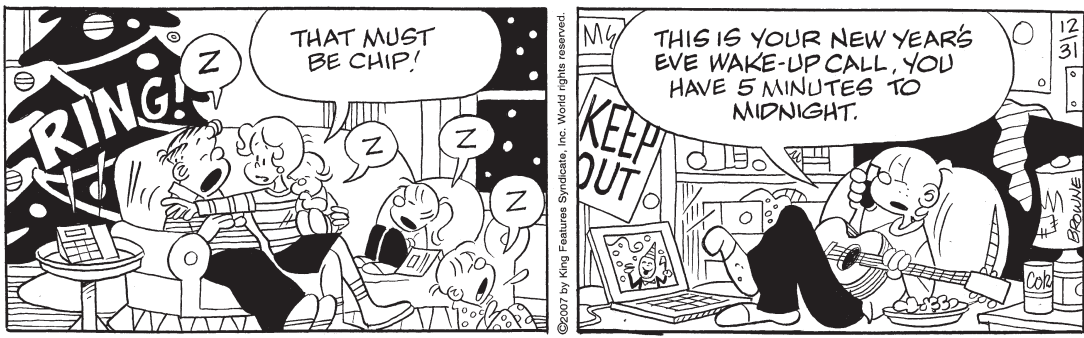
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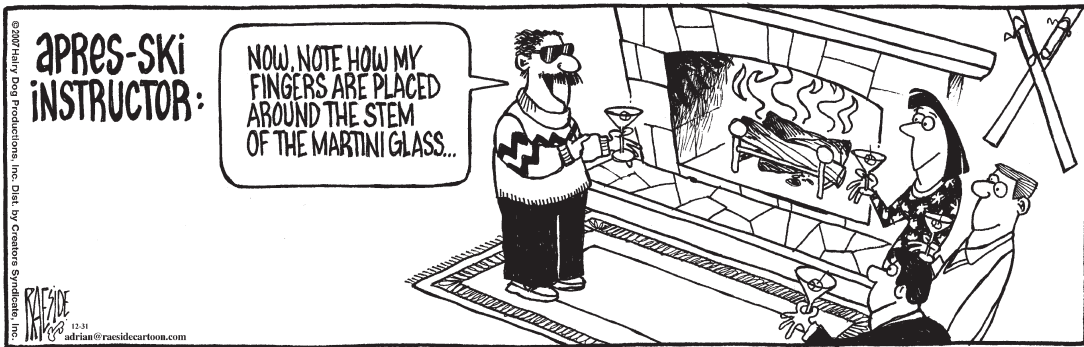
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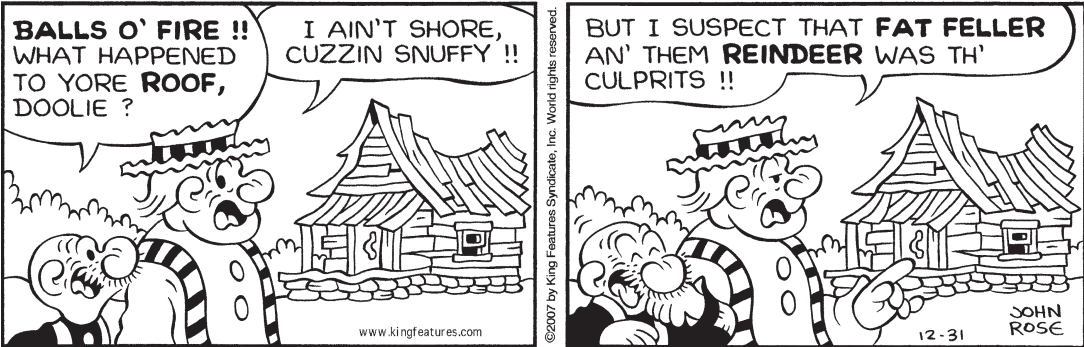
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This Date In History

By The Associated Press
Today is Monday, Dec. 31, the 365th and final day of 2007.
Today's Highlight in History:
On Dec. 31, 1879, Thomas Edison first publicly demonstrated his electric incandescent light in Menlo Park, N.J.
On this date:
In 1775, the British repulsed an attack by Continental Army generals Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold at Quebec; Montgomery was killed.
In 1857, Britain's Queen Victoria decided to make Ottawa the capital of Canada.
In 1862, President Lincoln signed an act paving the way for West Virginia statehood.
In 1877, President and Mrs. Hayes celebrated their silver anniversary (actually, a day late) by re-enacting their wedding ceremony in the White House.
In 1946, President Truman officially proclaimed the end of hostilities in World War II.
In 1974, private U.S. citizens were allowed to buy and own gold for the first time in more than 40 years.
In 1978, Taiwanese diplomats struck their colors for the final time from the embassy flagpole in Washington, marking the end of diplomatic relations with the U.S.
In 1985, singer Rick Nelson, 45, and six other people were killed when fire broke out aboard a DC-3 that was taking the group to a New Year's Eve performance in Dallas.
In 1986, 97 people were killed when fire broke out in the Dupont Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Three hotel workers later pleaded guilty in connection with the blaze.)
In 1987, Robert Mugabe was sworn in as Zimbabwe's first executive president.
Today's Birthdays: Folk and blues singer Odetta is 77.

Newsday Crossword

NOISEMAKERS by Sally R. Stein Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS
1 Obtains
5 Wine barrel
9 Club regulation
14 Hard to find
15 Sandwich-cookie name
16 Rental document
17 Tucson's loc.
18 The Dalai
19 Bulletin-board fasteners
20 Noisy winter vehicle
23 Take a break
24 That lady
25 Seasons, as popcorn
27 Household cleaning chemical
31 Noisy fight
35 Caviar source
36 Sgts., for example
39 "Sorry, \_\_\_ at the office"
40 Noisy kitchen appliance
44 Collective-bargaining group
45 Chair or bench
46 Office neckwear
47 Ritzy residence
49 Seafood servings with shells
52 Dentist's concerns
55 Work-wk. start, usually
56 Software purchaser
59 Noisy gardening machine
64 End of a fable
66 Adam's second son
67 Great review
68 Item's cost
69 Location
70 Adam's home
71 War horse
72 Incoming-plane stats.
73 Mailed away
DOWN
1 Mardi \_\_\_
2 Have coming
3 Threesome
4 "Oh, yeah?"
5 Dye, for instance
6 Jordanian or Saudi
7 Tourney rounds
8 Australian bearlike beast
9 Crunchy sandwich, for short
10 Way back when
11 Doily material
12 Inquires
13 Toward sunset
21 Guys
22 Santa's helper
26 Excursion
27 Engage in debate
28 Complains
29 Have coming
30 Experts
32 Social stratum
33 To no \_\_\_ (ineffective)
34 Monica of tennis
37 Type of poem bearlike beast
38 Thailand's former name
41 Competition on the water
42 Penny-\_\_\_ poker
43 Loses one's footing
48 "Electric" fish
50 Note after fa
51 Makes noise while sleeping
53 Make fun of
54 Customary practice
56 Baseball officials
57 Prepare, as laundry
58 A Great Lake
60 Greek cheese
61 Walk through water
62 \_\_\_-steven (tied)
63 Apartment payment
65 Showed the way



# New pipe organ being installed at First UMC in Bryan

By **JIM BUTLER**

Bryan-College Station Eagle  
BRYAN — Bryan's First United Methodist Church hoped to unwrap a new pipe organ for Christmas, but the not-quite-finished instrument was still able to bring the music of the season to the congregation.

The organ is being installed by Garland Pipe Organs of Fort Worth. For nearly 40 years, Dan Garland has built and placed pipe organs. His 50th major installation is close to completion at the Methodist church on 28th Street.

"Every pipe organ is different," Garland said by phone from his Fort Worth workshop.

"Each one has to fit the room physically and architecturally. The No. 1 thought in my mind is always that I am building an instrument to help congregations sing hymns. I like to think that the wind moving through the pipes is the breath of God."

One look behind the facade of a pipe organ would lead some to think that only God could create such an instrument. From a front-row pew in the Bryan church's sanctuary, a visitor might be able to count 32 shiny, metal pipes — 16 on each side of the choir loft.

But climb a ladder into the attic, step carefully on boards that keep you from falling into

the sanctuary, and you come to a small space in which an average person can barely stand.

There are two such spaces, one behind each set of visible pipes. In these spaces are thousands of pipes made of metal or wood, from tiny to huge, aligned in ranks. For this particular organ, there are 45 ranks (or rows) of 61 pipes each for a total of 2,745. Each rank represents a musical octave of eight notes.

"Most of the lower notes come from wood pipes," Garland said. "Wood produces a warmer sound."

The new pipes were manufactured in Germany, the Netherlands and Ohio.

Garland was able to reuse some pipes from the organ being replaced.

"I was thrilled to find some Hook pipes in the previous organ," Garland said, explaining that Hook & Hastings was a top-of-the-line pipe manufacturer in Boston. "They didn't survive the Depression (1930s). These pipes probably came from the original organ in the old church building."

Newer organs use an electrical circuit board with thousands of wires that control air to the pipes. Older organs used wires.

The church started planning for a new organ in 2003, said the Rev. David Henry, minister

of music for the First United Methodist Church.

"The old organ lasted 45 years, which is pretty good for a mechanical device," Henry said.

The church did almost no fundraising to pay for the \$500,000 instrument.

"We got a very large anonymous gift to get it started, and another gift that got us up to 75 percent. More gifts came in, and we ended up being over-subscribed by \$100,000. We used \$40,000 of that to renovate the sanctuary with new tile and carpet. We justified using the organ fund because the renovations help the organ sound better."

# Condemned killer says Bible helped jury decide his death sentence

By **MICHAEL GRACZYK**  
Associated Press Writer

LIVINGSTON — Nearly a decade after an East Texas man was gunned down during a burglary of his home, the death sentence of the Waco man convicted of the slaying remains under scrutiny because jurors at his trial had Bibles with them when they decided he should be executed.

Khristian Oliver, now 30, was condemned by a Nacogdoches County jury in 1999, a year after authorities said he and three companions were involved in the break-in of the home of 64-year-old Joe Collins, who was shot and beaten.

Oliver's three accomplices received prison terms ranging from five to 99 years. He got the death penalty and in his appeals lawyers are contending jurors improperly consulted Scripture that called for death as punishment for murder.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last month upheld Oliver's conviction and denied his request for a federal evi-

dentiary hearing on the Bible-related claims, but agreed to consider written arguments on the matter and then hold oral arguments.

"This is headed toward a showdown on a very fundamental question on the use of the Bible," Winston Cochran, Oliver's lawyer, said.

Cochran had until the end of December to present written briefs to the court. Prosecutors will then have an opportunity to respond. Oral arguments before the New Orleans-based court are not likely until later in 2008.

"I'm really surprised the 5th Circuit has got much interest," said special prosecutor Sue Koriath, who handled the initial appeal to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, which upheld the conviction and death sentence. "I think the Supreme Court ruled on this years ago, that you can't tell people to leave their values at the door."

"Unless there's a suggestion they used religious law as opposed to

the Code of Criminal Procedure and the instructions the judge gave them, but that wasn't an issue in this case."

At issue is a verse in Chapter 35 of Numbers which, in the New American Standard Bible,

reads: "But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death." Other versions of the Bible have similar passages, some of them referring to an "iron rod"

as the weapon.

"This poor old farmer, he got shot and when he was lying outside on the ground, he was struck with the barrel of a gun," Cochran said. "So he was literally struck with an iron rod."

"You could say God and Moses anticipated this exact thing if you take a literal view of it. And that's got a lot of potential for mischief."

Koriath said there never was an implication jurors voted based on Scripture.



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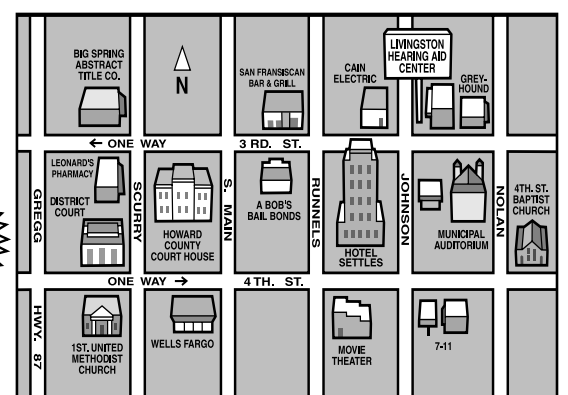
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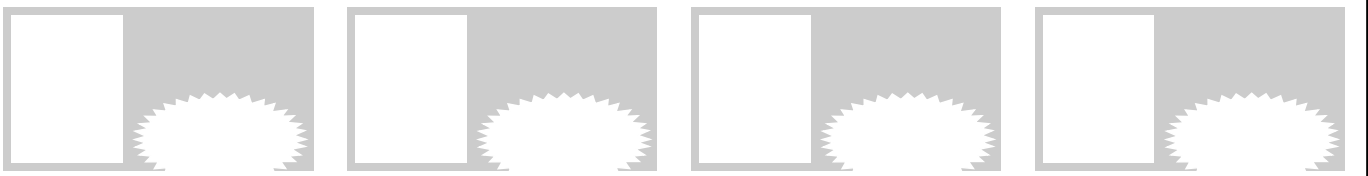
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**2007: The Year in Review**

**April**

**Lady Bullfighter returns home**

Patricia McCormick, the Big Spring native who won fame as the first American female bullfighter, returned home to Big Spring in April.

McCormick's visit came just in time for the opening of an exhibit featuring her at the Heritage Museum of Big Spring.

A long-running feud, of sorts, between the Howard County Commissioners Court and Constable Mark Winn came to a head in April when County Attorney Mike Thomas filed an application to remove Winn from his elected position, citing his failure to obtain peace officer certification.

Thomas' filing came early in the month, but it was not until almost four weeks later that commissioners finally said a final "no" to Winn's request for additional time in order to acquire his certification, as well as additional funds to pay college coursework required to receive his certificate.

Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf Provost Dr. Ron Brasel announced his plans to retire during the month, amid protests by SWCID students complaining about a number of issues ranging from the quality of the cafeteria's food to their request that Dean of Students Edward Tagge be fired.

During meetings with Brasel and Howard College President Dr. Cheri Sparks, the SWCID students also requested that trustees appoint a deaf person to succeed Brasel following his



HERALD file photo  
**Patricia McCormick, left, a former Big Spring resident who gained fame as a female bullfighter in Latin America during the 1950s, talks with Bonnie Warren of Seminole during a reception in McCormick's honor at the Heritage Museum on April 10.**

retirement.

Although little was firmed up as a result of the meetings between administrators and the SWCID students, Sparks stressed that the school takes the students' concerns seriously and is dedicated to improving the

educational experience for everyone.

Other noteworthy events that took place during April included:

- Former Big Spring Police Department jailer Lawrence Wayne Hein was arrested on a charge of sexual assault of a public servant following an almost year-long investigation by Texas Rangers.

- A "wintry mix" of sleet, snow and below-freezing temperatures created treacherous conditions in the Crossroads area on April 7, leading to numerous traffic accidents, power outages and even a brief closure of Interstate 20. Despite the rash of accidents, no fatalities were reported.

- The Big Spring Symphony closed its 2006-2007 season with a concert featuring soprano Renay Peters Joubert.

- The Big Spring City Council approved a resolution that enhanced its control over the Moore Development for Big Spring Inc. Board of Directors.

- "Good Health — Now and For Our Future" was the theme for the annual Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce Health Fair at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

- Participants from all over the state took part in the

annual Master the Mountain Fun Run/Walk at Big Spring State Park.

- More than 200 friends and family members honored the Don and Marilyn Newsom family during rededication ceremonies at the Marilyn Keaton Newsom Family Lodge at Big Spring State Hospital.

- For a fourth consecutive year, the Big Spring High School Band received a sweepstakes trophy at the University Interscholastic League Concert Contest after having won Division I ratings in marching, concert and sight-reading competitions. And for the first time, Big Spring's top two junior high school bands also took home sweepstakes awards.

- Howard County commissioners approved the hiring of Carl R. Griffith and Associates Inc. to provide consultant services in an effort to cut costs for a proposed new jail.

- The Big Spring Kennel Club Dog Show was staged April 28-29 at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

- Danny and Reed Stewart were named Conservation Rancher of the Year Award winners during the annual Howard Soil and Water Conservation District presentation.

**Sports**



HERALD file photo  
**On the first play from scrimmage Ahmad Childress (99) sacked San Angelo quarterback Dixie Wooten (7) for a seven-yard loss. The Big Spring Roughnecks won over fans in the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum with a 39-23 victory April 1.**

From the first snap of the April 1 Intense Football League game at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum, the Big Spring Roughnecks had the San Angelo Stampede Express right where they wanted them — scrambling, fumbling and, in general, losing to a better football team.

The Roughnecks took the IFL pre-season win, 39-23.

"It was difficult at first because I didn't know what to expect," Roughnecks owner Tommy Benizio said, "but I felt very welcomed here. I hope to be able to do this more often."

"The fans were knowledgeable and really into the game," Roughnecks Coach Chris Williams said. "They were truly impressive."

Roughnecks quarterback Chad Frieauf, formerly of the Denver Broncos, finished 24 of 36 for 183 yards and two touchdowns. Frieauf was named the player of the game.

"This community has been really supportive of us," Frieauf said. "I hope we won some fans."

- The Big Spring Lady Steers softball team fought back to win several district games and pull out the third-seed heading into the softball playoffs slated to start in May.

- Coahoma's Bulldogettes faced their biggest challenge since they joined District 5-2A. The Hawley Lady Bearcats finished atop the District 5-2A standings with the Bulldogettes, forcing a one-game playoff to decide the No. 1 seed coming out of the league.

After enduring a rain delay, which became a common theme throughout the baseball and softball playoffs in 2007, the Bulldogettes defeated Hawley, 7-0, claiming a bye in the first round of the playoffs.

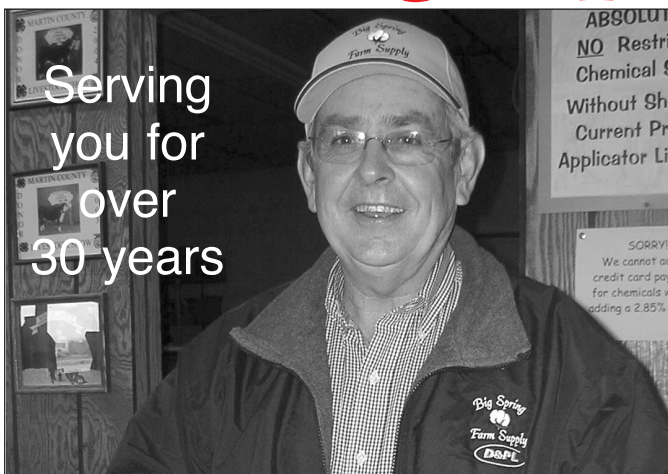
- Forsan's baseball and softball teams earned its first playoff berths in school history after having each program available for just two years.



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins  
**Three children braved the cold winds to hunt Easter eggs at the Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez State Veterans Home on April 7.**

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### 2007: The Year in Review

## August

# World's best hang gliders arrive

For an eighth straight year, Big Spring hosted a championship hang gliding event in August at McMahon-Wrinkle Airpark. This time, however, it was the most important event of them all — the 16th FAI Hang Gliding World Championships.

The event brought more than 150 of the world's best hang gliders to Big Spring for almost two weeks of competition and assorted activities.

When all was said and done, Hungarian Attila Bertok claimed the individual title, while Austrian pilots Gerolf Heinrichs and Robert Reisinger finished second and third, respectively.

In team competition, Great Britain didn't have any of the top individuals, but put four pilots in the top 20 to take the gold medal, while France finished second and Austria was third.

While weather conditions were not as ideal as they had been in previous years, FAI officials, pilots, team leaders and manufacturers who took part in the event said it was the best world championships the FAI has ever staged.

They stressed that the flying conditions were not only the best they've ever encountered for the event, but the hospitality afforded by the Big Spring community was unlike anything they've ever received.

On a more serious note, the month began with Adan Munoz, executive director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, meeting with Howard County commissioners and County Judge Mark Barr in Austin and warning them that if the county's voters failed to approve a bond issue to finance construction of a new county jail in November, the commission would close the existing facility permanently.

That same message was delivered in a former letter to the commissioners court a few days after, and was restated later in the year when Munoz made appearances at a Big Spring Rotary Club meeting and during a town hall meeting with local residents on the Howard College campus.

Two murder trials in 118th District also topped the headlines in August. In the first of those proceedings, Michael Harbert of Lamesa was found guilty of murder by a six-man, six-woman jury in connection with the Dec. 24, 2006, shooting death



of former Big Spring High School track and football star Tory Mitchell.

Harbert was sentenced to life in prison and a \$10,000 fine for the murder of Mitchell.

He was additionally sentenced to 20 years in prison and another \$10,000 fine after being found guilty of possession of a firearm by a felon.

In the second trial, John Michael Hays received a 99-year sentence after being found guilty of murder in the beating death of 20-year-old Roland David Dickinson on Jan. 1, 2007.

While city, county and school district officials wrestled with proposed budgets and tax rates for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, Alon USA announced that it would sue the Howard County Tax Appraisal District for a second straight year over its valuation of the Big Spring Refinery.

The refinery was appraised at almost \$320 million, but Alon appealed the appraisal saying the property should only be valued at \$152 million.

Appraisal Review Board members heard Alon's argument, but upheld the \$320 million valuation by a 2-1 vote.

Until litigation is settled in the matter, Alon officials announced the company would pay taxes on a value of \$80 million for the facility.

Other top news stories for August included:

- Howard College trustees hiring the architectural consulting firm of Parkhill,

Smith and Cooper to oversee a \$21.6 million renovation of the Big Spring campus.

- Three area school districts — Glasscock County, Sands and Grady — received "recognized" status when the Texas Education Agency released its accountability ratings.

- County commissioners approved a tax rate of 48.787 cents per \$100 valuation for fiscal 2007 — 6.38 cents above the rollback rate. The increase should generate approximately \$700,000 in additional funding for the county.

- After less than three months on the job, Tim Larson resigned as executive director of the United Way of Big Spring and Howard County. Larson's resignation came just days

before the 2007 United Way Campaign Kick-off Luncheon. Jan Hansen was named interim executive director for the United Way a few days later.

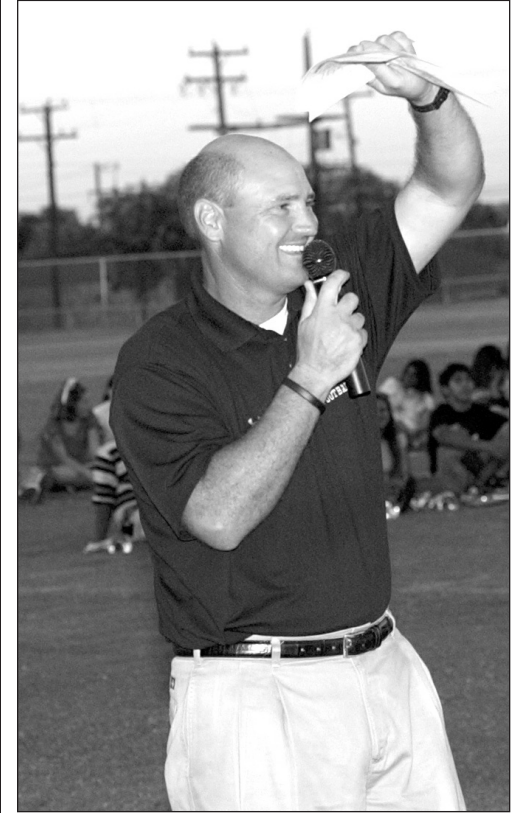
- Brad Dockrey, 29, of Big Spring was killed in an accident at the Colorado City Airport. Dockrey was in between crop dusting runs when the accident occurred. He was struck by the prop of his plane.

- The Big Spring Independent School District administrators announced first-day enrollment had surpassed projections. BSISD Superintendent Michael Downes said 3,774 students attended classes on the first day of school, a sharp increase from the 3,623 enrolled at the same time in 2006.



HERALD file photo  
Members of the U.S. team are announced during opening ceremonies for the 16th FAI Hang Gliding World Championships.

### Sports



HERALD file photo  
Big Spring Steers Head Football Coach and Athletic Director Mike Ritchey leads a cheer at a community pep rally Aug. 27.

Summer vacation ended midway through August and a new school year got under way. With it came a new high school sports season to the Crossroads region.

The fall season didn't indicate the start of just football for Big Spring High School. Male and female athletes in volleyball, cross country, swimming and team tennis also began their 2007 campaigns.

However, it was the beginning of a new era for the Big Spring Steers football team as Mike Ritchey started his first season as Steers' head coach and athletic director.

Ritchey stepped down as principal of Big Spring High School in order to get back into the coaching ranks.

Still, the passion and love for coaching has always stuck with Ritchey. "Coaching is my passion," he explained. "I enjoyed being principal, but I wouldn't say it was my first love in the education system. Coaching and being a part of the athletic program has always been my first love. I've always missed coaching, but I don't feel I ever really stopped being one."

The season didn't start the way Ritchey had hoped, though, as the Steers fell to Odessa High, 41-6.

- The first week of the football season appeared grim for most Crossroads teams.

Football squads in Coahoma, Forsan, Garden City, Lenora Grady and Ackerly Sands kicked off their seasons Aug. 31 with only Grady winning its opener.

- The Lady Steers volleyball team had a slow start to its season, losing its first 12 matches. However, Big Spring found its way onto the winning path in the Nita Vannoy Tournament in San Angelo, winning three games in bracket play. The Lady Steers picked up two 3-set victories over Water Valley and San Angelo Grape Creek and a dominant straight sets win over Colorado City.



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**2007: The Year in Review**  
**December**

**Christmas still special in Big Spring**

Santa Claus came to town on Dec. 1 — and he had a lot of company.

Thousands of Howard County residents lined Gregg Street that evening to welcome Santa and a few hundred escorts as the *Big Spring Herald* Community Christmas Parade was held for the 22nd time.

Even Mother Nature helped out during the proceedings. Unlike the past few years, moderate temperatures made for a pleasant evening of parade-watching.

*Herald* Publisher Ron Midkiff put his stamp of approval on the evening's proceedings. "I was impressed with the way the community turned out for the parade, and I thought it was a great success," said Midkiff. "And I was very proud of the people at the *Big Spring Herald* who worked so hard to put this on."

More than 48 entries echoed this year's parade theme of "Peace on Earth," and three floats earned top honors from the judges. Winning \$100 for Best in Show, presented to the top entry in the parade, was the City of Big Spring float, while Western Container's entry was awarded the Mayor's Trophy (worth \$75) and West Texas Centers for MHMR earned \$50 for earning the Grand Marshal's Award.

The Howard County Sheriff's Posse was judged to have the best mounted entry, while Kayla Cervantes topped the individual/family division; the Blue Knights of Texas won



HERALD file photo  
The city of Big Spring's entry for the 22nd annual Big Spring Herald Community Christmas Parade took the top prize available, most effectively conveying the parade theme of "Peace on Earth."

the civic/church/school division; Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez State Veterans Home won the commercial division; and Alon USA won the industrial division.

The same night the First United Methodist Church of Big Spring held its annual Living Christmas Tree presentation, performing to a packed audience.

A week later First Church of the Nazarene's Drive Through Nativity drew thousands of visitors, and the annual Festival of Lights opened on Dec. 15 and continued drawing visitors to Comanche Trail Park through the final day of the month.

When Howard College's annual Luminaria Ceremony, the Big Spring Symphony's "The Symphony at Christmas" concert, the St. Andrew's Celebration staged by St. Mary's Episcopal Church, the Big Spring High School Band holiday concert and the Symphony Guild's annual Christmas Tour of Homes were added, there was more to see and do during the Yuletide than in many cities much larger.

As always, the spirit of Christmas ruled the month and Howard Countians again proved they can open their hearts and pocket-books for those less fortunate. Local residents provided presents for almost 500 needy children and senior citizens registered for the Salvation Army Angel Tree project, as well as answering the call from the Child Protective Services' Giving Tree project and the Adult Protective Services' Be A Star effort.

In fact, the effort to provide for those less fortunate were almost too numerous to mention. Among those getting headlines during the month were the Cossacks Motorcycle Club's annual Bykes for Tykes effort, the 1946 Hyperion Club's project to provide all the needs for two families for the holiday, the Big Spring Herald/Salvation Army Toy Drive, and the Spring Tabernacle's Toys for Children effort.

And remarkably, students at Kentwood Elementary School pooled their funds to

make a \$276 cash donation to the Salvation Army, as well as providing a large amount of much-needed canned goods for the charity's food pantry.

Other top stories grabbing the headlines in December included:

- Big Spring Police Department officers were called on to investigate a rash of drive-by shootings that continued early in the month.

- Big Spring Independent School District trustees had hoped to be able to sell the old Runnels Junior High School building, but rejected the only two bids they received for the property.

- The Big Spring City Council and Howard County Commissioners Court began making plans to place the Spring City Senior Citizens Center under the city's umbrella. Long operated by the county with financial assistance from the city, officials say the center can be better operated and funded under the city's administration.

- A former Big Spring Police Department records clerk, Marie Wilson of Forsan, was arrested on charges of theft by a public servant. She was released on \$20,000 bond. If convicted of the charge, she could face a prison term of two to 20 years.

- The Settles Hotel Development Company made a long awaited announcement just before Christmas, saying it would begin renovation of the historic hotel building in February 2008.

**Sports**



HERALD file photo  
Big Spring's Jason Walker makes a move in the post in action from Dec. 11 at Midland College's Chaparral Center.

Midway through the second period, it appeared the Big Spring Steers basketball team was going to fall short of winning the Gym Bice Classic in Andrews Saturday.

The Steers' opponent was from Lovington, N.M., and featured the incredibly athletic forward Lance Smith. Smith fueled a 9-0 Lovington run in the second period, giving the New Mexico team a 29-15 lead with 5:12 left in the first half.

Fortunately for the Steers, they feature a fairly athletic forward themselves. Jason Walker scored 16 points in the second period alone as Big Spring outscored Lovington 25-9 in the last five minutes of the first half for a 40-38 lead at intermission.

It was a lead the Steers never relinquished on their way to a 91-72 pounding of Lovington in the finals of Andrews' annual basketball tournament.

Big Spring opened the season 0-1, falling to a very athletic Abilene Wylie team. However, the Steers were without several key players who were still playing football.

Once those players joined the rest of the team, Big Spring rolled off seven consecutive victories. The Steers would hit a bump in the road, though, as they matched up with several superior 5A teams and lost four straight.

The Steers picked up a win over Snyder Dec. 17 to finish the first half of their season 8-5 before the Christmas break.

- Two Steers were named to the Class 4A All-State football team as honorable mentions. District 4-4A Defensive Most Valuable Player Cade Hollandsworth, a junior, made the squad as a middle linebacker. Joining him was sophomore running back Monte Anderson, who was also a first-team all-district selection.

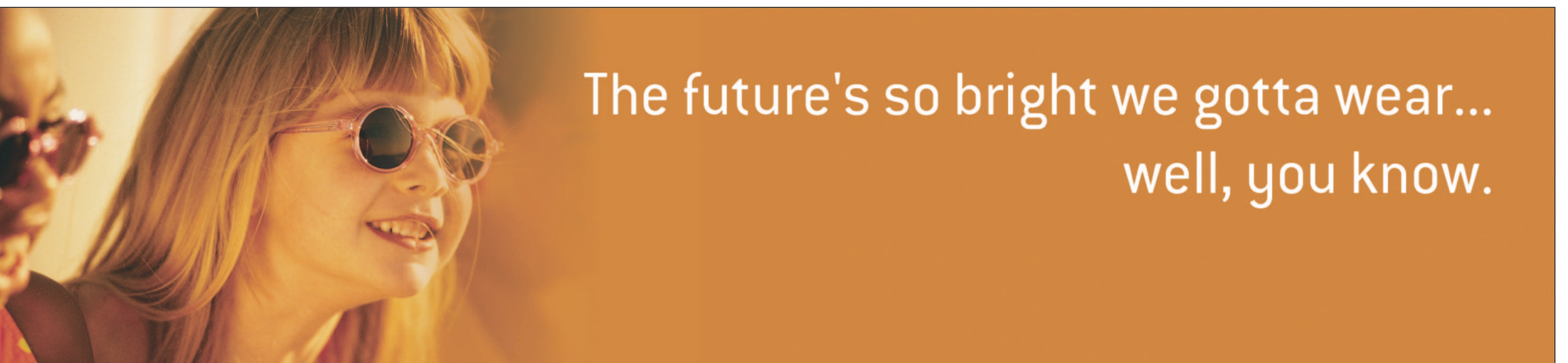
The Steers ended up with 14 players named to the all-district team.

- Forsan's Buffaloes started their season 8-1 and won Garden City's Bearkat Classic Dec. 1. The Buffs are the only Crossroads basketball team ranked in the top 20. They entered the rankings Dec. 17 at No. 15.

- Coahoma's girls and boys basketball teams put up memorable showing at its own Coahoma Invitational, ending Dec. 1. The Bulldogettes claimed the title, while the Bulldogs grabbed a second-place finish.



Courtesy photo  
The Living Christmas Tree presentation at First United Methodist Church always draws a big crowd.



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## 2007: The Year in Review

# February

## Director: VAMC has solid future

After two years of uncertainty, Howard County residents were assured that the future of the Big Spring VA Medical Center was bright. Director Michael Bell announced in February "There was a cloud over us ... That's been lifted, and now we can look forward to a new mission."

The "cloud" he referred to was a two-year federal study that looked into the possible closure of the facility. Instead of being closed, however, it was decided the facility would remain open. In addition, plans called for a facility on the hospital grounds that would provide long-term care for veterans suffering with mental health or substance abuse issues.

'Bogus bills being passed in Big Spring' was the headline that greeted readers in the Feb. 1 issue of the *Herald*. The article went on to alert merchants that several counterfeit \$50 and \$100 bills had been received over the past several days.

With much fanfare, it was announced in early February that a "Brawl in Big Spring" Intense Football League exhibition game would be held at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum between the San Angelo Stampede Express and the "Big Spring" (Odessa) Roughnecks in March.

Thirty-five-year-old Kirk Douglas Flanary was taken into custody in San Angelo and charged with first-degree murder for his alleged role in the January death of Roland David Dickinson, 20. Flanary was the second man charged in the death of Dickinson, whose body was found Jan. 11 in a ravine six miles north of Coahoma. John Michael Hays, 50, had been arrested earlier at his home on Midway Road.

Later in the month, 33-year-old Christopher David Lovett would be charged with first-degree murder in connection with Dickinson's death, after being taken into custody in Eastland.

Still later, a fourth suspect, Billy Wayne Haynes, 30, of Houston was taken into custody during a traffic stop in Winkler County and charged in the murder.

The Howard County Sheriff's Office said at the time that the murder was part of an Aryan Circle conspiracy.

Also in February, a Garden City man and his wife died in what was alleged to be a murder-suicide. Brian Christopher Cook, 37, and his wife, Dana



**Michael Bell, left, director of the Big Spring VA Medical Center, talks to Charles Beil during a reception at the hospital. Bell said the future of the facility was bright.**

Erin Cook, 36, were found dead in their home northwest of Garden City by Brian Cook's mother.

Local police began investigating an aggravated robbery in which a woman entered the Dollar General store at 501 Birdwell Lane, threatened the clerk with a knife and demanded money. The woman then fled on foot, according to police.

Goliad fifth grader Michael Akin won the 2007 Big Spring Independent School District Spelling Bee. He held off a determined challenge from Big Spring Junior High School student Blake Brorman over nine rounds to win the title.

Elbow Elementary School students were crowned University Interscholastic League academic champions for their age group. It was the fifth year in a row that Elbow students won the zone competition, according to school officials.

In what might be the story of the year — because of a failed bond election followed by a successful one — the need for a new county jail came up time and time again in February. On Feb. 12, commissioners were told that the cost of housing inmates of county eclipsed \$75,000 in January.

Speaking of money and

bonds, the Big Spring City Council approved sale of its general bond and certificates of obligation, moving forward — on paper, anyway — with more than \$15 million in repairs and improvements. Approved by voters in 2006, the bond would lift the tax rate from 71 cents to \$1.01 per \$100 valuation. Of the funds, some \$9.2 million was dedicated to street and roadway improvements — primarily in the downtown area and Main and Scurry streets.

Another \$5 million is to go to enhance city parks, including a major upgrade and expansion at the Roy Anderson Sports Complex.

Crime reports dominated mid-to-late February. Fifty-one-year-old Callie Jo Nickle of Big Spring was indicted by a Howard County grand jury after it was alleged that she tried to kill herself and her 12-year-old daughter in June, 2006. She was indicted for attempted murder.

And, a former Florida teacher, Gil Raimundo Cancel-Comas, 29, was held without bond in Tallahassee on charges of kidnapping a 13-year-old Big Spring girl. Cancel-Comas was also charged with lewd and lascivious conduct, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and custody interfer-

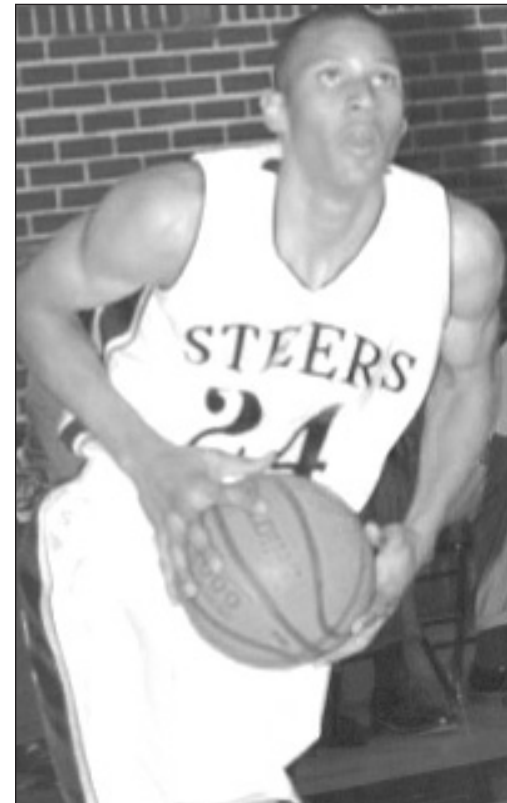
ence. Authorities said the two apparently made contact on the Internet and had been chatting for about a year before Cancel-Comas picked up the girl and transported her to Florida. The girl contacted family members in Big Spring and Cancel-Comas was arrested shortly afterward.

Late in the month, police were investigating an aggravated robbery at a 7-Eleven store in the 900 block of Willia during early morning hours. Brandishing a knife, the male suspect left the store with about \$300 worth of cigarettes, according to police.

As February came to a close, Howard College trustees voted unanimously to put a general obligation bond for more than \$21.6 million on the May ballot. The funds would pay for extensive renovation and rehabilitation of the college's buildings and facilities.

Meanwhile, Mayor Russ McEwen gave his State of the City address, telling those in attendance, "Big Spring is actualizing its rebirth. We're enjoying prosperity we haven't witnessed in decades. There is much to celebrate, yet there's much to be done."

### Sports



**HERALD file photo Big Spring Steer Jason Walker prepares to launch to the top of the rim for two his 15 points in the loss to Estacado Feb. 2.**

It was announced in late January that professional football was coming to Big Spring, but it was other news that broke in February that really brought the Intense Football League's appearance in Howard County home.

Howard County had one of its favorite sons playing in the IFL pre-season "Brawl in Big Spring."

Starting his competitive football career as a Steer at Big Spring High School, wide receiver J.T. Smith ended it as a Big Spring Roughneck.

"J.T. called and was very excited about the IFL bringing the first-ever professional football game to his hometown of Big Spring," Roughnecks President Tommy Benizio said. "He offered to help in anyway that he could, but he probably never dreamed that the Roughnecks would ask him to suit up and play in the game."

Smith was born in 1955 and graduated from Big Spring High in 1973. After scholastic football, Smith enjoyed 13 years as a professional player in the National Football League. He played for three teams: the Kansas City Chiefs, Washington Redskins and the St. Louis/Phoenix Cardinals from 1978-1990.

- Big Spring's boys and girls teams struggled throughout conference play. The Steers were officially eliminated from the playoffs by No. 3 Lubbock Estacado.

- Garden City's Lady 'Kats upset No. 5 Roby to advance to the girls basketball state finals.

- A district championship slipped through the fingertips of the Forsan Buffaloes as they fell to Hamlin 44-43 Feb. 6. The Buffs had a chance at winning the game at the buzzer, but the shot didn't fall. The Buffs still managed to make the playoffs, though, but fell to Sundown in the area round.

- Coahoma's Bulldogs claimed a District 5-2A championship. The Bulldogettes also streaked into the playoffs, but were knocked out in the first round.

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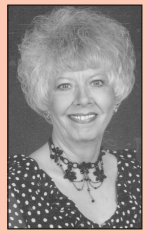
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## 2007: The Year in Review

# January

## Four arrested for Jan. 11 murder

A murder case that would eventually earn a Coahoma man 99 years in prison began with the discovery of a man's body in a ravine Jan. 11.

The victim, who was identified as 20-year-old Roland David Dickinson, had lived in the Big Spring area for less than six months, according to Howard County Sheriff Dale Walker.

Preliminary autopsy results showed the cause of death to be blunt trauma to the head. The body, which was found wearing only a pair of underwear and a white T-shirt, showed signs of a brutal assault, according to Walker.

Dickinson's body remained unidentified for several days before family members came forward, officials said.

One week later, John Michael Hays, 50, was arrested at his home on Midway Road and charged with murder. Also arrested in the case were a trio of accomplices — Christopher Lovett, Calvin Fox Jr. and Billy Ray Haynes.

"To start out with nothing, the case came together very quickly," said Walker. "At times it developed so rapidly it was hard just to keep up. We greatly appreciate all the assistance we received from the Big Spring Police Department, TDCJ and the Texas Department of Public Safety. We're extremely glad to have closure on this case. I feel like we were very fortunate."

Later in the year, Hays was tried and convicted for Dickinson's death in 118th District Court and received a 99-year prison term.

Lovett eventually pleaded guilty to aggravated assault causing serious bodily injury and received 10 years in prison, while murder charges remain pending against Fox.

Haynes was indicted for murder, but charges were subsequently dismissed.

Also in January:

- Teresa Andrea Torres became Howard County's first baby born in 2007 when she made her debut at 3:26 p.m. Jan. 2 at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. She weighed five pounds, 11 ounces and was 18 inches long at birth. Teresa is the fifth child for Adam and Leticia Torres — and the fourth girl.

- Big Spring High School Band members Malle Carrasco and Ryan Harris were named to the Texas Music Educators Association Class 4A All-



HERALD file photo  
**Leticia Torres holds her daughter, Teresa Andrea Torres, who became Howard County's first baby of 2007 when she was born at 3:26 p.m. Jan. 2.**

State Band. It was the second time Carrasco was selected, while the honor was Harris' first.

- Forsan High School senior Eric Ellis also won all-state band honors, earning a spot on the Association of Texas Small School Bands All-State Band. It was the second straight year Ellis earned the honor.

- Several local families were left homeless Jan. 11 after an early morning fire — aided by high winds — ripped through an apartment building. Big Spring Fire Chief Brian Jenson said the fire was reported at an apartment building located at the intersection of Eighth Street and Nolan at approximately 3 a.m.

- Crews with the city water department had their hands full in late January, as they

struggled to repair more than 40 breaks in main municipal water lines caused by a cold snap.

- Howard County commissioners voted 3-2 to hire Jeff Heffelfinger of Southwest Architects to consult on the construction of a new county jail. Later in the year, voters approved construction of an \$11 million jail to replace the current facility, which has been beset by several compliance problems over the past several years.

- Big Spring businesses were hit in late January with a wave of counterfeit bills, as several fake \$50 and \$100 bills were recovered, police officials said.

- Officials with Bealls Department Store announced plans to expand its store located at Big Spring Mall by approximate-

ly 8,000 feet. Danielle Ramirez, property manager for Big Spring Mall, said Bealls would expand into three lots directly across from the Hallmark store in the mall.

- Rey Villarreal, who was assistant superintendent of Big Spring schools for several years, left the district to accept the position with Pecos ISD.

Villarreal, who was relieved of his assistant superintendent duties earlier in January, resigned as director of curriculum and grants Jan. 23, Superintendent Michael Downes said.

Villarreal assumed his new duties as director of personnel for the Pecos school district Jan. 24, a spokesperson at that district confirmed.

### Sports



HERALD file photo  
**Colter Morgan (23) goes high for a rebound and tip-in basket to help the Coahoma Bulldogs blowout the Hawley Bearkats 60-38 Jan. 26 at Coahoma's Elementary Gym. Morgan ended the game with 10 points.**

One shot after another floated towards the basket in the Stamford-Coahoma basketball game and time after time Coahoma's Colter Morgan swatted the spalding basketball towards the stands, towards his point guards, out of bounds and everywhere else in the gym Jan 19.

When the final buzzer sounded Morgan had set a new school record by blocking 14 shots, two more than the previous record of 12 established in 2005 by Isaac Brenner. The Bulldogs (16-8) defeated Stamford 62-43, to remain in a tie for second place in District 5-2A.

"Yeah ... I was surprised to hear how many I had, but I'm just as excited about how well we played tonight," a humble Morgan, who stands at 6-7, said after he was told that he had broken a school record. "Our defenders on the perimeter kept the pressure on the ball and that's what brought them down low to me. Without the great defense by everyone else I wouldn't have the blocks."

- Howard College's men's basketball team opened the season 12-1, but found winning tough in conference play. Howard started off 0-3 in the conference, essentially eliminating them early from the race for a title.

The Hawks first two losses were heartbreakers. Howard fell the Midland College 71-70 in its conference opener, despite having a chance to win the game with 2.8 seconds left. Brandon Sampay's shot wouldn't fall, giving the soon-to-be National Champions a pivotal win.

The Odessa Wranglers led the Howard Hawks for two seconds Jan. 15 — the most important two seconds — as they sent the Hawks home with a stunning 65-63 defeat at the buzzer.

The Hawks eventually grabbed a conference victory, beating Western Texas College to nab their first.

- The Hawk women also struggled to find the win column in January, opening up 0-4 in conference play.

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## 2007: The Year in Review

# July

# July begins with a 'Pop'

July started off with an exercise in patriotism, as residents from Howard County and other surrounding communities came together to celebrate the July 4 holiday.

The annual Pops in the Park concert and fireworks show drew thousands to Comanche Trail Park for the ever-popular combination of good company, good food and good music.

In addition to putting on a fantastic show, event organizers said donations collected during the holiday event will cover the cost of the 2008 show.

"One of our new presenters came forward and asked us how much we needed to make our goal and they came up with the difference, right at the last minute," said event chair Jan Hansen.

That timely donation from Fiberod enabled event organizers to achieve and surpass their \$40,000 goal and begin making preparations for an even bigger and better 2008 event.

The fun in Big Spring didn't end with the Pops in the Park festival, as the Funtastic Fourth Festival — sponsored by Downtown Revitalization Association — took over the Heart of the City Park July 4.

"Starting this year we're taking a new direction with the Funtastic Fourth," said Allan Johnson, owner of Allan's Furniture and president of the DRA, prior to the festival. "We decided to scrap the battle of the bands and we've taken a completely new direction. The Funtastic Fourth is going to be a celebration of God and country. We're getting a lot of local churches involved and our long term goal is to get every single church in town involved in this event."

The Coahoma Freedom Parade and the Highland South Fourth of July Parade also gave residents a chance to show off their patriotic colors.

The annual Farmer's Market got under way the first part of July, providing area shoppers with fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits, as well as other locally made products. The market also provided entertainment in July, as Jesse and Noah Bellamy — sons of famous singer David Bellamy — performed to mark its opening.

A Howard County jury took less than two hours to find a Coahoma man not guilty of aggravated sexual



HERALD file photo  
**Fireworks of every shape and color light up the West Texas sky night as the Big Spring Symphony Orchestra plays "Stars and Stripes Forever" during the annual Pops in the Park celebration.**

assault of a child in 118th District Court in July, as Simon Chavez, 29, was acquitted.

Chavez had been accused of forcing his then 6-year-old daughter of performing oral sex on him on or about Aug. 27, 2006. If convicted, he could have faced a term of between five and 99 years or life in prison.

Howard County commissioners managed to whittle down the court's list of possible sites for a new county jail in July, settling on the site located on W. Highway 80. Two weeks prior, the court had announced it would pursue a second site — the lot west of the courthouse and adjacent to the 118th District Court — a choice County Judge Mark Barr later called premature.

A two-hour standoff involving more than a dozen area law enforcement officials ended with the appar-

ent suicide of a Big Spring man July 10. Michael Kilmer, 26, died of a single self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, said Justice of the Peace Katheryn Wiseman.

Police were initially called to the 1000 block of Goliad Street in response to an armed subject call at 10:38 a.m. There, they found a woman who had fled the house, claiming there was an armed man inside the residence.

At about noon, officers heard a single gunshot and immediately attempted to contact Kilmer by telephone and bullhorn. When those efforts were not successful, SORT officers entered the residence, where they found him dead.

Perry Wells, 44, transient, was life-flighted to a Lubbock hospital after a chase that ended with the suspect allegedly inflicting a

serious stab wound to his left arm with a pocket knife, according to law enforcement officials. Wells was released from the hospital several days later.

A 54-year-old Big Spring man was pronounced dead at University Medical Center in Lubbock following a major accident involving a train July 4. Roland Glenn Cate succumbed to the wounds he sustained in the crash, which took place at the railroad crossing on Birdwell Lane, at approximately 8:13 p.m.

The Big Spring Salvation Army kicked off its annual Back to School program, which provides school supplies for the area's low income families, while residents of Stanton celebrated the Martin County Old Settlers Reunion.

The honored family at this year's reunion was the Caleb and Sarah Louder clan. Family members participated in the morning parade, then were honored at a reception.

The Big Spring Independent School District effort to provide teachers and students with laptop computers came to fruition, as more than 1,200 were delivered to the high school in mid-July.

Big Spring Police Department officers made a trio of drug-related arrests in the final days of July while attempting to serve a warrant on a local man who was indicted on a pair of felony drug charges.

Terry Lynn Hargers, 37, of 2607 Fairchild, was arrested at 303.5 E. Ninth Street on warrants for delivery of a controlled substance (second-degree felony, enhanced) and delivery of a controlled substance (first-degree felony, enhanced).

Angela McGee, 24, of Big Spring, was also arrested at the scene on a charge of evading arrest. Police also arrested Kimberly Killcrease, 26, of Big Spring, on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

Elevated property values in Howard County translated into quite a spike in the taxable values for area entities, as the County Appraisal District released its 2007 certified values.

The taxable value for Howard County took a mighty upswing in 2007, up \$352 million with \$1.87 billion, compared to the \$1.51 reported in 2006. Howard College, which follows the same taxable values as the county, posted identical numbers.

### Sports



Courtesy photo  
**Big Spring's Mariah Cervantes swings at a pitch for the 8U All-Stars in the West Texas All-Star Tournament held at UTPB's campus in Odessa July 21. The tournament ended prematurely due to rain.**

In Big Spring, as in most smaller cities throughout the country, little league baseball and softball become the headlining sports in the middle of summer.

July saw several softball and baseball teams play in all-star tournaments. However, Mother Nature allowed only one tournament to be completed.

Five teams represented the Big Spring Little League Baseball Association in all-star tournaments held throughout Midland and Odessa in the early part of the month.

Unfortunately, only one team survived past the Fourth of the July. After rolling through the bracket, becoming one of the final four teams, the 11-year-old All-Stars lost two consecutive games in the double-elimination tournament, bringing an end to Big Spring's Little League baseball season.

If you asked members of the Big Spring's Girls Softball Association, they'd say the boys were fortunate to get to play that deep into their brackets.

Whether the teams came out as winners or losers, it was the weather that claimed the ultimate victory July 20-21 at the West Texas Softball Tournament on the University of Texas-Permian Basin's campus in Odessa.

All 12 softball fields felt the wrath of a downpour on the 21st and the rest of the tournament was called off, leaving the four Big Spring Girls Softball Association all-star teams with an unsatisfying end to their season.

Four Coahoma Bulldogettes were honored as All-State selections by the Texas Sports Writers Association. Freshman pitcher Heather Newton, sophomore second baseman Laci Sterling and junior centerfielder Krista Kerby were all selected as third-team honorees. Senior first baseman Ami Martinez claimed an honorable mention selection.



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## 2007: The Year in Review

# June

## Money woes and personal accolades

Howard County commissioners — facing rising costs in energy, utilities, insurance and expenses incurred by the state's closing of the county jail — began working on a half-million dollar budget deficit.

Big Spring businessman Jerry Worthy was selected for the 2007 Boss of the Plains Award from the Ranching Heritage Association. He was recognized for his service and generosity to the museum and historical park.

Relay for Life officials announced during their annual Relay Wrap Up that the cancer research fundraiser had generated \$185,923 in total receipts. It was the second straight year for the effort to surpass its goal.

Crystal Ward, Big Spring High School senior, was selected as an Outstanding Performer at the 2007 Texas State Solo and Ensemble contest. She was the first BSHS band member in recent memory to accomplish the feat, officials said.

Hays Stripling Jr. was supposed to be honored as being instrumental in the construction of the Northside Community Center's new building during a Rotary Club meeting in June. What was to be a small salute, however, turned into Hays Stripling Jr. Day, as the longtime humanitarian was lauded for his efforts not only at Northside Community Center, but with the Boy Scouts of America, the Howard County Bible Class organization, Howard Soil and Water Conservation District, First United Methodist Church and numerous other endeavors, including lauding Texas



HERALD file photo  
**Tommy Welch, right, emcees a salute to Hayes Stripling Jr., seated with his wife, Dorothy, during a meeting of the Big Spring Rotary Club.**

A&M University.

Proposed site of a new Howard County Jail — along West Highway 80 — drew controversy, with some residents objecting to the location.

"I think it's a bad idea to have a jail in a residential area," said JoAnn Staulcup, city council member and west side resident. "There's a significant number of people living on the west side who prefer not having it there."

However, not everyone was opposed to it. Mona Lue Tonn, minister of Spring Tabernacle Church, declared "We're in the deliverance business," and added, "That area of town is just infested with drug problems ... we're hoping the jail might make a difference with all that."

Commissioners, citing cost as a major factor, voted to secure the property, contingent on a bond passing to pay for the jail.

Big Spring Independent School District named Bruce Wilson as principal at Big Spring High School and Dana Rodriguez as principal at Kentwood Elementary.

Several people were indicted in June for the aggravated kidnapping of a 4-1/2-year-old child. Christene Michelle Bean, 26, was indicted for her alleged part in the April 9 kidnapping. Indicted for aggravated kidnapping and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon was Tuterence Demaskinni Davis, 28. Tiffinie Monique Vanderbilt, 23, was indicted for aggravated kidnapping

and delivery of a controlled substance.

Police said the motive for the kidnapping may have been related to "narcotic activity."

A Howard County woman accused of trying to kill herself and her 12-year-old daughter pleaded guilty to attempted murder in June and received a 10-year sentence. Callie Jo Nickle, 51, pleaded guilty to a single charge of attempted murder after police said she gave an overdose of medication to her daughter and herself the previous June.

Crime didn't pay in June but other events did, including the Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo, Howard-Glasscock Old Settler's Reunion, and the state park's Stargazing program.

The Rhotons and Overtons were recognized as pioneer families of the year during the settler's reunion.

In a positive move for downtown Big Spring, the Settles Hotel Development Company announced it had acquired several properties adjacent to the Settles Hotel, including the old Greyhound Bus Terminal.

Later in the year, the company would announce renovations at the historic hotel will begin in February 2008.

Following a nine-month search for an executive director, Moore Development for Big Spring board members turned their attention homeward and selected longtime local resident and businessman Terry Wegman to fill the position.



HERALD file photo  
**Jacque Mauch builds a nice looking hamburger with the help of Martin Fryar during the Howard Glasscock Old Settlers Reunion, held in the Howard County Fairbarn.**



HERALD file photo  
**Matt Bright of London, Tenn., hangs on as a horse tries to buck him off in the bronc-busting competition in the 2007 Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo at the Big Spring Rodeo Bowl.**

As is the case with most of Big Spring's annual attractions, tradition plays a huge role with the staging of the Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo.

Of course, that's what one would expect with one of the oldest rodeos in the United States. In fact, the Big Spring Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo is the oldest continually running professional rodeo in Texas.

That says a great deal because Texas is, after all, rodeo country.

The event's 74th edition took place June 21 and with no decline in interest occurring, Big Spring could look forward to another 74 years of rodeo action.

"Seventy-four years is getting on up there," said Skipper Driver, a long-time member of the rodeo association board. "Not that many people put on professional rodeos in this part of the state. We're very proud of it."

Howard Hawks shortstop Tyler Ladendorf was drafted for a second straight year in Major League Baseball's amateur draft.

Ladendorf was reportedly ranked by some scouts as a possible fifth-round pick.

However, his name was never called during the draft's first day. Instead, he waited until Friday evening to be drafted in the 34th round by the San Francisco Giants.

This marks the second consecutive year that Ladendorf was drafted in the 34th round. Last season, he was drafted right out of high school by the New York Yankees with the 1,034th pick.

This year he was selected just three picks higher as the 1,031st selection.

Ladendorf led the nation in steals, converting all 56 attempts without being picked off. He'll be wearing a Hawks' jersey again next season.

Ladendorf was the first Howard College baseball player to be drafted since 2005, when J.W. Brown was drafted in the 46th round by the Cincinnati Reds.

Little League baseball all-stars filled baseball fields all over the Permian Basin at the end of the month in area tournaments that lasted into July. Five teams represented the Big Spring Little League Baseball Association in five different brackets.



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## 2007: The Year in Review March

### Big Spring headed to Austin in March

To examine Big Spring and Howard County in the month of March, one would have to widen their views to include the state capitol, as local officials hit the road for Big Spring Day in Austin.

More than 250 local residents traveled to Austin and descended on the grounds of the Texas Capitol March 7, taking music — in the form of a children's choir composed of fourth graders from Big Spring, Coahoma and Forsan schools — and the always-popular Blue Bell Ice Cream, in hopes of raising awareness for the Crossroads area among lawmakers.

It marked the sixth time that Howard County residents peacefully invaded the Capitol for Big Spring Day in Austin, having made the trek every other year.

March was also a month to draw attention to our country's Native American past, as the annual Big Spring Powwow took place at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

The Powwow featured Otter Trail from Oklahoma as the Southern Drum host and Eagle Point Singer from Austin as the Northern Drum host.

The Head Female Dancer was Nicole Shultz of Norman, Okla.

Big Spring Independent School District trustees took a major step toward putting a laptop computer into the hands of every high school student and teacher in March, deciding on a 4-3 vote to go out for sealed bids for the computer program.

Trustees Mike Dawson, Allan Partee and Irene Galan voted against seeking bids, while Tony Kennedy, Maria Padilla, Phil Furqueron and former board member Ricky Robertson supported the measure.

Howard County commissioners had their hands full in March, as the court struggled to solve problems with its jail and address the concerns of the county's constables.

Commissioners agreed the county should budget funds for constables to acquire the continuing education credits demanded by the state every two years, estimated at approximately \$295 plus travel expenses, which failed to meet the approval of Constable Bill Holden.

"That doesn't even cover what I've already paid out of my own pocket," said Holden as he stormed out of commissioner's court. "I can't see that. I just can't see that. This is a joke."



Savannah Sumrall prepares to carry the American flag into the rodeo arena during the 29th annual Coahoma Kindergarten Rodeo.

Holden, a certified peace officer, was requesting the county pay for decals for his vehicle, dues for the state's Justice of the Peace and Constable Association and continuing education hours required by state mandate.

Commissioners also heard requests from fellow constable Mark Winn, who was asking the court to fund the completion of his peace officer certification.

Not only did commissioners deny Winn's request, they later removed him from office for not getting his state certificate within the state mandated period.

Commissioners also made progress on its two-fold jail situation — to bring the current jail into state compliance and the design and construction of a new facility. County officials raced to repair the jail's smoke evacuation system in hopes of having the facility, which was closed by state officials in November 2006, reopened.

The court also struggled to find a suitable site to build a new jail facility after the court's first choice — the old Kmart building located at Birdwell Lane and FM 700 — was optioned for purchase by a local church.

The board of directors for Moore Development continued its search for an executive director during the month, enlisting Lubbock-based personnel consultant Laurin Prather to head up

the effort.

The economic development agency continued to operate with the position vacant after longtime director Kent Sharp announced he would be resigning in August 2006.

The board also continued negotiations with the Settles Hotel Development Company for \$3 million in funding to help with the restoration of the historic Settles Hotel.

Moore Development for Big Spring Inc. directors voted unanimously Dec. 8 to provide up to \$3 million to help Brint Ryan — manager of the Dallas company and the founder and CEO of Ryan & Company — renovate the hotel. SHDC announced plans for a \$12 million renovation project which includes plans for commercial and residential use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors.

A Big Spring man received a three-year sentence after pleading guilty to one count of indecency with a child March 20 in 118th District Court, bringing an ongoing trial to an abrupt close.

Daniel Ray Jones, 38, of 2507 Peach St., pleaded guilty to indecency with a child, a second-degree felony punishable by two to 20 years in prison and a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

Assistant District Attorney Robin Orr said two other charges facing Jones — two counts of aggravated sexual

assault of a child, a first-degree felony punishable by five to 99 years to life in prison — were dismissed as a condition of the plea bargain.

A Howard County grand jury officially charged a Lamesa man with the murder of former Big Spring High School track star Tory Mitchell. Michael Harbert, 23, of Lamesa, was among 15 people indicted during March's session of the grand jury. Harbert was indicted for murder in the Dec. 23, 2006, shooting death of Mitchell.

Officials with the Alon USA Big Spring Refinery announced David L. Foster would be taking over the facility reins in April, stepping in for Joe Conciene, who became Alon USA's vice president for refinery operations.

The Big Spring Rattlesnake Roundup, sponsored by the local American Business Club, took over the Howard County Fairbarn for a weekend in March, while Coahoma Elementary School celebrated its western heritage with the 29th annual Coahoma Kindergarten Rodeo.

The 38th Annual Big Spring Prospector's Club Gem and Mineral Show also met with local success, joining the Third Annual Spring Clean Community-Wide Flea Market as just one of many events filling the Crossroads calendar during the month.

### Sports



HERALD file photo Garden City's Morgan Schwartz in fouled by Kennard's Felicia Skinner in the third quarter of Friday night's Class 1A, Division II state semifinals game in Austin. The Lady Kats won and advanced to face Nazareth in Saturday's championship game.

It may have been Big Spring Day in Austin March 7, but it was Garden City's month as both the boys' and girls' basketball team made trips to the state tournament.

The No. 6-ranked Garden City Lady 'Kats erased a 10-point deficit March 3 night as they rallied back to knock off Kennard's Lady Tigers in the Class 1A, Division II state semifinals at the University of Texas in Austin.

The Lady 'Kats never led by more than three in the game but were ahead when it counted most — when K'Lann Niehues scored off an offensive rebound with two seconds left to give Garden City a 37-35 victory and a chance to play in the state final against perhaps the most storied girls' basketball team in Texas — Nazareth's Swiftettes.

The Lady 'Kats saw their bid for a state basketball title come to an end as they fell to Nazareth in the Division II, Class 1A state title game, 61-31.

Garden City's only lead of the game came in the opening moments as the Lady Kats scored the opening basket but Nazareth answered with a three to take the lead and never looked back.

"I have six seniors who have fought and dreamed of this moment, getting our school to the state tournament," Head Coach Brent Kirkland said. "This is something they can be proud of having started."

Garden City's boys were knocked out in the semifinal round by Laneville, 60-43.

"It's been a dream in a lot of ways just to get here," Garden City coach Koby Abney said. "It ended a little short but there are a lot of other teams that wish they were in Austin right now."

Howard College's Hawks pulled off the upset of top-seeded Temple in the first round of the Region V Tournament. The Hawks won 81-72 in what was essentially a home game for Temple on the campus of Mary-Hardin Baylor University.

The fourth-seeded Hawks couldn't continue the Cinderella run, though, as South Plains College knocked them off in the next round.

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**2007: The Year in Review**

**May**

**Jail finally passes the test in May**

After being locked out of their own lockdown, Howard County prisoners were able to go home, in a fashion, in May.

Six months after it was closed because it failed to meet certain life safety guidelines, the Howard County Jail was allowed to reopen for business by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

County officials got the good news after tests on the fire alarm and smoke evacuation systems finally passed state muster May 24.

"We're ready to go now," said County Judge Mark Barr. "The test went excellent. We're now approved to reopen the jail any time we want."

Barr said the facility could see its first inmates as early as the following week.

"I talked to the sheriff, and they still have to go through and do some cleaning and some painting," said Barr. "Once that's completed, we'll start bringing the inmates back in."

The county jail was shut down by the jail standards commission in November 2006, after the facility's smoke evacuation system failed to meet requirements during a pair of tests earlier that year.

The jail also failed to meet state requirements that call for a stand pipe in the jail to deliver water to firefighters and a door that swung in the wrong direction. However, these pair of problems had been corrected, leaving the smoke evacuation system the lone obstacle standing in the commissioners court's way.

Repairs at the jail cost the county more than \$250,000.

Since the jail's closure, local inmates had been housed in other counties, including Dickens, Glasscock and Lamb counties, at considerable expense to the county.

And while reopening the jail certainly helped lessen the burden housing inmates outside the county put on governmental coffers, Barr said it was a problem he expected to see continue.

"If we can keep our numbers right about where they are now, we'll still be forced to house between one and six inmates out of county even after we reopen the jail," said Barr. "That's just because of overcrowding. Also, we still can't house women in our jail, so there's another 10 inmates that we'll have to pay to house out of county."

"The cost of the past sever-



**Workers make some last minute adjustments to a jail fire alarm system at the Howard County Courthouse May 21. The jail, closed by state order for six months, was allowed to reopen in May after passing life safety standard tests.**

al months has nearly killed us. We're looking at the budget for the coming year right now, and it doesn't look favorable. It doesn't look favorable at all."

Also in May:

- Ritchey, the principal at Big Spring High School, returned to his coaching roots when he was introduced as the new athletic director and head football coach for Big Spring Independent School District. He succeeded Tim Holt, who resigned his position after meeting with school district officials May 9. Holt had been AD/head coach for two years, compiling a 7-15 win-loss record during his tenure.

- Big Spring Independent School District became the first school system in this area to provide laptop computers for its high school students and staff after the BSISD school board formally approved the program at its May meeting.

By the same 4-3 margin that characterized past votes on the issue, trustees voted to authorize more than \$500,000 in expenses to start the program for the coming school year.

Board President Tony Kennedy, along with trustees Ricky Robertson, Phil Furqueron and Maria Padilla voted in favor of the program, while Vice President Allan Partee and

trustees Mike Dawson and Irene Galan voted in opposition.

- Among the distinguished high school graduates who received their diplomas in May was one who waited a long time for the honor — 41 years, in fact.

Big Spring's Mike Tarpley, Snyder High School Class of 1966, finally received his diploma at SHS graduation ceremonies May 25. Tarpley dropped out of high school in 1966, joined the Army and served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. He recently learned of a Texas state law that allows combat veterans to receive their high school diplomas, which led to his belated graduation.

**Sports**



**HERALD file photo**  
**Coahoma Bulldogettes Head Softball Coach Tracy Tadlock (right) is showered with ice water by Janice Gonzalez following the Bulldogettes' 4-1 win over Hawley in the Region I finals May 26.**

While the school year was winding down, the high school baseball and softball playoffs were just heating up in May, culminating in a record setting trip to the state tournament for one area squad.

Five softball and baseball teams from Howard County made a run into the postseason. Forsan and Coahoma each had representatives in both sports' playoffs, while the Big Spring Lady Steers made it into the softball postseason.

Surprisingly, all five qualifiers survived the playoff rush at least until the second round.

The Lady Steers were the first team eliminated from the playoffs, falling to Pampa in the area round.

Forsan's and Coahoma's baseball teams also bowed out in the area rounds. The Buffaloes, making their first postseason appearance, lost to the No. 2 ranked Hamlin Pied Pipers. Meanwhile, the Bulldogs suffered a heart breaking loss to Blanco in 10 innings.

While others fell to the wayside, Forsan's Lady Buffs and Coahoma's Bulldogettes battled toward a trip to the state tournament. Unfortunately, only one would succeed in earning a trip to Austin.

A young Lady Buffs squad, featuring no senior players, lost to Seymour in the regional semifinals, bringing Forsan's first trip into the softball playoffs to an end.

However, Coahoma extended its run of appearances in the state softball tournament to nine in 14 seasons, defeating district-rival Hawley for the Region I championship.

Sadly, the Bulldogettes were eliminated in the semifinals, falling to eventual state champion Troy, 11-1.

- Big Spring's Zack Dawson advanced to the state track meet, finishing third in the mile.

- Garden City's Taylor Niehues and Alex Halfmann cruised to their second consecutive Class 1A state tennis championship in boys' doubles.

The duo didn't drop a set on their way to becoming back-to-back state champs.

- Forsan's Cayley Eggleston and Kaylon Stanley earned a bronze medal in girls' doubles at the state tennis tournament.

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## 2007: The Year in Review

# November

# County jail bond passes

Howard County residents went to the polls in November, and their message was simple: Give us a new jail.

With what county officials deemed overwhelming support, Howard County voters approved a \$11.57 million bond to finance a new jail facility Nov. 6, moving a project more than three years in the making forward.

With 4,079 total votes cast in the election — 2,113 during early voting, 1,820 on election day and 191 absentee ballots — Howard County residents approved the bond with 2,863 votes for the measure and 1,216 opposed. Percentage wise, the ballot received 70.19 percent in favor and 29.81.

The future jail — which will be a 96-bed facility — is planned for a tract of land on U.S. Highway 80, between Utah and Wright, on the city's west side.

The November vote came in stark contrast to the 2006 defeat of a similar bond, when voters turned down a 144-bed, \$10.1 million jail by 60 percent of the ballot.

November would also see county commissioners struggle with budgetary constraints, putting the County Library and the Spring City Senior Citizens Center on the fiscal chopping block.

According to County Judge Mark Barr, talks between the city of Big Spring and the commissioners court continued, with the Senior Center expected to become a city responsibility.

Barr said turning over control of the Senior Center could certainly have a good impact on the county's coffers, which was already suffering through more than \$1 million in cutbacks.

Commissioners also continued negotiations with several wind energy developers in November, as the court worked to establish a trio of re-investment zones to allow for tax abatements for projects planned for the Howard County area.

Tuterrence Demaskinni Davis, 28, who was indicted on charges of aggravated kidnapping and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in June, and was accused in the abduction of a four-and-a-half year old child, had his day in court in November.

After having the aggravated kidnapping charges against him dismissed, Davis was found not guilty on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in 118th District Court.



**The Forsan High School Band marches its way into Texas history as the group clinched the State 1A Marching Contest.**

Being named the Texas Music Educators Association Class 1A Honor Band earlier in the year just wasn't enough for Forsan High School.

They wanted more — and they got it in November, as the FHS Band clinched the 1A-2A State Marching Championship title at the Alamodome in San Antonio, defeating defending champions Sundown with nine-out-of-10 votes for the first-place spot.

"It's such a wonderful feeling," said FHS Band Director Jim Rhodes. "Last year, we came in second place behind Sundown, so to be able to knock them out of the top spot this year just made it all the sweeter."

The Crossroads area celebrated Veterans Day in true American fashion during November, as the Big Spring VA Medical Center — joined by other local veteran groups — put on a Community-wide Veterans Day program at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

The program featured keynote speaker Michael Bell, director of the West Texas VA Health Care System and master of ceremonies Randy McKinney, a member of the local Vietnam Memorial Committee, as well as representatives from other military and veteran organizations.

It wasn't all fun and cheer in November, however, as Big Spring suffered a rash of shootings in the 1300 block of College, 1500 block of Sunset, Main Street and Cherokee and the 2500 block of Langley.

At least three injuries were reported as a result of the shootings, which local law enforcement officials said

were gang related, but refused to go into more detail.

Howard County also saw a dramatic increase in the number of grass fires in November, as Tommy Sullivan, HCVFD fire chief, and his personnel responded to at least a dozen reports.

"We're seeing a heavy influx of wildfires," said a tired and weary Sullivan. "We expected that because of the rains this year. Rain is always good for our area, but the end result is always high fuels. We have the highest amounts of fuel this year than we've seen in the past 25 years."

The increase in wildfires — along with prompting from Sullivan — led county commissioners to enact a burn ban later in the month.

The administration and staff of the Big Spring VA Medical Center turned its attention on the Thanksgiving holiday in November, serving more than 500 meals, complete with turkey, dressing and all the trimmings.

The meal consisted of 18 turkeys, 150 pounds of potatoes, 20 pounds of onions and numerous No. 10 cans of vegetables.

Area residents received a Thanksgiving gift from mother nature, as well, as the Big Spring area saw several inches of snow on the ground during the holiday.

The Salvation Army also launched its annual Angel Tree program, taking applications from approximately 135 adults during the charity's application process, amounting to 378 children and 68 seniors being approved for the program, which provides Christmas gifts for area low income res-

idents who might otherwise wake up Dec. 25 to a bare tree.

Adult Protective Services also tried to get shoppers in the giving mood with its annual "Be a Star" program, which provides gifts for the area's elderly and disabled.

Shoppers looking for holiday decorating ideas also got some help in November, as the Canterbury Christmas Bazaar offered up more than 20 vendors hocking everything from lighted glass blocks to wooden Christmas trees and snowmen.

Grady School officials wasted little time reaping the benefits of voters' largesse. A little more than a week after district residents approved a \$10 million bond for construction and renovation projects, the school board took its first steps toward turning plans into action.

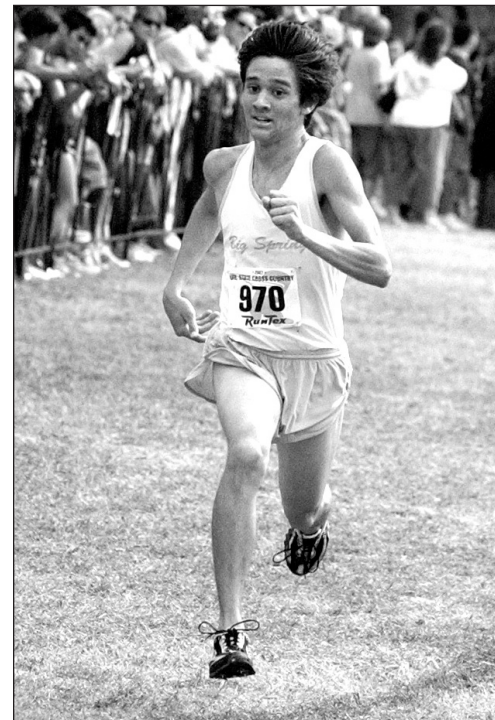
Three men accused of conducting a month-long burglary spree were among 18 defendants indicted by the Howard County Grand Jury in the last days of November.

Christopher Wade Clark, 21, Steven Silletti, 17, and Robert Pearson, 20, of 904 Nolan, were indicted in connection with a string of burglaries that occurred earlier in the year. Clark was indicted on two counts of burglary of a habitation, one count of unauthorized use of a vehicle and seven counts of burglary of a building.

Silletti was hit with nine indictments — two for burglary of a habitation, one of UUV and the rest for burglary of a building.

Pearson faces a comparatively lighter load — he was indicted three times, all for burglary of a building.

## Sports



HERALD file photo

**Big Spring's Zack Dawson races to a third-place finish at the state cross country meet held at Old Settlers' Park in Round Rock Nov. 10.**

When a team returns four out of seven individuals from a state championship team, then a repeat performance is generally expected.

Unfortunately, that didn't hold true for the Big Spring High School cross country team Nov. 10 at the state meet in Round Rock.

The Steers finished in third behind Katy Seven Lakes and Mesquite Poteet, proving how difficult it is to defend a state title in cross country.

"There's so many good athletes at state that it becomes hard to defend," Head Coach Randy Britton said. "I'm still disappointed, though. We had four returning runners. There's no reason we shouldn't have been more competitive for the title."

The Steers had two runners — Zach Dawson (third) and Jordan Valle (12) — finish in the top 15, but didn't have another runner cross the finish line until Jessie Sanchez did at 39th.

Dawson finished with the same exact time and in the same exact place as he did at state in 2006.

The Steers football team finished its regular season with two straight wins over Lubbock Estacado and San Angelo Lake View, giving Big Spring the second seed in District 4-4A and a playoff berth.

It was one and done for the Steers in the postseason, however, as Hereford's Whitefaces jumped out to an early lead and held on late to win, 34-20. The game marked the second time Hereford had beaten the Steers in 2007.

The Texas schoolboy playoffs were in full effect with three Crossroads teams other than the Steers qualifying.

Coahoma bowed out in the opening round, falling to Ballinger for the second time in the season, 35-20.

Forsan advanced to the area round by beating Winters in the first round. The Buffs lost, 40-21, to Valley Mills.

Grady made the deepest postseason run, coasting past Ira into a rematch with district-rival Rankin in the Region I finals. Rankin avenged a 50-46 regular season loss to the Wildcats by pounding Grady, 50-29, at Big Spring's Memorial Stadium.



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## 2007: The Year in Review

# October

## Crime clouds year's 10th month

Crime and — what else? — the jail bond issue stole the show for October in 2007.

Seeking support for a second jail bond issue, commissioners asked for help from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. Adan Munoz, executive director of the agency, told those attending a town hall forum, "After what I saw today, my recommendation to the commission will be to shut the Howard County Jail down permanently if the jail bond doesn't pass."

He later said, "Folks, you've done it to yourselves. There are plenty of people who want to run around pointing fingers, but it was you that voted this bond down last year, and costs just keep jumping up."

At the same time, County Judge Mark Barr told the public that if the jail were closed, there would be drastic cuts in personnel and services in order to house prisoners out of county.

Voters would go on to pass an \$11.57 million jail bond issue in the November election.

Bomb threats, kidnappings — October was one for the police logs.

Police were called to Subway Sandwiches early in the month in response to bomb threat received by telephone at the business. The threat turned out to be a hoax.

Days later, police were dispatched to the resident of an 89-year-old woman who had been robbed at knifepoint. The suspect, a male, had apparently broken into the home through a back door, woke the woman and demanded money while threatening her with a knife. The victim gave the man some money and he fled, police said.

A rash of burglaries led to the arrests of several individuals in September and October. Charged with possession of drug paraphernalia near where police described as a hot spot for burglaries were 21-year-old Chris Clark and 17-year-old Steven Silletti. Police said the pair later confessed to taking part in the burglaries. An arrest warrant was also issued for 33-year-old Bobby Baker in connection with the burglaries.

In an unrelated case, police arrested 18-year-old Kimberly Denise James of Snyder on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Officers alleged that James entered the residence of an 84-year-old man and demanded money. The victim gave her \$20 but that didn't satisfy the woman. Police said the man got a handgun from his bedroom but the victim struck him on the head with a BB gun she found displayed on a wall of the home. She then took the man's handgun and fled. Officers located her a short time later, hiding in a nearby residence.

It took a Martin County jury just 30 minutes in October to decide Rodolfo Hernandez was not guilty of sexual assault of a child. Hernandez, a native of Mexico living in Stanton, had been accused of sexually assaulting a 15-year-old boy the previous December. Assistant District Attorney Robin Orr said he was shocked at the outcome, especially considering the prosecution provided testimony from the victim and a nurse examiner as well as DNA evidence.



HERALD file photo  
The Howard College mascot gets a giggle out of 6-year-old Jacki Torbik at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. The college cheerleaders were on hand to help celebrate Texas Chamber of Commerce Week in October.

Quick thinking by an 8-year-old boy may have saved him and a friend from a disastrous fate Oct. 14, police said. As it was, officers arrested 46-year-old transient Traci Lynn Wilson for kidnapping and aggravated kidnapping and the children were returned safely to their guardians.

According to police, the two children — the boy and a 9-year-old girl — were taken from a front yard by a man claiming to be their uncle. A motorist, unaware of what was transpiring, gave the trio a ride to an old motor home in the 1600 block of E. Third Street.

While at the home, the boy became scared that his mother would be looking for him and ran out an open door, police said. The girl tried to follow but the man stopped her. The boy ran to a 7-Eleven where the police were called. Officers followed the boy's directions to the motor home and apprehended Wilson.

Police did not believe the girl had been sexually assaulted, but feared that was Wilson's plan.

Sexual conduct did occur in another criminal case that saw an end in October. Former Big Spring Police Department jailer Lawrence Wayne Hein, 44, was sentenced to two years in a state jail for having inappropriate sexual conduct with a prisoner.

Hein had been convicted of the

offense on Sept. 25 by a district court jury. He was sentenced in mid-October by Judge Robert H. Moore III.

Steven Glen Hildebrand was indicted in October for the May 31 beating death of James David Boettcher, 59, both of Big Spring.

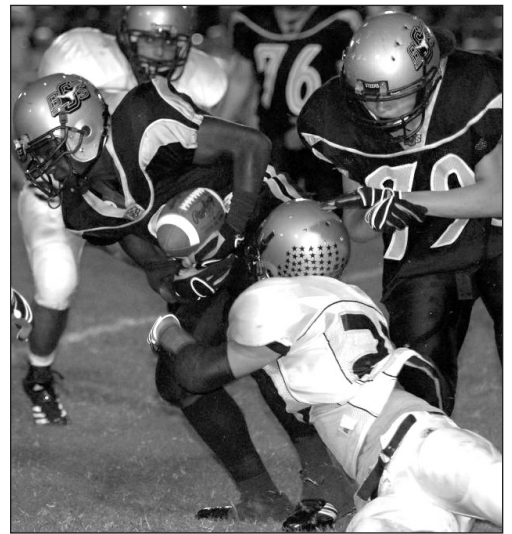
Hildebrand was arrested Sept. 22 for murdering Boettcher, who was found dead near his residence at approximately 11:22 p.m. Hildebrand was not arrested initially because investigators could not at first rule out that the death may have been accidental.

Aside from crime? Longtime farmer Marcus Phillips received the Ag Producer of the Year Award and Kelly Newton Insurance Agency accepted the Ag Business of the Year Award during ceremonies at the annual Expo and Luncheon, sponsored by the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce.

Big Spring High School students and exes celebrated homecoming with an annual parade, ballgame and other activities. Ale Garcia and Jono Smith were named homecoming queen and king, respectively.

As the month came to a close, a bid by Big Spring High School and Stanton High School bands fell just short of reaching state competition; however, Forsan High School did earn a date in San Antonio's Alamodome. It would result in a state championship.

### Sports



HERALD file photo  
Big Spring Steers running back Monte Anderson drags an Andrews defender as his teammate Pavel Plakhotny looks to throw a block Oct. 5 at Memorial Stadium. Andrews ended up putting a damper on Big Spring's homecoming night, winning 33-29.

Big Spring's Steers entered October winless at 0-5, still searching for Mike Ritchey's first victory as Steers' head football coach.

It appeared that victory would come Homecoming night, when the Steers hosted the hated Andrews Mustangs. It was a different look on offense for Big Spring with most of its offense being run out of the newly-installed Jumbo package, meaning running back Monte Anderson lined up at the quarterback position in a shotgun set.

The new offense baffled the Andrews defense, allowing the Steers to jump out to an early lead. Big Spring held the lead for most of the night, but couldn't close the deal.

Andrews scored two touchdowns in the last four minutes of the game, earning the 33-29 win and sending Big Spring to 0-6.

However, the Steers wouldn't have to wait too much longer for their first victory of the season. Big Spring opened District 4-4A play the very next week with a 26-16 win over Plainview. It served as a very emotional and much needed win for a beleaguered Big Spring team.

"Honestly, I'm much more excited for these kids than I am for our coaching staff or for myself. These kids earned this win tonight and absolutely deserve it," Ritchey said. "If I've got tears, then they're not tears of joy for the coaching staff. They're tears of joy for these athletes. Everything is starting to come together. Winning can be everything for a team. It changes attitudes and a player's outlook. It gives us great confidence as well."

• The Big Spring Lady Steers played the volleyball match of the year Oct. 2 at San Angelo Lake View. The Lady Steers fought through five tough sets for their only win of the district season.

Unfortunately, the Lady Steers would lose a 5-set heart breaker against Lake View Oct. 16, eliminating Big Spring from playoff contention.

• Forsan's and Coahoma's football teams also got on the winning path in October. Both squads were 3-1 in the month.

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**2007: The Year in Review**  
**September**

**City, county approve hefty tax hikes**

Local and county taxpayers will see a hefty increase in their tax bills after actions taken by the Big Spring city council and Howard County commissioners in September.

Faced with cost overruns, commissioners reluctantly approved a new tax rate of 48.8 cents per \$100 valuation for the new fiscal year during their Sept. 23 meeting.

Commissioners had cited declining fund balances and ongoing litigation with Alon USA — owner of the Big Spring Refinery — concerning property values as the reason for the tax hike, which is expected to generate approximately \$700,000 in additional funding for the coming fiscal year.

“This is reluctant,” said County Judge Mark Barr. “However, it’s the only way we can make this thing work.”

The county also made a number of budget cuts — totaling \$300,000 in savings — in hopes of avoiding bankruptcy in the coming years.

Unfortunately, those cuts translated into layoffs.

Budget cuts expected to go into effect Oct. 1 included the elimination of two full-time positions and one part-time position from the sheriff’s office, two full-time positions and one part-time position at the county library and two full-time and one part-time position from the county’s road and bridge department.

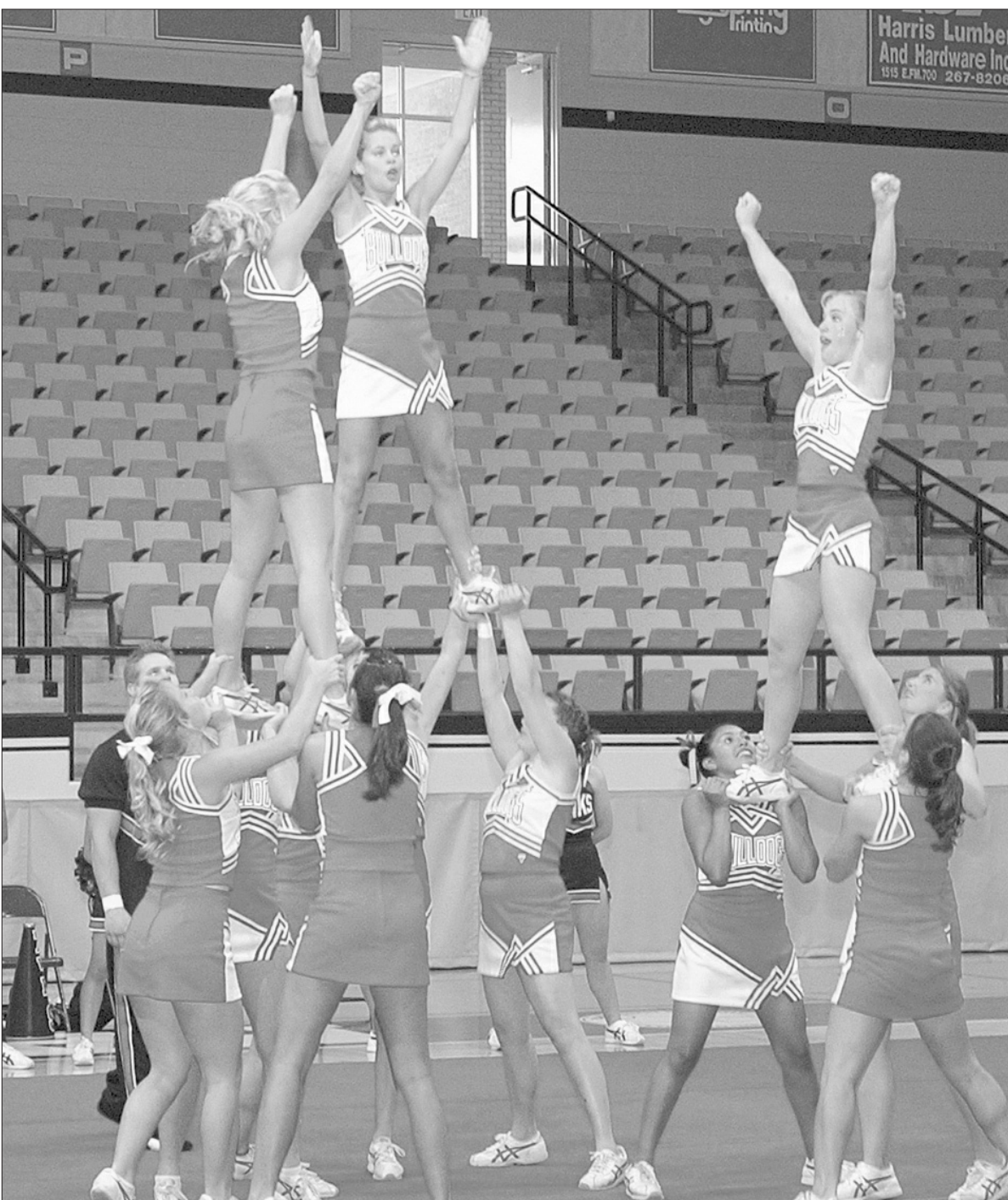
Commissioners also approved the elimination of one full-time and one part-time position from the maintenance department and a single part-time position with the District Clerk’s office.

A day after the commissioners’ action, the Big Spring City Council also approved a tax hike when they OK’d a new rate of \$1.02 per \$100 valuation.

The council — Councilwoman Stephanie Horton, who supported the rate on its first reading, was not present — voted 5-1 in favor of the rate, which is approximately 5 cents over the city’s rollback rate of 97.7820 cents.

Councilman Greg Biddison, who voted against the rate during its first reading, was once again the only council member to vote against the measure.

“We’re trying to bring new industry to Big Spring, but when they see this tax rate what do you think they are going to say?” said Biddison. City Finance Director



HERALD file photo  
**Coahoma High School’s varsity cheerleaders perform a routine during the annual Battle of the Cheerleaders at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. CHS and Forsan High School squads were the big winners during the competition, held in conjunction with the annual Howard County Fair.**

Peggy Walker said the tax hike would translate to a tax bill increase of approximately \$100 for the average valued home.

“The average home owner is paying \$237 per year based on this year’s tax rate,” said Walker. “With the proposed rate they would be paying \$338, an increase of approximately \$101 a year. The owner of a home valued at \$100,000 is looking at an increase of \$275.”

The rate includes an additional 30.14 cents for bond projects approved by voters last year, a clear message they support the tax increase, according to Mayor Russ McEwen.

“The majority of the tax increase came from the bond issues that passed, and the taxpayers basically said to us they want to do these projects and we’re willing to have our taxes raised to do that,” said McEwen.

The rate also included a 7.32 cent tax hike strictly for

the creation of a narcotics task force within the Big Spring Police Department.

Also in September:

- Members of the Moore Development for Big Spring Board of Directors said goodbye to a pair of their former members Wednesday, as three new board members were welcomed aboard.

The board — which includes newly appointed members Glenn Fillingim, Dr. Keith Ledford and Glynda Jones Mouton — approved a resolution thanking former board members Richard Steel, Raul Marquez and Mike Niklasch for their labors over the past several years.

- A Big Spring man pleaded guilty to a charge of aggravated sexual assault of a child and was sentenced to 30 years in prison, ending what investigators say was a three-year string of offenses.

Joshua Abraham Edwards, 34, was arrested in May by the Howard County Sheriff’s

Office after allegations of abuse. Edwards was indicted by a Howard County grand jury on two counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child, a first-degree felony, and two counts of indecency with a child, a second-degree felony.

If the case had gone to trial, Edwards faced five to 99 years to life in prison for each of the first-degree charges, and two to 20 years in prison for each of the second-degree felonies, officials said.

- A Howard County District Court Jury took less than an hour to find a former Big Spring Police Department jailer guilty of inappropriate sexual contact with a prisoner.

Lawrence Wayne Hein, 44, was later sentenced to two years in state jail by District Judge Robert H. Moore III

The seven-man, five-woman jury deliberated for about 40 minutes before returning the verdict.

**Sports**



HERALD file photo  
**Big Spring Steers running back Monte Anderson stiff arms a San Angelo Central Bobcats defender Sept. 7 in the Steers’ 11-7 loss. Anderson scored Big Spring’s only touchdown of the game.**

Big Spring’s boys cross country team started the 2007 season in the same manner they ended last season. Winning.

The defending Class 4A state champion Steers opened their season at Abilene Christian University’s Cross Country Classic Sept. 1 at Sherrod Residential Park in Abilene. Big Spring dominated the field, taking first place as a team with all seven runners finishing in the top 20.

Zack Dawson — last year’s third-place finisher at the state meet — won the classic, finishing the 3-mile course in 15:29.70. Jordan Valle claimed second place with a time of 15:41.29.

However, the Steers didn’t dominate throughout the month. On Sept. 24, the Steers finished eighth amongst 15 teams at the A&M Invitational. It was a performance that Coach Randy Britton hoped would serve as a warning to the team.

“This will hopefully be a wake-up call for the boys’ squad,” Britton said. “We should have finished higher in the field.”

- Head Football Coach Mike Ritchey continued to not see the start he had hoped for from the Big Spring Steers. A young Steers team dropped all four of its September matchups, including shalackings from Abilene Wylie, 61-14, and Sweetwater, 40-0.

- The Lady Steers volleyball team also struggled to get on the winning path in September. The Lady Steers finished 0-10 in the month, dropping their overall record to 3-22. Three of those losses came against District 4-4A opponents.

- As a matter of fact, winning in September wasn’t coming easy for most Howard County teams.

Coahoma went 0-3 in the month and was shut out twice, once by Roscoe and once by Merkel.

Forsan didn’t fare much better, but did see its fortunes turn around in its final game of the month.

The Buffs overcame a 27-point deficit to Irion County to win 35-34 in an overtime thriller.

- It wasn’t all losses in the Crossroads region, though. The football squads from Grady, Garden City, Sands and Stanton combined for an overall 12-1 record in the month.

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