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BIG SPRING

HERALD

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 19, 2008



VOLUME 103, NUMBER 70

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

Public concern prompts meeting

Oasis Addition area residents oppose use of well for disposal

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

County residents in the Oasis Addition opposing the use of an old oil well in that area for disposal of oil and gas waste will be holding a community meeting Thursday in hopes of staving off the project, led by Abilene-based Kemper Operating Company.



Beauchamp

Roy Don Beauchamp, a resident of nearby Oasis Road, said Kemper Operating Company's plans could endanger the drinking water for residents in the area.

"It's an abandoned oil well. They are wanting to put some tanks up close to the intersection of Highway 350, FM 700 and Oasis Road," said Beauchamp. "The only source of water we have is well water, and we're very much concerned this could cause a problem with our water. They are wanting to pump this salt water — from what I can understand from the letter — probably a half-mile into this abandoned well."

William Kemper, the owner and operator of Kemper Operating Company, said he understands the immediate fears many residents

See OASIS, Page 3A

Fires out, investigation begins



Smoke and flames roll out of the Alon USA Big Spring Refinery Monday morning following an explosion that rocked the facility. According to reports, the fire was caused by a leak in the refinery's propylene system. Fires were extinguished by late in the afternoon.

Alon to assess damage, start next phase in blast aftermath

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Officials with Alon USA say they expect to begin gathering data today in hopes of determining the cause of Monday morning's explosion that tore through the Big Spring Refinery.

Blake Lewis, spokesperson for Alon USA, said the last of the fires at the refinery were extinguished late Monday afternoon, allowing the Israeli-owned company to move into its next course of action.

"An operation like this moves in phases," said Lewis. "The first phase was all about the people. After that, everyone was concentrating on getting the fires extinguished. Now that all of the fires are out, it's time to begin collecting data."

"Of course, the most pressing question right now is determining how this happened. Once we've determined that, we'll begin working on the next phase, which is figuring out what resources it will take to get the refinery up and running again."

An explosion ripped through the Big Spring Refinery at approximately 8:15 a.m. Monday, sending a shock wave through the surrounding communities.

An Alon employee, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Monday the cause of the explosion was a propylene tank leak that could not be stopped, causing a mist-like vapor to

See REFINERY, Page 3A

"Of course, the most pressing question right now is determining how this happened. Once we've determined that, we'll begin working on the next phase, which is figuring out what resources it will take to get the refinery up and running again."

—Blake Lewis, Alon spokesman

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



Alon: The wake-up call

At approximately 8:17 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 18, 2008, Big Spring, Texas, got a wake-up call. I had just placed my toothbrush in its holder and wiped the excess from my lips and looked up in the mirror. All of a sudden I was shocked by a jolt that almost sent me to the floor. The windows shook and the



RON MIDKIFF

ground rumbled. I stood in silence for a few seconds knowing in the back of my mind what had happened. I fearfully peered out my bedroom window facing east and there I saw what I

suspected. A huge mushroom cloud shadowed the sky. Something inside me had told me what was happening and the fear I was feeling was the fear of what I knew could come from my suspicions.

I knew I had to get there to help in any way possible. My phone rang and it was my bookkeeper informing me of what had happened and that calls had already

began flooding the switchboard.

"Isabel," I replied, "I a.m. on my way out the door. I will call you when I get on the scene." As I headed toward the darkened sky I prayed that God would take care of anyone involved and keep everyone safe in our town.

I could see many emer-

See CALL, 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

Page 1B
Tuesday, February 19, 2008

IN BRIEF

Crossroads high school varsity sports calendar TODAY

Big Spring softball vs. Midland Lee, 5:30 p.m.

Forsan softball vs. Grape Creek, 4 p.m.

Coahoma softball vs. Midland High, 7 p.m.

BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

Coahoma girls and boys basketball vs. Wall at Abilene Cooper, 6:30 p.m.

Forsan boys basketball vs. Iraan at Angelo State's Junell Center in San Angelo, 5:30 p.m.

Grady girls basketball vs. Whitharral at Borden County, 5 p.m.

Garden City girls basketball vs. Sterling City at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum, 6 p.m.

Sands boys basketball vs. Ropes at Post, 8 p.m.

...

THURSDAY

Big Spring softball, Forsan softball and Coahoma softball at West Texas Classic in Midland in tournament play through Feb. 23.

Coahoma baseball at Sonora Tournament through Feb. 23.

FRIDAY

Big Spring baseball at Sweetwater, 6 p.m.

Forsan baseball at Tahoka, 7 p.m.

HC women win, men suffer loss at New Mexico

Howard College basketball teams split a pair of games with New Mexico Junior College squads Monday night in Hobbs, N.M., with the women taking a 77-53 win over the Lady Thunderbirds, while the men suffered an 86-85 loss.

The Hawk women improved their record to 23-5 on the season and stand third in the Western Junior College Athletic Conference standings with a 9-3 mark. The loss left Howard's men with a 21-7 mark and tied for third place in the WJCAC standings at 10-4.

Thursday, Howard's teams will travel to Clarendon for WJCAC meetings with Clarendon's Bulldogs and Lady Bulldogs.

Big Spring Girls Softball registration held every Saturday

The Big Spring Girls Softball Association begins registration for the 2008 youth softball season Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Mall across from Merle Norman.

Girls ages 4 to 14 as of Jan. 1 are eligible to play.

A subsequent sign-up dates will be held March 1.

Fee is \$45 with a \$5 discount for a second child.

Anyone with questions can call Rodney Jones at 213-3750.

Memphis, Tennessee set up 1 vs. 2 matchup

By JIM O'CONNELL

AP Basketball Writer

Get ready for No. 1 vs. No. 2. Memphis survived its closest game of the season to remain the lone unbeaten and a unanimous No. 1 in The Associated Press' college basketball poll Monday.

Losses by Duke and Kansas last week allowed Tennessee to make the jump from fourth to No. 2, setting up the 38th career matchup of the top two teams in the rankings.

Tennessee (23-2) is at Memphis

(25-0) on Saturday, the first 1-2 meeting since No. 2 Ohio State beat No. 1 Wisconsin 49-48 on Feb. 25, 2007. Both have games Wednesday night: Memphis is at Tulane and Tennessee hosts Auburn.

The No. 2 team has won five of the last six meetings with the top-ranked team since 1994. The lone win for No. 1 was Duke's 97-66 victory over Texas on Dec. 12, 2005.

Memphis beat UAB 79-78 on Saturday, erasing a seven-point deficit over the final two minutes

and waiting for a final shot by the Blazers to be ruled after the buzzer by officials.

Tennessee also survived a road scare on Saturday, beating Georgia 74-71. But the 1-2 Volunteer State Showdown wasn't decided until Duke lost 86-73 at Wake Forest on Sunday night.

Memphis received all 72 first-place votes and 1,800 points from the national media panel to be No. 1 for a fifth straight week, the last three unanimously. Tennessee had 1,699 points to reach the highest ranking in

school history. The Volunteers were third four weeks ago.

North Carolina (24-2), which has managed to go 3-1 without injured point guard Ty Lawson, moved up two spots to third, while Kansas (24-2), which lost at Texas on Monday then cruised past Colorado on Saturday, dropped one place to fourth.

Duke (22-2), which had a 12-game winning streak snapped by the Demon Deacons, dropped from second to fifth and was fol-

See POLL, Page 2B

Texas roars past A&M

By JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN — Nearly three weeks ago, Texas walked off the court a dejected and submissive team after getting blown out by rival Texas A&M.

Harshly — and publicly — criticized by their coach after that debacle, the No. 7 Longhorns haven't been the same team since. And Monday night, they showed the No. 22 Aggies just how far they've come with a 77-50 win in the rematch.

Texas went toe-to-toe with the bigger, stronger Aggies for 40 minutes. While D.J. Augustin dribbled and dazzled his way to 27 points and nine assists, forward Damion James and the Longhorns blocked 12 shots and matched the Aggies in rebounding and scoring under the basket.

This time, it was the Aggies sulking away after a loss that seemed to indicate two teams going in very different directions.

"We whipped them and they whipped us," A&M coach Mark Turgeon said. "It's even."

Not in the Big 12 standings it isn't.

Texas (22-4, 9-2) has won six in a row since losing to A&M. The Longhorns are tied for first and starting to calculate their NCAA tournament position. The Aggies (20-6, 6-5) meanwhile, have lost two straight and can't get out of the middle of the pack.

In other Top 25 games on Monday night, it was: No. 10 Xavier 81, Rhode Island 77; No. 12 Georgetown 68, Providence 58; No. 18 Louisville 61, Syracuse 50; and No. 23 Saint Mary's 100, Pepperdine 64.

Defense has been the

key for Texas' turnaround. A&M shot just 6-of-31 in the first half and Texas blocked 12 shots in the game.

"We've come together on the defensive end. That's the single biggest thing that we've done over the past two weeks," Longhorns coach Rick Barnes said.

Texas also got spectacular game from point guard Augustin, who is capable of pulling them off more often but had struggled of late.

Augustin nearly outscored the Aggies by himself in the first half with 17 points as Texas took a 39-18 lead into half-time.

"He did everything for that team tonight, give him credit. He came out and played at a level no else played at," A&M's Josh Carter said. "It was embarrassing tonight."

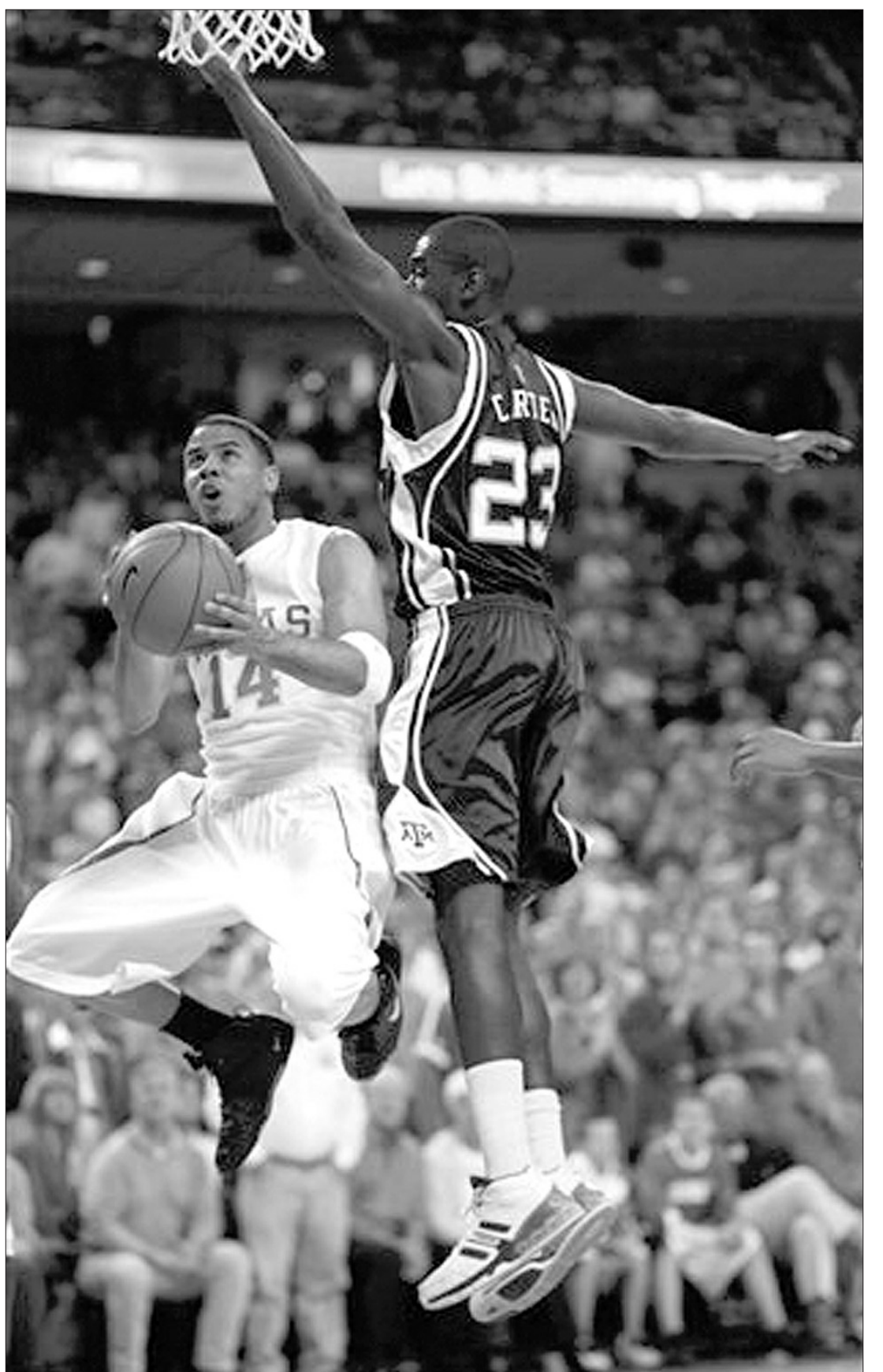
From the start, the teams traded bruising screens, blocked shots, dunks and menacing stares between the big men in a physical contest typical of this heated rivalry.

Texas charged up the sellout crowd with a 16-4 run in the first 5 minutes with four 3-pointers and a pair of blocked shots. James, who was singled out by Barnes after a poor effort in the first meeting, grabbed Texas' first two rebounds and hit the Longhorns' first 3-pointer of the game.

James and Augustin seemed to be everywhere in the first half.

In one sequence, Connor Atchley started a fast break with a steal and fed a quick outlet to Augustin before James finished it with two-hand-

See TEXAS, Page 2B



AP Photo/Harry Cabluck

Texas guard D.J. Augustin, left, goes up to shoot against the defense of Texas A&M guard Josh Carter during first half action at their college basketball game Monday in Austin.

Pettitte's apology tops those of the others

There's nothing like a good apology, especially when you know it comes straight from the heart.

Eric Gagne issued his Monday in two different languages, though if you had just come back from a few months climbing in the Himalayas you'd be hard-pressed to know just what he was apologizing for.

Even Gagne didn't seem sure, and you would think he would be the one to know. Something about a "distraction that shouldn't be taking place" was taking place and that "right now I just want to go forward."

The French version, I'm told, was better, though even with four years of high school French I wasn't able to quite get the translation down. I was pretty sure, however, that there was nothing in there about shooting

up with human growth hormone to make sure his fastball didn't flatten out and drop into the low 90s.

Gagne had to have been watching and taking notes a few days earlier when his former batterymate, and the guy who used to score his HGH for him, issued his own mea culpa before beginning his new job as a \$5 million a year catcher and role model for the Washington Nationals.

For that kind of money you would think that Paul Lo Duca might be able to do better than a three sentence statement apologizing for "mistakes in judgment I made in the past and for the distraction that has resulted." Maybe even tell us if the details in the Mitchell report about him buying steroids for his minor league teammates in 1999 and then going around the clubhouse to make sure his buddies had a fresh supply of HGH in the majors were true.

Apparently not. Like Mark McGwire, he just doesn't want to talk about the past.

"Come on, bro'. Next question," Lo Duca said.

Silly us for having the temerity to ask. Even sillier of us to actually expect an answer.

Who did we think he was? Andy Pettitte?

No, and as it turns out, not too many of his fellow Mitchellites are either. Jason Giambi never explained what he was apologizing for, Paul Byrd has developed a case of amnesia, Gary Matthews has never told us why he was sent HGH, and we haven't heard a peep yet from Jose Guillen, Troy Glaus or Miguel Tejada.

Come to think of it haven't heard much from Bud Selig either, though on Monday he did allow as to how he doesn't know when he'll finish his review of players named in the Mitchell report or when he'll figure out what punishment they might get.

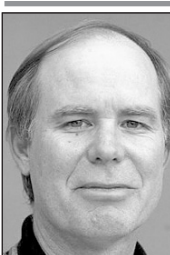
Unfortunately we've heard way too much from Roger Clemens, but my guess is he'll quiet down now following his

disastrous appearance last week before Congress. It was his strident denials that brought Pettitte deeper into this mess than he was ever supposed to be, and his insistence on having a congressional investigation that led to some embarrassing revelations about family members of both pitchers.

That's not excusing Pettitte for using HGH, or lying about it in his first statement when he said he used it only two days in 2002. But I find it believable when he said he lied about using it a second time two years later to protect his father.

Actually there's a lot I found believable about Pettitte after watching him go before the media for an hour Monday and answer almost every question directed his way as honestly and thoroughly as he could. The only ones he didn't answer dealt with Clemens, and Pettitte is already on the record in his congressional deposition on those

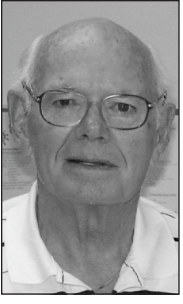
See DAHLBERG, Page 2B



TIM DAHLBERG

Obituaries

Marvin Earl Wright



Marvin Earl Wright, 79, of Muskogee, Okla., died Saturday night, Feb. 16, 2008, at Broadway Manor Healthcare Center in Muskogee. He was born Nov. 4, 1928, to Claude and Ila (Bean) Wright in Big Spring.

Marvin graduated from high school in Big Spring and took his first job on the railroad. One year later he married the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Virginia Ann Neel, on Dec. 31, 1948. He continued working on the railroad until he was drafted into the United States Army in 1953. Soon after, he was called into the Air Force and served on special duty while stationed in Illinois.

After his honorable discharge from his tour of duty in service to his beloved country he returned to work on the railroad. The Texas Pacific Railroad started Marvin as an electrician, working on steam engines. Marvin climbed the ladder of success by moving his family every two years. As a third generation railroader, he moved for the sixth time to Muskogee. He immediately fell in love with the town, the people and the golf course.

Marvin continued his promotions and moved with his wife a couple of times in Kansas where he retired as an assistant superintendent of Rules and Safety. After an amazing career with the Union Pacific Railroad with 44 years of service, Marvin returned to Muskogee and enjoyed 19 years of retirement, filled with family, fun and golf.

Golf was always his specialty and he was an excellent golfer. He will be remembered for more than his game of golf. He was not only a wonderful provider and a hard worker, but also an amazing father and grandfather. His ambition and desire in life was for his seven grandchildren to receive a college education. This is a dream that will soon be fulfilled.

Mr. Wright was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Donnie Earl Wright; one sister; and two brothers.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Virginia Wright of the home; one daughter, Diane Paine and husband Chuck of Edmond, Okla.; one son, Ronnie Wright and wife Brenda of Ft. Collins, Colo.; daughter-in-law, Cindy Wright of Pueblo, Colo.; seven beautiful grandchildren, Tiffany Paine, Cara Wright, Alyssa Wright, Tisa and husband Riley Riggs, Wesley Wright, Jason and wife Kathryn Wright, and Taylor Paine; one brother, Lt. Col. Charles Wright and wife Doris of San Diego, Calif.; sisters-in-law, Wanda Wiley, Eddie Lou Neel, Charlene Neel, Betty Neel and Wanda Wright. Marvin was also blessed with 23 marvelous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008, at First Baptist Church in Muskogee, with the Rev. Don Jones officiating. Interment followed in Memorial Park Cemetery. Pallbearers were Jason Wright, Wesley Wright, Chuck Paine, Riley Riggs, Ron Bowen and Mark Pearson.

Friends may wish to remember Mr. Wright by making memorials to Salvation Army Auxiliary, 615 South Main, Muskogee, OK 74401, Alzheimer's Association, 6465 South Yale, Suite 312, Tulsa, OK 74136-7804 or The First Baptist Church Building Fund, 111 South 7th, Muskogee, OK 74401.

Funeral service arrangements are under the direction of Foster-Petering Funeral Home in Muskogee, OK.

Paid obituary

Myrtle Stewart

Myrtle Stewart, 99, of Stanton died Monday, Feb. 18, 2008, at her residence. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008, at the First Baptist Church of Stanton. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery in Stanton.

She was born May 17, 1908, in Knowles, N.M., and married Ted Roy Stewart on Dec. 22, 1935, in Courtney, Texas. He preceded her in death June 24, 1994.

Mrs. Stewart was a long time member of Courtney Baptist Church and later moved to Stanton and became a member of First Baptist Church Stanton.

Survivors include two daughters, Alice Capps of Pleasanton and Kathryn Stewart of Stanton; one son, Ted Stewart of Stanton; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

She was also preceded in death by her parents two brothers and four sisters.

The family suggests memorials be made to the charity of one's choice.

Arrangements under the direction of Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton. Online condolences can be made at: www.npwelch.com

Barbara Ann Cordes

Barbara Ann Cordes, 73, of Big Spring, died Monday, Feb. 18, 2008, in a local hospital. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

F.H. 'Hank' Williamson

F.H. "Hank" Williamson, 62, of Big Spring, died Monday, Feb. 18, 2008, in a Midland nursing home. His services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Crestina Perez

Crestina Perez, 90, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008, at Parkview Nursing and Rehab. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Sammie J. Froman



Sammie J. Froman, 72, of Big Spring, died Monday, Feb. 18, 2008, in a local nursing home. Graveside funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008, at the Trinity Memorial Park Peace Chapel with Dr. Randy Cotton, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, officiating. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

He was born Feb. 8, 1936, in Martin County and married Shirley Harper on Dec. 18, 1954 in Big Spring.

Mr. Froman was raised in Martin County and attended school at Flowergrove and the Brown Community. He moved to Big Spring in 1951 and worked for W.D. Caldwell Corporation as a young man. He owned and operated Sam Froman Dirt Contracting Inc. for 20 years, retiring in 2000. Sammie was an avid fisherman and enjoyed restoring antique tractors. Sam was a member of Trinity Baptist Church.

Survivors include his wife, Shirley Froman of Big Spring; two sons and daughters-in-law, Kenneth and Layne Froman of Gail and Gene and Robbie Froman of Big Spring; nine grandchildren, Elizabeth Row and husband Brad of Grand Junction, Colo., Michelle Froman and Randi Froman, both of Midland, Ty Froman and wife Kendra, and Jacob Froman, all of Big Spring, Katherine Froman, and Michael Froman, both of Gail, and Collin Froman and Walker Froman, both of Big Spring; four great-grandchildren, Hailey Row and Jackson Row, both of Grand Junction, Colo., and Kyron Brownfield and Key Don Brownfield, both of Big Spring; two brothers, Finous Froman of Levelland and Larry Froman of Modesta, Calif.; and two sisters, Billie Patterson of Modesta, Calif., and Ernie Oaks of Monroe City, Mo.

He was preceded in death by one daughter, Tanya Sue Froman, and his parents, James Claude and Marie Estep Froman.

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

Paid obituary

Petra Escanuelas



Petra Escanuelas, 73, of Odessa, formerly of Big Spring died Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008, in Odessa. Funeral Mass will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at St. Thomas Catholic Church with burial at Mount Olive Memorial Park. Vigil services will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Myers & Smith Chapel.

She was born Oct. 19, 1935, in Wink to Maria and Mateo Escanuelas. She lived most of her life in Big Spring until moving to Odessa in 1986. She had been a member of St. Thomas Catholic Church in Big Spring and later Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Odessa.

She is survived by one sister, Gregoria "Goya" Escanuelas of Odessa; two brothers, Ygnacio "Nacho" Escanuelas Sr. and his wife Maria, and Alex Escanuelas Sr. and his wife Yolanda, all of Big Spring; nine nieces; five nephews; 15 great nieces; 10 great nephews; four great great nieces; and five great great nephews.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com

John Jackson Bentley

John Jackson Bentley, 90, of Carrollton and formerly of Stanton, died Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008, in Forney. Graveside funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008, at the Evergreen Cemetery Chapel in Stanton with Van Pendergrass, minister of Downtown Church of Christ in Stanton, officiating.

The family will receive friends tonight from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the funeral home.

He was born March 28, 1917, in Benjamin and married Marjorie Blackerby on May 14, 1942, in San Antonio.

Mr. Bentley was a longtime member of the Webb Chapel Church of Christ and had served as an elder at the Church of Christ in Farmers Branch. He served in the United States Army as a master sergeant during World War II. He earned various medals two of which were Purple Hearts. He started Bentley's of Stanton in 1948. Mr. Bentley also served 35 years in Civil Service with HUD, completing his service with F.D.I.C., retiring at the age of 87 in 2005. He was also involved in real estate for 60 years.

Survivors include his wife, Marjorie Bentley of Carrollton; three daughters, Judith Diane Wright of Marietta, Georgia, Jane Ellen Bowers of Lubbock, and Elizabeth Jan Childress of Fort Worth; two sons, John David of Midland and Thomas Emmett of Forney; one sister, Rebecca Hildebrand of Flagstaff, Arizona; 12 grandchildren; and 8 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Coates Bentley and one sister, Patricia Moffett.

The family suggests memorials be made to Berean Children's Home, P.O. Box 1009, Brookhaven, Miss., 39602-0109 or to American Cancer Society, 2304 Wadley, Midland 79705.

Arrangements are under the direction of Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton. Online condolences can be made at: www.npwelch.com

Bulletin Board

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

TODAY

- Big Spring Band Boosters meets at 5:30 p.m. in the high school band hall. All band parents are invited to attend.
- Big Spring Art Association meets at 7 p.m. in the Howard County Library. All working artists and those interested in art are invited to attend.
- Order of the Eastern Star No. 67 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 221 Main.

WEDNESDAY

- Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Free blood pressure screenings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St., provided by InHome Care.
- Senior Circle meets at 10:30 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for Sit and Be Fit Chair Aerobics. Those 50 years and older are invited to attend. Call 268-4721.
- Senior Circle meets at 11 a.m. in the Scenic Mountain Medical Center classroom for Stretch and Tone. Call 268-4721.
- Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third St.

THURSDAY

- Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.

Support Groups

TUESDAY

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Non-smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

FRIDAY

- AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

SATURDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets from 11 a.m. to noon at 615 Settles. Open meeting 5 p.m. until 6 p.m.

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Dental Hygiene Clinic - Horace Garrett Building

Young making another comeback, this time in class

AUSTIN (AP) — Vince Young is making another comeback at Texas. This time, it's in the classroom.

The Tennessee Titans quarterback who led Texas to the 2005 national championship is back in class this semester, working toward his degree in education.

"I just wanted to come back and finish up because I wanted to show not only myself and my

family, but all the people that have respect for me, that school is the key," Young said Monday. He's taking 12 hours this semester with still more to come.

"You can never stop getting knowledge, and the kids that left school early and went to the NFL, you've still got to come back and get your degree because you can always have that for life," he said.

Young is revered at Texas and his return to campus has prompted some gawking and cheering from his classmates.

"The kids, they're shocked. One day I walk into class to a standing ovation and my teacher — she's from UCLA — she was like 'What's going on?' I guess she thought the applause was for her," Young said.

"The kids have been giving

me a lot of love. Some kids are like 'Why are you back? You've got all this money.' That's not what I'm shooting for. I want to get my degree," he said.

Young was a junior when he left the Longhorns in January 2006, just a few days after Texas rallied to beat Southern California in the Rose Bowl. He was the first player to leave school early under coach Mack Brown.

Returning to school was his idea, he said.

"School is great. Different, but at the same time I feel like I'm more mature right now so I can understand everything the teacher is saying and I pay attention a whole lot," he said.

And how are his grades?
"I've been making some good Bs right now. I've been making some high Bs. Hopefully the As are coming," he said.

TEXAS

Continued from Page 1B

ed dunk. A minute later, James blocked a shot from behind, then flew in to snag the rebound off the backboard to start another break.

Augustin made two 3s, then fed a tricky pass in the lane for an easy layup. When he pulled up for a soft jumper in the lane over Bryan Davis, Texas led 37-14.

Misfiring from the outside, the Aggies tried to use their muscle inside to start the second half. Three quick fouls and two more blocked shots, including one when Atchley stopped 7-footer DeAndre Jordan, left Turgeon rubbing his temples during the first timeout of the half.

If Texas was giving him a headache, it only got

worse. Augustin hit another off-balance jumper and Justin Mason was left wide open for a 3 that put Texas up 51-27.

Things were going so badly for A&M that when Jordan snagged a rebound deep in the lane and tried to tomahawk a dunk, he caught the front of the rim and ball went flying back up in the air.

Texas hit nine 3-pointers while the Aggies were 1-of-14 from long range. The Aggies also missed 12 of 23 free throws.

"Guys have to make free throws and open shots," Turgeon said. "They're on scholarship, they're supposed to be really good players, so they need to step up and do those things."

Barnes ripped his team after losing to A&M.

Maybe Turgeon's words will turn things around for the Aggies around as well.

No. 10 Xavier 81, Rhode Island 77

At South Kingston, R.I., Josh Duncan scored 23 points, B.J. Raymond added 14 and Xavier overcame a furious second-half run to hold off Rhode Island.

The win was Xavier's eighth straight and the 14th in its last 15 games, helping the Musketeers (22-4, 10-1 Atlantic 10) maintain their grip on first place in the Atlantic 10 conference.

Parfait Bitee scored 25 points and Will Daniels added 23 for Rhode Island (20-6, 6-5). The loss snapped the Rams' 11-game home winning streak.

No. 12 Georgetown 68, Providence 58

Roy Hibbert had 18 points inside, Jonathan Wallace added 14 from the outside and visiting Georgetown beat

Providence.

The Hoyas (21-4, 11-3 Big East) came in having lost two of three games and they struggled against Providence's 2-3 zone for the opening half and first 5 minutes of the second half.

Then came a 3-point barrage led by Wallace as Georgetown hit five from behind the arc in a 17-2 run that gave the Hoyas a 52-43 lead.

Weyinmi Efejuku had 25 points for the Friars (13-13, 4-10), who have lost four straight and eight of nine.

No. 18 Louisville 61, Syracuse 50

Terrence Williams scored all 12 of his points in the second half for host Louisville.

Andre McGee added 12 points and the Cardinals (21-6) limited the Orange (17-10) to 29 percent shooting to keep pace with No.

12 Georgetown atop the Big East. Arinze Onuaku led Syracuse with 16 points and Paul Harris added 13, but the Orange found few openings in Louisville's tough 2-3 defense.

Syracuse entered the game tied with Georgetown in field goal percentage, making 49 percent of its shots from the field. The Orange managed barely half that against Louisville.

POLL

Continued from Page 1B

lowed by UCLA, Texas, Butler, Stanford and Xavier.

Butler (24-2) continued its climb to uncharted poll territory, moving up one spot to eighth, its highest ranking ever. Xavier (21-4) jumped from 12th to crack the top 10 for the first time since the next-to-last poll of 2002-03.

Wisconsin moved up four places to 11th and was followed by Georgetown, Connecticut,

Purdue, Indiana, Drake, Washington State, Louisville, Michigan State and Vanderbilt.

The last five teams were Notre Dame, Texas A&M, Saint Mary's, Calif., Kansas State and Marquette.

Marquette moved back into the poll after a one-week absence. The Golden Eagles (18-6), who were ranked as high as 10th this season, fell out after consecutive losses to Louisville and Notre Dame. But an 89-64 victory at Seton Hall and a 72-54 win over Pittsburgh had them back in at No.

25. Pittsburgh (19-6) dropped out for the first time this season following the loss to Marquette. The Panthers reached No. 6 following an overtime win over Duke in December, and were able to stay ranked until this week despite injuries to starters Mike Cook and Levance Fields.

Purdue (21-5), which beat Michigan State and Northwestern last week to hold first place in the Big Ten, jumped from 19th to No. 14 to match its highest ranking since the Boilermakers were also

14th in the poll of Jan. 26, 1999.

The week's biggest drop was Michigan State's fall from No. 10 to No. 19. The Spartans (20-5), who lost to Purdue and Indiana last week, had been ranked as high as sixth this season. Their previous low was No. 12 in the first poll of the regular season.

DAHLBERG

Continued from Page 1B

facts.

While Gagne was in Arizona trying to figure out how to say nothing in French as well as he did in English, Pettitte was remorseful, repentant and apologetic. He said he let his teammates down, let his owner down, and let every kid down in America who looked up to him.

"I care what people think about me," he said. "I consider myself a role model."

On this day, Pettitte was a role model, though it may not have been the role he wanted to play. He's pitched in seven World Series and under the glaring pressure of being in New York, but admitted he was scared to death about going before the media this time.

Hopefully, Byrd, Matthews, Gagne, Lo Duca and the other players were taking notes because Pettitte never tried to hide. When he finished answering some questions, he would ask the reporter if he needed more.

The short one on why he did HGH, though, seemed good enough.

"Stupidity, desperation, that's the only excuse I can give you," he said.

That's better than what most of baseball's juiced generation has given. They remain content to hide behind ambiguous statements that offer nothing, figuring a few home runs or a few clutch saves will win the

faithful back anyway.

They'll probably get away with it because fans have short memories, and writers are just as tired of writing about steroids and HGH as people are of reading it.

To Pettitte, though, that wasn't enough. He had to apologize to the Steinbrenners, to the fans, to the media, to

everyone. He had to, he said, because it's the only way he'll be able to sleep well at night.

Mission accomplished. He should sleep well now.

Tim Dahlberg is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at tdahlberg@ap.org.

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker
By the Process of Elimination

East dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 5 3
♥ Q J 8
♦ K 7 6
♣ A J 10 7 4

WEST
♠ K 9 6 4 2
♥ 6 5 3
♦ 10 4 3
♣ 8 5

EAST
♠ A 8 7
♥ 10 7 2
♦ Q J 9 2
♣ K 6 2

SOUTH
♠ Q J 10
♥ A K 9 4
♦ A 8 5
♣ Q 9 3

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

There are times when it is better for a defender not to take a trick that he can win. The big challenge, of course, is to know when that's the right thing to do.

Consider this case where South is in three notrump and West leads the spade four, won by East with the ace as declarer follows with the ten. East returns the eight, on which declarer plays the queen, and the question is whether West should take the trick or allow the queen to hold.

West's choice is crucial, because if he wins the trick, declarer makes four notrump, while if he plays low, declarer goes down one.

How should West go about solving such a problem? Remember, he

cannot see the East or South hands. He has to try to reason out for himself exactly what is going on.

Fortunately, if West does not impulsively win the queen with the king, it is not difficult for him to diagnose the spade situation correctly. This is mainly because there are rigid conventions that govern precisely which spade East should return at trick two, depending on his holding in the suit.

For example, if East started with the A-J-8, he would return the jack, not the eight. Similarly, holding the A-8-7, East would return the eight, not the seven. This is in accordance with the standard practice of returning the second-highest card from a three-card suit if the highest card has already been played.

The procedure changes, though, when East starts with four cards in the suit led by partner. In that case, East returns his original fourth-best card rather than the second-highest. Therefore, if East's initial holding in the actual case were the A-J-8-7, he would return the seven rather than the jack or eight.

A bit confusing, perhaps, but by applying these principles, it becomes easy in the present case for West to deduce that declarer started with precisely the Q-J-10 and that East started with the A-8-7. West therefore ducks the second spade, and when East later gains the lead with the king of clubs, his spade return sinks the contract.


su | do | ku

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

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

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
Can wisdom and power coexist? Today, Pluto in Capricorn offers the



HOLIDAY MATHIS

Pisces sun the equivalent of spiritual kryptonite, empowering sage souls with take-charge ability. Yet Albert Einstein said, "The attempt to combine wisdom and power has only rarely been successful and then only for a short while." Well, even geniuses can be proven wrong.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your environment has even more impact on your psyche than usual. Go where you're likely to be inspired by genius. Brilliant works shine a light on your potential.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). This is the final act of a family drama — situation resolved, and

all players can take a curtain call. Soon you may actually find yourself once again liking those crazy people to whom you're related.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). When you check your ego at the door, it turns out that relationships aren't so complex after all. There is always a choice to retreat or embrace. You will benefit in ways you never imagined when you embrace.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're re-learning what it means to delight in your endeavors.

Today's secret to happiness is to concern yourself more with having fun than with having more than the next guy or girl. Your exuberance attracts love.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Business and legal matters can wait no longer. Tend to them and your stress level drops considerably. This afternoon, you learn just what you need to know to go from amateur to pro.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You are bright and enthusiastic, so team with people who appreciate these qualities. Hint: It's usually the ones who meet your smile with a smile and easily give up laughter to your jokes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your ability to capture the interest of potential customers, clients, friends or romantic hopefuls has a lot to do with timing. You have a fabulous knack for acting at the perfect moment.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're introduced to newness that mentally stretches you. Your mind is traveling even if your body is staying put. The world is a more exotic and varied than you dreamed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're in a competitive mood and will benefit from pitting yourself against a tough opponent. Even if you lose, which is unlikely, you actually win because you considerably advance your skills.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Identify your heart's desire, and grab it with both hands. Make a bold commitment to your future. If your vision involves someone else, now is the time to tell this person.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Noble actions, it turns out, are just plain fun. And all the fun you have helping others

doesn't take away from the significance of your contribution. You're especially effective in the case of a troubled youth.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It's mind expanding to meet different kinds of people. You can relate to anyone at all as long as you know it's for a limited amount of time. However you share a special spark with Scorpio.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I'm new to astrology, and I'm noticing how many people are just crazy about it. What can astrology do for me? And how will I know whether it's right for me?"

I can only speak for myself, so while honoring that astrology isn't for everybody, it's enriched my self-understanding, helped me understand others and absolutely turned challenging periods of my life into opportunities to grow. One of astrology's greatest gifts is the gift of perspective, to see my life from a different angle or vantage point, but any knowledge base that does this for you is a potential growth tool. I think the reason it's so relatable is that practically anyone can find at least a grain of truth (or a bushel of wisdom) in the symbols because it's an ancient system of archetypes, or universal experiences, common to humanity. There are many ways to use it — some use astrology to help with life decisions, others just for fun. As with anything, it's all how you use it. If you have an open, curious mind and a desire to penetrate the secret knowledge of the universe, you just may fall for astrology! Also, check out my book, "Rock Your Stars: Your Astrological Guide to Getting it All," which explains how astrology can help you with just about everything — from what color to paint your bathroom walls and how to design an exercise routine that's just right for you, to how to navigate family relations and which person you should spend the rest of your life with. Plus, it's got plenty of fun tips for the most challenging of all dilemmas: What on Earth should you order at Starbucks? Good luck, new astrology fan! In short: It's an exciting, non-judgmental approach to life analysis. What could be better?

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BIG SPRING HERALD

Early voting under way at courthouse

Herald Staff Report

Early voting in the March primaries began this morning at the Howard County Courthouse and in courthouses in Martin and Glasscock counties.

Locally, voting polls are located on the third floor of the courthouse. An eleva-

tor is available.

Early voting in the Republican and Democratic primaries will continue through Feb. 29. Hours are 8 a.m. through 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Howard County will have extended-hour voting Feb. 26 and 28, when polls will be open until 7 p.m.

Election day is March 4.

Citizens are reminded they may vote in either the Republican primary or the Democratic primary, but not both. Candidates involved in the election may vote only for the party in which they are affiliated. For instance, a Republican candidate for a county office cannot cast

a Democratic ballot. To do so automatically disqualifies that candidate.

Voters do not have to vote in the primary to cast a ballot in the general election in November.

On the ballot are a myriad of offices up for election, from president to U.S. and state lawmakers and county positions.

CALL

Continued from Page 1A

gency response vehicles and the echo of the sirens pierced the morning calm.

As I reached the FM 700 intersection, I approached several policemen and volunteers holding back traffic and directing drivers away from the scene.

I spoke with the officers and explained who I was with and was soon directed to the union building across the highway from the refinery, which had been set up as a central command office for Alon and public officials.

I proceeded to the designated building approximately one-half-mile closer to the refinery. The site was almost what I envisioned and resembled something out of a horror film. I thought to myself that it must be as close to Hell inside the fence of that refinery as you could get. The black smoke and towering inferno was a site that sent chills down my neck.

My thoughts quickly turned to how I could help and what about the injured? I was sure there would be many injured and many deaths, thus triggering my training in first aid and first response. The service road was lined with scores of firemen and EMS technicians. I approached several firemen, including Fire Chief Brian Jensen and others, asking if there was anything I could do. Each time

the response was that only firemen were going in to assist. My first aid training was put aside for the moment and my journalism experience kicked in.

Shortly I joined a few other media personnel and photographers as we briefed each other on the information we had accumulated at that point. It was simply a miracle as to the information we had been given. Remarkably, there were no fatalities and only three known injuries. However, the morning was still young.

Dave Foster of Alon spoke to us around 9:30 a.m. and informed us that the command post and information station was moving to a different location for safety reasons. Dave was concerned for the safety of everyone and above all, I could tell he was relieved that there were no fatalities.

The morning dragged on as the smoke continued to bellow from the refinery. News media from around the state flooded the grounds of the command center. State representatives, along with county and city officials, made statements to the public, trying to ease the tension and fear.

I truly can say that what I witnessed Monday morning is a testament to Big Spring and West Texas. Emergency responders and everyday people stepped forward to help without regard to the danger they could be placing on themselves. Volunteers and emergency responders, not knowing if there could have been an even larger explosion or environmental

conditions that could cause problems, put all thoughts aside to help others. For this, I applaud you all. I know if the situation would have worsened the belts would have tightened and the people of this community and surrounding area would have given their all for their fellow Americans and neighbors.

As Mayor Russ McEwen put it, there was a "Miracle on Refinery Road," but the miracle was not only in the lives spared by God's intervention but the miracle of how people do the will of God without even knowing they are doing it.

As for those looking to make a profit from this disaster, shame on you. However, I cannot dictate when and how you advertise with our newspaper. Advertisers should be given the same rights as any other citizen. It is not our desire at the *Herald* to praise anyone except all those involved in the superior effort put forth this during this disaster.

Knowing there is a reason for all things, I hope we all take a look around. Consider this a wake-up call. Take a look at what we have here in Big Spring. Think about what we could have. Think about how we can help others. Pray for those who have not. Give freely to those who need. Hold out your hand and help others. Live each day as it is your last. Work together. Love one another. Wake up!

Contact Publisher Ron Midkiff at 263-7331, ext. 250, or by e-mail at publisher@bigspringherald.com.

Bowl-A-Rama closed, citing damage from blast

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

At least one Big Spring business has been adversely affected by Monday's explosion at the Alon Refinery.

Big Spring Bowl-A-Rama, located within a mile of the refinery, suffered significant structural damage in the blast and is closed until further notice, co-owner Diana Dodd said.

Bowl-A-Rama was open for business and hosting a group of Big Spring High School students when the explosion occurred at 8:20 a.m. Monday.

"The whole building moved," Dodd said. "At first, we thought the snack bar had exploded ... Ceiling tiles were falling all over the place."

Fearing for the safety of the students and other customers, Dodd and her husband ordered everyone outside the building, she said.

"No one was hurt — not even a scratch," she said. "But it was a very scary experience for everyone."

Dodd said she and her husband are waiting for inspectors to certify the building's safety before they re-open for business.

"Hopefully, it will just be for a week or so," she said. "But we don't want anyone to come in here until it's safe."

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

REFINERY

Continued from Page 1A

gather in the refinery. According to the witness, the vapor got into a cracker heater and an alkaline unit, causing both to explode simultaneously.

Lewis said any estimates at this time regarding the extent of the damage to the facility are premature, as are any reports the refinery is not fulfilling its obligations to its buyers.

"The Big Spring rack — that's where the trucks pull in and load up with product — is running at 100 percent right now," said Lewis. "A lot of peo-

ple simply assume because the facility's refining operation is down, the entire operation is down, and that's not accurate. We have a lot of product in storage tanks at the refinery."

Lewis said Alon officials have not yet been able to determine what the loss of the facility's refining capabilities — estimated at 70,000 barrels per pay — is costing the company. "That's something that will come later, as we continue collecting data," he said.

Jeff D. Morris, Alon's president and chief executive officer, said in a statement that safety is the company's most important concern at this

point in the aftermath.

"We are concerned by this unfortunate accident, and our main focus right now is on the welfare of the injured workers and their families as well as on ensuring that the refinery is safe for investigators to begin determining the source and cause of the explosion," Morris said in a press release issued Monday.

Five injuries were reported as a result of the explosion, according to Lewis, including one Alon USA employee (identified by the Associated Press as Paul Berringer), a trio of contractors and a motorist who was struck by debris while traveling on Interstate Highway 20.

"The Alon employee was taken to Lubbock with burns," said Lewis. "Unfortunately, I don't have an update on his condition. One of the contractors was treated for a concussion, while the other two were treated for hearing problems."

Morris said a toll-free number has been set up to address any damages caused by the blast.

"We are very grateful to our employees, Big Spring and Howard County emergency responders and local officials for their quick and very effective response and for their support," said Morris. "We are aware of the effects that the explosion has had on

the members of our community, and we have just established a toll-free number to help address their concerns.

"We also want to assure our customers that we will make all the appropriate arrangements to keep them supplied. We remain totally committed to the safe operation of the refinery and will provide additional information regarding the condition of the facility as soon as possible."

Area residents with property damage are asked to call 800-451-4527.

Alon markets gasoline and diesel products under the Fina brand name and is a leading producer of asphalt. Alon also oper-

ates more than 300 convenience stores in West Texas and New Mexico primarily under the 7-Eleven and FINA brand names and supplies motor fuels to these stores from its Big Spring refinery.

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

OASIS

Continued from Page 1A

have concerning the disposal well, but most are simply unfounded.

"There are thousands — at least 5,000 that I know of — of these wells across the state of Texas," said Kemper. "They are closely monitored by the Railroad Commission, and it's rare for there to be a problem with one of them. I understand why these people are upset, but I really believe if they have the facts they will feel a lot more comfortable with it."

Kemper said the Oasis location for the well, which would be dedicated to salt water used in oil-field injections, is ideal, and only furthers his claims it poses no threat to the area's water supply.

"The fewer wells you have nearby, the safer these types of salt water

wells are," explained Kemper. "That's because you don't have to worry about other wells breaking that level of protection. We're willing to put in a monitor well near the disposal well, so, if somehow there was a leak, we would know about it long before it reached any of the water wells nearby."

"Another reason we chose this location was its accessibility. It's proximity to Interstate Highway 20, Highway 350, FM 700 and Highway 87 makes it ideal for us."

The well's location may look inviting to Kemper, but to Beauchamp it's an accident just waiting to happen. "Right there at that corner, people from Big Spring and Coahoma pick up their kids from the school buses," said Beauchamp. "We're not really sure how much of Oasis Road they are going to be on, but with the number of trucks they say

they are going to haul in there it could damage the roads. However, our main concern is what kind of damage this could do to our water."

Beauchamp, along with several other Oasis Addition residents, recently met with Howard County commissioners to ask for their support in opposing the disposal well.

"They did send you guys (the county) some letters," said Beauchamp. "We're just asking the commissioner's court, if it gets down to it, to say no to this also. We're just

trying to let you guys know what's going on and ask for your support, even if that just means you signing a letter. We're just asking for support from you guys."

The community meeting is slated for 7 p.m. Thursday at Birdwell Lane Methodist Church, located at 2702 N. Birdwell Lane.

"We'll have a petition at the meeting that area residents can sign to oppose the disposal well," said Beauchamp. "We just want to get everyone together and get organized."

Kemper said he plans to attend the meeting.

"I really think if people understand how this works, and all of the safety measures that are taken, they will feel a lot more comfortable with it," said Kemper.

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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OTHER VIEWS

Let's remember tough task all presidents face

Many adults remember celebrating the Feb. 12 birthday of Abraham Lincoln and the Feb. 22 birthday of George Washington each year when they were children.

The closeness of the birth dates of the two great presidents linked them together in the minds of many Americans. Washington's birthday was a national holiday — and it still is, although now days it generally is called Presidents' Day and has been expanded to honor all presidents.

While we sometimes regret the eroding of individual recognition of Washington and Lincoln, having a holiday to recognize all presidents is not a bad thing.

The office of president is a very difficult job that can also be a dangerous one. Four of our 43 presidents — Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley and John F. Kennedy — were assassinated in office. Others, such as Gerald Ford and especially Ronald Reagan, who was seriously wounded, had narrow escapes.

Four presidents — William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Warren G. Harding and Franklin D. Roosevelt — died of natural causes while in office.

Most presidents lived out their terms of office, but they nonetheless devoted significant portions of their lives to serving their country as president.

Each president faced a unique set of challenges and difficulties in office. Most presidents were called upon to make tough decisions that alienated part of the public against them, and all of them were controversial in the eyes of at least some of their countrymen.

America's presidents have varied greatly in the quality of leadership they have offered, but from the strongest successes to the controversial failures, they all were part of the development of our nation.

When the next Presidents' Day rolls around, America will have a new president living in the White House. That person, the 44th U.S. president, will face opposition from the first moment he or she takes office and will endure criticism that will last long after the 45th president has taken up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

It is an extremely difficult job in which it is impossible to please everyone.

Not every president has the stature of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, but they all have earned their places in history, and they deserve recognition from their nation.

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

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- By e-mail Managing Editor John A. Moseley at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

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A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May we be unusually strong-willed and sure of ourselves while we walk with You, Lord.

Amen

This recession may be a doozy

As the economy shifts into reverse gear and Congress and the president work out the details of a proposed fiscal stimulus, some are asking whether it will be enough to head off a recession. The answer is very likely no.

The timing, length and depth of a recession depend on many variables and are therefore difficult to predict. But there are certain things that we already know. First, we are witnessing the bursting of unprecedented bubble in house prices.

Nationally, a loss of wealth of about \$8 trillion would be necessary just to bring these prices back to their normal long-term trend. Even conservative estimates of the effect of such a drop imply a decline in consumer spending of \$400 billion, or about 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product, or GDP (the total market value of goods and services by produced within the United States during a year). Some economists think the drop would be much more than that, because of the expansion in recent years of consumers borrowing against the (previously rising) value of their homes.

We also have the first official GDP numbers for the last quarter, which shows the economy at a near standstill with just 0.6 percent annualized growth. Consumer

spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of the economy, has been holding up; but this cannot last as the price of homes that people have been borrowing against continues to fall.

The size of the proposed stimulus, which is about \$150 billion, is just not large enough to compensate for the kind of spending declines that we can expect. Near the peak of the housing bubble in 2005, homeowners were cashing out about \$780 billion in home equity at an annual rate. Although not all of this was used for consumption, a lot of it was; this "ATM machine" has now run out of cash.

It is worth looking at the total fiscal stimulus provided by the federal government when the previous huge asset bubble — in the stock market — burst. The federal budget went from a surplus of 2.4 percent of GDP in 2000, to a deficit of 3.5 percent of GDP in 2003. This is about six times the size of the proposed stimulus package, although the federal government will automatically provide at least some more stimulus than the current package, as tax revenues fall and some social spending rises.

Based on the experience of the last three recessions, the Center for Economic and Policy Research has estimated that the next recession could increase unemployment by 3.2 million to 5.8 million people, and poverty by 4.7 million to 10.4 million, with at least 4.2 million also losing health insurance. The range depends on whether it

is a mild-to-moderate recession like the last two (2001 and 1990-91) or more severe as in 1980-82.

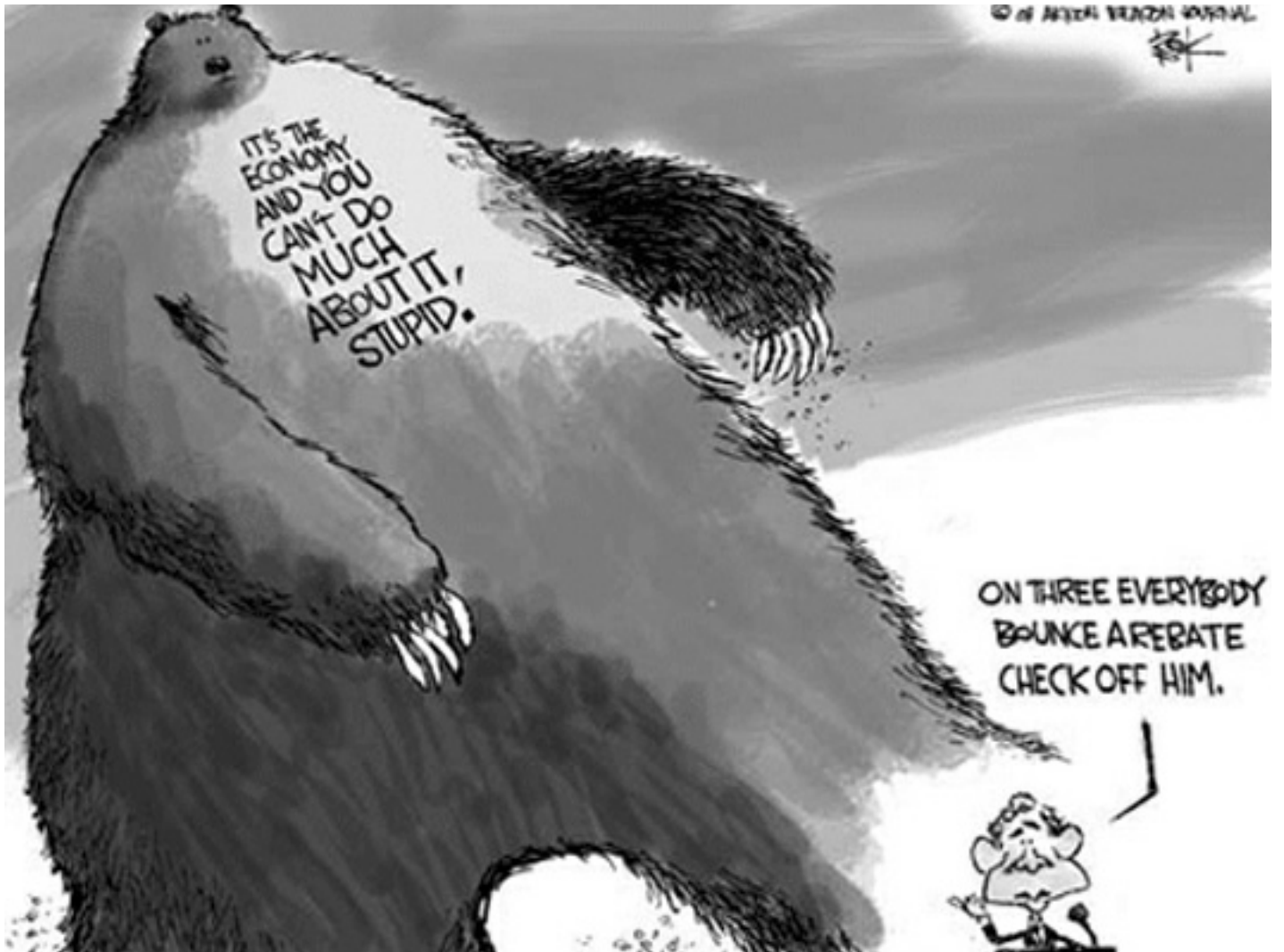
Given the magnitude of the risks and economic pain that our economy is facing, it is imperative to demand measures that will soften the blow — especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, unemployed, and poor. The package that passes Congress, despite some positive additions by the Senate, will be especially inadequate to do the job.

Out of the Great Depression came the New Deal, which included Social Security, the legal right to organize unions, unemployment compensation and other reforms that transformed the United States into a more just society while setting the stage for the post-World War II boom. Over the last 30 years, the country has become vastly more unequal and economic performance has also deteriorated with the ascendancy of the political right.

We are not facing a depression, but the hard times ahead will highlight the need for structural changes such as universal health care and labor law reform. These and other major reforms — including a bigger and "green" fiscal stimulus that would reduce carbon emissions — should be pushed to the top of the political agenda.

Mark Weisbrot is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington, D.C.

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Mortgage crisis is racist, too

Owning a home is the essence of the American dream. It represents economic achievement and security. The dream holds true across races, ethnicities and genders. But the implementation does not.

We know society has historically worked against people of color. Examples include a century of legal slavery and exclusion from participating in wealth-building programs like the 1862 Homestead Act and the 1944 GI Bill.

These programs gave millions the assistance and tools needed to improve their economic lives. A strong, flourishing middle class, a hallmark of America's prosperity, arose as a result.

Today, in a new millennium, millions at the lower end of the economic spectrum face a new obstacle: the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

The crisis occurred because a financial product intended for limited use has been disproportionately marketed to many. The crisis has ruined many economic lives and communities, and has cost the financial institutions that underwrote massive numbers of shaky sub-prime loans hundreds of billions. These losses triggered a global economic crisis, the end of which is not in sight. The next chapter could well be about a deep

U.S. recession.

The resulting human cost is less often mentioned. Yet, the emerging indisputable — and reprehensible — fact is that people of color and poor people were targeted as the best candidates for these loans. In the hands of the mortgage lending industry, sub-prime loans became predatory loans — a faulty product ruthlessly hawked even though financial institutions were aware of its defects. Even a surface check of the demographics shows that, in city after city, a solid majority of sub-prime loan recipients were people of color.

Hungry for a new and different product, the financial services industry added features to sub-prime loans — exploding adjustable rates, balloon payments, and penalties for early repayment — that hobbled their recipients financially and made it unlikely that they would be able, after a brief honeymoon period, to repay the loans at all.

A deeper look into the crisis reveals that the sub-prime lending debacle has caused the greatest loss of wealth to people of color in modern U.S. history. Blacks have lost an estimated amount of between \$72 billion and 83 billion; Latinos, \$75 billion and 98 billion.

There is also a spillover effect from the wholesale writing of bad loans: Communities are torn apart. As one house after another in a neighborhood goes vacant, squatters move in, crime spikes, local stores close. The value of other people's houses in the vicini-

ty, even those who have not taken out sub-prime loans, deteriorates by thousands of dollars. The local tax base erodes, since fewer people are living there and paying taxes. This in turn leads to revenue shortfalls, which mean budget cuts in public services, teachers, police and firefighters, repairs to bridges and schools, and other government activities that offer residents quality of life.

But the government has remained silent and inactive in the face of the crisis. There are, however, things that can be done:

Just as rules have favored one group or another throughout U.S. history, so can rules now help crisis victims regain productive lives, wealth, and homes. Residents and their government, working together, can alleviate the crisis with new rules like regulating the mortgage industry, federal investment in financing homes, lowering the cap on the mortgage deduction, providing incentives for developers to build affordable homes, and dedicating federal estate tax revenues to housing disaster relief.

The hundreds of billions in short-term gains reaped by the financial industry didn't even last as long as ice cream in the sun. But cleaning up the mess they made will take the taxpayers and their government a long time.

Christina Kasica is communications manager for United for a Fair Economy.

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MARK WEISBROT



CHRISTINA KASICA



Courtesy photo

One of the earliest nesting birds in North America, the great horned owl takes advantage of January. When ground cover is at its least, food for the nestlings is more readily found. Four months later, when the young start hunting, game is the most abundant.

Bird Poop: Bright orange towel becomes life-saving tool for rescue team

Two weeks prior to the telephone call, we had been at the wildlife sanctuary in Midland. Although we had rescued and transported several birds of prey, this would be our first time to force feed one of the larger birds. Excited and apprehensive at the same time, we looked forward to learning more.

Grabbing and holding a struggling raptor, Midge Erskine then encouraged me to open its beak and give it small chunks of rabbit while Art watched the effort. After closely following her verbal directions, my hands were nearly on the bird's beak when her husband, Woody, cautioned, "Always remember, those birds can bite off your finger or thumb. Fortunately, they don't know that," he added as he left the room.

Hoping no one could hear how loud my heart was beating, and checking to make sure my hands weren't shaking, I proceeded to pry open

the massive beak. It was quite an introduction to the tremendous force the bird could exert on any prey. As the lesson progressed, we also were instructed in how to capture the bird by its legs. Impressive were the feet and talons. The slightest misstep in handling meant a possible "footing" by the bird.

Like an "X," each foot had two talons forward, two behind. The crushing power of its feet enabled it to squeeze and hold on to its catch. Able to lift large prey, some of which was heavier than the bird, made it an aggressive and proficient hunter.

Our previous experiences with this type of bird had been easy in comparison. A large blanket or old coat thrown over the bird had enabled us to press its wings against its body. With a quick uplifting movement, we had quickly put the raptor in a cardboard box and secured the top. Knowing we would not always have that easy a capture, we felt it imperative to know more about handling difficult situations.

About to use the knowledge we had previously gained, we hurried to answer the call from Animal Control. They had a large raptor that

could not fly. Without the luxury of additional space for birds, the officer requested that we remove it from a long, narrow cage in the back of one of their pickups as soon as possible.

As we entered the parking area of the city's "pound," we realized its location near Beal's Creek and the railroad tracks had been accurately described by citizens wanting a better locale. Even though the buildings offered temporary shelter, the personnel seemed genuinely concerned about their charges. No one could truly appreciate how limited they were in resources during the '70s.

When the officer lowered the tailgate, we knew this capture was going to be a challenge. Since the cage occupied the length of the truck bed, I would have to enter and exit by crawling the distance on my knees. There would be little room to spare. At the other end, pressed against the back of the cage, was a frightened, very angry adult great horned owl.

Expressing his concern for my safety, Art asked, "Are you sure you want to do this?"

If we turned the cage

See OWL, Page 6A



BEBE
MCCASLAND

Laura on Life: Finding new 'Breakfast of Champions'

How many rules is a kid breaking when he has fudge nut brownies for breakfast? It's hard to count them all, since I only have 10 fingers.

I baked a big batch of fudge nut brownies yesterday and we had them for dessert last night. There was still some left over this morning. When my children woke up and made their way to the kitchen, yawning, the first thing they saw was the brownies. Everybody knows it's going to be a good day if there's going to be fudge nut brownies in it. Consequently, their eyes brightened and I

could see the wheels start turning: "How can we negotiate one of those brownies."

"Mom, can we have a brownie?" they asked hopefully.

"Brownies are not breakfast," I said like a good mommy, as if my mouth wasn't watering at the sight of them. I thought to myself, "When they leave for school, I'm going to snag a nice hefty one for myself." Yeah, so I'm a hypocrite. My daughter tried one more time, "We'll eat our breakfast right after we eat our brownie." I said no, as she knew I would.

Faces falling, they scuffled to the cupboard and brought out the cereal. Same old thing: Colorful fruity rings with marshmallows and chocolate flavored sugar balls...

Wait just a minute! I read the labels, as I should have done before I

bought them — and found sugar, sugar, high fructose corn syrup (whatever that is) and more stuff I couldn't pronounce. It read like a recipe for spontaneous combustion!

Why would they put all that bad stuff in breakfast cereals for kids? I think I may have discovered the origin of ADHD! Or then again, maybe it's the only way parents can get their kids to drink milk, which is good for them. Hmmm.

What do fudge nut brownies have in them, I thought. Sugar, yes, but not as much as the cereal. Flour, certainly. Nuts

have protein and fiber. Eggs, that's a great breakfast food. Why? I don't know. Someone declared eggs a breakfast item and the rest of us agreed with him, I suppose. It seems just that random, this categorizing of breakfast, lunch, and dinner foods, doesn't it?

Why don't we eat a salad for breakfast? Or roast beef and mashed potatoes? Or how about a nice big plate of liver and onions? Why do we only eat certain foods for breakfast and everything else is off limits? Doughnuts and muffins aren't so different from fudge nut brownies. So,

why are they considered breakfast foods? It doesn't seem fair that fudge nut brownies should be blackballed from the breakfast list.

Well, so far, fudge nut brownies were beating the pants off the cereal for the "Breakfast of Champions" title.

However, it doesn't do very well in the milk category. But...what if...we drank a glass of milk with it?

Bingo! Here is where I sprout wings and become my children's fairy godmother. I wave my magic

See LAURA, Page 6A



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Ailing Castro steps down as president

By ANITA SNOW

Associated Press Writer
HAVANA — An ailing, 81-year-old Fidel Castro resigned as Cuba's president Tuesday after nearly a half-century in power, saying he will not accept a new term when parliament meets Sunday.

The end of Castro's rule — the longest in the world for a head of government — frees his 76-year-old brother Raul to implement reforms he has hinted at since taking over as acting president when Fidel Castro fell ill in July 2006. President Bush said he hopes the resignation signals the beginning of a democratic transition.

"My wishes have always been to discharge my duties to my last breath," Castro wrote in a letter published Tuesday in the online edition of the Communist Party daily Granma. But, he wrote, "it would be a betrayal to my conscience to accept a responsibility requiring more mobility and dedication than I am physically able to offer."

In the pre-dawn hours, most Cubans were unaware of Castro's message, and Havana's streets were quiet. It wasn't until

5 a.m., several hours after Castro's message was posted on the internet, that official radio began reading the missive to early risers.

By sunrise, most people headed to work in Havana seemed to have heard the news, which they appeared to accept without obvious signs of emotion. There were no tears or smiles as Cubans went about their usual business.

"He will continue to be my commander in chief, he will continue to be my president," said Miriam, a 50-year-old boat worker waiting for the bus to Havana port. "But I'm not sad because he isn't leaving, and after 49 years he is finally resting a bit."

Castro temporarily ceded his powers to his brother on July 31, 2006, when he announced that he had undergone intestinal surgery. Since then, the elder Castro has not been seen in public, appearing only sporadically in official photographs and videotapes and publishing dense essays about mostly international themes as his younger brother has consolidated his rule.

There had been wide-



AP Photo/Cristobal Herrera
Cuba's President Fidel Castro, left, is shown with his brother, Raul Castro, in this 2002 file photo.

spread speculation about whether Castro would continue as president when the new National Assembly meets Sunday to pick the country's top leadership. Castro has been Cuba's unchallenged leader since 1959; he was the world's longest ruling head of state.

Castro said Cuban officials had wanted him to

remain in power after his surgery.

"It was an uncomfortable situation for me vis-a-vis an adversary that had done everything possible to get rid of me, and I felt reluctant to comply," he said in a reference to the United States.

Castro remains a member of parliament and is likely to be elected to the

31-member Council of State on Sunday, though he will no longer be its president. Raul Castro's wife, Vilma Espin, maintained her council seat until her death last year even though she was too sick to attend meetings for many months.

Castro also retains his powerful post as first secretary of Cuba's Communist Party. The party leadership posts generally are renewed at party congresses, and the last one was held in 1997.

The resignation opens the path for Raul Castro's succession to the presidency, and the full autonomy he has lacked in leading a caretaker government. The younger Castro has raised expectations among Cubans for modest economic and other reforms, stating last year that the country requires unspecified "structural changes" and acknowledging that government wages that average about \$19 a month do not satisfy basic needs.

As first vice president of Cuba's Council of State, Raul Castro was his brother's constitutionally designated successor and appears to be a shoo-in for the presidential post

when the council meets Sunday. More uncertain is who will be chosen as Raul's new successor, although 56-year-old council Vice President Carlos Lage, who is Cuba's de facto prime minister, is a strong possibility.

"Raul is also old," allowed Isabel, a 61-year-old Havana street sweeper, who listened to Castro's message being read on state radio with other fellow workers. "As a Cuban, I am thinking that Carlos Lage, or (Foreign Minister) Felipe Perez Roque, or another younger person with new eyes" could follow the younger Castro brother, she added.

Bush, traveling in Rwanda, pledged to "help the people of Cuba realize the blessings of liberty."

"The international community should work with the Cuban people to begin to build institutions that are necessary for democracy," he said.

"Eventually, this transition ought to lead to free and fair elections — and I mean free, and I mean fair — not these kind of staged elections that the Castro brothers try to foist off as true democracy."

OWL

Continued from Page 5A

on end, the bird might hold on to the sides with its talons, or if it did plummet downward, a wing could be damaged further. Only once choice remained.

As we started to unload what we thought we might need for this attempt, Art noticed a bright orange towel among our gear. Given to him by his best man shortly after our wedding, he had never used the thick, oversized beach towel. Since Tony couldn't find the burnt orange of their university days, he had selected what he considered close in color. My only thought had been that it would glow in the dark.

We readily ruled out a pole net, since the cage was too narrow for its

use. Deciding on my leather gardening gloves and the orange towel, I asked Art to walk slowly beside the truck about a foot ahead. Holding the towel at the top two corners inside the cage, I would not be able to judge what the owl was doing. If the bird could only see the fabric approaching, rather than me, it might lessen its fear. Hopefully, my approach would keep it at the back of the cage. Pressing the owl against that area could assist in its capture.

As the officer opened the cage door, the owl began harsh popping sounds as it clicked its beak. The warning was accompanied by its swaying from side to side while it tried to look as large as possible. When I was nearly a foot and a half from the end of the cage, the owl struck blindly at the towel with

its feet.

When one foot's talons became caught in the thick terrycloth to my right, I reached for the leg I knew was on the other side, while holding the rest of the towel with my left hand and elbow. The bird's other leg and foot hit the lower part of the towel about an inch from my left knee. Grabbing at that area and missing with my left hand, I met his taloned foot as it came forward again. Due to the thickness of the towel in addition to the leather glove, the great horned's talons did not penetrate enough to grab my fingers.

Quickly, while the owl tried to untangle its foot from the towel, I reached higher and secured the remaining leg. Recalling the advice from two weeks before, I could hear Midge saying, "Control the feet and you control the

bird." How true that was!

Securing both legs with my right hand, I quickly used my left hand to wrap the remaining part of the bulky towel around the wiggling, popping owl. My retreat from this confinement was slow as the owl continued to fight the orange covering.

As we unwrapped the great horned, I suddenly realized we had an audience.

Another officer and several city employees from another department had come to watch the show. With widely spaced ear tufts on its large head, the owl sported a barred chest with mottled shades of brown. Its white throat and big yellow eyes were a striking contrast. Considering its size, Art told the men he thought it was a female and where we would be taking it.

Upon hearing that the

wing in question had a hairline fracture that was mendable, we were ecstatic.

The great horned owl could be released in the future. With a growing appreciation of the bird's natural defenses came the realization that we would be gaining knowl-

edge from every rescued bird. And on future challenges, the bright orange towel would become a mainstay as it slowly faded and acquired memorable holes.

Bebe McCasland is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.

LAURA

Continued from Page 5A

wand and say "You guys can have a fudge nut brownie for breakfast if you drink a glass of milk with it." Woo-hoo, that felt good!

My 9-year-old yells, "Dad! There's an alien taking over Mom's body!"

I frown at him and say, "Okay, but if you tell your Dad I'm an alien, you're never getting brownies for breakfast again, because your mom won't allow it."

"Never mind, Dad! Just kidding. Can I have the piece in the middle?"

So, OK, we have established that I have no discipline whatsoever, but these are fudge nut brownies we're talking about, after all. Manna from heaven. Ambrosia.

My children and I are all devouring brownies and gulping milk when my husband comes into the kitchen.

"Fudge nut brownies for breakfast?" he questions me. "Who are you, and what have you done with my wife?"

One of my children whispers, "He knows!"

With my mouth full, I answer him, "You want your wife or a brownie?"

"That's a no-brainer,"

he says, pulling up a chair and helping himself to the unexpected treat.

I know I should be

insulted, but I'm eating fudge nut brownies. All is well in my world today.

Laura Snyder may be reached at lsnyder@lauraonlife.com.

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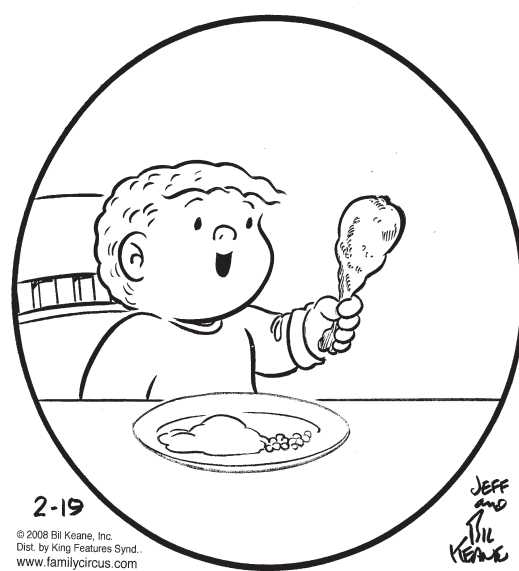
Table with 20 columns (WFAA, KMYD, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KPBT, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN, SCIFI) and 6 rows (6:30 PM to 12:30 AM) listing various TV programs and their channels.

DENNIS THE MENACE



"ARE YOU READY FOR A VISIT FROM A PRETTY GIRL?" "BUT I THOUGHT YOUR DOG WAS A BOY."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

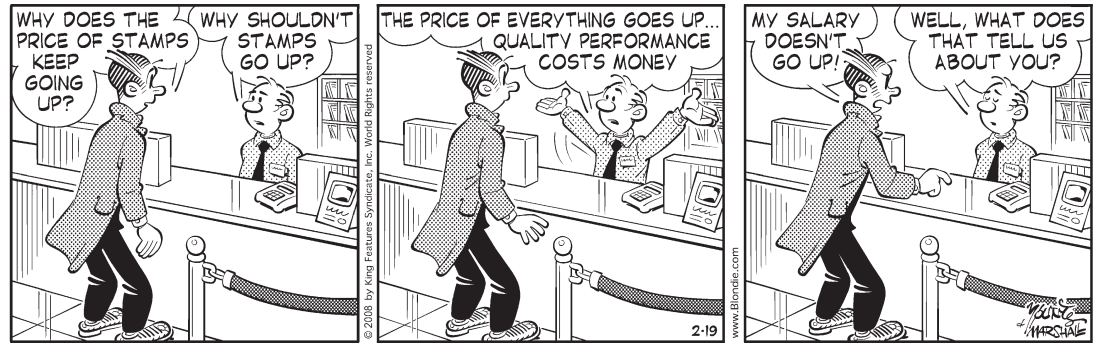


"This is my favorite kind. Chicken on a handle."

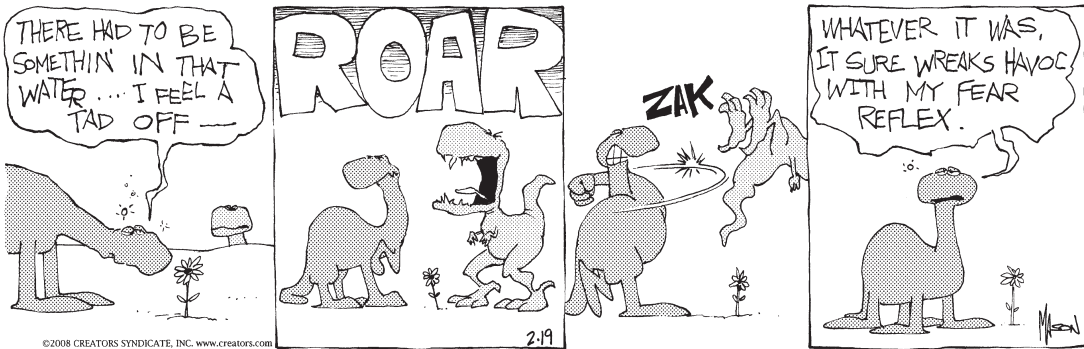
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BLONDIE



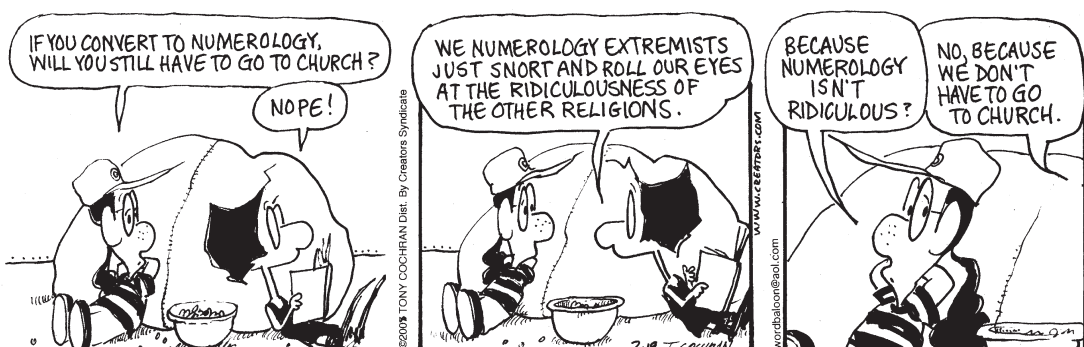
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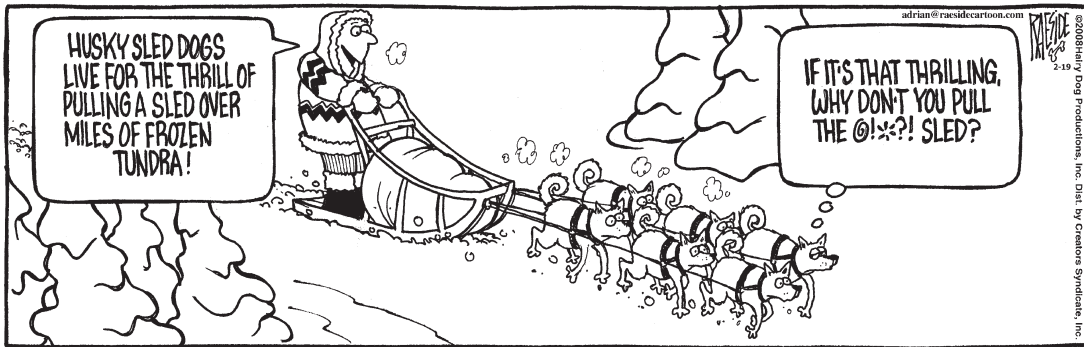
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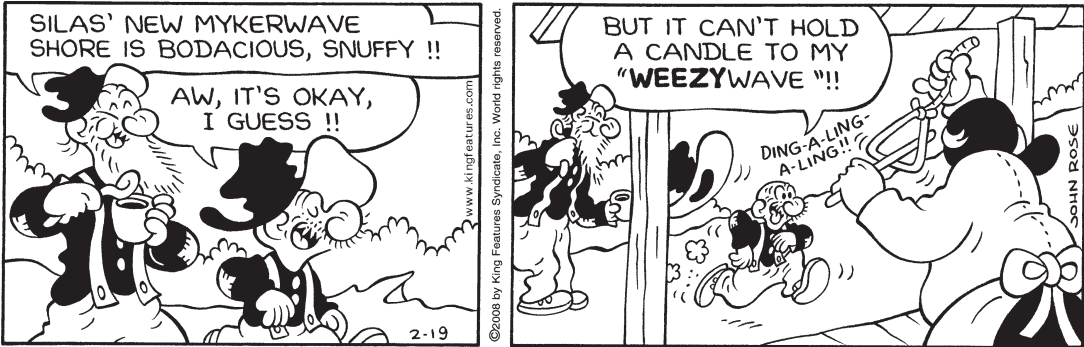
HI AND LOIS



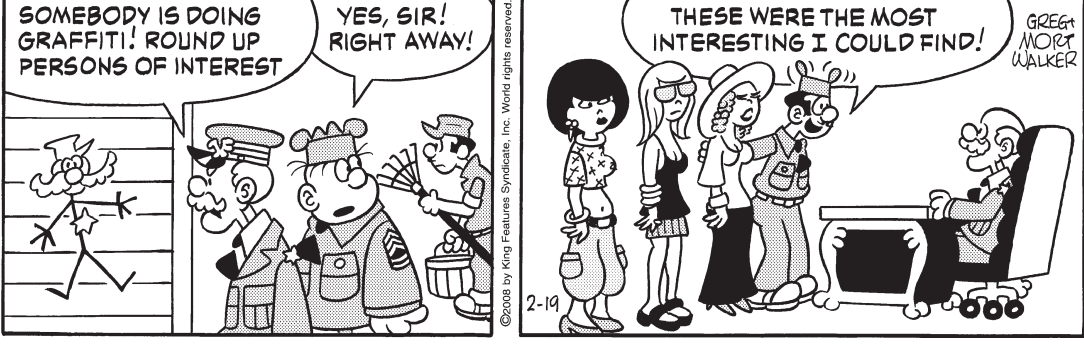
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 19, the 50th day of 2008. There are 316 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 19, 1945, during World War II, some 30,000 U.S. Marines began landing on Iwo Jima...

received a U.S. patent for "an improvement in phonograph or speaking machines." In 1881, Kansas prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. In 1942, President Roosevelt signed an executive order that gave the military the authority to relocate and intern U.S. residents...

Today's Birthdays: Singer Smokey Robinson is 68. Singer Bobby Rogers (Smokey Robinson & the Miracles) is 68. Actress Carlin Glynn is 68. Singer Lou Christie is 65. Actor Michael Nader is 63. Rock musician Tony Iommi (Black Sabbath, Heaven and Hell) is 60. Author Amy Tan is 56. Actor Jeff Daniels is 53. Rock singer-musician Dave Wakeling is 52. Talk show host Lorraine Crook is 51. Actor Ray Winstone is 51. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is 49. Britain's Prince Andrew is 48. Tennis Hall-of-Famer Hana Mandlikova is 46. Singer Seal is 45.

Answer to previous puzzle

Word search grid with words like UPTO, ABCS, LIONS, MEOW, MUCH, ENROL, PENNSYLVANIA, AAVE, SLEEK, LIFE, CLAW, DISC, TOUT, HAD, TABS, SISSY, AMI, HOLE, PEOPLE, STATE, OF, THE, UNION, TORRID, TARP, NOT, YOYOS, SEMI, SPA, UTAH, SLOT, WARN, FRAT, ARIAS, EXECUTIVE, BRANCH, PLIES, MIRE, PILE, TENDS, PIST, STUD.

Newsday Crossword

TV SETS by Gail Grabowski Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS 1 Magazine edition 6 Passing fancies 10 Mailed out 14 Men-only parties 15 Hilarious happening 16 Creative thought 17 Ogden Nash specialty 19 Jump 20 Historical period 21 Not difficult 22 Major happenings 24 Netlike fabric 25 Bridge section 26 On fire 29 Stroked, as a dog 32 Pub servings 33 Chimps and orangutans 35 Aloe (lotion ingredient) 37 Faucet problem 38 Perfume feature 39 Nonwritten exam 40 "So what is new?" 41 Female relative 42 String around a package 43 Begin a journey 45 Small streams 46 Bad habit 47 Part of a sock 48 Venue 51 Lends a hand 52 Bowler's target 55 Brother of Cain 56 President's option 59 Bistro handout 60 Treater's words 61 Huron and Erie 62 Computer storage unit 63 Golf gadgets 64 Foe 9 Most difficult to climb 10 The "e" in pronounce, e.g. 11 Biblical paradise 12 Clutter-free 13 Touches on the shoulder 18 Bouquet holder 23 Big wine holder 24 What a house is worth 25 Paid out 26 Competent 27 Has a hunch 28 Rental agreement 30 Very strange 31 Had some water 33 Severe 34 Writing instrument 36 Pub servings 38 Kitchen cooker 42 Railroad bridge support 44 Salad-dressing ingredient 45 Give up, as rights 47 Walks in the woods 48 Ewe's little one 49 Follow orders 50 Penny 51 High point 52 Small pooch, for short 53 List entry 54 Like a snoop 57 Dollar bill 58 Mover's truck

13x13 crossword grid with black squares indicating non-letter positions.

Police blotter

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

- **STEPHEN ANGLIN**, 58, of 3200 Rickabaugh, was arrested Sunday on charges of public

intoxication and disorderly conduct - language.

- **JOHNNY BARRAZA**, 39, of 429 Westover Road, was arrested Monday on charges of resisting arrest and criminal mischief - family violence.
- **THEFT** was reported in the

1800 block of Gregg Street.

- **RESISTING ARREST, SEARCH OR TRANSPORTATION** was reported:

- in the 3100 block of Rickabaugh.

- in the 400 block of Westover Road.

- **DEADLY CONDUCT - DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM** was reported in the 700 block of Goliad.

- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 400 block of Westover Road.

Sheriff's log

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 40 inmates at the time of this report.

- **MARCUS LANCE HATTENBACH**, 36, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of violation of parole - blue warrant.

- **PAUL POPE**, 48, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for driving while intoxicated - third or more offense.

- **LISA ANN RIOS**, 28, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of contempt of court - disobedience of a court order.

- **TAMMY LOCKHART COKER**, 31, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of burglary of a habitation.

- **GARY LEE SCOTT**, 57, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of burglary of a habitation.

- **JESSICA ELLAINE JENNINGS**, 20, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of theft.

- **WILLIAM KYLE DUGAN**, 18, was arrested Saturday by DPS on charges of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less, driving under the influence by a minor and no liability insurance.

- **GUADALUPE M. PATTIN**, 49, was arrested Sunday by DPS on a charge of public intoxication.

- **GLORIA LOPEZ**, 32, was arrested Sunday by DPS on a charge of public intoxication.

- **HUBERT GEAN HODGES**, 50, was arrested Sunday by DPS on a charge of public intoxication.

- **MARK MATTHEW LINDEM**, 30, was arrested Sunday on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.

- **RICKEY EARL HOKES**, 47, was arrested Sunday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated - second offense, open con-

tainer.

- **MICHAEL RAY LEWIS**, 36, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

- **JOSEPH THOMAS HADEN**, 27, was arrested Sunday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

- **CHRIS RUIZ**, 38, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft.

- **WELDON BRYANT DANIELS**, 44, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of credit/debit card abuse and possession of a controlled substance.

- **CAROLYN MARIE ANCHONDO**, 34, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for credit/debit card abuse.

- **AARON WAYNE HENSLEY**, 23, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of violation of probation.

- **JAVIER IVAN RAMIREZ**, 26, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to identify - giving false information.

- **CHRISTOVAL LIMON MORENO**, 48, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of burglary of a building.

- **MARSHA GALE BURCIAGA**, 35, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of displaying a fictitious inspection/insurance document.

- **IRMA RUTH CALVIO**, 31, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on charges of resisting arrest/search/transportation and assault - family violence.

- **JOHNNY BARRAZA**, 39, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of criminal mischief - family violence and resisting arrest.

Weather

Tonight...Partly cloudy. Not as cool. Lows in the mid 40s. SouthWinds 10 to 20 mph.

Wednesday...Sunny. Highs in the lower 70s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph.

Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph in the evening becoming light andVariable.

Thursday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. Light andVariable winds becoming north-west around 10 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Friday...Mostly cloudy. Cooler. Highs in the mid 50s.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 2-18-32-33-35.

Number matching five of five: 0.

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 2-15-23-24. Bonus Ball: 31.

Number matching four of four: 8. Prize: \$2,258.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 5-8-1-5. Sum It Up: 19.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 7-5-4. Sum It Up: 16.

EMS

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

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 2000 block of Virginia. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported in

the 2300 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 4000 block of Aspen. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported 20 miles south on Highway 87. Two people were transported to SMMC.

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1600 block of Lark. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 200 block of Nolan. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of Washington. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 2000 block of S. Main Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 2000 block of Chanute. One

person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 800 block of W. Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 600 block of N. Main Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- **GRASS FIRE** was reported in the 200 block of Carey.



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The youngest freshman

14-year-old enjoying college life at UNT

By AMY DODD THOMPSON
Denton Record-Chronicle

DENTON — As far as University of North Texas administrators can recall, Lauren Coker is the only 14-year-old to ever enroll in the Honors College there.

But her older classmates don't intimidate the freshman, who says college has been good for her.

"It's probably the best environment I've been in," Lauren said.

Professors are open to questions and opinions, she said, and she feels she's learning and learning a lot at a good pace.

Gloria Cox, dean of the Honors College, says Lauren holds herself with poise and confidence.

Cox met the Argyle girl when she gave a presentation in her freshman seminar, and the young student did not look out of place, she said.

"She had evidence of a great deal of intellectual talent," Cox said.

The Honors College has more than 1,000 students in its enriched-curriculum program, and Cox said Lauren met all the requirements for acceptance into the program.

Lauren is working

toward a bachelor's degree in English with a focus in creative writing, but she is also being home-schooled in subjects including math, physical education and art so she can get a high school diploma.

If she were in high school, Lauren would be a 10th-grader. The last year she attended in a traditional school was ninth grade, after skipping eighth grade.

Lauren, whose IQ test places her in the "profoundly gifted" range, is a Davidson Young Scholar with the Davidson Institute, a national nonprofit organization that serves young, highly gifted individuals.

Her mother, Julie Coker, said two experts in the field of gifted education suggested about a year ago that Lauren go to college.

Coker waited for a year while her daughter attended ninth grade because she felt that Lauren was too young. But then they decided to give college a try, and the teen started out with 11 credit hours in the fall. Her mother said that was a breeze for Lauren. This semester, she's

taking 13 credit hours and loving it.

Lauren is "happier than she's been in years," Coker said.

With Lauren's mental age being higher than many others her age, she sometimes didn't fit in and came off as awkward to those around her, as with other highly gifted children, Coker said.

Age usually isn't an issue for Lauren in her classes, and sometimes teachers don't even realize how young she is.

Last semester, Coker said, a professor asked students to write in Spanish about what they felt when they were 15.

A fellow student, who had gotten to know Lauren, raised his hand and asked, "What if you aren't 15 yet?"

Rachel Yeatts, who taught Lauren honors composition last semester, at first did not realize Lauren was younger until she was told.

"She's a bright, intuitive and enthusiastic student — always had interesting things to contribute to discussions and in her writing," Yeatts said.

Lauren's passion is writing, and she's been at it for years. She used to

write plays for family and friends to put on. Lately, she's been focusing on short stories and has written a 400-page first draft for a fiction book that she hopes to get published this year. It's a spin-off of The Phantom of the Opera. Lauren describes her story "as to Phantom as (the production) Wicked would be to The Wizard of Oz."

UNT has long nurtured its bond with young minds at the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science.

Four 13-year-olds and four 14-year-olds have studied at UNT through the academy for as long it has been associated with the university, around 20 years, UNT spokeswoman Kelley Reese said.

The university is also serving a 19-year-old student who started work on his doctorate when he was 17.

Young students accepted for enrollment at UNT come with the mental tools to handle the coursework, said Troy Johnson, associate vice president for enrollment management.

"They have clearly shown the academic ability" to learn at a college level, he said.

Teachers union urges changes in accountability

AUSTIN (AP) — Teacher unions pressing for major reforms to school accountability measures are renewing calls for Texas to put less emphasis on high-stakes testing that educators blast as commanding too much classroom attention.

The plea by all four teacher organizations in Texas come as leaders of a special state panel indicate changes are coming to the school accountability system when the Legislature reconvenes in January. The system annually rates campus and district performance based on test scores and graduation rates.

Sen. Florence Shapiro, who chairs the Senate education committee, said Monday that the system needs to be "recharged."

"It's time to look at our accountability system, evaluate it and decide what parts we want to keep, what we want to adjust and what we want to throw out," said Shapiro.

Testifying before the Select Committee on Public School Accountability, teachers unions complained the

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test monopolizes classroom instruction and swallows the time teachers have to work with students.

Richard Kouri of the Texas State Teachers Association said the high-stakes test and school ratings now determine "how a child is viewed, how a school is viewed and even the salary of teachers."

"Everybody is living and dying based on what these accountability ratings show," Kouri said.

The high-stakes nature of the TAKS has been lambasted by teachers and parents, who argue that too much classroom time is spent preparing students for the test. Students must pass the test to graduate.

State ratings are anxiously awaited by superintendents, school boards, teachers and parents each year because they are the chief measure of how well schools are educating their students.

The Association of Texas Professional Educators reported that a recent survey of parents and teachers found they share "a fairly negative view of our current testing system."

Woman who killed cheating spouse takes lawyer to trial

HOUSTON (AP) — The famous saga of a woman who killed her cheating husband by mowing him down with her luxury car returns to court Tuesday in a civil case Clara Harris filed against her former defense attorney.

Jury selection is set to begin more than three years after Harris filed a lawsuit claiming Houston attorney George Parnham overcharged to defend her

in the 2003 murder trial that garnered international attention.

Harris, 50, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for running over her philandering spouse in a hotel parking lot in 2002 after confronting him with his mistress. The lawsuit claims Harris hired Parnham for \$75,000 but wound up paying more than \$235,000.

Lawyers for Parnham,

whose list of past clients includes Andrea Yates, have argued that Harris is the one who still owes money.

"She's mad about how much he charged her," said Charles Babcock, who is representing Parnham.

Opening statements are scheduled for Wednesday in the trial, which is expected to last about a week.

Harris and Parnham never had a written agreement. Dean Blumrosen, Harris' attorney, said his client is owed between \$90,000 and \$135,000.

Babcock said Parnham had to take out a \$90,000 loan to pay experts who aided in Harris' defense.

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Open House Invitation

Big Spring State Hospital will host an Open House for perspective employees on Wednesday, February 20 at 2:30 PM. If you are looking for after-school work or a summer job, come to our Open House for an opportunity to have your questions answered and see if assisting people with mental illness in their recovery is something you might be interested in. We look forward to meeting with you in the Administration Building (502) at 2:30.

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