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WEDNESDAY

MARCH 19, 2008



BIG SPRING HERALD

VOLUME 103, NUMBER 95

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

Downes, TEA meet

Agency mulls complaint against superintendent

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

Big Spring Independent School District Michael Downes had his chance to answer charges of misconduct Tuesday afternoon.

Downes and his attorney met in Austin with investigators from the Texas Education Agency regarding allegations of improper relationships with students.

The complaint, filed by former BSISD employee Jamie Owen with



Downes

the State Board of Educator Certification in late 2007, accused Downes of inappropriate conduct with students at a previous stop in his educational career more than 15 years ago.

Downes, who assumed superintendent duties at BSISD in 2002, and other district officials have consistently declined comments on this case since it sur-

facted.

Grapevine attorney Neal Adams, who has represented Downes in this matter, expressed confidence that state officials will return a finding favorable to his client.

"We went into the meeting quite confident of where we stood, and based on the questions we were asked, I feel we were pretty much on the right course," Adams said.

The particulars of the complaint

See **DOWNES**, Page 3A

Flee attempt earns felony escape charge

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

A routine hearing turned into a chase Tuesday morning when a Big Spring man escaped custody and scampers two blocks from the 118th District Courthouse before officers caught him.



Alvarez

According to Mike Welling, director of Howard County's Pre-trial Bonding program, 19-year-old Ruben Alvarez was in the district courtroom consulting with his attorney when he decided

to make a run for it.

"While he was in the courtroom it came in that he had a warrant for his arrest, so I called across the street to the sheriff's office and asked them to send someone over to escort him to the jail," said Welling. "At that point, Alvarez was consulting with his attorney and was not in handcuffs or any other restraint. At that point he decided he wasn't going to stick around."

Welling said he struggled with Alvarez, who was wanted on a charge of felony theft.

See **ESCAPE**, Page 3A



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins

Emergency personnel redirect traffic at the intersection of Third Street and Goliad Tuesday morning following a traffic accident involving a GMC pickup and a Dodge Ram pickup. Only minor injuries were reported at the scene.

Discount ends Thursday on Health Fair booth rental

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

Organizations wishing to purchase booth space at this year's Howard County Health Fair still have a short time to do so at a discount.

Officials with the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, which coordinates the event, said Thursday is the final day to purchase booth space for \$80.

After that, booths will cost \$100 until March 28, at which time no more reservations will be taken, Executive Director Debbye ValVerde said.

Around 50 organizations have secured booth space for this year's fair, scheduled for April 12 at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

ValVerde said there is plenty of space still available.

"We have room for 65 organizations," she said. "So far, everything is going well. We just want to make sure that groups that want to rent space at the fair contact us within the next few days."

ValVerde said a new corporate sponsor, Air-Evac Lifeteam, has joined a list that includes Alon USA, *Big Spring Herald*, KBST,

See **BOOTHES**, Page 3A

Narcotics bust puts five in jail

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

The Big Spring Police Department Narcotics Unit executed a search warrant in the 700 block of E. 13th Street Monday, netting crack cocaine and marijuana, as well as making five arrests.



Wilbon

Jordan

According to Sgt. Tony Everett, public information officer with the BSPD, officers served the warrant at 705 E. 13th Street at approximately 2 p.m., the result of a month-long investigation.



Foster

Lewis

Martinez

"The search warrant was the result of a one-month investigation of drug sales from the house," said Everett. "Officers discovered a quantity of crack cocaine and a small amount of marijuana, which resulted in the arrest of five people."

Those arrested included:
• Jonathon Paul Wilbon, 36, of 705 E. 13th St.,

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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.



Teen missing after being swept by floodwaters

By PAUL J. WEBER

Associated Press Writer

DALLAS — Airlines faced passenger backlogs Wednesday from hundreds of flights canceled by severe Texas storms that flooded streets and left rescuers searching for a teenager who was apparently swept down a creek drainage pipe.

The 14-year-old boy remained missing after a

friend, who swam to safety, told authorities he saw him carried by fast-moving waters Tuesday in the creek where they had been playing, according to the Mesquite Fire Department.

More than six inches of rain deluged areas around Dallas on Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service. That included record rainfall at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport,

where more than half of 950 scheduled flights were canceled.

By early Wednesday morning, DFW airport had opened all security checkpoint lanes in preparation for an early rush of stranded passengers. Airport officials said the backlog flights would take most of Wednesday to unwind.

"Everybody did a great job overnight of hanging in there

and trying to get some rest," airport spokesman Ken Capps said. "The airlines will be working the lines early to try to get as many people rebooked and out of here as quickly as possible."

Cots and blankets were given to stranded travelers overnight. The airport early Wednesday also received several hundred new passengers

See **FLOOD**, 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
Wednesday, March 19, 2008**

IN BRIEF

Crossroads high school varsity sports calendar

TODAY

(Note: Big Spring's baseball game against Fort Stockton was canceled Tuesday due to inclement weather. The Steers will play an extra game against Chickasha, Okla. at 1 p.m. today at Steer Park.)

THURSDAY

Big Spring baseball vs. Chickasha, Okla., 1 p.m.
Big Spring softball at Hobbs, N.M., TBA
Coahoma baseball vs. Merkel, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY

Big Spring softball at Brownwood, TBA
Forsan baseball at Morton Tournament through Saturday.

MONDAY

Forsan baseball at Winters, 4:30 p.m.
Forsan softball vs. Eldorado, 5 p.m.

Big Spring Country Club hosting 3-person scramble

The Big Spring Country Club is hosting a 3-person scramble April 5 and 6 with a 1 p.m. shotgun start on both days.

Entry fee is \$60 per player plus a golf cart, however, private carts are welcome.

Entry includes a barbecue lunch on the course for the first day of the tournament.

The field will be flighted by first-round score and the number of flights will be determined by the number of entries.

An optional cash players pool will be available for both rounds.

Call the Pro Shop at 267-5354 for details.

Crossroads of West Texas Golf Classic scheduled

The Big Spring Chamber of Commerce and ATMOS Energy are sponsoring the Crossroads of West Texas Golf Class to be held at the Big Spring Country Club May 17 and 18.

The tournament is limited to the first 100 paid teams with a two-man scramble format being used.

A handicap is required and the tourney will be pre-flighted by a tournament committee and local golf pro.

Entry fee is \$180 per team. All entries are to be paid in advance. The fee includes access to the ATMOS Energy hospitality tent, free beverages, a barbecue lunch for both days, an afternoon shootout on May 16 and a golf goodie bag.

Winners may receive pro shop merchandise at 100 percent or may take 70 percent of winnings.

Call the country club's Pro Shop at 267-5354 or the Chamber of Commerce at 263-7641 for more information.

Mount St. Mary's wins Big Dance opener

By **JOE KAY**

AP Sports Writer

DAYTON, Ohio — The Mount finally got The Win.

Mount St. Mary's, a Maryland school known for getting drubbed in its previous two appearances in the NCAA tournament, got this one started with a nice-looking win Tuesday night in the opening game.

A 69-60 victory over Coppin State set up a daunting second game for the Mountaineers (19-14), who immediately started preparing for their next opponent.

Anybody up for playing North

Carolina? In its own backyard, no less?

"I envisioned playing against them when I was little," said guard Jeremy Goode, a Carolina native who led the way with 21 points. "To play against them means a lot."

It means a season that seemed to be a lost cause only a few weeks ago can go on for at least a few more days.

The Mountaineers won their last five games to shed their losing record and make the tournament, then got the one victory that's always been well out of reach. In its two other NCAA

games, Mount St. Mary's lost to Kentucky by 46 points in 1995 and to Michigan State by 23 in 1999.

"It's a relief," said Kelly Beidler, who had 15 rebounds. "It just felt good to say we've actually won an NCAA game."

No time to savor it. Tournament reality hits on Friday, when the Mount plays the top-seeded Tar Heels in Raleigh. Fans in the crowd of 8,464 at University of Dayton Arena held up signs calling on the play-in winner to "Bury N. Carolina."

Tough chance for that. A 16th

seed has never taken down a No. 1.

But, that's something for later. For a few sweet minutes on Tuesday night, Mount St. Mary's got to savor its breakthrough over another Maryland school, located about 60 miles away.

Coppin State (16-21) became the first team to reach the tournament with 20 losses, and the Eagles played as if they were in over their heads during the closing minutes. With the pressure on, they went five minutes without scoring, allowing Mount St.

See **HOOPS**, Page 4B

Rockets blasted, streak ends at 22

Celtics shoot down Houston's historic run with 94-74 win

By **CHRIS DUNCAN**

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — It took the NBA's best team to end the Houston Rockets' 22-game winning streak.

Kevin Garnett and the Boston Celtics stopped the Rockets' remarkable run in emphatic fashion Tuesday night, pulling away in the second half for a 94-74 victory.

Garnett scored 22 points and Paul Pierce added 20 as Boston handed Houston its first loss since a 97-89 defeat to Utah on Jan. 27. The Rockets then put together the NBA's second-longest winning streak, which ended 11 victories shy of the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers, who won 33 in a row.

"Our names will be mentioned there with Hall of Fame people," said Houston point guard Rafer Alston. "We have something to tell our kids."

It was only Houston's second loss in 28 games and its fourth since a 97-93 loss in Boston on Jan. 2, a game Tracy McGrady sat out with a knee injury. The Rockets also lost for the first time in 11 games since Yao Ming went out with a season-ending foot injury on Feb. 26.

The Rockets were finally doomed by poor shooting and mistakes that they overcame during their streak with hustle and solid defense.

"I'm too close to the situation right now to really appreciate,"

Rockets forward Shane Battier said. "When I'm old and gray and can't dribble this basketball anymore, I think I'll appreciate it. Right now, we're still in a playoff run and have got some dogs barking at our heels."

Boston blanketed McGrady all night, holding Houston's remaining All-Star to eight points on 4-for-11 shooting. Other Rockets had routinely picked up the slack during the seven-week run whenever McGrady struggled, but the Celtics never let that happen.

The Rockets scored a season-low 34 points in the second half on 11-for-33 shooting.

"It's not disappointing," McGrady said. "It's a hell of a team over there. They outplayed us. I've never seen a defense like that. I mean, if they play defense like that, night in and night out, the NBA is in trouble because that was defense at its finest."

Luis Scola scored 15 for Houston, which had a 15-game home streak snapped. Only the 1985-86 Rockets, who won 20 straight at The Summit, had a longer home-court streak in franchise history.

Reserve Leon Powe added 21 points for the Celtics, who've won 13 of their last 14 games, the last three without All-Star guard Ray Allen, who's out with a sore left ankle.

See **ROCKETS**, Page 3B



AP photo/Bob Levey
Boston Celtics forward Kevin Garnett (5) goes up to dunk the ball as Houston Rockets forward Luis Scola (4) defends during the fourth quarter of a basketball game Tuesday in Houston. The Rockets 22-game win streak ended as the Celtics beat the Rockets, 94-74.

Mavs rally falls short, Lakers win 102-100

By **JAIME ARON**

AP Sports Writer

DALLAS — Kobe Bryant took a pass in the lane and spun toward a defender, flicking the ball over his head once his back was toward the basket. The ball hit the glass, caromed off the rim and fell into the net.

Just like that, the Los Angeles Lakers were up by 25 points midway through the third quarter. And the momentum the Dallas Mavericks thought they'd built with five lopsided wins over lousy teams seemed silly.

Dirk Nowitzki and the Mavs ended up making things interesting all the way to the final buzzer, but it wasn't enough to change the outcome. The Lakers won 102-100 Tuesday night, ending a skid of three losses in four games and putting them back into a tie with Houston for the best record in the Western Conference.

"It's a big win for us," Bryant said. "We had to stop the bleeding. We got a big lead, but it wasn't the way we wanted to close out the game. But we got the win."

Bryant scored only nine of his 29 points in the second half. He also jammed his hip. An injury to an MVP front-runner could be devastating considering this was Los Angeles' second straight game without Pau Gasol and before the game coach Phil

Jackson said emerging center Andrew Bynum probably won't return until the playoffs.

"I'm good. I'm straight," Bryant said. "I jammed my hip into the socket. It hurt for a minute and then released. I'm fine."

With Bryant slowed at the end, Vladimir Radmanovic stepped up, scoring 10 of his season-high 21 points in the final quarter. His spurt included three 3s, all of them while the Mavericks were challenging the biggest comeback in team history.

Dallas made only 12 shots in the first half and scored just 38 points. It was so bad that some fans booed and others chanted MVP for Bryant. Jessica Simpson, sitting in the front row with beau Tony Romo, was in jeopardy of being blamed for another loss by one of her hometown teams.

But the Mavs closed the third quarter on a 14-1 run, then opened the fourth with a 9-2 spurt. They pushed again at the end, with consecutive 3-pointers from Nowitzki making it 98-97 with 41 seconds left. A long 3 by Jason Terry got Dallas within 101-100 with 4.9 seconds to go.

Derek Fisher made one of two fouls shots after that, giving the Mavericks a chance to win it or take their chances in overtime — like when the teams met in Los Angeles two weeks before.

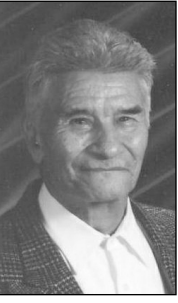
See **NBA**, Page 3B



AP photo/Tony Gutierrez
Los Angeles Lakers guard Sasha Vujacic, left rear, fouls Dallas Mavericks guard Jason Terry (31) as Kobe Bryant looks on in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Tuesday. The Lakers won 102-100.

Obituaries

Ricardo Chavez



Ricardo Chavez, 90, of Midland, formerly of Big Spring, died Tuesday, March 18, 2008, at his residence. Funeral mass will be at 2 p.m. today, Wednesday, March 19, 2008, at St. Thomas Catholic Church. Vigil services will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008, at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

He was born April 2, 1917, in Candalaria to Maria and Tiofilo Chavez. He married Petra Porras May 28, 1949, in Pecos. They moved to Big Spring in 1951 from Pecos. Petra preceded him in death Dec. 4, 2004. He worked at Webb Air Force Base for 30 years. He was a member of St. Thomas Catholic Church, St. Joseph's Society and was also a Cursillista.

He is survived by three daughters, Maria Sanchez and her husband, Ray, and Margarita Vasquez and her husband, Manuel, all of Midland, and Elida Rodriguez and her husband, Everardo, of Big Spring; two sons, Joe Chavez and J.C. Chavez, both of Midland; four brothers, Pedro Chavez of Balmorhea, Francisco Chavez of Artesia, N.M., Pancho Chavez of Odessa and Abel Chavez of Pecos; four sisters, Rosa Dominguez and Eva Baeza, both of Pecos, Maria Tercero of Odessa and Paula Gomez of Midland; 23 grandchildren; and 44 great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by one son, Ismael Chavez; two grandchildren; two brothers, Miguel Chavez and Juan Chavez; and three sisters, Juanita Ortiz, Petra Porras and Donicia Nunez.

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

Sandra Duenzl

Sandra Duenzl, 69, died Thursday, March 13, 2008, in Weatherford.

Services were held at 10 a.m., Monday, March 17, 2008, at Horseshoe Bend Baptist Church. Burial was in DFW National Cemetery.

Sandra was born March 27, 1938, in Coahoma, the daughter of Howard and Mary Reid. She was a member of Horseshoe Bend Baptist Church and Horseshoe Bend Ladies Auxiliary Volunteer Fire Dept. She retired from Tekni-Kut Corp as a partner with her husband.

Sandra was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Quinon and Wallace Reid; and sisters Mildred Menser and Bonnie Mims.

Survivors include her husband, Ernst; a son, James Duenzl of Dallas; daughters, Mary Duenzl and Elizabeth Chamberlain and husband, John, all of Dallas; a step-daughter, Tzila Duenzl of California; three grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations may be made to Cook Children's Hospital.

Arrangements were by White's Funeral Home of Weatherford

Ervin W. Platte

Ervin W. Platte, 79, of Houston died March 13, 2008, in Houston. He was born May 30, 1928, in Hamilton County to Willie and Lilly Platte.

He is survived by his wife, Lora of Houston; two daughters and five sons, Karen and her husband, Harvey Jones, of San Angelo, Janice and her husband, Steve Allman, of Phoenix, Ariz., Larry and his wife, Jackie, of Big Spring, Roy and his wife, Laurie, of Big Spring, Kenny and his wife, Gail, of Shattuck, Okla., and Clifton and his wife, Dawn, of Pflugerville; 14 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Support Groups

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.

MONDAY

• Encourager's Support Group for all widows and widowers meets the first and third Monday of the month. For more information, call Nancy Hale at 398-5239.

Police blotter

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

- **BRANDIE CASEY**, 23, of New Caney, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of forgery.
- **UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE** was reported in the 500 block of Westover Road.
- **FRAUDULENT POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE/PRESCRIPTION SCHEDULE** was reported in the 700 block of Scurry.
- **DEADLY CONDUCT/DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM** was reported in the 4200 block of Hamilton.
- **BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported in the 600 block of Goliad.
- **AGGRAVATED ASSAULT** was reported in the 1900 block of Wasson.

Sheriff's report

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

- Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 37 inmates at the time of this report.
- **BARRON DWAIN WARDWELL**, 31, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.
 - **JOSE DAVID RIVAS**, 43, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
 - **TANDI JO CASSELMAN**, 24, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of theft.
 - **JARIN LYNN RICHARDSON**, 33, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.
 - **RUBEN ALVAREZ**, 19, was arrested Tuesday on charges of theft, bondsman off bond for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, bondsman off bond for burglary of a habitation, forgery of a financial instrument, bondsman off bond for forgery of a financial instrument (two counts) and escape from custody.
 - **BILLY WAYNE STRICKLAND JR.**, 29, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft by check.
 - **VALENTE ROSA LOZOYA**, 25, was arrested Tuesday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

Fire/EMS

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

- **TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported near the intersection of Third Street and Owens. Three people were transported to SMMC.
- **TRAUMA** was reported in the 1900 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported near the intersection of Third Street and Goliad. Service refused.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 2600 block of Ent. One person was transported to SMMC.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Tuesday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 6-8-13-22-25
Number matching five of five: 0.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
1-5-0-0. Sum It Up: 6

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
8-3-5. Sum It Up: 16

Weather

Tonight...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 40s. South winds around 10 mph.

Thursday...Sunny. Highs in the mid 70s. South winds 10 to 20 mph increasing to 20 to 25 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 40s. South winds 20 to 25 mph shifting to the southwest 10 to 20 mph after midnight.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 70s. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph shifting to the northeast 15 to 20 mph in the afternoon.

Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s.

Saturday...Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 70s.

Saturday night...Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Lows around 40.

Sunday...Cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Cooler. Highs in the upper 50s.

"We wish to clarify the prior notice regarding reporting of claims resulting from the incident at the Alon Refinery on February 18th. The prior notice stated that claims must be reported by no later than Saturday March 15th. In fact, the notice was intended to state that claims would no longer be handled over the phone after such date. Due to the need for this clarification, the date for submitting claims over the phone at the below number has been extended to Monday, **March 31st**. After that date, individuals wishing to make a claim may call the number below to receive recorded instructions for submitting a claim in writing **1-800-451-4527**."

Bulletin Board

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

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.
- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.
- Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in the RSVP office at 501 Rannels.
- League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information, contact John Ybarra at 264-1628. The public is invited.
- American Legion Post 506 meets at 6 p.m.
- Rackley-Swords 379, Vietnam Veterans of America meets at 7 p.m. in the Sparenburg Building, 309 S. Main St.
- Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

- Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.
- AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant.
- Greater Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.
- Dance at the Senior Center, 1901 Simler, from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Take Note

• The SMMC/FMC Relay For Life team is hosting a scrub sale. The vendor will be selling in the hospital's first floor classroom on Wednesday, March 26 from 7a.m. to 5 p.m. with a percentage of the proceeds going to Relay For Life.

• American Red Cross Lifeguarding and CPR classes will be held in two sessions this year, March 31-April 5 and April 14-19. Cost will be \$125. Those interested can sign up with Coach Randall Shaw at rshaw3535@hotmail.com or at the Big Spring YMCA. Times of the class will be given at the time of registration. Spots are limited and fees must be paid at registration. Individuals who register must be present for all classes. After the first day of class, no refunds will be given.

• Cross stitchers are needed to complete one or more blocks of this year's Howard County Fair quilt. All supplies are provided. Blocks may be picked up from Posey Cotton Office, 601 Scurry, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. For information, call 263-1267 or 263-4980. This year's quilt theme is "Wildflowers of Texas." All proceeds from the sale of tickets for the quilt are used to defray the expenses of the Fair. The quilt will be awarded the last night of the fair.

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

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

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

BIG SPRING HERALD

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Torres victorious in 22 seconds



Courtesy photo
Big Spring MMA 51/50 fighter Nathan Torres (left) has his arm raised after winning a mixed martial arts contest in Alabama March 8. Torres defeated his opponent in 22 seconds with the use of arm bar submission. Torres' brothers, Joe and Angel, were also victorious in fights on the same night. MMA 51/50 instructor Kevin Maumau also won a match against a much larger opponent. Maumau stands at 5-8 and weighs 240 pounds. His opponent was 6-5 and 390 pounds. Still, Maumau came out with the win. All four fighters return to Alabama in May for their next contest.

Mendoza makes case for spot in Rangers' rotation

Herald Staff Report

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Luis Mendoza made his strongest case yet to earn the final spot in Texas' rotation.

One of three candidates to become the Rangers' fifth starter, Mendoza allowed two hits and one run over five innings Tuesday in an 11-6 victory over Oakland that snapped the Athletics' seven-game winning streak.

"I'm trying to throw the most innings I can and mix all my pitches," said Mendoza, who had allowed nine runs and nine hits in 6 2-3 innings before Tuesday. "I think that's what they're looking for — to show I can pitch in the big leagues."

The right-hander's five-inning stint was the longest by a Texas starter this spring.

"Other than the one inning in Colorado he's been real good," manager Ron Washington said. "He's got good stuff, man. He kept his stuff for the whole time he was out there. That tells you right there he's made adjustments."

Jeff Fiorentino led off

the game with a sharp single to center but was retired by Mendoza on a double-play grounder by Kurt Suzuki. Chris Denorfia doubled to start the third off Oakland's other hit off Mendoza and later scored.

A's starter Justin Duchscherer went four innings, allowing six runs on four hits with two walks and four strikeouts. The right-hander gave up four consecutive hits in the second inning as the Rangers extended a 1-0 lead to 3-0.

"I honestly felt like I consistently hit the spots I wanted to hit," said Duchscherer, whose 2007 season was cut short by hip surgery in July. "My arm feels good and my hip feels good."

Daric Barton's third home run of the spring in the sixth pulled the A's even at 4, but the Rangers scored one run in the bottom half and three more in the seventh. Adam Melhuse added a three-run homer in the eighth for Texas.

Corey Brown hit a solo shot in the ninth for the Athletics.

See **MLB**, Page 4B

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HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Police and other emergency response personnel attempt to extricate persons from their vehicle following a two-car accident at the intersection of Third and Owens streets Tuesday morning. Three people were transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center with unspecified injuries.

BUST

Continued from Page 1A

charged with possession of a controlled substance — more than four grams, less than 200 grams in a drug free zone and failure to identify — giving false information.

- Markisha Jordan, 19, of 705 E. 13th St., charged with possession of a controlled substance — more than four grams, less than 200 grams in a drug free zone.
- Linda Foster, 30, of 705 E. 13th

St., charged with possession of a controlled substance — more than four grams, less than 200 grams in a drug free zone.

- Kirsten Lewis, 23, of 300 S. Settles, charged with possession of a controlled substance — more than four grams, less than 200 grams in a drug free zone.
- Angela Martinez, 18, of 807 Wyoming, charged with possession of a controlled substance — more than four grams, less than 200 grams in a drug free zone, a Beeville warrant for a probation violation and failure to identify as

a fugitive from justice.

“Each of the possession charges are first-degree felonies due to the fact the residence is in a drug free zone because of its distance from Big Spring High School,” said Everett.

A first-degree felony is punishable by five to 99 years to life in prison, with a possible fine not to exceed \$10,000.

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

ESCAPE

Continued from Page 1A

“We struggled in the court, all the way out to the front door,” said Welling. “Once we got to the front steps of the courthouse, that was it. He was gone.”

Welling said Alvarez ran east on Fourth Street,

quickly setting several law enforcement officers on his trail.

“Wayne Wright from the Big Spring Police Department was the first one to run in pursuit of him (Alvarez),” said Welling. “A few minutes later, deputies from the sheriff’s office and several BSPD officers were in pursuit, as well. He man-

aged to get to an area just south of the city water office, which is where officers caught him.”

In addition to the felony theft charge, Welling said Alvarez is now looking at a charge of felony escape.

No injuries were reported as a result of the chase, although the struggle may have complicated recent surgery Welling under-

went.

“I just had surgery on my leg a few weeks ago,” said Welling. “I’m not sure if I messed it up or not. I’m on my way to the doctor to have it checked out, however.”

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

FLOOD

Continued from Page 1A

who were bussed from airports as far as Louisiana.

At least 11 more cancellations were expected Wednesday morning, and airport officials braced passengers for more delays and canceled flights as airlines rebuild their schedules.

Forecasters expected sunny skies around Dallas on Wednesday, a stark change from the barrage of rain and strong winds that wreaked havoc on the area Tuesday.

Street flooding led to multiple high water rescues, and a city bus was abandoned by the driver and passengers when it became stranded. No one on the bus was hurt.

In suburban Lancaster, hundreds of people were

advised to evacuate their homes as nearby Ten Mile Creek rose. One woman was rescued from her yard and four other people were rescued from

their vehicles, said Ciciely Hickmon, a spokeswoman for the city.

It was unclear how many travelers were affected by the cancella-

tions at DFW airport, where officials estimate about 160,000 passengers pass through their terminals each day.

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DOWNES

Continued from Page 1A

continue to be a bit of an unknown factor. Adams said neither he or Downes have been supplied with a copy and will not be until the investigation is completed.

“On Friday, we submitted a detailed response to what we believe was contained in the complaint,” Adams said. “Michael has said all along that he has nothing to hide and has been fully cooperative in this investigation.”

TEA Lead Investigator Tracy Thomas will eventually submit a recommendation to her superiors, who will then issue a decision, Adams said.

That decision could range from a dismissal of the complaint to possible disciplinary action against Downes. Adams said any disciplinary

steps taken by TEA could be appealed to an administrative law judge for final determination.

Adams stressed that he fully anticipates a positive response from TEA.

“We feel ... there is no basis for the complaint and we believe the investigation should be closed,” he said. “What’s sad about this is that a disgruntled former employee who doesn’t particularly care about the facts in this case can put a person through all this.”

In January, BSISD trustees announced their support for Downes and extended his contract by a year, although they said they would continue to monitor the situation.

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

BOOTHS

Continued from Page 1A

KBYG, H-E-B, Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home, Parkplace Retirement/Parkview Nursing and Rehab, Scenic Mountain Medical Center, Warren Chiropractic Center, West Texas Centers for MHMR and the West Texas VA Health Care System.

“Our sponsors are the ones who allow us to have free admission and screenings at the health fair,” ValVerde said. “If it wasn’t for them, we’d definitely have to charge.”

The event usually provides a large number of free screenings for a variety of illnesses and medical conditions, including

blood sugar, blood pressure, glaucoma and PSA antibody.

Other events include the Fire Safety House, a 41-foot mobile travel trailer used to instruct children on various fire safety tips in a home setting, ValVerde said.

Another children’s attraction will be Dimple the Clown.

For more information, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 263-7641.

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

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Ricardo Chavez, 90, died Tuesday. Funeral Mass will be at 2:00 PM Wednesday at St. Thomas Catholic Church. Vigil Services will be at 7:00 PM Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Graveside services will be at 2:00 PM Thursday at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

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NBA

Continued from Page 1B

Nowitzki nailed a 3 to tie it last time, but this time his shot went wide right. Part of the problem was a low inbound pass from Josh Howard that cost the big German precious seconds.

"Still, I had a good look," he said.

Nowitzki had 35 points, 11 rebounds and a season-high five blocks, but the Mavericks' five-game winning streak was snapped. Dallas fell to 0-6 against teams with winning records since adding Jason Kidd.

Kidd had his worst game since arriving from New Jersey, with one point (0-for-3 shooting, including a missed 3-pointer in the final half-minute), seven assists and three rebounds in only 28 minutes. He was benched from 6:27 of the third to 5:51 of the fourth.

Nowitzki said Los Angeles' great shooting in the first half kept Kidd from being a factor, which knocked the whole team

out of whack.

"It's hard to get out running when you have to take the ball inbounds every time," said Nowitzki, whose frustration about the first half was evident when he hurled the ball the length of the court after the buzzer.

Lamar Odom scored 17 points for Los Angeles and Ronny Turiaf had 17 points, 17 rebounds and lots of tenacious play.

Jackson was disappointed that his players let Dallas rally, especially since he warned them exactly what to avoid and they didn't listen.

"They were pretty thick-headed tonight," he said.

Terry and Howard scored 19 points for Dallas, which slipped to seventh in the West. With 24 losses, the Mavericks have the same amount as eighth-seeded Golden State, but lead the Warriors by three games in the win column.

The Mavericks can't let this loss linger as Boston comes to town Thursday night and San Antonio on Sunday, giving them two more chances to try beating a championship con-

tender.

"If we come out and played focused basketball like we're capable of doing, we can beat anybody," Jerry Stackhouse said. "If not, we'll be hanging our heads down like tonight."

Notes: Mavs security kept two more bloggers out of the locker room, as per team owner Mark Cuban's policy. ... Bryant shot 27 free throws last time the teams met. He had only six this time — and made only three. ... Dallas' game against the Clippers next Tuesday will be shown live in 3D high definition to an invitation-only audience of 100 fans picked from the team's Web site. The 2007 All-Star game and Game 2 of last year's NBA finals are the only previous live sporting events shown in 3D HD.

Pistons 136, Nuggets 120

Richard Hamilton scored 24 points and Rasheed Wallace added 21 as Detroit scored 130 points in regulation for the first time since March 8, 2000.

The visiting Nuggets were coming off a record-setting 168-116 victory over Seattle, but it

was Detroit's offense that took over Tuesday night. The Pistons scored a season-high 73 points in the first half.

Suns 111, Trail Blazers 98

Amare Stoudemire scored 25 points, Shaquille O'Neal had 16 points and 14 rebounds, and visiting Phoenix won its fifth straight.

Steve Nash added 22 points and eight assists for the Suns, who remained a game behind the division-leading Los Angeles Lakers in the Pacific Division.

Bulls 112, Nets 96

Luol Deng scored 20 points, and Drew Gooden had 19 points and 11 rebounds as host Chicago built a big halftime lead, survived a sluggish third quarter and pulled away.

New Jersey played the second half without starting point guard Devin Harris, who sprained his right ankle and limped off the court with 1:56 to go in the second quarter. Vince Carter led the Nets with 22 points and Richard Jefferson

finished with 21.

Kings 122, Warriors 105

Kevin Martin scored 34 points, Ron Artest added 26 and Sacramento snapped a three-game losing streak against its Northern California rival.

Baron Davis had 24 points and eight assists for the Warriors, who had won their last two games at Arco Arena with a large number of their Bay Area fans making the trip of about 80 miles. With long stretches of awful shooting causing their third loss in 11 games, the Warriors remained just 1-1/2 games ahead of Denver for the final spot in the Western Conference playoffs.

Heat 112, Bucks 106

Jason Williams and Ricky Davis had double-doubles, Chris Quinn hit three crucial 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, and Miami snapped an eight-game losing streak with a victory in Milwaukee.

Michael Redd scored 18 of his 27 points in the first half for Milwaukee.

ROCKETS

Continued from Page 1B

Boston beat San Antonio 93-91 on Monday night and Garnett said the Celtics were all business in their approach to Tuesday's game.

"There wasn't really a lot of talking on the bus last night after the win," Garnett said. "We got on the plane, it was real subtle. There wasn't a lot of talking and I know when we're like that, we're focused."

The Rockets still have one more streak to protect — they'll go for their 13th straight road win in New Orleans on Wednesday night. The end of the big streak hadn't quite sunk in moments after this

loss.

"I feel worse for the fans than I do for us," Battier said. "We'll be all right. We've got a game in 20 hours. We'll be out there trying to win another game. For the fans, they really were captivated by the streak and we hope they still get behind us and cheer us on."

Houston beat the Lakers on Sunday to take over sole possession of first place in the Western Conference and set up Tuesday's showdown between conference leaders.

They were tied at 40 at halftime, but Boston took control in the third quarter, led by its All-Star duo.

Garnett swished a jumper from the top of the

key 15 seconds out of the break and Pierce sank a 3-pointer on Boston's next trip down, the start of an 18-5 spurt. The Rockets missed eight of their first 10 shots out of the break and stopped getting the bounces that had always gone their way throughout the streak.

"I loved the way we played defense tonight," Garnett said. "We had a lot of energy."

Even when Houston got aggressive, it backfired.

With 3:18 left in the third quarter, Tony Allen drove the baseline and McGrady and Scola both jumped to block him. McGrady blocked the ball, but Scola whacked hit Allen and sent him hard to the court. Referee Scott Foster called a flagrant

foul on Scola as Allen lay on the floor for several minutes. He finally got up and hit two free throws to put Boston up 64-52.

McGrady missed a jumper in the final seconds of the third quarter and Battier was there for the rebound, but tipped it right to James Posey, who started a fast break the other way.

"All good things must come to an end," McGrady said.

The Celtics outscored Houston 32-16 in the third quarter and built a 72-56 lead, the largest deficit the Rockets had faced since Boston had them down 20 in their first meeting. Houston went 7-for-16 from the field with six turnovers in the deci-

sive quarter.

Boston pushed the lead over 20 early in the fourth quarter. During a timeout, the crowd stood and applauded as a video on the scoreboard finished with a shot of the arena and the line: "Where 22 in a row happens."

The rest of the game was a cold dose of reality. McGrady left with 8:45 left and fans slowly filed out of the arena. With 2:09 left, Garnett drove down the line and hammered home a one-handed dunk, then added a milder throwdown on Boston's next possession.

The loss dropped Houston back into a first-place tie with the Lakers in the West. The Hornets are a half-game behind

heading into Wednesday's matchup.

Notes: Boston coach Doc Rivers said he would re-evaluate Ray Allen's injury on Wednesday. Rivers said Allen could "possibly" play in Dallas on Thursday. ... The Celtics have won seven straight road games and all seven meetings against teams from the Southwest Division. ... Former Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon had a courtside seat for the second straight game. ... Rockets rookie forward Carl Landry sat out for the sixth straight game with a bruised right knee. Landry will travel with the team to New Orleans for Wednesday's game.

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Jason's Entertainment Page



The NFL Free Agency period has become ridiculous in the past few years. First off, the NFL just keeps increasing the salary cap year after year. Let's take a closer look at this. The salary cap for the 2008/2009 NFL season is \$116 million per team, an increase of \$7 million above the 2007 figure. You are probably thinking, that's just the salary of a high profile player in the NFL. Well, the salary cap was set at \$75 million in 2003. A 17 million increase from 1999 (\$57.3 million). The salary cap in 1998 was \$52.4 million. So in a 10 year span the salary cap has seen a 125% increase. WOW ... I already know what you are saying. I didn't know inflation was this bad. There were several teams who had over 30 million in cap space to spend. I remember in the past, teams would only be 5-10 million above the salary cap, while many teams were cutting players to be buyers in Free Agency. Now, you can keep your overpriced veterans without cutting and still be a buyer in Free Agency. Let's look at one of the free agents this year.

Calvin Pace - \$42 million contract, \$20 million signing bonus, \$22 million guarantees.



The average football fan probably didn't know about Pace until free agency because outside of Lance Briggs, there really was nobody. Pace, a former first round pick out of Wake Forest, is a tweener from DE and LB. He is an ideal OLB in a 3-4 defense but a below average DE. In his first four seasons he had a total of 7.5 sacks/ 88 Total Tackles / 4 FF. Last year, in a contract year, he had 6.5 Sacks/ 98 Total Tackles / 1 FF/ 1 INT. Pace had a terrific year, but no Pro Bowl birth. Boy did Pace cash in. Me being a Miami Dolphins fan, I wanted the Tuna to bring him in. I was thinking he would get about a 5 year contract worth \$30 Million, \$8 million signing bonus, and \$12 million guarantees. Still, I think the contract I came up with was very overpriced for a one year wonder. He basically doubled the signing bonus and guaranteed money I thought and most thought he would get.

This is one of many free agents who broke the bank in Free Agency. This is what happens when teams can franchise their best players and tender them as an exclusive rights free agent. Basically your mediocre free agents get paid like Superstars. Just think in another 6-8 years, the salary cap in the NFL will basically be the payroll of the 2008 Yankees (MLB does not have a salary cap). And maybe a 3rd string QB will get to see a contract like Calvin Pace got in 2008.

EDITORIAL

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Ron Midkiff
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Agriculture Week time to remember those who feed us

Area farmers and ranchers are in the midst of the 35th celebration of National Agriculture Week, which began Sunday and continues through Saturday, as the nation honors its food and fiber producers.

The celebration provides an opportunity for most of us to develop a better understanding of just how important a role this agriculture plays in our lives.

Not only does agriculture play an important role in our local economy here in West Texas, our state contributes heavily to the nation's agricultural economy.

From the cotton fields here in the Crossroads; to the corn, sorghum and cotton fields of the South Plains; the cattle feedlots and wheat fields of the Panhandle and Rolling Plains, to the vegetable fields and citrus groves of South Texas and the timber forests of East Texas, Texas ranks first in the nation in the production of many agricultural products — specifically cotton, spinach, cattle, beef cattle and sheep.

In Texas, agriculture still employs a little less than 20 percent of the workforce. That's more than just the farmers and ranchers involved in agricultural production. It's those who process, transport and market agricultural products.

Sadly, most Americans are unaware of the connection between themselves and agriculture — they see themselves as totally removed from the farm.

That is probably not the case here in West Texas, because most of us are well aware that someone we know is employed by the food and agriculture industry.

Still, many of us take little thought of how important agriculture is in our lives.

A century ago, almost all of the population would have to spend at least six days a week growing their own food, and only a few people would be free to pursue other activities.

Today, however, the food-gathering efforts of most people consist of selecting food from a grocery store and bringing it home. Virtually the same can be said of the process of providing clothing for ourselves and our families.

We have the hard work and, in many cases, sacrifices of America's farmers to thank for that luxury.

Let us all remember that this week.

How To CONTACT Us

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

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

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 - Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
 - Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

Your steady management of our life, Lord, gives us the confidence to go out into the world.

Amen

Put Venezuela on the terror list

After years on the receiving end of insults and unfounded attacks from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, President Bush finally is engaging in some tough talk with the firebrand/demagogue who wants to lead a leftist movement against the United States.



MIGUEL PEREZ

Last week, Bush took a few long-overdue shots at Chavez — all part of a renewed White House effort to back the Colombian government and its war against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), leftist guerrillas for which Chavez has expressed admiration.

Bush said, "The region is facing an increasingly stark choice: to quietly accept the vision of the terrorists and the demagogues or to actively support democratic leaders like President (Alvaro) Uribe (of Colombia)."

"I've made my choice," Bush added. "I'm standing with courageous leadership that believes in freedom and peace."

Bush is making a new effort to promote the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement, which stupidly has been stalled by Democrats in Congress. He says the agreement is an essential weapon to fight Chavez's growing influence in Latin America. He should have been talking this way a long time ago, but it's better late than never.

"As it tries to expand its influence in Latin America, the (Chavez) regime claims to promote social justice," Bush said in a speech. "In truth, its agenda amounts to little more than empty promises and a thirst for power. It has squandered its oil wealth in an effort to promote its hostile anti-American vision. And it has left its own citizens to face food shortages while it threatens its neighbors."

Chavez responded with his usual diatribe, calling Bush a "terrorist" responsible for "genocide." But at least now he is getting a response from the White House. We simply couldn't afford to ignore him any longer.

After all, Chavez nearly started a South American war recently, when he ordered Venezuelan troops to the border with Colombia because of an incident that had nothing to do with Venezuela.

The real border feud was between Colombia and Ecuador. On March 1, Colombian troops chased FARC guerrillas across their border with Ecuador and killed a group of rebels on Ecuadorian soil. It sparked a conflict that threatened to escalate into a war but was settled peacefully at a summit of Latin American presidents one week later.

Nevertheless, Bush said Venezuela's response to the conflict between Colombia and Ecuador was "the latest step in a disturbing pattern of provocative behavior by the regime in Caracas."

Obviously, the reason Chavez was so willing to get involved in this conflict is Colombian soldiers obtained evidence in the raid into Ecuador that implicates both Chavez and Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa as supporters of the FARC.

The Colombian government has charged that at least one document in a computer recovered from the rebels suggests Chavez recently gave \$300 million to the FARC.

Because the United States considers the FARC a terrorist organization — and because now there is evidence that Chavez is supporting the rebels — Venezuela should be designated as a sponsor of terror.

Bush has toughened his talk against Chavez, but the question now is whether he is willing to put Venezuela on the U.S. list of

state sponsors of terrorism, which is what some U.S. lawmakers are calling for. According to published reports citing a U.S. official, the White House has asked attorneys to look into the requirements for placing Venezuela on the list.

However, taking such a step could be costly. Venezuela is a major U.S. oil supplier, and Chavez already has threatened to shut off the spigot if we don't let his "Bolivarian Revolution" take over most of our hemisphere.

"They threatened to put us on the list of terrorists that they've got there. Great, let them make their list and shove it in their ... pocket," Chavez said, with an intentional pause. He did not repeat an earlier threat to stop selling oil to the United States, but the implication was there.

For Bush, this is a tough call — and perhaps the main reason he had restrained from engaging in tough talk with Chavez. If he puts Venezuela on the blacklist, it could disrupt the flow of oil we purchase from that country and make many Americans scream at the gas pump. But if he doesn't put Venezuela on the U.S. list of terror sponsors — along with Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Syria — what good is having a list?

Where is our credibility if we call Chavez a sponsor of FARC terrorists but fail to sanction him, as we do with others, because we need his oil? Where are our principles? Are we going to allow Hugo Chavez to hold us hostage?

When asked whether the United States will put Venezuela on the list of terror sponsors, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice gave a non-committal response: "We will watch the situation and ... act accordingly."

Not good enough! If the Bush administration is going to talk the talk with Chavez, it better be ready to walk the walk to create sanctions against Venezuela.

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ADDRESSES

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GARY SIMER — Home: 263-0260.

The white elephant in the room

Would Barack Obama be where he is if he weren't black? Would Hillary Clinton be where she is if she weren't a woman? Would Geraldine Ferraro be where she is if her name had been Gerald?



SUSAN ESTRICH

I'm not even going to touch the first two, lest I be forced to resign from a position I don't have or given one so I can resign from it.

I'll stick with the third question, which Gerry Ferraro, who is my former boss and longtime friend, has answered thousands of times herself.

Walter Mondale picked her over Michael Dukakis (yes, he was the other choice) in 1984, because he wanted to shuffle the deck, change the dynamic, bring excitement and a sense of making history to what was already seen as a long-shot effort to unseat the very popular incumbent, Ronald Reagan.

In other words, he picked her because she was a woman. Gerald wouldn't have gotten it. Is there something wrong with that?

That doesn't mean she didn't deserve it. It doesn't mean she wasn't qualified. It just means gender matters. In her case, unlike every election before or

since, it mattered in a way that resulted in a qualified woman getting the nod instead of a qualified man. And I don't think it's sexist to say that.

Geraldine Ferraro is many things — outspoken, spontaneous, sometimes outrageous, but always courageous, loyal and loving. I adore her. But that's not my point. One thing she isn't — I know this, and I think Barack Obama does, as well — is racist.

I don't think she in any way meant to put Obama down by pointing to his race as an essential element of his appeal. It is an essential element of his appeal. That doesn't mean he's the affirmative action candidate. It doesn't mean he's unqualified or undeserving. Recognizing that race matters is exactly what critical race theorists have been arguing for years to those who have claimed that we can or should be colorblind. Impossible, they've said all along. Is it now racist to recognize that they're right?

We need to be able to talk about race without forcing whoever brings it up to resign from whatever honorary position they may hold. It's the white elephant in the room that you're not supposed to acknowledge, but at which everyone stares, as it grows larger due to the forced silence. Guess what? There's a white elephant in the room. Or, to be politically correct,

an elephant of some color, which we will not mention. A large, colorless elephant. Is it better if we leave it at that?

Calling someone a racist, accusing someone of racism, those are ways to end the conversation, not begin it. Simply denouncing someone that way doesn't tell us anything about why they're wrong, if they're wrong.

Somebody should have asked Geraldine Ferraro what she meant, and why, instead of denouncing her for saying it.

Maybe she's right. Maybe she's wrong. But it's important to discuss it, and not outdo ourselves condemning her.

This is a unique and unprecedented campaign. A black man is running against a woman for the nomination of one of the two major parties. It's down to the two of them. Whoever wins is making history. Voters will confront a choice they have never before faced. It's a big deal.

It does matter. Saying that is neither racist nor sexist. Letting people actually discuss what they mean, what it means to them, and why and how both race and gender do matter might actually help us move forward to the point where both matter less.

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HOOPS

Continued from Page 1B

Mary's to break it open. Sensing the enormity of the moment, they missed eight straight shots and a pair of free throws. Several times, the ball started to roll in, then agonizingly spun out.

"We had a lot of opportunities," said Tywain McKee, who had a team-high 15 points. "We just couldn't put them in."

Goode, a 5-foot-9 sophomore who knows a little about Carolina blue because he grew up in Charlotte, was the spark for Mount St. Mary's up-tempo offense. He did it all, driving to the basket and hitting fadeaway jumpers over much taller players.

He also supplied the final touches, hitting four free throws in the last 27 seconds.

Perhaps no other opening-game winner enjoyed it so much and complained so little. Unlike previous years, there was no grousing about having to start the tournament in Dayton.

Not from Mount St. Mary's, the Northeast Conference champ that had a losing record before it got on that late run. The only complaint was from some folks who didn't even think the

Mountaineers deserved to be in the tournament at all, given their RPI of 159.

"Me and Chris (Vann) were in the hotel watching ESPN and a guy says this game shouldn't even be played," Goode said. "He said neither team deserved to be in the tournament. That kind of got us ready to play."

Coppin State complain? No way.

Marooned at 4-19 in early February, the Eagles sneaked into the tournament for the first time since 1997 by winning the Mid-Eastern Athletic title.

"This was a great opportunity," said Antwan Harrison, who scored 14 points. "What we came through to get to the NCAA tournament, you can't take that away."

No one could grouse about the game, either. For the most part, they didn't play like teams with a combined 35 losses. Coppin State used its quickness, going inside for dunks and layups. Mount St. Mary's trio of dangerous guards did most of the damage.

Coppin State was ahead the entire first half, leading by as many as nine. The Mountaineers' guards changed the tone after halftime, when Vann's three-point play put Mount St. Mary's up 39-34.

MLB

Continued from Page 1B

Yankees honor victims with exhibition at Virginia Tech

Before putting on their pinstripes Tuesday, the New York Yankees arrived at Virginia Tech in suits and sunglasses. First stop, the moving memorial to victims of last year's campus massacre.

Derek Jeter posed for a picture with a woman in front of the stone that commemorated her fiancée. The shortstop's only request to her was that she smile, which she did.

"It's part of the reason that we're here," Jeter said. "People always ask, well, what can you do? How does this help? I really don't know. If it just makes people smile or enjoy themselves for the three hours that we're here, it's all worthwhile."

The Yankees brought Alex Rodriguez, Jason Giambi and other stars to Blacksburg, Va., for an exhibition game against college kids that was more about healing than baseball.

The final score didn't matter.

"There are certain things that happen that are so devastating that

time stops," Rodriguez said, comparing the Virginia Tech shootings to the terrorists attacks in 2001. "For me, this is one of them. This is probably the proudest day I've ever (had) to wear a Yankee uniform."

Hearing that, Hokies coach Pete Hughes said, "knocks you on your heels."

From beginning to end, the visit Yankees owner George Steinbrenner promised moments after

seeing the tragedy unfolding on television last April 16 was one to remember.

The Yankees made a \$1 million contribution last year to the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund, created to cover grief counseling, memorials and other costs for the victims and their families after Virginia Tech student Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people in two campus buildings before committing suicide.

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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
			8			9	1	
1			2	8	7			
6			3				7	4

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Upping the Percentages

South dealer. North-South vulnerable.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A Q 9 4		♠ 7	
♥ Q 10		♥ 8 7 5 3	
♦ 10 8 5 2		♦ 9 4 3	
♣ A 8 3		♣ K 9 6 5 2	
SOUTH			
♠ K J 10 8 5 2			
♥ A J 4			
♦ A K 6			
♣ 7			

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
6 ♣			

The bidding:
Opening lead — queen of clubs.
One of the very first things a beginner is taught is how to take a finesse. But, strangely enough, one of the last things he learns is when not to take a finesse.
Here is a typical case. South is declarer at six spades, and West leads a club. It seems entirely normal to win with the ace, draw trumps and then take a heart finesse. If East has the king, the slam comes home; if West has the king, the slam goes down, since declarer must eventually lose a diamond.

However, this would not be the best way to play the hand. In effect, declarer would give himself only a 50-50 shot at making the contract. But the fact is that South can improve on his prospects by adopting an altogether different line of play.

He should ruff a low club at trick two, then cash the K-A of trumps and ruff dummy's eight of clubs. He now makes his stab at fame and fortune by playing the A-K and another diamond.

As the cards lie, West would win the diamond and be forced to return a heart or a club, either of which allows South to score the rest of the tricks.

It is true that declarer needs a considerable amount of luck to achieve the winning position, but it costs him nothing at all to try. Had East wound up on lead after the third diamond, South would still have the heart finesse to fall back on.

The principle that governs this type of hand can be applied to many deals. Declarer notes at the outset that he has roughly a 50 percent chance for the slam if he relies exclusively on a finesse.

He then seeks a way to improve on this percentage, and once he reaches this point in his thinking, he is only a short step away from finding the winning line of play.

Tomorrow: What can defeat me?

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FOR SALE By Owner, located in Colorado City. 2Bdr/1Bath, carpet utility room, central heat/air. Asking \$40,000. Call Robbie at 432-267-6537 or leave a message.

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BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Composer Arthur Rubenstein once said, "The seasons are what a symphony ought to be: four perfect movements in harmony with each other." Today, the planets elegantly orchestrate the vernal equinox, heralding celestial balance between light and dark: springtime. It's also beginning of the astrological New Year — the sun enters Aries.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You feel better about life when it affords you sweet freedom. You need your space. Those who understand the need will be among your favorite people. Distant, but favored.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your normal routine is underway, and yet it's just not the same. Something inside you has changed. In fact, a few of your daily habits don't seem to fit the new you one bit.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Money won't solve the problem. This should come as a relief, taking some of the pressure off. What will solve the problem is creativity and courage, and you have plenty of both.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Friends will be competitive. Love it or hate it, you can't deny that it pushes you to step up your game. Of course, the friends you love best are the ones who don't feel the need to outdo you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). On your way to a goal, you get the feeling that you're missing out on some fun — and for what? If you see immediate results for your sacrifice, it might just not be a sacrifice.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Everyone has a fuse, and yours happens to be very, very long. Therefore, it takes a lot of burning to set off an explosion of emotion. But someone close to you is working on it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Will financial success corrupt your ethics? Well, you're about to find out! The money is coming in, and you have your pick of ways to use it — and the power it brings with it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Small gestures yield small results. And sometimes, small results are best. For instance, where the neighbors are concerned — it's nice to stay friendly and not too involved.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Risk your ego. It appears that you may lose self-esteem when you do, but you actually gain self-esteem when you realize you are strong enough to face possible rejection.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your special charisma inspires astounding generosity. You may be encouraged by people who actually need encouragement, supported by those with very little support of their own.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You learn best from personal experience, but it doesn't have to be your own. Interview the people who know what you want to know. Get input from objective and honest folks who've been in similar straits.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Pay attention to gentle reminders and good-hearted kidding. They're telling you something. When you heed the message, you avoid having to deal with a decidedly angrier message later.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "My Gemini daughter is graduating college. I'm concerned about her ability to find work that makes her happy — her work history is erratic." Work, shmerk. If it's not fun, it's not for Gemini. Am I saying she has a questionable work ethic? Not at all. Because Gemini can commit. What's more, she can have a ball sweeping the floor. And she can enjoy running the coffee pot just as much as she can enjoy running the company. She's always looking for the amusements in life, and she therefore finds them. If there is a funny monkey Web site, for example, that allows her to program a chimp in a wig to say, "The conference call has been moved to three o'clock," Gemini is all over it. Relax, mom. For Gemini, there is no one thing; there are many. She's multitalented, and she keeps discovering new interests into the next century. So when she wonders if she'd be better

off quitting this job or going for that position, suggest she focus on mastering whatever she's doing now. Once she becomes masterful, down from the heavens will drop signs that make her next career adventure obvious. (Need career advice? Read my new book, "Rock Your Stars: Your Astrological Guide to Getting it All.")

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Bruce Willis is a Pisces. Who knew? That's the mystery of this subtle sign. Pisces is an amalgam of all other signs, so Pisceans have the capacity to be just about anybody they choose to be. Bruce just reaches into his zodiacal closet and thinks, *Maybe I'll be a warrior/comedian/politician today.*

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

dentist schools need to teach a class on compassion. — Disappointed and Furious

Dear Furious: No one should be browbeaten into having dental work done if it is not affordable. Most dentists are quite helpful about the bills if you discuss it with them beforehand. Explain that you have a phobia, that fixing everything is cost-prohibitive, and ask how they can ease your fears while maintaining some regular care. You should leave any practice where the dentist berates you — and be sure to say exactly why you are walking out.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Knowing We Did the Right Thing," who donated their daughter's organs and hadn't heard from the recipients. I'd like to address this to them on behalf of all of us:

Dear Donor Parents: I received a liver transplant on Aug. 1, 2004, in Birmingham, Ala. You will never know what a true gift of life is until you get a second chance. I am so very proud of the decision you made. My donor was a 29-year-old man. I didn't know this young man or his family until my transplant. His family and mine have gotten together several times since then.

I have two daughters and a son-in-law who are organ donors. Several people became donors after they saw what a difference it made in my life. I want to offer you my heartfelt condolences on the loss of your daughter. I think she would be very proud of you for the number of lives you've saved. May God bless you. — Edna in Alabama

Dear Annie: Due to financial difficulties, my husband, children and I moved into my mother's house a year ago. Mom owns the place, but when we moved in, she decided to live full time in the condo she also owns. We pay the bills to keep the house running and do maintenance as needed.

Here is the issue: Mom, who lived in this house for over 20 years, still has a key and stops by every day. She walks in without knocking and starts talking as if we have

nothing else to do. She interrupts conversations between my husband and me or prevents me from working on important papers.

How do I get Mom to see that she doesn't live here anymore and needs to respect our privacy? It is just rude and tactless. — Married Daughter

Dear Daughter: Mom still considers this to be her house, not yours, and she feels perfectly comfortable and justified dropping by whenever she chooses. Talk to her in a loving way and explain that you're sure she doesn't mean to intrude on your privacy, but the constant unannounced visits are creating some resentment and the worry that she might walk in at a particularly inopportune moment. She's a landlord now, not a tenant. Ask her to please call first or, at the very least, knock before entering the house. If she refuses, we recommend installing a new deadbolt or even a simple chain. Tell her it's for safety purposes. Although she will still be welcome, you'll have a few minutes to put yourself together before opening the door.

Dear Annie: My wife and I have three children, only one of whom lives at home. The older two live in other parts of the country, are not married and will be traveling home for an upcoming family event. We will also be hosting two of their aunts and uncles, who are visiting from the West Coast for the same event.

Who should get the bedrooms? We don't have a guest room because my elderly mother-in-law lives with us, along with her aide. There are some pullout couches and sleeping bags, which the kids usually use. My wife thinks the children should be able to have their former rooms when they are home. I believe it is more polite to offer the bedrooms to the visiting, married adult guests. Should the married couples have the bedrooms, or should they go to the single, young adults? — John in Cincinnati

Dear John: We admire your hospitality. Those rooms that are regularly

occupied (yours, your youngest child's, your mother-in-law's) should be left alone. All other bedrooms are "guest rooms." It makes more sense for the older married couples to get private rooms and not have to sleep on pullout sofas or sleeping bags in common areas of the house. Your wife may fear that if she makes things less accommodating for your older children, they won't come home as often, but we suspect the kids will come anyway.

Dear Annie: The letter from "Sad Mom," whose son-in-law is using steroids, hit home. I was married for 18 years to a highly respected man who used drugs. When we separated, my family was furious and our friends and his colleagues "couldn't understand." None of them had any idea what it was like living with someone who is hiding drug use.

As long as a drug user continues to hold on to his job and appear to be a great "family man," people can be swayed into believing drugs are not affecting those around him. But I could not take the fear, mistrust and emotional abuse I had to endure.

The mother who wrote you should support her daughter for having the courage to separate herself from a husband who abuses his body and their relationship with steroids. — California

Dear California: We agree that until you have walked in the other person's shoes, it is difficult to understand the misery of living with an addict.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Annie's Mailbox ®: Advice for those in need

Dear Annie: Every week, a group of my neighbors and friends meets for dinner. "Veronica," a friend of our neighbor's for many years, is morbidly obese. For the past few months, she has had an overwhelming and offensive odor of stale urine. It's so prevalent that eating dinner in her proximity is next to impossible.

I am racking my brain to come up with a tactful way to say something. I don't know if Veronica realizes how horrible she smells. She is a very nice person, but her hygiene has become nonexistent. What can I do? — Need Tact in Indianapolis

Dear Need Tact: If this is a recent development, there could be physical reasons behind it rather than laziness about hygiene. Incontinence and a strong odor can be the result of a urinary tract infection or, in some instances, diabetes. If Veronica is morbidly obese, she could have a bladder control problem as well and may mistakenly believe she is the only one who can



**KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR**

smell it. Talk to your neighbor and ask if she's noticed this and if Veronica is aware of it. One of you should bite the bullet and tell the poor woman she needs to see her doctor.

Dear Annie: I just suffered through a dental visit, and the suffering was not from the pain of treatment, but from the dentist's rude attitude. And this is not the first time, nor is it the only dentist who has behaved this way.

I am a senior citizen on Social Security, and it is impossible to have regular checkups due to the extreme cost. Put that together with a lifelong phobia of dental work, and my teeth are hardly in good shape. But dentists don't seem to have any understanding of money issues. I have been rudely lectured time after time. One even came in with my X-rays and slammed them down, saying, "You are going to lose all your teeth," as if I had done this on purpose. I started to cry and he just stared at me. I never went back.

I just had X-rays and a teeth cleaning and the bill was \$340 — half my monthly income. What do they expect us to do? The

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

Legals

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of EILEEN ZANT, Deceased, were issued on January 31, 2008, in Cause No. P-13616, pending in the County Court of Howard County, Texas, to: DANNY ZANT and SARA HUHN.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **Danny Zant**
2100 Bonham
Odessa, Texas 79761
Sara Huhn
404 Crested Ridge Lane
Ft. Worth, TX 76108
DATED the 14th day of March, 2008.
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Why not check this out?

The library will be closed Friday and Saturday for the Easter Holidays. We will reopen Monday at 10 a.m.

Another great thriller from Greg Iles that will keep you up at night, "Third Degree" takes place in Athens Point, Miss., where a doctor's life will spiral out of control within a space of a week. A hot-shot helicopter pilot/sheriff's deputy places two roles: that of a law enforcement person and the lover of the doctor's wife. Is that enough to get you curious? If it is, check out "Third Degree" by Greg Iles. The library has quite a few of Greg's books, so look at some of his prior work. Most can be found in the Fiction area, although a few are located in the Mystery section.



HOLLIS MCCRIGHT

Spring is getting ready to burst out with green growth so it may be time to get your equipment into shape. The library has just acquired several service manuals on small, air-cooled engines, walk-behind lawn mowers and yard and garden tractors. These particular volumes are for equipment that was made since 1990. We also purchased volume 1 for large diesel engines service manual. It covers nine different manufacturers

so you may be able to glean some useful information from them. Look in the New Book Binder for specific titles.

A very useful item has been placed for circulation. "Texas State Directory" (976.4 TEX S) has a wealth of information on your state officials, boards, governing information for cities and counties and it also contains a federal section. The 2008 edition can be found at the Reference Desk and cannot be checked out. Another reference item available is "J.K. Lasser's Your Income Tax 2008" (REF 343.73 LAS J).

"Captured! The Betty and Barney Hill UFO Experience" (001.942 FRI S) by Stanton T. Friedman and Kathleen Marden is the story of the UFO abduction of Betty and Barney Hill in 1946. More and more people are convinced that UFOs are real and their existence is being covered up by the government. If you have doubts or questions about the Hill case or alien experiences in general, "Captured!" will give you the answers you're searching for. But the complete story of what really happened that day, its effect on the participants and the findings of investigators has never been told ... until now. Kathleen Marden, Betty Hill's niece, shares details from her discussions with Betty and from the evidence of the UFO abduction. She also looks at the Hills' riveting hypnosis sessions about their time onboard the spacecraft.

The transcripts of these sessions provide insight into the character of the aliens, including their curiosity, their democratic discussions and their desire to avoid inflicting pain. In addition, co-author, physicist and ufologist Stanton T. Friedman, the original civilian investigator of the Roswell Incident, reviews and refutes the arguments of those who have attacked the Hill case. No comment.

Do you like your relatives? Would you be friends with your sister or brother? "Forced to be Family: A Guide for Living with Sinister Sisters, Drama Mamas and Infuriating In-Laws" (646.780 DEL C) by Cheryl Dellasega may be able to help you learn how to live with toxic family members.

Trying to lose weight for the summer? "The Last 15" (613.25 SHU J) by Dr. Joey Shulman will show you how to reset your metabolism, gain energy, improvement in moods and increased self-worth. I wonder how it goes with a bowl of Blue Bell ice cream with chocolate?

Volume 5 of the "Collected Short Stories of Louis L'Amour" (LP W LAM L) is in. Printed in large print, it surely makes it easy to read. Titles like "The Ghost Maker", "When a Texan Takes Over" or even "Marshal of Painted Rock" takes one back to the days of ridin', ropin', wranglerin' and shootin'. Not much gray in a Western, bad is bad and good is good. A little bit of fiction

has trickled in: Karen Kingsbury's "Someday"; "Falling for You Again" by Catherine Palmer; Dee Henderson's "True Honor" and "When Morning Comes" by Cindy Woodsmall. These are categorized as Christian Fiction. Bill Crider is one of my favorite authors and his new mystery featuring Sheriff Dan Rhodes promises to be a great read. "Of All Sad Words" is the title and it mixes up guitars, moonshine, Web sites and county politics plus a murder or two.

Only a couple of Mondays remain for Gloria Hopkins and her "posse" to prepare tax returns here at the library. March 24, 31 and April 7 are the remaining dates. Hours are 8 a.m. until noon. To get to the basement, you enter at the glass door to the right of the main entrance. There is an elevator for those who need to take it down to the basement.

Howard County Library hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturdays. The Internet/Video room is closed from noon until 2 p.m. Monday through Friday and it will close a half hour before closing. The Library is located at 500 S. Main St. Our phone number is 264-2260. The Web site is www.howard-county.lib.tx.us.

Hollis McCright is director of the Howard County Library.



AP Photo/Sharon Stabley
The Irish Pub in Atlantic City, N.J., overflows with participants of its 24th annual day-after St. Patrick's Day tradition, Bag Day. Each March 18, people come from far and near to jam the joint, most wearing some sort of bag fashioned into a hat atop their head.

After St. Patrick's Day comes Bag Day at pub in Atlantic City

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Paul Murphy came all the way from Glasgow, Scotland, to stand against the back wall of The Irish Pub with a pint in his hand and a paper bag on his head.

He did not stand out in the least at the bar, which was packed Tuesday afternoon with people wearing brightly decorated paper bags atop their heads, for this was Bag Day, the second-greatest day of the year at The Irish Pub.

Each March 18, the day after St. Patrick's Day, people come from far and near to jam the joint, most wearing some sort of bag fashioned into a hat atop their head. The tradition dates back 24 years to a group of exhausted waitresses and casino workers who realized they had worked through the entire night and missed St. Paddy's Day.

"We said, 'We didn't have too much fun on St. Patrick's Day; let's start our own holiday,'" said Cathy Burke, who owns the pub. "The bartender had just brought out a pile of bags that they use behind the bar, and we put some on our heads and said, 'We declare today Bag Day, the official holiday of The Irish Pub and anyone who has to work on St. Patrick's Day.'"

That day, the staff met people at the door and told them they couldn't enter unless they wore a bag on their heads, handing them out to the slightly startled patrons. As the years went by, people started bringing their own bags, many richly painted and decorated.

Rich Crofton drove 40 miles from Williamstown to wear a white bag bedecked with shamrocks, drawings of two sudsy mugs, and the words "Beer Me, I'm Irish" on his hat.

"It's a chance to let your hair down a little bit," he said.

His friend Karen Peacock, also of Williamstown, said people come year after year to see friends they made at Bag Day.

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Bush to give speech marking 5-year anniversary of Iraq invasion

By JENNIFER LOVEN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Five years after launching the U.S. invasion of Iraq, President Bush is making some of his most expansive claims of success in the fighting there. Bush said last year's troop buildup has turned Iraq around and produced "the first large-scale Arab uprising against Osama bin Laden."

Massive anti-war demonstrations were planned in downtown Washington to mark today's anniversary of the war, which has claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 U.S. troops. Across the river at the Pentagon, Bush was to give a speech to warn that backsliding in recent progress fueled by the increase of 30,000 troops he ordered more than a year ago cannot be allowed.

"The challenge in the period ahead is to consolidate the gains we have

made and seal the extremists' defeat," he said in excerpts the White House released Tuesday night. "We have learned through hard experience what happens when we pull our forces back too fast — the terrorists and extremists step in, fill the vacuum, establish safe havens and use them to spread chaos and carnage."

Bush added: "The successes we are seeing in Iraq are undeniable, yet some in Washington still call for retreat."

Democrats took a different view.

"On this grim milestone, it is worth remembering how we got into this situation, and thinking about how best we can get out," said Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich. "The tasks that remain in Iraq — to bring an end to sectarian conflict, to devise a way to share political power and to create a functioning govern-

ment that is capable of providing for the needs of the Iraqi people — are tasks that only the Iraqis can complete."

The president's address sought to shift the nation's focus from economic ills to the security gains in Iraq, part of a series of events the White House planned around the anniversary and an upcoming report from the top U.S. figures in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

Vice President Dick Cheney just completed a two-day visit to view Iraq developments in person. Expected GOP presidential nominee John McCain also went to Iraq this week.

Before top Pentagon officials and hundreds of others, Bush planned to trace the war's "high cost in lives and treasure" and thank those who have fought in, planned and assisted the U.S. military

effort. In the excerpts, he defended the war as necessary at first, now, and for an undefined future until Iraq is stable enough to stand on its own.

"The surge has done more than turn the situation in Iraq around — it has opened the door to a major strategic victory in the broader war on terror," the president said.

"For the terrorists, Iraq was supposed to be the place where al-Qaida rallied Arab masses to drive America out. Instead, Iraq has become the place where Arabs joined with Americans to drive al-Qaida out. In Iraq, we are witnessing the first large-scale Arab uprising against Osama bin Laden, his grim ideology, and his terror network. And the significance of this development cannot be overstated."

Bush appeared to be referring to recent cooperation by local Iraqis with

the U.S. military against the group known as al-Qaida in Iraq, a mostly homegrown, Sunni-based insurgency. Experts question how closely — or even whether — the group is connected to the international al-Qaida network. As for bin Laden, he is rarely heard from and is believed to be hiding in Pakistan.

Iraq no longer dominates the public debate

and tops voters' concerns. With the economy taking a tumble, things improving by some measures in Iraq and much attention riveted on the 2008 presidential race, Iraq has faded from the front burner.

Bush has successfully defied efforts by the Democratic-led Congress to force troop withdrawals or set deadlines for pullouts.

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News in brief

U.S. forces raid Afghan village near border with Pakistan, killing 6, officials say

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — U.S. forces searching for bomb makers raided Afghan homes near the border with Pakistan early Wednesday, exchanging gunfire with militants. Six people were killed, including two children and a woman, Afghan officials said.

The U.S.-led coalition said its forces were searching compounds in Khost province for a militant named Bismullah who organized roadside bomb attacks and smuggled weapons. Militants shot at the troops, who returned fire and killed "several militants," including Bismullah and Rahim Jan, another man suspected of making bombs, the coalition said.

A woman and two children were among six people killed, said Khibar Pashtun, a spokesman for the Khost governor.

The coalition statement said a woman and a child who were in one of the buildings from which militants were shooting were killed.

"Coalition forces take every possible precaution to ensure the safety of noncombatants during the conduct of operations. It is regrettable that militants continue to place innocent lives at risk simply to further their own agendas," Maj. Chris Belcher, a spokesman for the coalition, said in a statement.

Hillary Rodham Clinton's schedules as first lady to be released to public

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton's schedules as first lady — thousands of pages worth — are being released after months of pressure and criticism that the Clintons were delaying making them public.

On Tuesday, the National Archives announced it would release 11,046 pages of daily schedules of the first lady at former President Clinton's presidential library in Little Rock and online Wednesday morning. The archives operates the library.

Clinton has faced criticism from fellow Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and Republicans over the number of White House documents from her husband's administration that have not been made

public.

The documents to be released include schedules for 2,888 days and are the files from Patti Solis Doyle, who was the former first lady's scheduling director. Doyle served as Clinton's campaign manager but stepped down in February after a series of losses to Obama in the Democratic nomination battle.

The archives said 4,746 pages of documents have parts blacked out, mostly to protect the privacy of third parties, including their Social Security numbers, telephone numbers, and home addresses.

Georgian president to seek boost from Bush at meeting over NATO membership

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Mikhail Saakashvili of the Republic of Georgia is looking for a boost to his country's aspirations for NATO membership when he meets with President Bush.

The two leaders also are likely to discuss on Georgia's tensions with Russia over the possibility of NATO membership and Russia's support of two break-away Georgian regions.

Bush, who has been a strong advocate of Georgia's NATO hopes, may not be able offer more than encouragement to Saakashvili in their White House meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

Bush plans to attend NATO's summit April 2-4 in Bucharest, Romania, and Georgia's chances of joining a program that would prepare it for eventual membership will hinge on winning unanimous support of the 26 member countries. Some Western leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, have misgivings about moving Georgia a step closer to membership.

Russia has opposed NATO's eastward expansion and seems particularly angered about the prospect of membership for Georgia and Ukraine. The leaders of both former Soviet republics have annoyed Moscow by turning toward the West.

Astronauts move giant robot to prime parking spot at international space station

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Dextre the robot got a prime parking spot at the international space sta-

tion and should be able to keep it for at least a few months.

Astronauts moved the mechanical hulk to its new perch outside NASA's Destiny lab on Tuesday night, wrapping up nearly a week of robotic work.

Before they could relocate the robot, astronauts aboard the linked shuttle Endeavour and space station had to fold up Dextre's two arms, both of which have seven joints. It was a slow process that took an hour for each arm. The move itself, on the end of the space station's mechanical arm, went fairly quickly.

Dextre — a 12-foot giant with 11-foot arms — was launched into space in nine pieces aboard a transport bed, or pallet, that served as the robot-construction zone. Three spacewalks were needed to put the robot together. First, the hands were attached to the arms. Then the arms were connected to the torso. Finally, on Monday night, the eyes and tool belt were added.

The Canadian Space Agency supplied the \$200 million-plus robot, conceived as an assistant to space-walking astronauts. It may be months, or possibly even a year, before the robot is put to the test. That's how long it will take to check out the robot and allow an appropriate job to present itself.

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FCC grant to create broadband network to help expand telemedicine in the rural West

By SUE MAJOR HOLMES

Associated Press Writer

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — In rural areas, where accessing health care is often a challenge, the doctors and patients of the future will increasingly be linked by virtual interstates.

That's the vision of Dr. Dale Alverson, who predicts clinics, hospitals and private doctors' offices will routinely be hooked into a computerized network for telemedicine, allowing specialists to review records of far-away patients, analyze tests remotely and consult doctors elsewhere.

"I believe, in the end, telehealth will be part of doing business in the health field, just like we use the telephone," said Alverson, medical director of the Center for Telehealth at the University of New Mexico's Health Sciences Center. "It won't be looked at as something unique or special; it's just what we do. ... Just as for many of us now it's second nature to use the Internet and the Web for health information."

A \$15.5 million grant from the Federal Communications Commission to the Center for Telehealth and Cybermedicine Research at the Health Sciences Center will be used to design, build, operate and evaluate a Southwest Telehealth Access Grid, a broadband network largely serving rural areas that typically lack such tech-

nology.

The grant to increase the bandwidth will be a boon to New Mexico, said Gary Bauerschmidt, UNM's director for information technology services and co-chairman of the network design and modeling committee.

"There's a lot of sites that have no connectivity or very poor connectivity," he said. "Telehealth is such an advantage here. Doctors just can't travel around our state, and when you get to the

reservations, it's even more challenging."

The grid of telehealth networks will support rural systems and connections to more than 500 sites, primarily in New Mexico and Arizona, along with several Indian Health Service sites in Colorado, California, Nevada, Texas and Utah.

"What this really means is a network of networks, a virtual electronic highway that allows you as a patient to access health care at a distance,"

Alverson said.

Eventually, telemedicine could make virtual house calls, he said. With an aging population and a related increase in chronic disease, "the shift is more to getting the care to the patient where they live," Alverson said.

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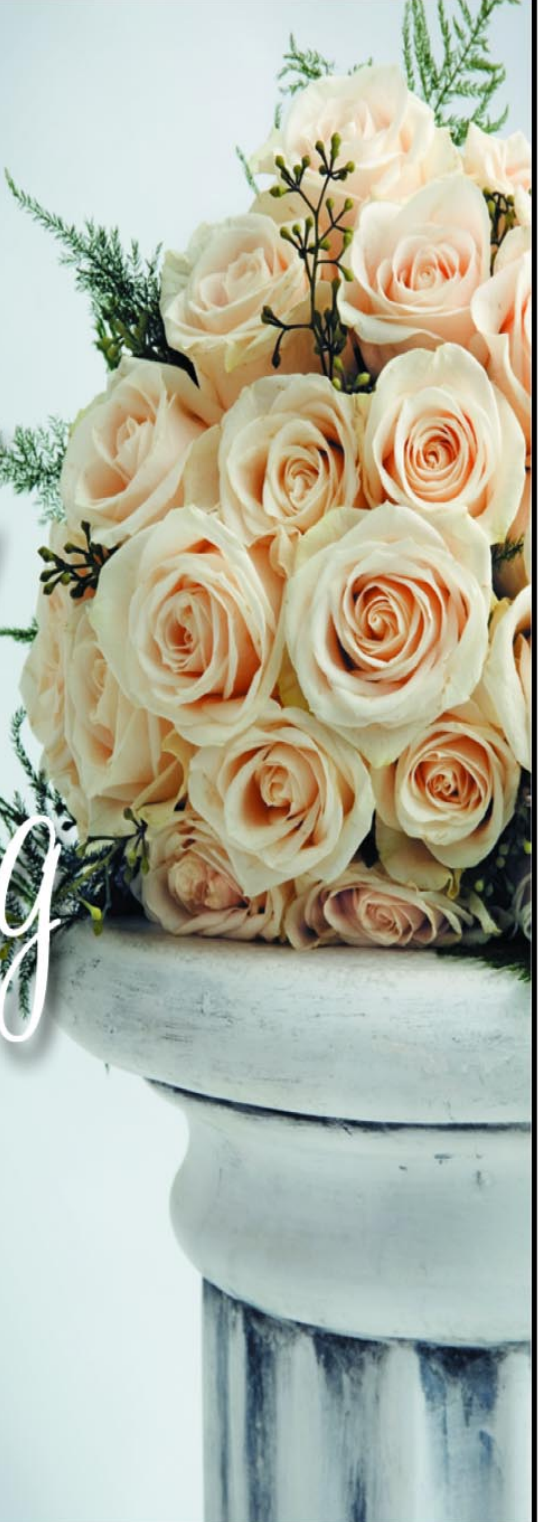
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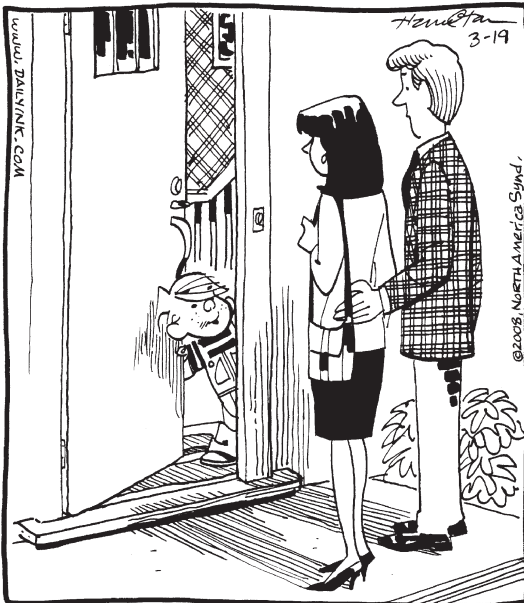
Inside The Big Spring Mall Mon-Sat. - 10-7 pm Sun. - 1 pm - 5 pm 263-4444



WEDNESDAY

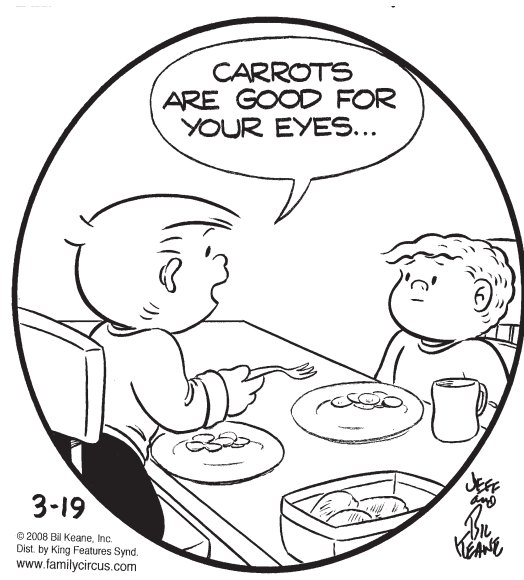
Table with 29 columns representing different TV channels and their programming for Wednesday. Columns include WFAA, KMID, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KPBT, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN, and SCIFI.

DENNIS THE MENACE



"Hi, I'm supposed to keep you occupied while mom and dad finish cleanin' up."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

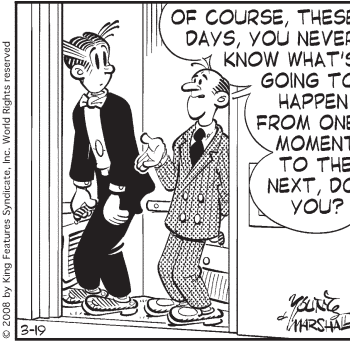
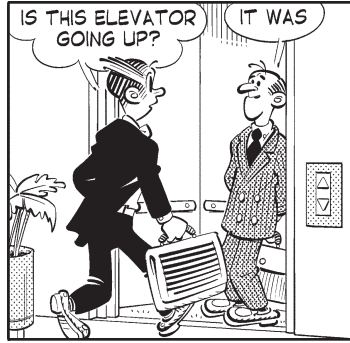


"...you never saw a rabbit wearing glasses, did you?"

HAGAR



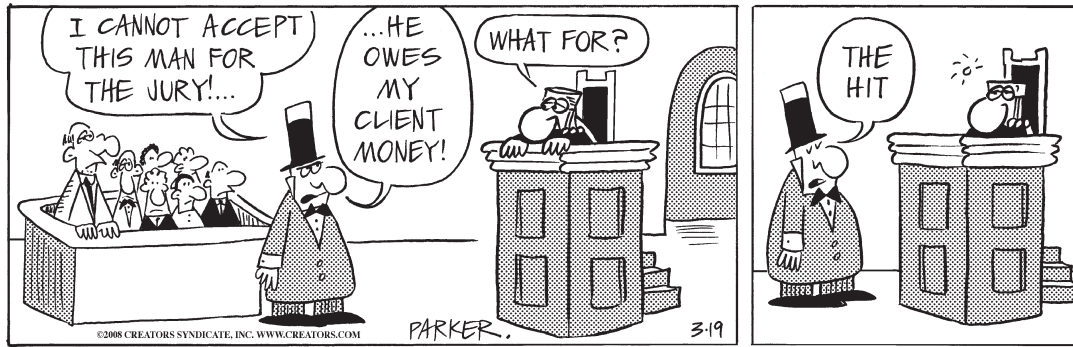
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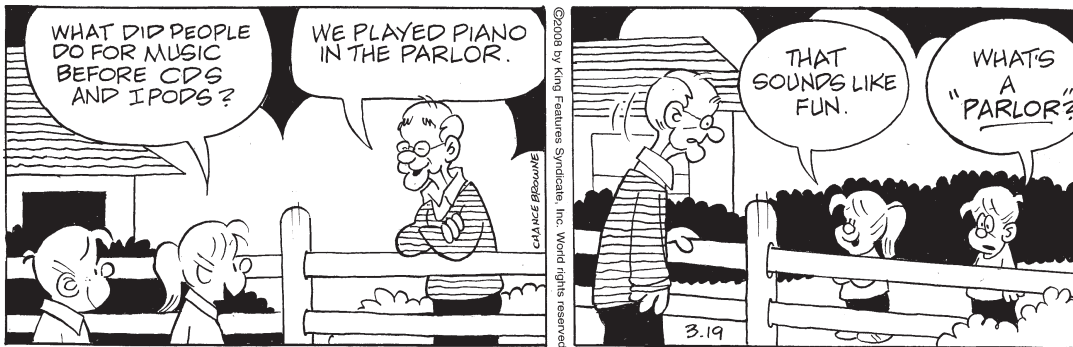
WIZARD OF ID



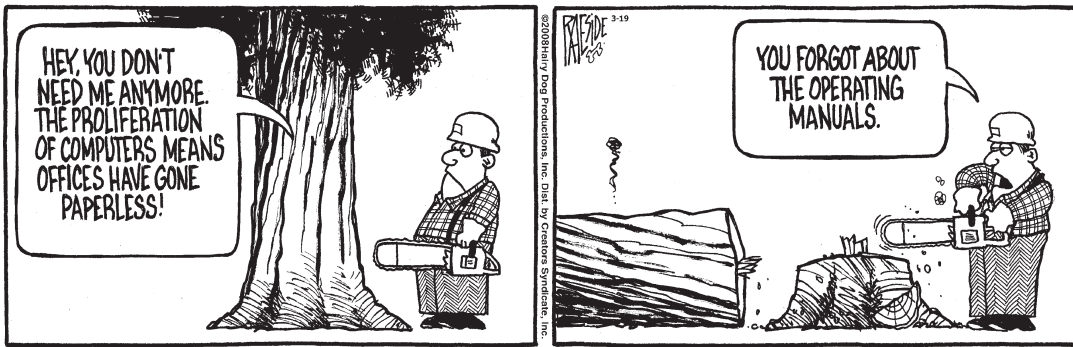
AGNES



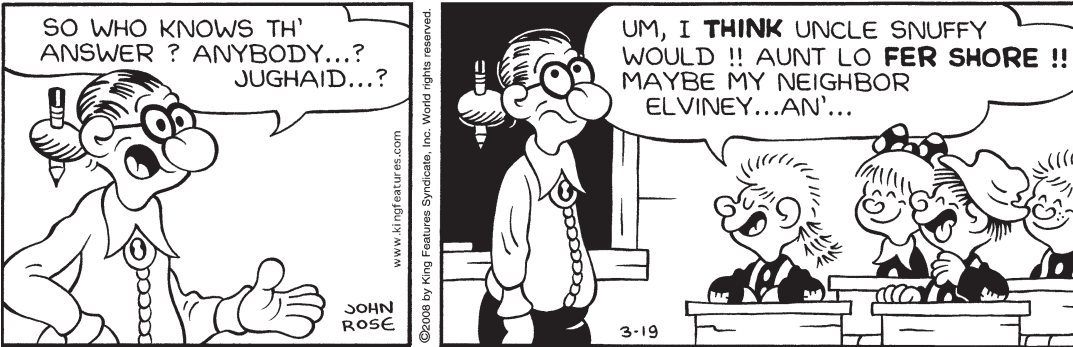
HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, March 19, the 79th day of 2008. There are 287 days left in the year. This is the date the swallows traditionally return to the San Juan Capistrano Mission in California.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 19, 2003, President Bush ordered the start of war against Iraq. (Because of the time difference, it was early March 20 in Iraq.)

On this date: In 1859, the opera "Faust" by Charles Gounod premiered in Paris.

In 1917, the Supreme Court, in Wilson v. New, upheld the eight-hour work day for railroad workers.

In 1918, Congress approved Daylight Saving Time.

In 1931, Nevada Gov. Fred B. Balzar signed a measure legalizing casino gambling.

In 1945, during World War

II, 724 people were killed when a Japanese dive bomber attacked the U.S. carrier Franklin off Japan; the ship, however, was saved.

In 1945, Adolf Hitler issued his so-called "Nero Decree," ordering the destruction of German facilities that could fall into Allied hands.

In 1953, the Academy Awards ceremony was televised for the first time; "The Greatest Show on Earth" was named best picture of 1952.

In 1958, the film "South Pacific," adapted from the Rodgers and Hammerstein stage musical, was released.

In 1979, the U.S. House of Representatives began televising its day-to-day business.

In 1987, televangelist Jim Bakker resigned as chairman of his PTL ministry organization amid a sex and money scandal involving Jessica Hahn, a former church secretary.

Today's Birthdays: Former White House national security adviser Brent Scowcroft is 83. Actor-director Patrick McGouhan is 80. Theologian

Hans Kung is 80. Jazz musician Ornette Coleman is 78. Author Philip Roth is 75. Actress Renee Taylor is 75. Actress-singer Phyllis Newman is 75. Actress Ursula Andress is 72. Singer Clarence "Frogman" Henry is 71. Singer Ruth Pointer (The Pointer Sisters) is 62. Actress Glenn Close is 61. Film producer Harvey Weinstein is 56. Actor Bruce Willis is 53. Rock musician Gert Bettens (K's Choice) is 38. Rock musician Zach Lind (Jimmy Eat World) is 32. Actress Abby Brammell is 29. Actor Craig Lamar Traylor is 19. Actor Philip Bolden is 13.

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Answer to previous puzzle grid with words like COOS, TASTE, ACME, PUNT, OUTER, TOOL, ACTI, PRUNE, ETAL, SHORTHAND, WATTS, ROAST, SOLO, SOREST, PARENTS, CLODS, CRAVE, SHH, ADO, SAUCE, WEE, REF, SPREE, FRAME, SNIPPED, REUBEN, NARC, POETS, BAGGY, TABLESALT, ANTE, CANOE, EWER, STAR, ALDEN, TONE, SIRS, BLAIST, SLOIE.

Newsday Crossword

UPS AND DOWNS by Fred Piscop Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1 Classified listings, 5 Be worthy of, 10 Radar dot, 14 Inventor's spark, 15 Trixie's sitcom pal, 16 Kilauea outflow, 17 Cap visor, 18 Competes at Indy, 19 Portentous signal, 20 Height boosters, 23 Air hero, 24 Tarzan neighbor, 25 Hot cereal, 29 Serb or Croat, 32 Marked, as a ballot, 35 Pride member, 36 Sculptor's medium, 37 Truck compartment, 38 Cost-of-living provision, 42 Lodge member, 43 Be wild about, 44 Plays for a sap, 45 '20s auto, 46 Manage somehow, 47 Screen dots, 49 "Friend or ___?", 51 Hasty escape, 52 Firehouse group, 59 Nativity trio, 60 Timid sort, 61 Biblical boatwright, 63 Iowa State's home, 64 Gourmet mushroom, 65 Softer, with "down", 66 Days gone by, 67 Broadcast workers' org., 68 Deep black, 9 Mrs. Dick Tracy, 10 Botch, 11 "The dog ate my homework," e.g., 12 Courier's partner, 13 Stove-top utensil, 21 Rent-a-car shuttle, 22 Former Czech president, 25 One on the run, 26 Supermarket passageway, 27 Well-known hymn, 28 Pig ___ poke, 29 Strip-mall unit, 30 Oral tradition, 31 Mandela's org., 33 Flip-chart holder, 34 Tog (up), 36 Metro station, 39 Added punch to, 40 Dust-up, 41 La Cage __ Folles, 47 Anderson of Baywatch, 48 Little devil, 50 Pindar, for one, 51 Luckless one, 52 Tibetan priest, 53 Actress Thompson, 54 Heliport site, 55 Rudely abrupt, 56 Voting no on, 57 Whistle hour, 58 Pull hard, 59 Traveler's aid, 62 "You, there!"