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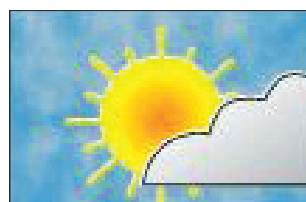
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THURSDAY

JANUARY 1, 2009



VOLUME 104, NUMBER 26

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2008: The year in review

Courtesy photo/Bob Price

Fire rages at the Big Spring refinery following an explosion at the facility Feb. 19.

Refinery explosion top news story

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

It was a busy 12 months. It was a year of both good and bad — gang violence reached deadly proportions, grass fires raged and businesses shut down, but it also marked the beginning of a much-anticipated restoration of one of Big Spring's key landmarks, two key events honoring our veterans and the settlement of a long-standing tax dispute.

But the day that literally and figuratively shook Big Spring was unquestionably the top news story of the year.

Following are the area's top 10 news stories for 2008, as determined by the Big Spring Herald's editorial staff:

Shortly after 8 a.m. on Feb. 19, workers at the Big Spring Refinery noticed a knee-high cloud of propylene gas escaping from a leak in the facility's light gas unit and immediately ordered an evacuation of the area.

Minutes later, the refinery quite literally blew its top.

A massive explosion that could be heard 50 miles away and shattered windows across town started a chain of events which resulted in five people being injured and millions of dollars in damage.

Miraculously, however, no fatalities were reported. Emergency units from across Howard County and the Permian Basin responded to the calamity. While law enforcement officials were busy rerouting traffic from the area, firefighters joined with refinery personnel to battle the blaze, which raged for several hours.

Within a week of the explosion, officials with Alon USA, the owner of the refinery, announced a multi-million dollar reconstruction effort to bring the facility back on line as soon as possible.

The reconstruction had its rough spots — a second explosion in April rocked the refinery's asphalt division — but by summer's end, the facility was back to near-capacity production. More than \$300 million has been spent to date on the effort, refinery officials said.

Gang-related violence took a violent and deadly upswing in 2008 with the low point occurring May 4. On that evening, two persons were killed in a shooting in the 900 block of E. 16th Street.

Valerie Garcia, 20, who was pregnant at the time of her death, and Michael Cardona, 21 — both of Big Spring, were pronounced dead at Scenic Mountain Medical Center shortly after the shooting was reported at 9:30 p.m.

The homicide remained unsolved at year's end. Two "persons of interest" were arrested on weapons charges connected to the incident,

happening all of a sudden, but the gangs have been here for years. It's just been in the last few months the level of violence has escalated. There are no easy answers."

It was a long, dry summer — and spring, and fall and ... Dry conditions and plenty of dead grass were an invitation to a fire in 2008 — and firefighters found their dance

See **YEAR**, page 3A

1
Alon explosion

2
Gang violence

3
Grass fires



HERALD file photo

Local resident Leonard Watkins sifts through the wreckage of his home on Curry Street south of Big Spring after a fire swept through the area earlier this year, destroying approximately 400 acres.

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Thanks at Year's End

As we say goodbye to 2008 and ring in a new year, we hope some things stay the same — like the opportunity to serve good folks like you.

Thank you for your loyal support and friendship this past year.

Happy New Year!

2008: The bigger the stage, the better the show

By **NANCY ARMOUR**

AP National Writer

The lesson of 2008: the bigger the stage, the better the show. All through the year, the top names and most-hyped events lived up to their billing.

From Michael Phelps to Usain Bolt, from Tiger Woods to Boston's new Big Three, from the Super Bowl to the Final Four, the stars always seemed to come out at exactly the right moment.

"They wanted a show," Rocco Mediate said after Woods beat him on

the 91st hole at the U.S. Open to win his 14th major, "they got one."

Or in Phelps' case, more than just one.

The lanky 23-year-old from Baltimore set his eye on the most hallowed of all Olympic marks — Mark Spitz's seven gold medals in a single Summer Games. And he took it down in spectacular style: Eight gold medals, seven world records and more drama than any reality show.

He won his seventh gold by the teeniest margin possible, a mere one-hundredth of a second. The very next day, he had to play catch-up on the

third leg in a medley relay the Americans had never lost to get No. 8.

"There are moments," Phelps said with his typical understatement, "I'll never forget."

Just as memorable, but a whole lot faster, were Bolt's trio of golds.

Little known outside the track world before Beijing, the tall Jamaican sprinter burst onto the scene, shattering his own world record in the 100 meters — even managing to mug for the cameras before he hit the finish line.

He got two more gold medals — and

two more world records — in the 200-meter sprint relay, and his post-race celebrations turned the Bird's Nest into a dance party. Shimmying, shaking and swiveling his hips to the delight of the crowd, he brought a badly needed dose of levity to a sport knocked low by doping allegations, regardless of what the fun police, aka IOC president Jacques Rogge, thought.

"They come out and pay their money to see a good performance and also to see a personality," Bolt said. "So I go

See **2008**, Page 2B

Upcoming Bowl Schedule

Today
Outback Bowl
South Carolina vs. Iowa, 10 a.m. (ESPN)

Gator Bowl
Nebraska vs. Clemson, noon (CBS)

Capital One Bowl
Georgia vs. Michigan State, noon (ABC)

Rose Bowl
Penn State vs. USC, 3:30 p.m. (ABC)

Orange Bowl
Cincinnati vs. Virginia Tech, 7:30 p.m. (FOX)

Friday
Cotton Bowl
Mississippi vs. Texas Tech, 1 p.m. (FOX)

Liberty Bowl
Kentucky vs. East Carolina, 4 p.m. (ESPN)

Sugar Bowl
Utah vs. Alabama, 7 p.m. (FOX)

Saturday
International Bowl
Buffalo vs. Connecticut, 11 a.m. (ESPN 2)

Monday
Fiesta Bowl
Ohio State vs. Texas, 7 p.m. (FOX)

Tuesday
GMAC Bowl
Ball State vs. Tulsa, 7 p.m. (ESPN)

Thursday
BCS National Championship
Florida vs. Oklahoma, 7 p.m. (FOX)

Tech set for SEC challenger

By **DAVID JIMENEZ**

Associated Press Writer

DALLAS — Houston Nutt didn't get to coach Arkansas in last year's Cotton Bowl.

Nutt with a new program, the Mississippi coach is making that trip to Dallas.

Mississippi and Texas Tech accepted bids to play in the Cotton Bowl, creating a matchup of teams responsible for the only losses by a pair of BCS powers.

Nutt coached his last game with Arkansas on Nov. 23, 2007, and resigned three days later. Reggie Herring, now the linebacks coach for the Dallas Cowboys, was the interim coach when the Razorbacks lost to Missouri in last season's Cotton Bowl.

"It's just a dream come true," said Nutt, who guided the Rebels to an 8-4 record in his first season and agreed to a contract extension Friday. "I didn't get a chance to come last year. I'm definitely coming this year."

The No. 8 Red Raiders



AP photo/Tony Gutierrez

Mississippi Coach Houston Nutt, left, and Texas Tech Coach Mike Leach, right, shakes hands as they pose for a photo by the 2009 Cotton Bowl trophy following a news conference in Irving Tuesday. The two teams play at 1 p.m. Friday.

(11-1) ended the regular season in a tie for the Big 12 South title with Oklahoma and Texas. The Sooners advanced to the Big 12 championship game on a tiebreaker and will be playing for the BCS national championship, but Texas Tech handed the only loss this season.

The Red Raiders are dealing with uncertainty regarding the future of coach Mike Leach, who interviewed with the

University of Washington before withdrawing his name from consideration.

Athletic director Gerald Myers, who spoke to reporters in a conference call to announce the Cotton Bowl teams, said Leach has been offered a five-year contract with a "substantial pay raise."

Leach, who Myers said was flying to a post-season awards ceremony, did not participate in a conference call earlier

this month. "We hope to get that signed and behind us," Myers said. "I don't think it will be a distraction at all."

No. 20 Ole Miss stumbled to a 3-4 start despite an early 31-30 victory at Southeastern Conference champion Florida, which will be playing the Sooners in the title game.

See **COTTON**, Page 2B

Pennington named NFL's Comeback Player of Year

By **BARRY WILNER**

AP Football Writer

NEWYORK — Chad Pennington has made a comeback from a comeback.

The Miami Dolphins quarterback won The Associated Press 2008 NFL Comeback Player of the Year award Wednesday, the second time in three years Pennington has received the honor. He also earned it in 2006 while with the New York Jets.

Pennington is the first player in the 11 seasons of the award to win it twice.

This time, Pennington was coming back from being benched in New York during the 2007 season, then discarded this summer when the Jets acquired Brett Favre. Two years ago, Pennington returned from two rotator cuff operations in eight months in 2005 and led the Jets to the playoffs.

But his work this year in guiding the Miami turnaround from 1-15 to 11-5 and AFC East champion was the best of his career.

The Dolphins needed to lean on Pennington as a leader as much as a passer.

They rallied around his work ethic, his preparation and his cool demeanor in the toughest circumstances.



AP photo/Julie Jacobson

Miami Dolphins quarterback Chad Pennington (10) motions for a first down after running a quarterback sneak on fourth-and-1 in the fourth quarter of an NFL game against the New York Jets on Sunday in East Rutherford, N.J. Pennington was named the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year for a second time in his career Wednesday.

Dallas shutterbug has photographed 61 Cotton Bowls

By **MICHAEL E. YOUNG**

The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS — For 60 years now, the panorama of the Cotton Bowl Classic — from the smallest of moments to images that linger in football history — has unfolded before James "Brad" Bradley's camera lens.

Through the years, he has photographed a Who's Who of football greats, the names tumbling out — Joe Montana, Bear Bryant, Joe Paterno, Vince Dooley.

But the biggest, as far as Bradley is concerned, may have been local boy turned football legend Doak Walker.

Walker was just back from the service and leading Southern Methodist University to football prominence when Bradley took his first Cotton Bowl assignment Jan. 1, 1948, at the stadium soon known as "The House That Doak Built."

Craig James, part of SMU's great "Pony Express" backfield with Eric Dickerson in the 1980s, said he's always happy to see Bradley because "he brings back a lot of great memories."

"He shot my freshman photo at SMU, which I have framed and proudly displayed in my study," James said. "I can't think of any other photographer whom you remember as a player and whom you took time for."

Top local sports stories of 2008

1. Big Spring state champions – Jordan Valle (cross country) and Zach Dawson (1600 meters) each claimed individual state titles. Dawson now runs long distance and cross country for Texas Tech.

2. Steers football shines – The Steers emerged as a dark horse in the 2008 football playoffs, going three rounds deep. Big Spring routed Canyon and El Paso Riverside in the first two rounds before falling to No. 2 Everman in the Region I semifinals. It was the longest playoff run for Big Spring since 2002. The team finished 8-5 on the season.

3. Bulldogettes back to state – Coahoma came one win shy of winning its second state softball title, falling to East Bernard 1-0 in the Class 2A finals. Still it was Coahoma's 10th overall and fourth consecutive trip to the state tournament in Austin.

4. Howard baseball nationally ranked – The Hawks were ranked as high as second in the NJCAA national poll, but failed to win a single game at the Region V Tournament in Lubbock. Three Hawks – Tyler Ladendorf, Matt Curry and Pedro Villareal – were selected in Major League Baseball's Amateur Draft in June.

5. Hawks fall short of nationals appearance – Howard College's men's basketball team gave eventual national champion South Plains all it could handle in the Region V finals, but came up on the losing end, 63-57.

6. Resurgence of Hawk women – The Howard College women's basketball team finally returned to the elite of the WJCAC, advancing to the semifinals of the Region V Tournament before falling to South Plains. It was almost a complete turnaround as two seasons earlier the Hawks didn't win a single conference game.

7. Tannehill rising – Former Big Spring Steers quarterback Ryan Tannehill emerged as the Texas A&M Aggies top wide receiver in the 2008 season, finishing the year with 55 receptions for 844 yards and five touchdowns. Tannehill was voted the Aggies' Offensive Most Valuable Player by his teammates and coaches for his efforts.

8. Lady Steers softball makes some noise – Big Spring advanced to the regional quarterfinals before bowing out to district-rival Frenship, 5-0 and 1-0. Frenship didn't lose a single District 4-4A game and the Lady Steers were the only squad capable of even scaring the Lady Tigers.

9. Big Spring cross country wins district again – The Steers proved to be the most enduring group in District 4-4A, walking away with their sixth consecutive district title. Big Spring's top five runners each finished in the field's top 10 with Jordan Valle winning the race, while Kade Parkere placed second.

10. Lady Steers end long losing streak – After finishing 0-28 in the 2007 girls basketball season, Big Spring started its 2008 campaign with two straight wins over Snyder and Fort Stockton, ending a tumultuous losing streak.

Obituaries

Dixie Mize Bond

Dixie Mize Bond, 83, of Sweetwater, died Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2008, in a Sweetwater hospital. Graveside funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, Jan. 2, 2009, in the Garden City Cemetery with the Rev. Lloyd Hagemieier officiating.

She was born Feb. 20, 1925, in Garden City and married Joe Bond in 1970 in Champion, Texas. He preceded her in death in 2000.

She was raised and attended schools in Garden City. She was a homemaker and lived in Sweetwater the past 30 years off and on.

Survivors include three sons, Roy Mize and wife Betty of Sweetwater, Hollis Mize of China Grove Community, Texas, and Tommy Mize of Sweetwater; a sister, Vada Witkowski of Sand Springs; eight grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Arrangements are under the direction of McCoy Funeral Home of Sweetwater.



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• The purpose of life is a life of purpose. Join Nurses' Hospice of Big Spring Volunteer program today. We request potential volunteers not to volunteer for one year after a significant loss. Come by 1008 E. Third St. or call (432)517-4073.

• The mission of CASA of West Texas is to promote and support quality volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglect children in court in an effort to find each child a safe, nurturing and permanent home. CASA currently has 10 active volunteers to serve the 55 plus children of Howard County in foster care. A class is forming in Howard County and 20 volunteers are needed. For more information on becoming a CASA volunteer, please contact Robyn LaForge at (432) 683-1114.

• The Big Spring Salvation Army will be conducting free blood pressure and glucose screenings Dec. 31 from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Army's Corps Building, located at 811 W. Fifth St. The screenings are being sponsored by In-Home Care. For more information, contact the Salvation Army at 267-8239.

• West Texas Opportunities Inc., through a Job Access Reverse Commute project with the Texas Department of Transportation offers transportation to employment in Midland, on a limited schedule, Monday through Friday each week. This fixed route currently leaves Big Spring at 7 a.m. and makes a stop at the EZ Rider bus connection in downtown Midland. The route leaves Midland for the return to Big Spring at 4:15 p.m. As a promotional introduction, no fare is charged. Beginning April 1, the daily fare will be from \$3 to \$8, round-trip, depending on the number of passengers using the service. For more information, call Victor Enriquez, JARC coordinator, at West Texas Opportunities, (800) 245-9028.

• The Permian Basin Foundation has awarded West Texas Opportunities Inc. \$130,000 through the Texas Resources for Iraq Afghanistan Deployment fund. WTO will assist current and former military personnel serving in Iraq or Afghanistan and their families. Funding will serve Howard, Martin, Andrews, Borden, Dawson, Ector, Fisher, Gaines, Glasscock, Midland, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry and Upton counties. For more information, contact Diana Martinez or Debbie Wilson at 110 Johnson in Big Spring or call (432) 267-9536.

• Scenic Mountain Medical Center's Relay for Life team is selling cookbooks to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. The cookbooks can be purchased at the PBX operator's booth for \$10 apiece. For more information, contact Beverly Grant at 268-4952.

• HATS (Hope After The Sadness), an American Cancer Society Resource Room is available at First Methodist Church. This center provides information and valuable resources for those affected by cancer. This HATS ministry, established in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Shane Brue, maintains a room with free hats, wigs and head coverings available for check-out by those dealing with hair loss

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.

• Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets

Take Note

due to cancer treatment. Other services and resources are also available. Contact the "Hat Lady," Marci Lykken at 267-2915.

• Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call (877) 277-1618, the High Plains American Cancer Group Report Center. Anyone wishing to volunteer to drive in this program should call Sherry Hodnett, president of the Big Spring ACS Board, at 264-7599 at her office at Home Hospice.

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

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

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

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

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

• Legal Aid of Northwest Texas is accepting appointments from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month. Individuals seeking legal advice for matters concerning family law, divorce, custody and child support issues, social security cases, employment and housing may contact the office to schedule an appointment. Criminal cases are not accepted. Anyone recently served with legal documents should call the office immediately at 800-926-5630 or 432-686-0647.

• Big Spring and surrounding counties are in critical need of foster families. Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected. For more information on becoming foster parents or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

Support Groups

at 5 p.m. at the First Christian Church at 10th and Goliad for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Call 213-1342 or 263-6819.






CHANGING DATES

• The local National Alliance on Mental Illness group meets every two weeks in the basement of the Howard County Library. For dates and times, contact Ramona Blassingane at 263-9748.

TUESDAY

• Grief share, sponsored by Home Hospice and the First Presbyterian Church, Seventh and Runnels (north end door), meets at 6 p.m.. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, contact Sherry Hodnett at 264-7599.

Your Local Weather

Fri 1/2	Sat 1/3	Sun 1/4	Mon 1/5	Tue 1/6
 70/41 Sunshine. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 40s.	 73/35 Abundant sunshine. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the mid 30s.	 54/30 Plenty of sun. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.	 50/35 Showers. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the mid 30s.	 60/32 Plenty of sun. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s.

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COTTON

Continued from Page 1B

The turning point for the Rebels came in Nutt's return to Arkansas, a game that Ole Miss won 23-21 and started its current five-game winning streak.

"We were very charitable the first

few weeks giving things away," Nutt said. "It was tough to flip the switch in making them believe they're good enough. Things took off when we went to Arkansas."

Texas Tech was in the running for the BCS national title game until losing 65-21 to Oklahoma on Nov. 22. Texas, which will be playing Ohio State in the Fiesta Bowl, is the other Big 12 team in a BCS game.

"We're coming from one of the two toughest conferences in the country," Red Raiders defensive coordinator Ruffin McNeill said. "We feel good about our season and progress. We understand the conference is going to put out two top teams in the BCS."

Ole Miss and Texas Tech have twice met in bowl games, the Rebels winning the 1986 and 1998 Independence. The teams last met in the 2003 regu-

lar season when B.J. Symons threw for 661 yards in a 49-45 Red Raiders victory.

Texas Tech still has that prolific passing game with quarterback Graham Harrell and receiver Michael Crabtree, a Dallas native.

"They easily could have played for the championship of the Big 12," Nutt said. "They're a very tough challenge."

2008

Continued from Page 1B

out there and give them a show."

The Chinese spared no expense for their coming-out party, and it was a smashing success: beautiful venues, opening ceremonies with enough kilowatt power to make Las Vegas blush, even several days of blue skies. Phelps and Bolt weren't the only athletes equal to the grand setting.

Dara Torres reminded us that age is just a number with three silver medals at 41, while Nastia Liukin was the picture of grace and elegance, on and off the gymnastics floor. The Redeem Team did everything the NBA could have asked from their multimillionaires, rolling over almost every opponent but doing it with such class you couldn't help but like them.

We felt a little unsettled once the grandeur of the Beijing Games faded, and it had nothing to do with a post-Olympic hangover, the annual dread of a BCS debacle, Brett Favre's new uniform or the knee injury that turned Tom Brady into a couch potato.

The economy is in deep trouble, and sports were quick to feel the hit. There were layoffs at the NFL, the NBA and Major League Baseball's Internet division, and the Arena Football League is taking a break

for at least a year. There's hardly a team in NASCAR that hasn't felt the pinch.

Of course, none of that stopped the New York Yankees from showering CC Sabathia with \$161 million. But then, the rich always have always been different or maybe, as baseball uber-agent Scott Boras likes to point out, they just use a "very different economic model than the real world."

But no matter which model you used, 2008 delivered plenty of bang for the buck.

A Super Bowl that was expected to be the coronation of Bill Belichick's New England Patriots as the greatest NFL team ever turned into something even better, thanks to Eli Manning and the New York Giants.

Emerging from his big brother's shadow — and a pack of New England defenders — Manning and David "How did he do that?" Tyree led the Giants on a frenzied, frantic, game-winning drive that gave the Super Bowl its best finish ever. Ruined the Patriots' perfect season, too.

Said Manning, whose performance gave his family back-to-back Super Bowl MVPs: "You can't write a better script."

Maybe not. But that didn't keep Memphis and Kansas from trying in the NCAA championship game.

The title was going to Graceland until Memphis squandered a

9-point lead with 2:12 left by missing four free throws down the stretch. With 2.1 seconds on the clock and no time-outs, Mario Chalmers coolly knocked down a 3 to force overtime — the first in a title game since 1997.

Overtime was all Kansas, as the Jayhawks pulled away for their first title in 20 years.

"Ten seconds to go, we're thinking we're national champs," Memphis coach John Calipari said mournfully. "All of a sudden a kid makes a shot, and we're not."

The state of Tennessee did not go titleless, however, with Candace Parker and Pat Summitt's Lady Vols winning their second in a row. Parker also picked up an Olympic gold medal with the U.S. team, and won both the WNBA's rookie of the year and MVP honors.

Going the (extra) distance was something of a theme in 2008.

The Philadelphia Phillies finally got their World Series title two days after the decisive Game 5 began. Hey, when a city's waited 25 years for a major championship, what's a little rain delay?

Dusk had turned to dark by the time Rafa and Roger's epic battle at Wimbledon was settled, the longest men's final in the history of the 121-year-old tournament. Only fitting, really. Deposing a king is never easy work, and Rafael Nadal needed a victory over Roger Federer on a surface other than clay to prove he truly is the Swiss master's equal.

Or maybe better. With his victory at Wimbledon, along with a fourth straight French Open title and gold medal at the Beijing Olympics, Nadal broke Federer's stranglehold on No. 1.

And then there was Tiger.

Limping his way

around hilly Torrey Pines on a knee worse than anyone knew, Woods forced a playoff with a 12-foot birdie on the final stroke of regulation. After blowing a three-shot lead with eight holes to play, he sent it into OT again with yet another birdie on the 18th hole.

Finally, on the 91st hole, Woods prevailed. It was his 14th major title, leaving him just four shy of matching Jack Nicklaus' record.

"It was just unreal," Woods said. "It was back and forth, back and forth. And 90 holes wasn't enough."

Apparently, it was. Two days after the Open, he announced he needed surgery and would miss the rest of the season, including the last two majors and the Ryder Cup.

That's a gaping hole for golf to fill, but Pádraig Harrington managed quite nicely. The Irishman overcame a sore wrist and a resurgent Greg Norman to win his second straight British Open, then added the PGA Championship a month later.

Without Woods, the Americans' chances of ending their oh-fer streak at the Ryder Cup seemed as likely as Bill Murray being named the greenskeeper at the Valhalla Golf Club. But without Woods and his dominating presence, U.S. captain Paul Azinger got the rest of his rugged individualists to buy into the team concept, and they responded with their first victory since 1999.

"I poured my heart and soul into this for two years," Azinger said. "The players poured their heart and soul into this for one week. They deserved it."

So, too, did the Boston Celtics.

The Celtics may have hit the talent motherlode when they added Kevin Garnett and Ray

Allen to a team that already had Paul Pierce. But prolific scorers don't always play nice together — too much ego, not enough ball — and there was no telling if Boston's new Big Three could work as seamlessly as the original had.

No worries there. Garnett, Allen and Pierce were so unselfish they could give Miss Manners some tips, and together they steamrolled the Los Angeles Lakers for Boston's 17th NBA title.

"I hope we made you proud," Garnett said when he found Bill Russell, the Celtic great turned mentor.

"You sure did," Russell said.

Might just do it again, too, the way they've been running roughshod on takers from the East, West and everywhere in between this season.

Auto racing gave us a couple of big firsts and one really big third. Danica Patrick broke IndyCar's gender barrier on Victory Lane while Lewis Hamilton became the youngest and first black Formula One champion. As for Jimmie Johnson, he just kept on winnin', matching Cale Yarborough as the only drivers to win three straight NASCAR Cup championships.

Lorena Ochoa ruled the LPGA. Again. She won seven times, including her second major title at the Kraft Nabisco Championship, and was player of the year for a third straight season.

The Williams sisters were back to their dominant selves, facing each other in yet another all-Williams final at Wimbledon — their third, for those keeping score — where it was advantage, Venus. Serena won the U.S. Open, and they ganged up on everybody else to win their second Olympic gold medal in doubles.

Lance Armstrong is back, too, following Favre's lead and coming out of retirement for a go at his eighth Tour de France title.

And how's this for a switch: While baseball's version of the Billionaire Boys Club missed the playoffs for the first time since 1993, the Tampa Bay Rays won the American League

pennant. Yes, those same Rays who were so bad their first 10 years they never even sniffed a winning record, let alone the postseason.

"It's powerful what we got done this year," Rays manager Joe Maddon said. "And I know, from my perspective, this is just the beginning."

For others, 2008 was the end. Some, like Annika Sorenstam, Greg Maddux, Justine Henin and Mike Mussina, went out on their own terms, while others — this means you, Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens — finally wore out their welcome.

There were also those who left before we got the chance to say goodbye. Longtime NFL union head Gene Upshaw died just a few days after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and few had even known he was ill. Eight Belles broke down after finishing second to Big Brown at the Kentucky Derby. New York Rangers prospect Alexei Cherepanov, only 19, collapsed during a Russian league game and died.

As great as most of 2008 was, however, not everybody got with the program.

Big Brown stormed through the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, giving us hope we might actually see a Triple Crown winner for the first time since 1978. But he flopped at Belmont, easing home to a last-place finish.

Sean Avery got himself suspended, and the only shocker was that it came from crude comments off the ice, not his thuggishness on it. Pacman Jones earned another timeout from NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. Plaxico Burress shot himself in the thigh after accidentally pulling the trigger on a handgun in his pants while he fumbled a drink.

But nobody compares to the Bowl Championship Series, which extended its whining streak for another year.

Last year's title game between LSU and Ohio State was a dog — no, SEC, you can't add the Buckeyes to the conference — and the BCS has all of Texas seeing crimson this year. The Longhorns beat Oklahoma, both teams ended up in a three-way tie atop the bruising Big 12 South, yet it's the Sooners who will face Florida in the title game.

Huh?

Add in one-loss USC, Penn State, Alabama and Texas Tech, and it's no wonder even President-elect Barack Obama is calling for a playoff system.

"Any sensible person would say that if you've got a bunch of teams who played throughout the season, and many of them have one loss or two losses, there's no clear, decisive winner, that we should be creating a playoff system," Obama said in a "60 Minutes" interview.

It's never too early to start a to-do list for 2009.

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YEAR

Continued from page 1A

cards filled throughout the year. Tommy Sullivan, chief of the Howard County Volunteer Fire Department, said his crews responded to more than 300 fire calls during the year, a record the HCVFD would rather have not set.

"In my 15 years with the department, this is the worst year we've ever had," Sullivan said. "In 2007, we had 147 calls and this year we've had 326 calls."

The reason was plenty of tall, dead grass in the county — "There was just too much fuel out there," Sullivan noted.

No fatalities or serious injuries were reported as a result of the conflagration, but property damage was immense. No total estimate is available, but easily reached seven figures, officials said. Homes in the Kentwood and Silver Heels additions were destroyed in separate fires in the spring.

The Settles Hotel, Big Spring's "grand old lady" was getting herself a much-needed facelift.

Led by Gov. Rick Perry and a large group of state and local officials, ceremonies were held Aug. 21 to commemorate the start of a \$20 million restoration project on the hotel, for years Big Spring's most notable landmark.

The building, erected in 1930, was a destination of choice for travelers for many years, but has been vacant and in an advanced state of dilapidation for more than two decades.

Enter G. Brint Ryan.

Ryan, a Dallas developer native to Big Spring worked for more than two years laying the groundwork for the project before the formal kickoff in August.

"One thing I've known since the day I met Brint Ryan is that this thing was going to get done," Big Spring Mayor Russ McEwen. "... All I can say is thank God that Brint Ryan has a passion for the Settles Hotel."

Ryan's brother, Kris, who will oversee the restoration, said the project should be completed by October 2010.

In the span of one week in June, Big Spring took a big economic hit with the announcement that Solitaire Homes and StarTek Inc. would close its local operations.

Solitaire, which produces manufactured housing, cited the inability to sustain a large enough work force, while StarTek blamed "changing business needs" as the reason for closing its doors in Big Spring.

Combined, the two companies employed more than 300 local residents.

The years-long dispute between Alon USA — owner of the Big Spring Refinery — and the Howard County Tax Appraisal District was finally resolved in September.

The dispute, which severely impacted taxing entities in the county such as Big Spring Independent School District and the city of Big Spring, ended when the tax district formally agreed to the settlement.

Under terms of the agreement, Alon agreed to pay almost \$500 million to cover the three years under dispute (2006 through 2008).

The company agreed to tax levies of \$130 million for 2006, \$185 million for 2007 and \$175 million for 2008.

An investigation into alleged improprieties proved fatal to the educational career of Big Spring Independent School District Superintendent Michael Downes, who resigned in June.

The Texas Education Agency had been investigating Downes since November 2007, when a complaint was filed with the agency's certification division



Downes

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HERALD file photo

Kids Zone, the children's playground area at Comanche Trail Park, was heavily damaged by fire in December. Officials ruled arson as the cause of the blaze.

alleging improper conduct by the superintendent during previous stops in his education career.

BSISD trustees accepted Downes' resignation during a special meeting in late June.

Downes' dispute with TEA ended in December when he voluntarily surrendered his education certificates to the agency. The action means Downes can no longer hold teaching or administrative positions in any Texas public school system.

A new BSISD superintendent is expected to be hired by February or March 2009, school officials said.

In February, San Angelo Diocese officials announced that all four Howard County Catholic churches would be consolidated into a single parish effective in May.

Sacred Heat, Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Thomas and St. Joseph churches all retained their names but would operate as Holy Trinity Parish, said the Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, bishop of San Angelo.

Heading the new parish is the Rev. Bernard Gully, a West Texas native who came to Big Spring from Andrews. Joining Gully is the Rev. Ariel Lagunilla, who is the parish's new associate parish pastor.

One senseless act of arson saddened and outraged Big Spring residents in December.

Damage from the Dec. 9 fire that almost destroyed the Kids Zone children's play area at Comanche Trail Park was estimated at between \$30,000 and \$50,000, but officials were seeing red for more than just economics.

"We're outraged that someone would try to burn up an area designated to bring the children of the community pleasure," McEwen said. "We're hoping a \$5,000 reward will help shake some fruit from the tree."

No arrests were announced in connection with the case by year's end.

A pair of ceremonies during 2008 highlighted this area's devotion to its military veterans.

On Memorial Day, hundreds gathered at the local Vietnam Memorial for the unveiling of the All-Veterans Monument. Funded by private donations and built by volunteers, the monument — a six-sided obelisk — paid tribute to veterans of all branches of the military service.

Big Spring's sole Medal of Honor recipient, George O'Brien, was honored during Veteran's Day celebrations at the local VA Medical Center in

November.

A statue of O'Brien, who received the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Korean Conflict, was unveiled on the hospital grounds.

Other stories of note in 2008 included:

- William C. "Bill" Crooker, the first Republican elected to Howard County office, retired in December after 40 years as a county commissioner.

- A \$34 million bond, which would have financed construction of a "mega" elementary campus, was overwhelmingly defeated by BSISD voters in May.

- Plans for a county health center, which will provide health care to indigent patients in Howard County, were announced in September.

- Billy Ray Nelson, the only Howard County resident on Texas' death row, had his sentence reduced to life without the possibility of parole in July.

- Hayes Stripling Jr. and Janice Bond were named Man and Woman of the Year during the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet in January.



HERALD file photo

Renovation has begun on the historic Settles Hotel.

7
Downes resigns

Downes

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WANTED DRILLING Supervisor with at least 7 years experience. For Sharp Image Energy Inc. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 1888, Big Spring, Tx. 79721.

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Ron Midkiff
PublisherJohn A. Moseley
Managing EditorBill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEW

We wish you all a happy New Year now that it's 2009

As we enter a new year, it is time to take a few minutes to take stock of where we want to go both individually and collectively during the next 12 months. It's a point we've made before in this space and it remains as true as ever.

If we haven't already taken personal stock, now is the time to ask ourselves what we want to change in our lives and what needs to be done to effect those changes.

Certainly, many of us seek better health and will make resolutions to change our diets and exercise routines. The important thing is to follow through — to make lifestyle changes.

And many more of us will seek to improve our spiritual lives. That is an area in each of our lives in which there is always room for improvement.

Others will more than likely seek to be more loving or caring with regard to family members and friends.

Community-wide, we believe the outlook for Big Spring remains a positive one. And, although it seems as if we're somewhat challenged as a nation right now, we're convinced the same holds true for both our state and nation for the long run.

And we're very excited about the renovation of the Settles Hotel building which will soon get under way downtown.

There are encouraging signs in many areas. Yes, we're all challenged to some extent, but it's good to see the new Howard County Jail construction project still on schedule and the ongoing Settles project under way.

While lower gasoline prices are good news to our pocketbooks, there's no question that lower prices for crude oil will mean a slowing of things in the oil fields, the price of oil is still at a point where the industry can thrive.

Once again this year, we feel our city's appeal as a regional center for arts and recreation continues to grow, as evidenced by exhibitions at the Heritage Museum, the Big Spring Symphony's concert schedule for the current year and the United States Hang Gliding Association's continuing commitment to hold competitions here.

All of those projects, events and activities translate to jobs, income from visitors and — perhaps even more important — a better quality of life for all of us.

Several announcements about the year's upcoming events will be made soon and we can't help but look forward to what's on tap in 2009.

As we delve into the new year, we do admit feeling a bit tentative about some things less under our overall control. That's simply human nature.

One thing we can say with certainty though. We continue to be blessed by the "can-do" spirit of our fellow citizens — men and women who work together to get things done. And so, it's time to look ahead again and look ahead with optimism.

Happy New Year, Big Spring.

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

When we are tempted to take risks, Lord, may we come to You through prayer.

Amen

Congress calling Detroit incompetent?

I'm always conflicted when I watch some fat-cat miscreant being worked over at a Congressional hearing.

On the one hand, the person on the spit usually deserves it. He or she has almost certainly violated the public trust in a way so obvious that it caught even the half-closed eye of Congress. It's good to see victims squirm as the senators and congresspersons pound them with questions that are more like bills of indictment.

That enjoyment is mitigated, however, by the fact that it is Congress asking the questions. The sight of a politician clothed in righteous outrage, upbraiding someone for sleazy behavior and bad decision-making reaches a level of hypocrisy that is well beyond the reach of all but television evangelists.

The subjects of these hearings—in an effort to curry favor—generally accept their public chastisement humbly; thus the meekness of the auto executives who appeared before Congress last month in search of a few stray billions left over from the Wall Street bailout.

They were refused, ultimately, and lectured to as though they were high school students who had been caught smoking in the parking lot. They were told that they were dumb; how dare they come to Washington in their

corporate jets when they were asking for a handout. They were told they deserved to lose their jobs and their companies to fail. They were a black mark on the escutcheon of Free Market Capitalism, they were told.

To which our captains of industry answered "Yes, Massa," or words to that effect.

Just once I'd like to see one of the witnesses at a hearing respond in kind. For example, an auto executive under attack might have said:

"I may be a bad man, I don't know. I may even be a stupid man who doesn't deserve the responsibilities and rewards he's been given. I'll let others make those judgments.

"I do know this, however: You are not the people to make the case against me.

"You've gotten us into a pointless war at enormous cost, defending people who hate us. You've run up the largest federal deficit in our history without a clue as to how you're going to repay it, other than later."

"You ignored the warning signals given off by the savings and loan scandals and the collapse of Enron, letting dodgy financial schemes proliferate unchecked until they imploded, taking the economy with them.

"And us with them too, don't forget that.

"Have we been behind the curve in developing fuel-efficient cars? Yes we have. But don't tell me we're making cars that people don't want to buy.

"Last year General Motors out-sold Toyota in the United States by 1.2 million vehicles. Ford sold 850,000 more vehicles than

Honda and Chrysler sold more than Nissan and Hyundai combined. Sales for those foreign manufacturers, and Mercedes too by the way, are down by almost as much as ours are this year.

"We can't sell cars because people are afraid; they're afraid that the economic policies you put in place will bring them to ruin. We can't sell cars because potential buyers can't get loans, another gift your stewardship of the economy has given us.

"Now you want to appoint a car czar to run the auto industry? Give me a break. Off your record you guys couldn't run a car wash.

"Some of you suggest bankruptcy as a remedy for our problems.

Terrific idea. If you were going to buy a \$30,000 item whose resale value is an important consideration and you had your choice between a company that was in bankruptcy and one that wasn't, which would you choose? I thought so.

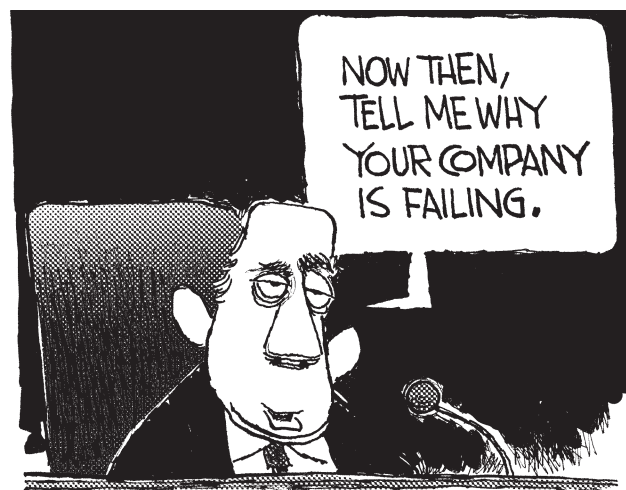
"Look, give me the money or don't. In the meantime I'm going back to Detroit—by plane—to keep trying to save my company. I could use your help and so could the three million Americans who depend on the auto industry for their livelihood."

I'm not saying that approach would work, but it would be great to see.

Don Kaul is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington correspondent who, by his own account, is right more than he's wrong. E-mail him at dkaul@earthlink.net.



DONALD KAUL



Finding someone unpardonable

If President Bush had been looking for a textbook case of a federal offender who should never win a presidential pardon, Isaac R. Toussie would fit the bill. Toussie is the sort of amoral swell who contributed to the 2008 mortgage meltdown.

In 2001, he pleaded guilty to making false statements to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2002 he pleaded guilty to mail fraud in a scam to get Suffolk County, N.Y., to overpay for land.

The New York Times noted, "The name of Isaac Toussie is detested by many working-class people in the New York metropolitan area. In 2001, several hundred of them sued in Federal District Court, accusing Mr. Toussie and his father of masterminding a scheme in which inexperienced or first-time buyers were promised affordable and comfortable suburban houses but instead were sold shoddy built homes in poor neighborhoods and saddled by mortgage payments that shot up surprisingly." According to Newsday, a pardon would clear the way for Toussie — who already served his five-month prison sentence — to win back his real estate license.

And the fact that Toussie's father recently and uncharacteristically donated \$28,500 to the Republican National Committee would taint any presidential par-

don with a pay-to-play stench.

Yet on Dec. 23, as Bush was working on exiting the White House on a high note, came the pardon that never should have happened. It was then followed by a Dec. 24 announcement by Press Secretary Dana Perino that Bush was rescinding Toussie's pardon "based on information that has subsequently come to light."

Credit Bush for taking back a bad executive decision, although some experts assert that cannot be done. If Bush had done nothing, the Toussie story likely would have been buried among stories on retail sales slumps, violence in Gaza and the latest proofs of President-elect Barack Obama's impressive physique. Perino's statement explained that Bush granted the pardon based on the advice of the White House counsel, Fred Fielding.

She also told reporters Fielding was unaware of any GOP contributions. Talk about shoddy staff work.

And you have to wonder if Fielding would have done the necessary homework if Toussie's lawyer had not been Bradford A. Berenson, a former Bush associate White House counsel.

My fear is that the negative fallout from the Toussie story will prompt Bush to issue fewer pardons and commutations. Bush has been too stingy with this power, even as the foolish inflexibility of federal mandatory minimum sentences has created many worthy recipients. Among them: Clarence Aaron, who is serving a life-without-parole sentence for a first-time nonviolent drug offense. Add

Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean, two Border Patrol agents sentenced to 11 years and 12 years respectively for shooting and wounding a fleeing drug smuggler in 2005 and covering up the incident.

What's the difference between Aaron, Ramos and Compean and the individuals who rated a Bush pardon or commutation? My guys aren't well connected, but they also were not career criminals. Aaron was a college student who made a serious criminal decision — and deserved to serve some prison time. Ramos and Compean covered up the questionable shooting of a fleeing drug smuggler. Yes, juries found all three men guilty, but juries had no input into their draconian sentences.

Only the president of the United States has the power to right the wrongness of their sentences. Only Bush can bring justice — for in these cases, a commutation would not bring mercy but justice — to men who have known mindless punishment without leavening proportion.

The outrage is not simply that a well-connected white white-collar criminal won a pardon. It also would be an outrage if Bush failed to do right by Aaron, an unconnected African-American man serving life for a first-time nonviolent offense, and two Latino Border Patrol agents who, if they did break the law, did so in the heat of the chase, not the cool of a boardroom.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsanders@sfcchronicle.com. COPYRIGHT 2008 CREATORS SYNDICATE INC.

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AFGHANISTAN

Mentally ill struggle for treatment

By KIM BARKER

Chicago Tribune
SAMAR KHEL, Afghanistan — Wali Sultani has been chained to the wall of his cell for almost a month. He is wearing the same dirty clothes and he is eating the same diet every day — bread, black pepper and water.

Sultani, 25, is no criminal. He is mentally ill.

Like almost everything else in war-torn Afghanistan, the mental health system is in shambles, and many Afghans do

Anwar Buzurg called journalists the sons of communists and imperialists. He used a rock to scratch out a plane on the wall of his cell.

“He has built himself a plane so he can fly out of here,” said his uncle, Hazrat Omar, who had brought Buzurg here five days earlier.

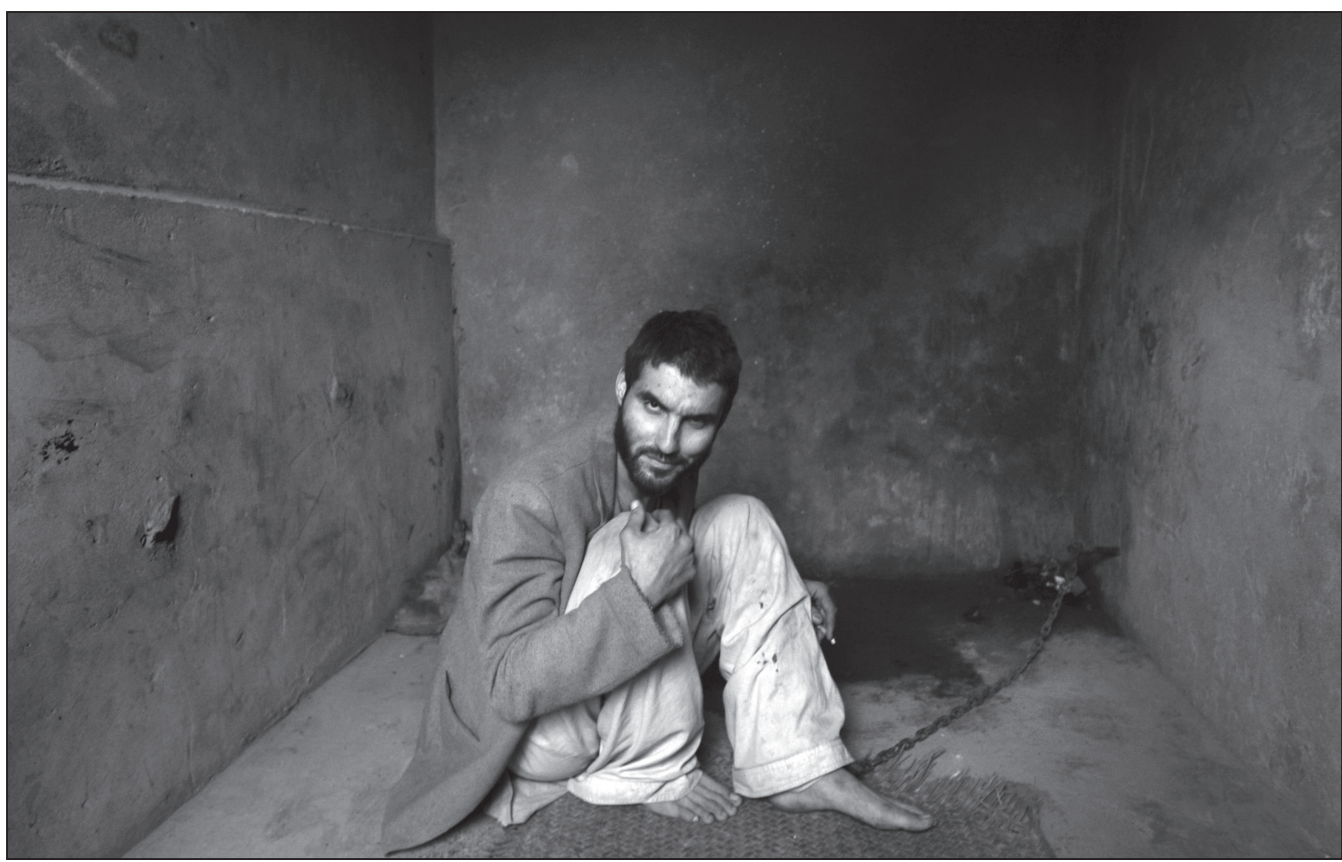
Even before being racked by 30 years of war, most of Afghanistan was stuck in a different time, before electricity, before TV, before tractors. War destroyed

what few advances the country had made, and the ravages of war led to emotional problems for many people.

A survey by the Afghan government shows that as many as 68 percent of the population suffers from some mental affliction, from anxiety to severe depression, Fahim said.

But there is only one mental hospital in the country, in Kabul, and it has only 60 beds, 20 of which are dedicated to drug addicts. Other hospitals have mental illness wards, but treatment is hardly a priority.

There are other



Kuni Takahashi/Chicago Tribune

Wali Sultani, a mentally ill patient, is chained in a small cell at a shrine in Samar Khel, Afghanistan. The patients, who are brought here by family members, are chained and only provided water, black pepper and bread during the 40-day-treatment, which are believed to get rid of bad spirit from patients' body.

shrines for the mentally ill sprinkled throughout the country. Others are supposed to cure rabies, paralysis, jaundice or arthritis. One nearby shrine is where people know to collect anyone who has drowned in flooding.

Such shrines are described as religious, but they are frowned on by strict Sunni Muslims, who do not believe in the amulets used to cure the sick here or the concept of jinns, tiny spirits that can possess people.

The shrine at Samar Khel is run by 100 families descended from the founder, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah, who died about 350 years ago. He was known as Mia, and all his descendants, the shrine guardians, are known as the Mias.

The Mias take turn guarding the shrine and take turns accepting donations or payments, although they said they would like an international relief agency to pay to rebuild walls bombed during the Soviet occupation and the civil war. To treat a patient costs as much as \$200, a small fortune in Afghanistan.

At this beige mud shrine, which is also

the graveyard for all the Mias and which the Mias compare to a hospital, people talk excitedly of those who have been cured: Like the doctor who had undergone shock treatments but was cured only by 40 days locked to a tree. And there are other miracles.

“There are lots of scorpions and snakes here, but the scorpions do not sting the sick people, and the snakes do not bite them,” Mia Osman said. “A bomb hit here in the middle of the courtyard during the Soviet invasion, but it didn’t explode.”

Still, the patients did not seem too happy with their treatment. There are 13 concrete cells, and most of the men inside had beards and hair that had grown long, and eyes that looked slightly wild. The cells smelled of human excrement. Sultani jabbed his finger as close as he could to Osman and yelled at the men who had locked him up.

“I will hit you with a rocket-propelled grenade,” said Sultani, waving his finger. “You are very bad people. Infidels are better than you Muslims.”

Like almost everything else in war-torn Afghanistan, the mental health system is in shambles, and many Afghans do not understand the concept of mental illness. So they bring people here, to this grubby shrine outside of the eastern city of Jalalabad, and chain them to trees when the weather is hot and inside concrete cells when it is cold. And they leave them for 40 days so that God can cure them.

The government’s Health Ministry would like to close such shrines, but given all the other health crises it faces, places like Samar Khel are low on the list. Government officials say some patients, suffering from high blood pressure, actually improve because of the basic diet.

“Of course, from the Ministry of Public Health perspective, with so many different priorities, it is difficult to go fight these people and their shrines,” said Abdullah Fahim, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health.

On a visit to Samar Khel last month, there were five inmates. Two did not talk, one scraped up pebbles from the dirt floor with a stick. Noor

68-year-old woman robbed for son

HAMILTON, Ohio (AP) — A defense lawyer says the Ohio woman dubbed “the Granny Robber” in several bank heists was trying to support a grown son who had fallen on hard times.

Sixty-eight-year-old Barbara Joly has admitted she robbed a bank in March, and investigators suspect her in as many as three other holdups.

Police say the former bank teller from Middletown, Ohio, probably got away with less than

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BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

The future looks bright as Mercury, the planet of communication, makes an entrance into the sign of Aquarius. People are sharing up to date knowledge on an array of topics and it's quite helpful. Far-out concepts are now accessible. Dip into the cosmic pool of ideas and examine a few that would have seemed just last year a bit wacky.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You may have made promises last night that seem, upon further reflection, to be not such a good idea. No worries. You will be released of liability for anything that doesn't hold up to the scrutiny of the morning light.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You go into the new year feeling spiritually robust. The things that bothered you yesterday seem trifling now. And romance is downright dreamy when you let the small stuff slide.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You need beauty. Your survival depends on experiencing the lovely aspects of life every single day. Put yourself on a gorgeous path where the trees arch, the buildings are glorious and the crea-

Tomorrow's Horoscope

tures are divine.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). What hurts you the most? The gnarly little wad of pain has probably followed you into the new year, but it won't be around for long. Write a letter to the cosmic force asking to be released of this once and for all.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You are a firm believer in fresh starts and the clean energy of this special day renews you like a trip to the oxygen bar. Your high spirits creates distance between you and yesterday's problems.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You were lucky enough to be born with talent. Now you have to be talented enough to find luck. Your artistic goals will be met in the new year because you start taking them seriously right now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). There are certain items you really need in order to do your business in the new year. Team up with an expert and go shopping. Capricorn helps you stay sensible about what you've got to spend and what you should spend it on.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Learning is a key enterprise for you this year and you're already engaged in the process of mental expansion. Regardless of the subject matter, going from ignorance to mastery is a thrilling journey.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). If you are unmotivated to complete a project, it may be a sign to switch to something more inspiring. In the new year you aim to impress the masses. You'll enjoy taking already good ideas to a superior level.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Everyone could use a little help now and then, but the kind of people you run into now are truly needy. Be a guardian angel. If you can provide assistance in an unseen way, all the better.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You underestimate how others feel about you. You just don't realize how important you are to the people who love you and also to the ones who don't know you well but just like having you around. Let yourself be appreciated.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Money may be fueling your ambition, but once you get into the thrust of a work endeavor you realize that it's about so much more than making a few extra dollars. Your efforts will be character enriching.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "Do you think my marriage will last the new year? I'm a Sagittarius and he's a Virgo." Do you want it to last? Sagittarius is a sign that finds the whole concept of "settling" to be, well, unsettling. You were born to explore, to follow your

curiosity, take risks, see the world, go on one adventure after another. Because of this impulse for constant discovery, relationships must be very special to capture your attention. And the relationships you gravitate toward ideally will be constantly changing because this keeps your interest fresh. Be careful not to make rash decisions about the people you love just because you're bored. Instead, make the kind of exciting plans that will invigorate and challenge you and the relationship. Your Virgo husband is probably not as eager to move, travel or embark on thrilling business the way you are. But he will support you if he sees why he should. Show him how change will benefit him. He's the perfect partner for much of what you want to do. He'll get the details worked out and make things happen. He can also stick to a budget and pull together the elements to make your dreams real.

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

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Annie's Mailbox : Advice for those in need



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

Dear Readers: Happy New Year. We hope you don't need to recuperate too much from your celebrations last night and are enjoying the first day of 2009. This is always a good time to clear the slate and start fresh, mend fences, re-establish relationships and resolve to do better in every area of your life.

Here's a poem sent in by a reader (author unknown) to help you get started:

Share your gifts and talents listen with your heart.

Do the things you dream about but don't have time to start.

Pick a bouquet of flowers show someone that you care,

Be gracious and forgiving life is never fair.

Hold on to your courage you may need it down the road,

We all have a cross to bear it could be a heavy load.

If you practice all these things no matter where you roam,

You may find both sun and rain but you'll never feel alone.

Dear Readers: Here's a letter that has been kicking around in our Mailbox for a while, and we thought it was perfect for today:

Dear Annie: I was watching a movie the other night, and there was a scene where all the characters sang "Auld Lang Syne." I've heard the song a million times but have no idea what the words are. I can never make them out clearly, and even the ones that sound like English make no sense to me. Can you help me out? -- Like To Know What I'm Singing

Dear Singing: The version we know best was written in Scottish by poet Robert Burns. The first stanza seems fairly understandable:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And days o' lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,

For auld lang syne

We two have fun about the hillsides and pulled wild daisies

But now we are far apart in distance,

From those days now in the past

We two have paddled in the stream from morning until noon

But oceans now lie between us since those days now in the past

So take my hand, my trusty friend and give me your hand

And we will take a hearty drink together,

In memory of those days now in the past.

Dear Annie: My 27-year-old son recently moved in with a woman he met online. "Garth" has brought several of his online romances home to meet his parents, but this woman is like no one before. She has an eating disorder, takes migraine medication all day long and drinks nothing but Mountain Dew. She's also the most miserable excuse for a parent I've ever seen.

"Terese" is divorced and has a disabled child. She claims to be a registered nurse, but is in total denial that there is anything wrong with a 4-year-old who doesn't speak, cannot feed himself, isn't potty-trained and can't walk five feet without falling.

She used to stick her child in Garth's old high chair, while he screamed, tore at his hair and became lethargic. This scenario once went on for three hours. I don't let that happen anymore, but the effort is all on my part. Sometimes Terese will just let her son run around and watch me chase after him.

I raised a special needs child and know that they, too, can be disciplined. I told Garth that unless Terese gets therapy and takes parenting classes, I will call Child Protective Services. My son finally got her to place the boy in a local program, but Terese complains about it all the time and I'm concerned she will remove him.

I can't tolerate this woman and her son any longer. I am 62 and done chasing children. But it's

the only way I can see my son. Garth is determined to marry this nightmare and have more children with her. She is also a master manipulator. She talked Garth into putting her name on his checking and savings accounts, but he has no access to hers.

Explaining to Garth how I feel is like talking to a wall. Any suggestions? -- Exhausted and Frightened

Dear Exhausted: None you will like. Garth is too far gone to listen to reason. He will simply have to make his own mistakes. Back off your criticisms of Terese, and limit the time you spend with them, but don't cut them off. Someone needs to keep an eye on that child and make sure he is getting the care he needs. If Terese removes him from that local program without setting up something else, by all means, call CPS and report the neglect. You can do so anonymously and the authorities will investigate.

Dear Annie: We had the same problem as "Complaining" in "Tennessee," about giving money to charity and then receiving "gifts" with more demands.

My husband, a wise guy, decided to send money orders instead. We get a receipt from the post office for tax purposes, and nobody knows our address. We are able to send donations to any charity we want without return solicitations. Lots of organizations need our support, and this is a nice, simple way to do it. - Nicole

Dear Nicole: Your husband found a clever way to make charitable contributions without being inundated with additional requests. The best thing, of course, is that you still choose to make those contributions. Thank you.

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.

Obama election voted top news story of 2008

By DAVID CRARY

AP National Writer

NEW YORK — The epic election that made Barack Obama the first African-American president was the top news story of 2008 — followed closely by the economic meltdown that will test his leadership, according to U.S. editors and news directors voting in The Associated Press' annual poll.

The campaign, with subplots emerging throughout the year, received 100 first-place votes out of 155 ballots cast for the top 10 stories.

Two other political sagas — the history-making candidacies of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sarah Palin — also made the list.

The vast economic crisis, plunging the U.S. into recession and ravaging many business sectors worldwide, was the No. 2 story, receiving 49 first-place votes. The precipitous rise and fall of oil prices was No. 3.

The top story of 2007 was the massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech University by a mentally disturbed student gunman.

Here are 2008's top 10 stories, as voted by AP members:

— **1. U.S. ELECTION:** Obama emerged from Election Night as a decisive victor and a symbol for the world of America's democratic promise. But he reached that point only after a grueling battle with Clinton for the Democratic nomination and then an often-nasty showdown with the McCain/Palin ticket in the run-up to the election.

— **2. ECONOMIC MELTDOWN:** The bad news kept coming — collapses of Wall Street giants; huge stock market losses; plummeting home prices and a surge of foreclosures; desperate times for U.S. automakers. It added up to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and will cost the federal government well over \$1 trillion in various rescue and stimulus packages.



Barack Obama on the campaign trail.

— **3. OIL PRICES:** The global economic angst produced hyper-volatile energy markets. The price of crude soared as high as \$150 a barrel in July before crashing to \$33 this month. In the U.S., the average price for a gallon of regular gas peaked at \$4.11, then plunged below \$1.70.

— **4. IRAQ:** The much-debated "surge" of U.S. troops helped reduce violence after more than five years of war, but Iraq is still buffeted daily by bombings, ambushes, kidnappings and political uncertainty. A newly ratified U.S.-Iraqi security agreement sets a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal by 2012.

— **5. BEIJING OLYMPICS:** China hosted the Olympics for first time, drawing praise for logistical mastery and condemnation for heavy-handed security measures. The games themselves were rated a success, highlighted by the record-shattering performances of swimmer Michael Phelps and sprinter Usain Bolt.

— **6. CHINESE EARTHQUAKE:** A huge quake in May killed 70,000 people in Sichuan province and left 5 million homeless. Many thousands of children were among the victims — authorities said about 7,000 classrooms were destroyed

in shoddily built schools.

— **7. SARAH PALIN:** Few Americans outside Alaska knew much about its governor when Republican John McCain picked her as his running mate. That changed rapidly. To her conservative admirers, she was a feisty, refreshing change from most politicians; to her critics, she was in over her head, and worthy of all the lampooning she endured.

— **8. MUMBAI TERRORISM:** Ten attackers allegedly sponsored by a Pakistan-based Islamic group terrorized India's financial capital in November, killing 164 people in coordinated attacks on hotels, markets and a train station. India's perennially uneasy relations with Pakistan were badly strained.

— **9. HILLARY CLINTON:** She didn't win, but Clinton came closer than any other woman in U.S. history to becoming a major party's presidential nominee. Her determined primary campaign, waged vigorously even when it seemed a lost cause, inspired millions of women across the country — and helped persuade Obama to choose her as secretary of state.

— **10. RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR:** The two nations waged a five-day war in August ignited by a Georgian

artillery barrage on the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Russia responded with a drive deep into Georgian territory, causing severe economic damage and aggravating already troubled Russia-US relations.

Stories that almost made the Top 10 included Cyclone Nargis, which killed more than 84,000 people in Myanmar; Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, which wreaked deadly

damage in the Caribbean and on the U.S. Gulf Coast; and the seesaw fate of same-sex marriage in California, where a court ruling approving it was later overturned by a ballot measure.

Several write-in votes were cast for two developments that occurred too late to be included on the AP ballot — the filing of a criminal complaint against Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the efforts of struggling U.S. automakers to get a federal bailout. The alleged financial scam involving Bernard Madoff also was revealed too late to make the ballot.

Several of the editors who voted commented on how two transcendent developments dominated the news in 2008.

"As far as I am concerned, there were only two stories this year," wrote Linda Grist Cunningham of the Rockford (Ill.) Register Star. "Global economy collapses (sending every country into financial, political and personal chaos) and Obama elected U.S. president, changing the way the America does business — financial, political and personal."

AP photo

AP photo



An unknown Sarah Palin became a celebrity.

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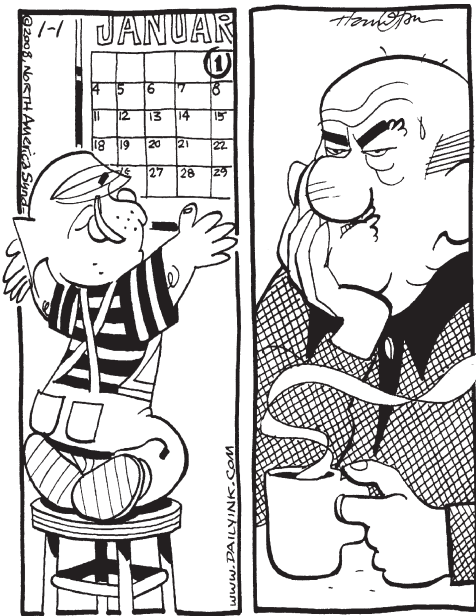
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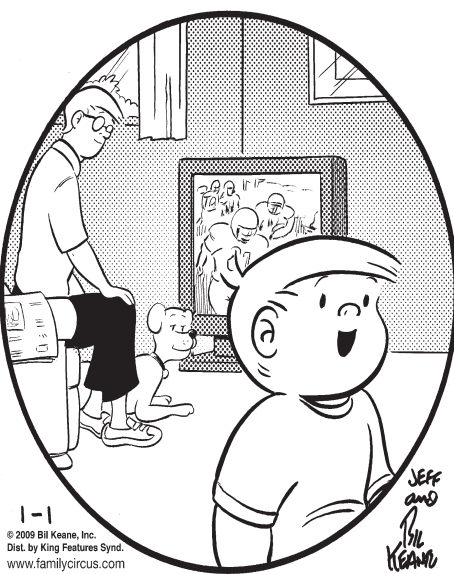
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5 :PM :30	Bowl -- Penn State vs. USC.	Bowl -- Penn State vs. USC.	Locura Noticiero	Lopez Lopez	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Raymond Friends	Granger Brad	BBC Business	MythBusters	Rocky II, Burgess Meredith	CSI: NY	Bones	Video Countdown	Wizards
6 :PM :30			La Gran Noche de 'Las Tontas No Van al	Two Men Pregame	News CBS	Pelicula: El Barrendero, Ursula Prats	News NBC	Seinfeld Hagee	Seinfeld Hagee	News-Lehrer	MythBusters		CSI: Crime Scn	Bones		Wizards
7 :PM :30	Videos	Videos		College Football: FedEx Orange Bowl -- Cincinnati vs. Virginia Tech.	How I Met CSI: Crime Scn	Pelicula: El Patrullero 777, Valeria Pani	News NBC	Friends Sprma	Friends Sprma	Great Performances	MythBusters	Movie: Rocky III, Talia Shire	CSI: Crime Scn	Bones		Wizards
8 :PM :30	Grey's Anatomy	Grey's Anatomy	La Gran Noche de 'Cuidado con el Angel'		CSI: Crime Scn		News NBC	Friends Light of the Southwest	Friends Light of the Southwest	To Be Announced	MythBusters	Movie: Rocky IV, Burt Young	TNA iM-PACT!	Bones	Hip-Hop Awards '08	Wizards
9 :PM :30	(:01) Private Practice	(:01) Private Practice			(:01) Elev-enth Hour		The Office	Movie: RV, Cheryl Hines			MythBusters	Movie: Rocky IV, Burt Young		Bones		Wizards
10 :PM :30	News Nightline	News Nightline	Impacto		News Late Show		News Noticias Titulares	News Tonight Show	Israel Van Impe	Charlie Rose	MythBusters	Amazing Video	Bones	Hatchett	Suite Life	
11 :PM :30	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Hora de la Risa		Late Late Show		Decisiones de Famosos	Late Night	Sex & Dr.	Smiley	MythBusters	Movie: Rocky V, Burt Young	MAN	Without a Trace	Movie: Soul Plane, Cory	
12 :AM :30	G. Keith Weekend	Weekend	Amarte-Pecado		RENO 911		Programa Pagado	News News After Dark	Israel LightWrd	(Off Air)	MythBusters	Married... Married...	Without a Trace	Without a Trace	Replace Kim	
1 :AM :30	Wall St Paid	Paid	Clasicos Humor		Friends TMZ		Entertain Paid	Poker After Dark	Light of the Southwest		MythBusters	Movie: The Amityville Horror	The Shield	Movie: The Amityville Horror	The Deal	Emperor Dragon

DENNIS THE MENACE



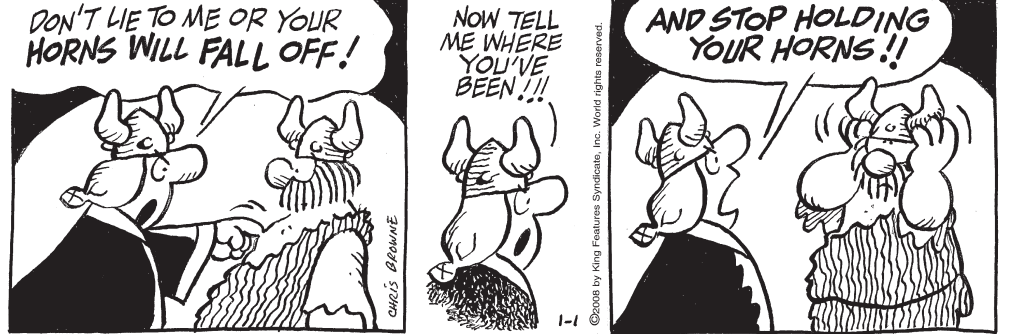
"A WHOLE NEW YEAR TO SPEND WITH MR. WILSON!"
"365 DAYS OF DENNIS!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

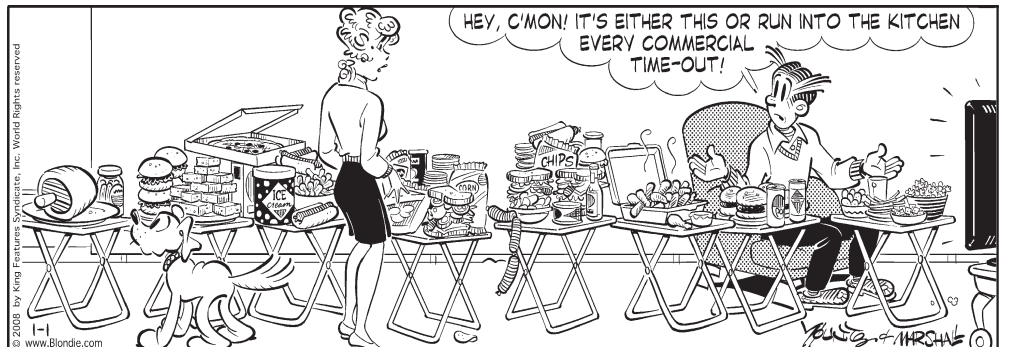


"Daddy and I started with bowls of cereal and now we're gonna have bowls of football!"

HAGAR



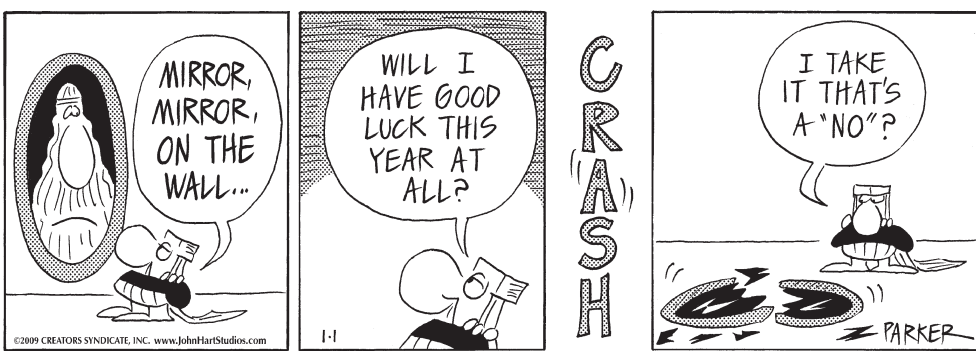
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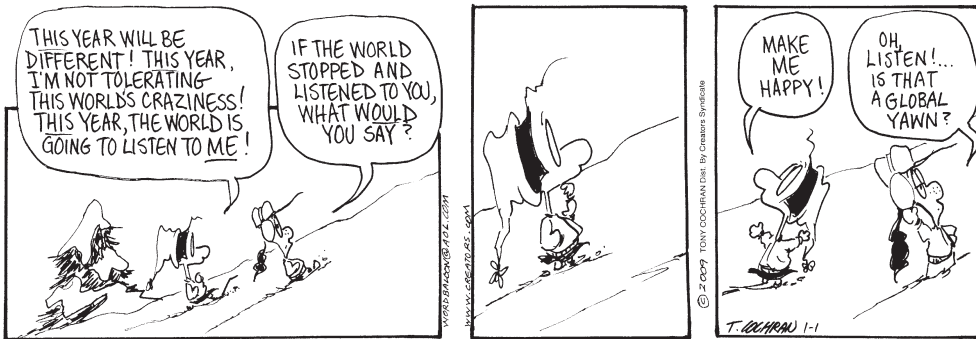
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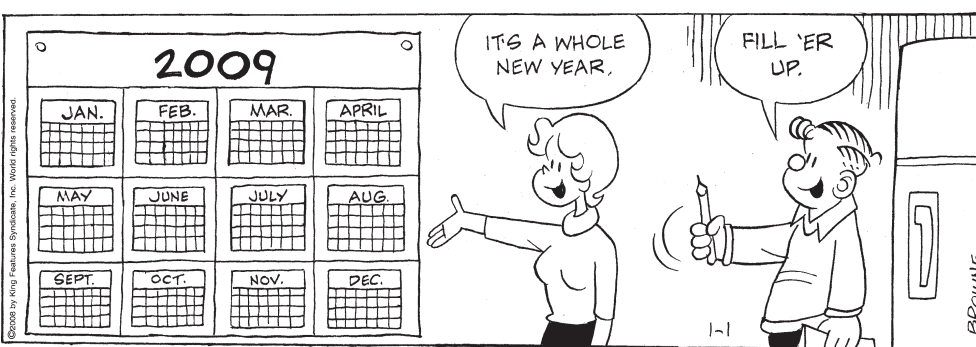
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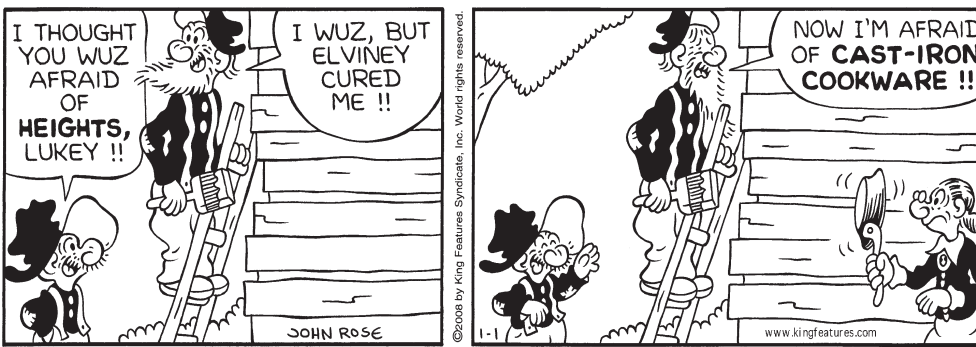
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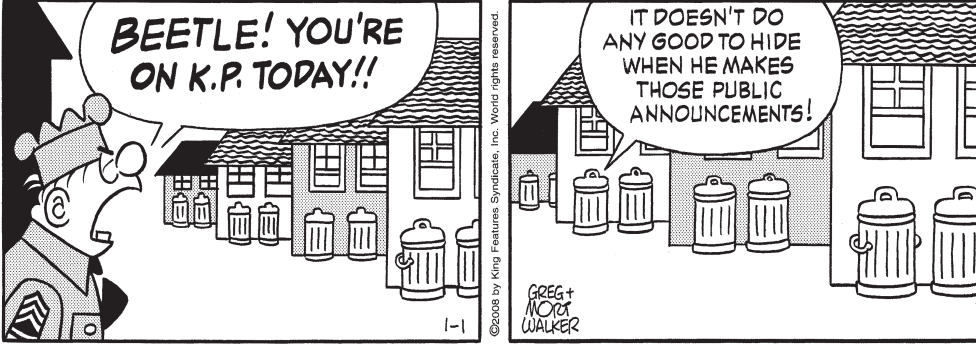
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 1, the first day of 2009. There are 364 days left in the year.
Today's Highlight in History:
Fifty years ago, on Jan. 1, 1959, Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries overthrew Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista, who fled to the Dominican Republic.
On this date:
In 1808, a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into the United States went into effect.
In 1863, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slaves in rebel states were free.
In 1890, the first Tournament of Roses was held in Pasadena, Calif.
In 1892, the Ellis Island Immigrant Station in New York formally opened.
In 1898, New York City was consolidated into five boroughs.
In 1909, five-term Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater was born

in Phoenix, Arizona Territory.
In 1953, country singer Hank Williams Sr., 29, while being driven to a concert date in Canton, Ohio, was discovered dead in the back seat of his car during a stop in Oak Hill, W. Va.
In 1979, the United States and China held celebrations in Washington and Beijing to mark the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
In 1984, the breakup of AT&T took place as the telecommunications giant was divested of its 22 Bell System companies under terms of an antitrust agreement.
In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect.
One year ago: Revelers celebrated the new year around the world; a ball dropped for the 100th year in New York's Times Square.
Today's Birthdays: Author J.D. Salinger is 90. Former Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., is 87. Actor Ty Hardin is 79. Actor Frank Langella is 71. Rock singer-musician Country Joe McDonald is 67. Writer-comedian Don Novello is 66.

Actor Rick Hurst is 63. Country singer Steve Ripley (The Tractors) is 59. Rapper Grandmaster Flash is 51. Actress Ren Woods is 51. Actress Dedee Pfeiffer is 45. Actress Embeth Davidtz is 43. Country singer Brian Flynn (Flynnville Train) is 43. Actor Morris Chestnut is 40. Actor Verne Troyer is 40.
Thought for Today: "Time has no divisions to mark its passage, there is never a thunderstorm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols." — Thomas Mann, German author (1875-1955).

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Answer to previous puzzle

SCADS	ANEW	ASH
CAMEL	PEER	ALTO
ATMACHINE	COOT	
MOO	TOIL	SECURE
	TED	STRUDEL
CARPED	TILER	
AVOID	TARE	RAMS
KILN	DICER	ELIE
EDEN	IRIS	SNORE
	UPSET	TOTTER
SUBMITS	MAL	
PROBER	DELI	BUS
OGRE	IRA	ACCOUNT
DEER	COIN	INDIA
EDS	TOSS	TESTY

Newsday Crossword

NO WAY by Richard Silvestri
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS	DOWN	
1 Seafood serving	1 EMT's skill	9 Gown feature
5 Northern constellation	2 Mouth top	10 Jane Fonda Oscar film
9 Hit the rink	3 Concerning	11 Jai
14 Sit for a shot	4 Brewpub serving	12 Shade lightly
15 Limerick master	5 Land's End competitor	13 Superlative suffix
16 New York island	6 Abbey Theatre cofounder	21 Be bright
17 Old-fashioned learning	7 Indian prince	22 Voice a view
18 Mexicali's region	8 League member	25 Chest material
19 Miniskirt designer		26 Keep away from
20 "No way, Mr. Memory Expert!"		27 Fruit covers
23 ___ Cruces, NM		28 Leather ender
24 Pizzeria order		29 Topic
25 Tip to one side		30 Non-macho type
29 Castor or Pollux		31 Establish
31 Transportation Dept. agency		32 College Station athlete
34 Lloyd Webber work		33 Phoenix's birthplace
35 Runner's sore spot		35 Stage blackout
36 Feet, so to speak		
37 "No way, Mr. Comedian!"		
40 Helper		
41 Like a wet noodle		
42 "Tomorrow" singer		
43 GPS lines		
44 Take the bait		
45 Trump, at times		
46 Brewpub serving		
47 Charge		
48 "No way, Mr. Biographer!"		
55 Following in the text		
56 Former science mag		

Smoking ban leads to major drop in heart attacks

ATLANTA (AP) — A smoking ban in one Colorado city led to a dramatic drop in heart attack hospitalizations, according to a new study that is considered the best and longest-term research to show such a link.

The rate of hospitalized cases dropped 41 percent three years after the ban of workplace smoking in Pueblo, Colo., took effect. There was no such drop in two neighboring areas, and researchers believe it's a clear sign the ban was responsible.

The study suggests that sec-

ondhand smoke may be a terrible and under-recognized cause of heart attack deaths in this country, said one of its authors, Terry Pechacek of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At least eight earlier studies have linked smoking bans to decreased heart attacks, but none ran as long as three years. Some critics had questioned whether a ban could have such an immediate impact, and suggested other factors could have driven the declines.

The new study looked at

heart attack hospitalizations for three years following the July 1, 2003 enactment of Pueblo's ban, and found declines as great or greater than what was seen in the other research.

"This study is very dramatic," said Dr. Michael Thun, a researcher with the American Cancer Society.

"This is now the ninth study, so it is clear that smoke-free laws are one of the most effective and cost-effective to reduce heart attacks," said Thun, who was not involved in the CDC study released

Thursday.

Smoking bans are designed not only to cut smoking rates but also to reduce secondhand tobacco smoke. It is a widely recognized cause of lung cancer, but its effect on heart disease can be more immediate. It not only damages the lining of blood vessels, but also increases the kind of blood clotting that leads to heart attacks. Reducing exposure to smoke can quickly cut the risk of clotting, some experts said.

"You remove the final one or two links in the chain" of

events leading to a heart attack, Thun said.

Secondhand smoke causes an estimated 46,000 heart disease deaths and about 3,000 lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers each year, according to statistics cited by the CDC.

In the new study, researchers reviewed hospital admissions for heart attacks in Pueblo. Patients were classified by ZIP codes. They then looked at the same data for the area of Pueblo County outside the city and El Paso County.

Police: Wounded wife grabbed gun, killed husband

By **GARRY MITCHELL**

Associated Press Writer
ROSINTON, Ala. —

Neighbors on a rural road in Baldwin County didn't pay much attention to the Cowan residence until gunfire erupted there two days before Christmas, revealing a deadly case of domestic violence.

Investigators said an enraged James Cowan Jr., 39, shot 42-year-old Pamela Cowan in the chest about 5:30 a.m., following a stretch of abuse that started the night before.

He had poured gasoline throughout their small home, dousing his wife and the bed in which she lay.

Then he stacked cushions from furniture on and near his wife and blocked the door with furniture as officers arrived.

But his wife managed to pick up the .357-caliber handgun he had put down briefly and shot him in the head, sheriff's spokesman Maj. Anthony Lowery said.

James Cowan was airlifted to a Mobile hospital where he was pronounced dead. Pamela Cowan was treated at a Pensacola, Fla., hospital and was expected to recover.

A county grand jury later will review the evidence, but Lowery said no charges were filed.

"There's no reason to believe she didn't act in self-defense," Lowery told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday in his Bay Minette office.

During the 13-year marriage, Pamela Cowan had obtained two protective orders against her husband, citing his violent moods, then tried to revoke both, including one about two weeks before the shooting. She told a judge in a letter that her husband need-

ed "one more chance" to change his life. She wrote she had seen a therapist and hoped to save her marriage.

There was no indication the protection order was revoked. The judge in her case did not immediately return a phone message Wednesday.

A week after the shooting, neighbor Peter Ryan cuddled a newborn puppy in the yard of his home within view of the Cowan residence. Ryan said the couple had lived across the road for several years, and said James Cowan helped him remove some Hurricane Ivan debris in 2004.

"He worked on trucks and big rigs," Ryan said. "He was gone a lot. I saw him about a month ago at a store."

In a nearby house,

John Danne, a 33-year-old welder doing home repairs, said the area is ordinarily quiet, aside from a drunken driver now and then.

He added, "This scared me, happening a quarter-mile from where I'm working. It's a tragedy."

Rosinton is a small crossroads community about 24 miles east of Mobile. Rural roads run beside farms that raise livestock, Christmas trees and cotton.

Robert "Rob" Hurst, who lives around the bend from Cowans, said the despite the area's quiet appearance, "you never know what goes on behind closed doors."

"It's heartbreaking," said his son, Robbie, as the pair worked in a cycle shop behind their home. "I'm just glad she

survived."

Although the shootings startled neighbors, the sheriff's spokesman said most of the county's homicides arise from domestic disputes. Lowery said Cowan's criminal record included about a dozen offenses, including assaults.

As the investigation continued Wednesday,

it was not immediately clear what set off last week's shooting. Lowery was among the officers on the shooting scene.

"She was fairly coherent when we were in there," he said, adding that details at the scene matched her account. The gasoline fumes made it "tough to stay

in there," he said.

Pamela Cowan's father, Charlie Wilson of Loxley, told the Press-Register, "At times she is all right; at times she is down."

Wilson could not be reached for further comment.

A public fundraising effort has been set up to pay her medical bills.

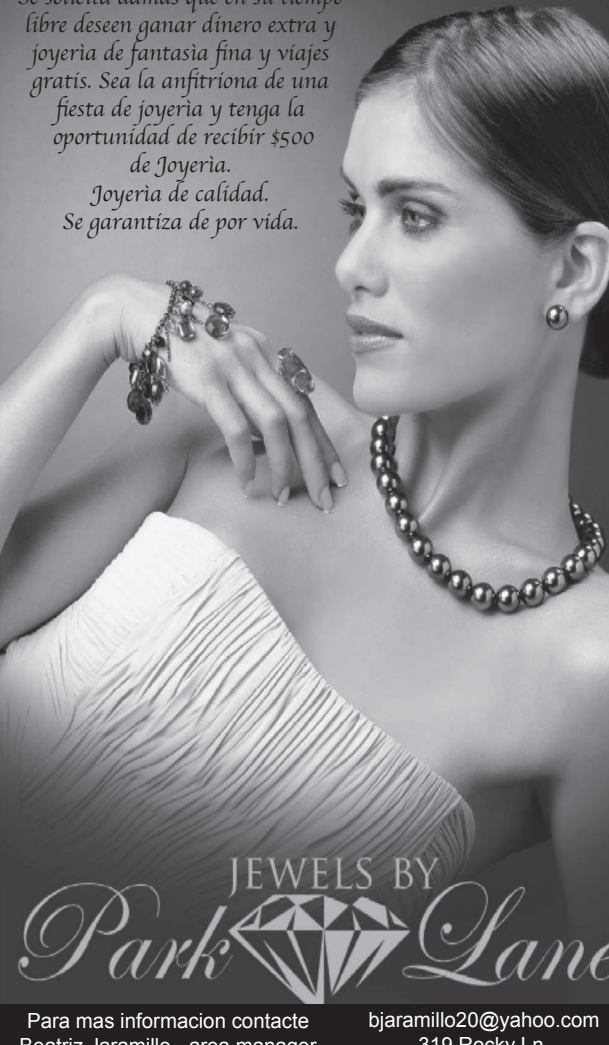



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John and Diana Dodd

We hope your New Year's celebration is a great start to a great year. May 2009 hold many wonderful things for you and yours. As we ring in the new year, we also celebrate your friendship and support. It's been a pleasure doing business iwth you, and we hope to see you often in 2009. Happy New Year, friends

Watch the Playoffs With Us!



SUNDAY GAME DAY

Come watch the game on our Big Screen TV's while the kids bowl. Wear your Jersey for 20% Off All Food, Drinks & Bowling

Don't forget to join us for Terrific Twosday Nights every Tuesday and come and watch The 25th Anniversary of Wrestlemania Sunday, April 5

Wishing you a Happy New Year



ORDER ONLINE
DOMINOS-NOW.COM

267-4111
2111 Gregg St.

Angel Food Ministry order day begins Friday

North Birdwell UMC has been notified that the delivery truck will not arrive until noon Jan. 24. Therefore, the pickup time will be 1:30 p.m. until 3 p.m. on that date.

Regular Box \$30

- 4 6-oz. ribeye steaks
- 4 4-lb. leg quarters
- 4 6-oz. beef patties
- 1 18-oz. cheese-filled manicotti
- 1 2-lb. pork rib strips
- 1 1-lb. chicken fajita strips
- 1 1-lb. ground turkey
- 1 1-lb. broccoli
- 1 1-lb. peas
- 1 c. oatmeal variety box
- 1 32-oz. shelf stable milk
- 1 8-oz. blueberry muffin mix
- 1 12 ct. white corn tortillas
- 1 1-lb. pinto beans
- 1 7-oz. chicken flavored rice and vermicelli
- 1 dozen eggs

1 dessert item

Senior Box \$28

- Ten seasoned, nutritionally balanced, fully cooked meals, heat and serve. Each contains three ounces of protein, a starch, two vegetables or fruit.
- New Orleans style chicken over rice with okra and tomatoes
 - Grilled chicken strips and penne pasta
 - Flamed-broiled Salisbury steak
 - Cheesy chicken and broccoli casserole
 - Classic chicken tetrazzini
 - Country fried steak with cream gravy
 - Spaghetti with meatballs
 - Chicken parmesan
 - Flame-broiled beef patty with onion gravy.
- Each senior meal contains a dessert.

With the purchase of either of the above boxes you can purchase any number of the specials.

Special No. 1: Assorted combo box, \$22 — 2 12-oz. New York strips, 2 8-oz.

sirlion strips, 4 6-oz. pork chops, 4 8-oz. hamburger steaks.

Special No. 2: Bacon wrapped combo, \$21 — 4 6-oz. bacon wrapped port filets, 4 6-oz. bacon wrapped beef filets, 4 6-oz. bacon wrapped chicken filets.

Special No. 3: \$21, 3.75 lb. T-bone steaks.

Special No. 4: Chicken combo box, \$20 — 4.5 lbs. whole chicken, 2 lbs.. wings, 2 lbs. nuggets, 2 lbs. breaded tenders.

Special No. 5: Fresh fruit and vegetables, \$21 — 4 lbs. Idaho baking potatoes, 3 lbs. sweet potatoes, 2 lbs. yellow onions, 4 lbs. navel oranges, 1/2-lb. pecan halves, 2 red grapefruit, 1 head cabbage, 1 lb. carrots, 4 tangerines, 4 pears.

Orders will be taken Fridays, Jan. 2 and 9, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays, Jan. 3 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at North Birdwell United Methodist Church, located at 2702 N. Birdwell.

Orders will also be taken from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 3 and Jan. 10 at the Big Spring Mall.

Quit smoking today

The statistics are scary. Smoking cigarettes causes more deaths than alcohol, AIDS, illegal drugs, car crashes, fires, murders, and suicides combined. In 2008, 400,000 Americans will die as a direct result of smoking. Yet, despite the risks of cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and ulcers, millions of Americans continue to feed their addiction to nicotine.



DR. SCOTT BARCLAY

If you have ever tried to quit smoking, you know what a difficult choice this can be. Quitting smoking takes courage and hard work. Many smokers may try multiple times before they are successful.

However, no matter how long you have been smoking, quitting will help you live longer. According to the Centers for Disease Control, a lifetime of smoking will cut your lifespan by an average of 12 years. So why not quit today? As 2009 begins resolve to quit smoking and begin to save your life. To help you quit, the Surgeon General has provided the following five-step formula:

Get ready. Set a quit date. Your quit date should be a specific calendar day that is not too far into the future (which allows you to change your mind) but far enough away so that you can still prepare. According to the Centers for Disease Control, people who avoid smoking on their quit date are 10 times more likely to be smoke-free six months later. In addition to setting a quit date, make changes to your environment by ridding your house, vehicles and office of cigarettes, then clean the smell of smoke from your house and clothes. If you have tried to quit before, review your past attempts and make note of what strategies were successful and what things to avoid.

Get support. If you have the support of your family and friends, you are much better prepared to quit smoking. Find support through individual, group and internet support groups and talk with your healthcare provider to discuss a healthy approach to quitting.

Learn new skills and behaviors. Take up a new hobby. Whether it's exercise or arts and crafts, changing your routine can help you avoid smoking triggers.

Find ways to distract yourself from urges and reduce your stress. Studies show thatitters who take up exercise when they quit smoking have higher success rates and manage to keep their weight stable or even lose weight.

Get medication and use it correctly. According to the Surgeon General, use of medication can more than double your chances of quitting for good. There are many options out there, including patches, nicotine gum, inhalers and prescription medication. Your health care provider can assist you with finding the medication that is right for you.

Be prepared for difficult situations. The decision to quit will not be easy. Most relapses occur within three months of quitting smoking. The following tips should help you avoid the urge to smoke.

- Avoid the use of alcohol.
- Avoid other smokers.
- Eat healthy
- Stay busy.

The choice to quit is a difficult, yet rewarding one. And it is the most important thing you can do for yourself and your loved ones. For additional information on smoking cessation, contact your physician.

Dr. Scott Barclay is a board-certified family practitioner and now part of the medical staff at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. To make an appointment, call 264-6361.

As we say goodbye to 2008 we would like to thank you for your patronage and support
Happy New Year

Let us Inspire Your Mornings Beginning Jan. 12th We will offer coffee delivery to your office from 8 a.m. -10 a.m.*

Spanky's Coffee House
1903 Gregg
432-935-6767

*Call us for details & restrictions

It's Celebration Time!

As we ring in a new year with celebrations of good cheer, we want to share our thanks and best wishes with all of you. Your kind support is appreciated, and we wish you endless hours of happiness in 2009.

We've loved every minute of serving you this past year and look forward to seeing you again in the year ahead. Have a safe and happy New Year

Stanton Division
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After hours 1-800-442-8688

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Anniversary Sale 87 Auto Sales Est. - 1972

2007 Ram 3500 Diesel, Automatic Warranty SOLD \$21,950	2004 Toyota Camry New Car Trade WE FINANCE
2001 Nissan Maxima New Car Trade WE FINANCE	2008 Chevy Impala LT 28K, "Like New," Full Factory Warranty \$13,950
2000 F250 7.3 Powerstroke 4X4 One Owner \$11,950	2006 Dodge Ram Quad Cab SLT 21,000 Miles, Factory Warranty "Like New" \$14,950
2007 Nissan Titan Crew Cab 19,000 Actual Miles, "Full Factory Warranty" \$17,950	2007 E. 250 Cargo Van 29,000 Actual Miles, "Full Factory Warranty" \$16,950

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