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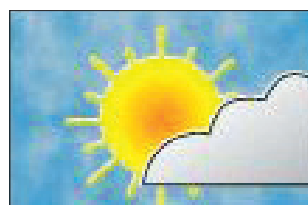
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# H BIG SPRING HERALD

**MONDAY**

JANUARY 12, 2009



VOLUME 104, NUMBER 35

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AP Photo/Helen Neafsey

**A multiple car accident is seen under the Indian Field Road bridge, on exit four of Interstate 95 north in the Cos Cob neighborhood of Greenwich Conn. A car that slid on ice caused the 13-car pileup, sending two people to the hospital and closing the northbound side of I-95 for two hours.**

## Taser ends standoff

*Forty-year-old jailed on numerous charges, warrants*

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

A Big Spring man was arrested Saturday morning following a short standoff with local law enforcement officers.

Jesse Martinez, 40, was taken into custody shortly after 7 a.m. Saturday and charged with assault – family violence, resisting arrest, evading arrest and outstanding local warrants.

According to law enforcement officials, the standoff began after officers were called to a residence in the 300 block of Davis Road for a domestic disturbance shortly after 5:30 a.m. Upon arrival, they found Martinez had barricaded himself in a residence at the location and refused to come out, according to Sheriff Stan Parker.

Negotiations between Martinez and deputies with the Howard County Sheriff's Office continued until the Big Spring man agreed to give himself up just after 7:30 a.m.

According to Parker, Martinez came out of the residence, but apparently changed his mind and attempted to go back inside, at which time officers used less-than-lethal bean bag rounds to attempt to subdue the man, but were unsuccessful.

However, a second attempt using a Taser was successful and Martinez was taken into custody at approximately 7:51 a.m., said Parker.

Martinez was taken to Scenic Mountain Medical Center where he was treated and released back into custody, then booked into the Howard County Jail, according to HCSO records.

## Northern Plains face frigid storm; en route east, south

By **KANTELE FRANKO**

Associated Press Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Blizzard warnings were posted across the Northern Plains early Monday as a bitterly cold wallop of snow threatens the region, while residents of the Midwest and Northeast dug out after their own tussles with weekend storms.

Arctic air was to dip down from Canada and spread snow into Montana, the Dakotas and Minnesota before marching into the Midwest, South and Northeast by the end of the week.

Parts of the Midwest and Northeast were already trying to handle up to a foot of snow that caused two large vehicle pileups — a 59-vehicle crash in New Hampshire and another in

Connecticut that involved 13 vehicles. There were at least four weekend traffic fatalities.

Most residents in New England heeded the authorities' warnings to stay off roads after the storm dumped up to 9 inches of snow in some areas in Massachusetts and sleet and freezing rain across Rhode Island. Some communities declared snow emergencies to help cleanup crews plow streets.

In New Hampshire, three buses and two tractor-trailer rigs were among 59 vehicles that crashed on snowy Interstate 93, sending a dozen people to hospitals Sunday morning and temporarily shutting down a stretch of the highway's northbound lanes.

None of the injuries were life threatening, but it took emergency

crews about an hour to remove one man from a car wedged under the back of a tractor trailer, Derry Fire Battalion Chief Jack Webb said.

A car that slid on ice caused a 13-car pileup Sunday afternoon near Greenwich, Conn., sending two people to the hospital and closing the northbound side of Interstate 95 for two hours. Police said no serious injuries were reported.

A Maryland teen was killed Sunday when he lost control of his SUV on an icy road and ran into a telephone pole near Union Mills. Authorities in Michigan said a 49-year-old man died when his snowmobile collided with a snow plow Saturday in Dorr Township. Motorists also died Sat-

See **STORM**, Page 3

## Charges dropped against BSHS student

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

A Big Spring High School student was allowed to re-enter classes Monday morning following a month-long investigation into allegations he took a firearm on school property.

LaRay Woodard, 18, a BSHS senior and member of the varsity football squad, was allowed to return to classes after the

Howard County District Attorney's Office announced the charges against him — possession of a firearm in a prohibited location — were dropped late last week.

According to officials with the Big Spring Police Department, officers responded to the high school campus Nov. 25, 2008, as result of a multi-agency investigation into a string of burglaries in Big Spring and Howard County. Police

searched Woodard's vehicle and found a weapon — reportedly a shotgun — in the trunk of the car.

According to District Attorney Hardy Wilkerson, the charges were dropped because of changes to the law that exclude school parking lots.

"The statute has changed in the past

See **WOODARD**, Page 3

## Council to discuss sports complex

By **THOMAS JENKINS**

Staff Writer

The city of Big Spring will look to plug the last utility gaps in the Roy Anderson Sports Complex Tuesday night, as the city council will consider first reading of several matters.

"We'll be asking the council to approve this easement, which will cinch

up the sewage service to the park," said Assistant City Manager Todd Darden, describing a 20-foot-wide easement that will connect existing city service lines at the Big Spring State Hospital. "We will also be asking for approval of a second easement, approximately 10 feet wide, according to the survey, that will connect the electrical services."

Darden said the pair of easements should help move the \$4.3 million project forward in the coming year.

Construction began in April 2008 and is expected to be completed around September, according to officials with Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, the engineer-

See **COUNCIL**, Page 3

### INDEX

Comics	9
Classified	6-8
Obituaries	2
Opinion	4
Sports	5,10

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COMPLETE STORY

## Obituaries

### Keith Howard



Keith Howard, 62, of Big Spring, died Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009, at his residence. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Walter McCall, chaplain with Compass Hospice, officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday at the

funeral home.

He was born on June 11, 1946, in Stanton.

Keith grew up in the Tarzan Community and attended school at Grady and graduated from Flower Grove High School. He then attended Howard College and Texas Tech University. Keith joined the United States Army and served for two years. He then attended the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and received his masters degree. He had worked in the trucking industry as a dispatcher for a number of years.

Survivors include three sisters, Annette Howard and Andrea Howard, both of Big Spring and Pat Ford of Midland; two nieces and two nephews, and four great nieces and one great nephew.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dick and Vivian Howard; and two brothers, James Howard and Richard Howard.

The family suggests memorials to a favorite charity.

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

### Randel Williams

Randel Williams, 38, of Big Spring died Saturday, Jan. 10, 2009, at his residence. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

## Sheriff's report

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 67 inmates at the time of this report.

• BOE LEWIS PAIN, 26, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for driving while intoxicated — second offense.

• JASON SCOTT EDWARDS, 20, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of resisting arrest, search or transportation and evading arrest or detention.

• SANTIAGO CANTU, 35, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for contempt of court — disobedience of a court order.

• KRISTAN NICOLE RIOS, 20, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• KYLE LEE BROWNFIELD, 18, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• CLINT BOLLIER, 18, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• KENNATH MICHAEL MCPHERSON, 18, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less and evading arrest or detention.

• CORY LEE PUGA, 18, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• CRYSTAL COBLE, 21, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on charges of bondsman off bond for resisting arrest, search or transportation and bondsman off bond for possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• KARA CHRISTINE BINGHAM, 23, was arrested Saturday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• MARCUS EMORY STURGILL, 20, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana — two ounces or less.

• LISA ANN TURNER, 46, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of resisting arrest, search or transportation.

• CHARLIE LEOS JR., 33, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a warrant for burglary of a habitation with intent to commit assault.

• JESSE MARTINEZ, 40, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on charges of evading arrest or detention, resisting arrest, search or transportation, assault — family violence and no seat belt.

• FRANKLIN KYLE CASEY, 47, was arrested Sunday by DPS on charges of driving while intoxicated — third or more offense and violation of a driver's license restriction on occupational license.

• LORENZO TORRES RAMIREZ, 23, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on charges of violation of a protective order and bondsman off bond for criminal mischief.

• ISIDRO MIGUEL DELACRUZ, 18, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

• RANDALL KIRK KIRKHAM, 18, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of theft.

## Police

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 9 a.m. Saturday and 7 a.m. today:

• CARL BRANDON CLARK, 30, of 205 Merrick Rd., was arrested Sunday on charges of failure to appear (two counts), failure to report change of address/name, failure to maintain financial responsibility and speeding.

• GARY WAYNE HOWELL, 49, of 553 Hillside, was arrested Sunday on a charge of public intoxication.

• ROBERT RUBEN SANCHEZ, 44, of 423 Westover Rd., was arrested Sunday on a charge of public intoxication.

• DONNIE GORDON HALE JR., 42, of 1214 Lloyd Ave., was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.

• THEFT OF A FIREARM was reported in the 1100 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

• THEFT was reported: in the 1100 block of Lamesa.

• THEFT was reported: in the 900 block of Willia.

• CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported: in the 1600 block of Oriole.

• BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 1900 block of 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

• BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 1700 block of Purdue.

• ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported: in the 800 block of 18<sup>th</sup> Street.

• ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported: in the 1900 block of Wasson Road.

• ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported: in the 1400 block of Sixth Street.

## Fire/EMS

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

• MEDICAL was reported in the 100 block of Lockhart. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of Driver Road. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAUMA was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Third Street and Gregg. Two people were transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Purdue. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1100 block of N. Nolan. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Jennings. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 500 block of W. 17<sup>th</sup> Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

• GRASS FIRE was reported in the 700 block of E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1100 block of N. Nolan. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 2300 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Fourth Street and Gregg. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of W. Fifth Street. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of S. Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAUMA was reported in the 2000 block of McGregor Road. One person was transported to SMMC.




• MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

## Take Note

• 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.

• 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.

## Your Local Weather

Tue 1/13	Wed 1/14	Thu 1/15
 <b>57/31</b>	 <b>64/31</b>	 <b>56/33</b>
Sunny skies. High 57F. Winds SE at 10 to 15 mph.	Abundant sunshine. Highs in the mid 60s and lows in the low 30s.	Abundant sunshine. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.

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## Bulletin Board

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

### TODAY

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

• Big Spring Band Boosters meet at 5:30 p.m. in the Big Spring High School band hall.

• Coahoma Lions Club meets at 6 p.m. in the Coahoma Community Center at 306 North Ave.

• The Concerned Citizens Council meets at 7 p.m. at the Howard County Library. For more information, call 264-6116.

• Archeology Society for Howard and Borden counties meets at 7 p.m. in the Howard County Library Community Room in the basement. Call 270-2615 for more information.

• Prospector's Club work night begins at 7 p.m. at 606 E. Third.

• Big Spring Society of the Order of Beacients meets at 6:30 p.m. for a meal with meeting that begins at 7:30 p.m. at 221 Main.

• Big Spring Commandry meets at 7:30 p.m. at 221 Main.

• The Christian Motorcyclists Association meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Dragon Restaurant, 1300 S. Gregg. Everyone is welcome. Call 263-3869 for more information.

### TUESDAY

• Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• The Big Spring chapter of the American Cancer Society meets at Home Hospice, located at 111 E. Seventh St. at noon Lunch is provided. For more information, contact Sherry Hodnett at (432) 264-7599.

• The Powwow Committee of Big Spring meets at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church annex, 809 Scurry, or the fellowship hall at 810 Scurry. Call Robert Downing at 263-3255 for information.

### WEDNESDAY

• Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Free blood pressure screenings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St., provided by InHome Care.

• Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.

• Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.

## Support Groups

### 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.

• The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St. Tuesday, Jan. 6, Teen Challenge will be held at The Path. They will present a Rally for Jesus.

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

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

### WEDNESDAY

• RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

## BIG SPRING HERALD

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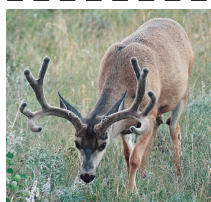
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## State Briefs

### Strayhorn to announce run for Austin mayor

AUSTIN (AP) — Former gubernatorial candidate Carole Keeton Strayhorn is running for mayor of Austin — again.

Strayhorn's campaign said Sunday the 69-year-old plans to officially announce her candidacy Monday, three decades after first winning the job before her rise in state politics.

Campaign coordinator Kevin Brown wouldn't elaborate on the announcement, only saying that Strayhorn "will make perfectly clear" Monday why she wants the office again.

Strayhorn served as Austin's first woman mayor from 1977 to 1983. She began her political career as a Democrat, then switched to the GOP before her election to the Texas Railroad Commission and then comptroller.

A self-described "one tough grandma," Strayhorn ran unsuccessfully for governor as an independent candidate in 2006.

### Speeding blamed in accident that killed 5

MAGNOLIA (AP) — Excessive speeding was likely the cause of a fiery collision that killed five people and injured two others, authorities said.

The driver of a Chevrolet Cobalt was driving on a state highway in Magnolia at "an extremely high rate of speed" when it collided with a Toyota van Saturday, authorities said.

"The driver of the van probably never saw it coming," said Department of Public Safety Sgt. Angela Fountain.

Four of the five family members traveling in the van were killed. They were identified as: Donald Lee Sexton, 60, of College Station; Curtis Charles Edwards, 78, of Pinehurst; Catherine C. Edwards, 83; and Lloyd Alvin Edwards, 83, of Salina, Okla.

"This is devastating for this family," Fountain said.

Another van passenger, 59-year-old Karla Kay Sexton of College Station, was in serious condition at Memorial Hermann Hospital-The Medical Center on Sunday afternoon, hospital spokeswoman Alejandra Rodriguez said.

Kayla Pratorius, 18, of Magnolia, was a front seat passenger in the Cobalt and was pronounced dead

at the scene.

The driver of the Cobalt was 22-year-old Brandon Lee Ferguson of Magnolia. He was in critical condition Sunday afternoon at Memorial Hermann Hospital-The Medical Center, Rodriguez said.

Fountain said that the investigation is ongoing and they are trying to determine the Cobalt's speed at the time of impact.

### UT Dallas college student arrested in throat slashing

RICHARDSON (AP) — University of Texas at Dallas police have arrested a man in an on-campus attack on a woman whose throat was cut.

The victim was attacked on Friday evening as she was working in the Engineering South building. Before she was taken to the hospital, she was able to describe her attacker. A campuswide search was launched.

University officials said that about 45 minutes later, a man called police to say he was the attacker.

John Shaffer, 20, a sophomore computer science major, was arrested at a student housing complex. He remained at Collin County Jail on Sunday, accused of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Bail is set at \$15,000. A jail spokeswoman said Shaffer did not have an attorney listed.

Susan Rogers, a UTD spokeswoman, told The Dallas Morning News for its Sunday online editions that she could not elaborate on the attack, what led to it or the victim's current condition, citing student privacy laws.

She also would not say whether Shaffer and the victim knew each other.

### Teen charged with capital murder

WACO (AP) — A 15-year-old boy charged with capital murder in the slaying of a man last week has also been charged with kidnapping a woman and her child last month, authorities said.

The teen was arrested late Friday night in the death of Gregory Lewis, a 48-year-old found shot on a road Tuesday. Lewis had been shot several times in the lower torso but was alive when police arrived. He later died at a local hospital.

The teen, whose name was not released by police because he is a juvenile, was arrested late Friday and is charged with capital murder and two counts

of aggravated kidnapping, said Waco police spokesman Steve Anderson in a story published online Sunday by the Waco Tribune-Herald.

Information on the teen's bond was not immediately available on Sunday.

Anderson said money was taken from Lewis, making the crime a capital offense.

During the shooting investigation, the teen was also linked to the Dec. 29 aggravated kidnapping of a 24-year-old woman and her 2-year-old daughter, Anderson said. He said that the mother and daughter had pulled into an apartment complex when a man approached her car, displayed a pistol and told her to get into the back seat of the car.

As the victim got into the back seat, three other men ran up and got in the car. Anderson said one of the three men also had a pistol.

The men took the woman's purse and drove her to an ATM, telling her that if she didn't withdraw money, they would kill her and her child, Anderson said.

The men dropped the woman and her child off when she couldn't withdraw any cash because her account was empty.

One of the other men allegedly involved in the kidnapping, 20-year-old Clifton Yudell Dobbins, arrested Friday and charged with two counts of aggravated kidnapping, Anderson said.

### Mesquite police investigate highway shooting

MESQUITE (AP) — Mesquite police say a 21-year-old driver was shot at least once following a confrontation with occupants of another vehicle and then crashed the van he was driving into the center barrier on U.S. Highway 80.

Mesquite police say that the driver was taken to a Dallas hospital in critical condition. Two passengers suffered minor injuries when the van hit the barrier early Sunday.

Police say the preliminary investigation shows that the occupants of the van were involved in a confrontation with people in a sedan on Interstate 30. Police say that as both vehicles traveled toward the I-30 interchange with U.S. Highway 80, shots were fired from the suspect vehicle.

Police are asking anyone who may have information or witnessed the shooting to contact them.

## Gay NH bishop to offer prayer at inaugural event

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The first openly gay Episcopal bishop will offer a prayer at the Lincoln Memorial at an inaugural event for President-elect Barack Obama.

The selection of New Hampshire Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson

for Sunday's event follows weeks of criticism from gay-rights groups over Obama's decision to have the Rev. Rick Warren give the invocation at his Jan. 20 inauguration.

Warren backed the ban on same-sex marriage that passed in his home

state of California on the November ballot.

Robinson said last month the choice of Warren was like a slap in the face. In an interview with the Concord Monitor, he said he doesn't believe Obama invited him in response to the Warren criticism

but said his inclusion won't go unnoticed by the gay and lesbian community.

"It's important for any minority to see themselves represented in some way," Robinson told the newspaper for a story in Monday's editions. "Whether it be a

racial minority, an ethnic minority, or in our case, a sexual minority. Just seeing someone like you up front matters."

Clark Stevens, a spokesman for the inaugural committee, said Robinson was invited because he had

offered his advice to Obama during the campaign and because of his church work.

## WOODARD

Continued from Page 1A

several years to specifically exclude school parking lots from what is defined as the

premises," said Wilkerson. "It's a double-edged sword, really. If someone goes to see their child's school performance and lock their firearm in the trunk of the car, that would be considered prudent. However, this will also allow

students and others to keep a weapon in their vehicle, giving them easier access."

Wilkerson said he was not aware of any other charges against Woodard.

School officials confirmed

that Woodard did return to class today.

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

## STORM

Continued from Page 1

urday in Illinois and Indiana.

The snow was a boon to Ohio ski resorts, which called it a stimulus package for their industry.

"We've been in busi-

ness for 47 years and — this is what I can't believe — yesterday was by far the best gross sales day we've ever had," said George Shaffer, area manager of the Alpine Valley ski resort east of Cleveland in Geauga County, where 11 inches of snow fell.

A transportation department worker in

Delaware suffered a broken leg Sunday when an SUV plowed through a section of highway near Wilmington that had been closed because of icy conditions.

The National Weather Service reported 8 inches of snow at Blissfield and Morenci in Michigan, and more than 6 inches of snow fell on

Detroit. The service also issued a winter storm watch across Michigan for Monday night through Tuesday.

The Pacific Northwest remained on alert with three flooded rivers in Washington, where state officials were assessing the damage from heavy rain and melting snow on roads and property.

National Guard troops were deployed in Lewis County, which was one of the state's hardest hit counties by flooding, said Rob Harper, a spokesman for the state division of Emergency Management.

## COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1

ing firm hired to oversee the project, which was approved by voters in 2007.

"The construction won't take nearly that long, but it's necessary for us to allow a grow-in period for the grass on the fields," Butch Davis, a representative from PSC, told the council in 2008. "The project should come in at budget for \$4.32 million."

The sports complex won't be the only multi-million dollar project making headway in 2009, as the council is also expected to consider approval of an agreement for sale of property regarding the Hotel Settles project.

"There are three parcels of property — approximately two-and-

a-half lots — near the hotel the Settles Hotel Development Company is wanting to purchase," said Darden. "Two of the lots are across the street from the hotel, and the third one is adjacent to it."

G. Brint Ryan, SHDC manager and Big Spring native, announced plans for a multi-million dollar renovation project in December 2006. According to SHDC officials, the project includes plans for commercial and residential use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors.

The project's budget has ballooned from \$12 million to \$20 million since its inception, with abatement of the structure currently under way.

Darden said SHDC has indicated the properties are expected to be devel-

oped as a part of the hotel renovations.

Also during Tuesday's meeting, the council is to entertain a joint election agreement with Big Spring Independent School District and a presentation of the 2010 Census.

The meeting will get

under way at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers at 307 E. Fourth St.

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



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# EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

**Ron Midkiff**  
Publisher

**John A. Moseley**  
Managing Editor

**Bill McClellan**  
News Editor

## OTHER VIEWS

# Gradual increase in gasoline taxes worth a real look

Western Refining CEO Paul Foster raised eyebrows last week when he told Fortune Magazine that the federal gasoline tax should be gradually raised to \$2 a gallon. It's now 18.4 cents a gallon.

On one hand, this is certainly not the time to raise anyone's taxes. We are in a recession.

On the other hand, Foster is thinking of the future. As he said on the magazine's Web site, a higher federal gasoline tax, as is charged in some European countries, would help wean citizens off petroleum products and force everyone's hand at perfecting alternative -- clean -- sources of energy.

It was made clear that Foster was not speaking for his El Paso-based company; his opinions are his own.

Federal taxes on gasoline are now 18.4 cents a gallon, and Texas adds another 20 cents a gallon.

"I think the tax on gasoline needs to be at least \$2 a gallon," Foster said. "But I don't think you can go there all at once," he told the magazine.

Of course not. Raising the tax all at once would get the price of a gallon back to \$4, and since prices are due to rise again when the world stock markets calm, the price of gasoline would force some people off the road.

The gradual increase, though, is worth thinking about.

It's not the time to decide yea or nay on Foster's theory, but it is certainly past time for Americans to get serious about perfecting cost-effective alternate forms of energy.

Foster's theory is to raise the tax slowly. "If you add a nickel a gallon now, I honestly don't think anybody feels that. And if you add a nickel a gallon for every year, then 30 years from now -- I know that's a long time -- eventually you get to a point where it starts to make a difference," Foster theorized.

We are certainly not proposing the federal government, or the state of Texas, raise its gasoline tax at this time.

However, by an oilman such as Foster airing his theories, it makes all stop and think about how important it is to eventually wean ourselves off the importation of foreign oil and devising ways to power our country with fuels that are renewable, less expensive and kinder to the environment.

Bottom line: Foster said things we should think about.

THE TIMES  
EL PASO

## HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

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

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- 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 don't always get what we want,  
Lord, maybe it's for our best.

Amen

# Yes, 2008 was historic one

I'm sure there have been worse years than 2008; I just can't think of one right now. Bad enough that the economy fell into a hole the bottom of which we have not yet seen, it has also become apparent that we are at the mercy of thieves and swindlers.

Ted Stevens of Alaska, then the longest serving Republican Senator, was found guilty of illegally accepting favors (a doubling of his house) from a contractor who did business with the government.

Really, a two-bit bribe for someone charged with moving hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars around. It makes you wonder what we didn't find out about.

Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, once considered an up-and-coming star in the Democratic Party, was caught on tape talking about auctioning a U. S. Senate seat to the highest bidder.

Bernard Madoff, a genuine certified lion of Wall Street who thrilled hundreds of rich investors with the returns he produced on the money they gave him, was found to be a miserable fraud, as empty of substance as the Wizard of Oz and a very bad man besides. His worst offense was the damage done to charities that trusted their funds to him, money that was supposed to provide for the needy in many cases. But almost as serious

was the stoking of the fires of anti-Semitism that his crookedness inspired, reinforcing the ugly stereotype of the dishonest, money-grubbing Jew.

It was a year when we saw legislators with platinum-plated government health insurance upbraid auto executives for giving workers gold-plated health plans.

When we saw investment bankers and other Wall Street brigands dipping into the federal treasury for billions of dollars to stave off collapse, all the while paying themselves handsome bonuses for their good work.

It was a year in which a billion became the new million. As recently as September our political candidates were still talking in terms of millions, as though that were real money. If a thing cost \$100 million, well, that was too expensive. We couldn't afford it. Then the economy went south and overnight the term "millions" became so yesterday. When the auto companies came to Washington looking for cash, they didn't ask for \$100 million to tide them over until payday--\$35 billion was the number--and they weren't the only ones. No problem it seemed could be addressed for less than \$30 billion, not even as a stopgap.

Having agreed with the consigning of perhaps a trillion dollars or more to do nothing more than apply a tourniquet to our hemorrhaging economy, President-elect Obama has announced he'll pour hundreds of billions more into the task of jump-starting it.

Will any of it work? No one

really knows. It doesn't seem right though, does it? Excessive borrowing got us into this mess in the first place; now we expect excessive borrowing will get us out.

They're making money in the old-fashioned way these days; they print it. (Many of the geniuses counseling Obama, by the way, are the same geniuses who didn't see the train coming until it hit them.)

All this borrowing means we're saddling our children and grandchildren and their children and grandchildren with a mountainous debt that they will have to repay someday; the theory being that it's better to do that than leave them with a bombed-out, burned up economy where no one can earn a living.

For now we're left wondering whether we can count on our jobs, our pensions, our retirement accounts, our health insurance or even the ability of our children to get an education and/or job.

We had learned to take those things for granted but we can't anymore and it's damned scary. The threads of trust that bound us together as a society have been broken, one by one.

President Obama's biggest job will be to reweave that web of trust along with its correlatives, confidence and optimism.

If he can do that, he's going up on Mt. Rushmore.

Donald Kaul is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-losing Washington correspondent who, by his own account, is right more than he's wrong. E-mail him at [dkaul@earthlink.net](mailto:dkaul@earthlink.net).



# Eric Holder strong choice for AG

As the world eagerly awaits the inauguration of America's first black president, many Americans are just as excited by the prospect of another important first -- Eric Holder as the nation's first African-American Attorney General. President-elect Barack Obama and Holder have much in common. They are both lawyers. They share a passion for pick-up basketball. They are both the sons of working class parents. And both have an up-close and personal experience with racial and economic hardship. I believe this gives them a special insight and empathy for the challenges facing so many of our citizens in these perilous times.

Also like Obama, Holder is the son of an immigrant father. Obama's father was from Kenya, Holder's, from Barbados. Born in the Bronx, Holder grew up in Queens and is a product of New York City Schools, including, Stuyvesant High School, Columbia University and Columbia Law School. His father sold real estate; his mother was a secretary. Neither went to college, but both instilled in him a com-

mitment to education and hard work as the pathway to a better life.

Upon graduation from law school in 1975, Holder became a U.S. Justice Department lawyer where he served until President Ronald Reagan appointed him judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in 1988. In 1993, he became the first African-American U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, a position he held until his appointment in 1997 as Deputy Attorney General, serving under President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno. Holder served briefly as acting attorney general under President George W. Bush, until the Senate confirmed John Ashcroft. Since 2001, he has served as a star attorney in the D.C. law firm of Covington Burling. On December 1, 2008, President-elect Obama announced Holder's nomination to be the 82nd Attorney General of the United States.

Holder is not only eminently qualified to be the nation's chief lawyer, he is an adamant defender of the rule of law and civil rights and is also determined to restore what he sees as an eroded respect for that principle in recent years. In a speech to the American Constitution Society in June of this year, he said, "The next president must move immediately to reclaim America's standing in the world

as a nation that cherishes and protects individual freedom and basic human rights." He called for closing the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, declaring without qualification that the United States does not torture, ending the practice of transferring individuals involuntarily to countries that engage in torture, and ceasing warrantless domestic surveillance.

As a long-time member of Concerned Black Men, Eric Holder also understands that increasing our already overcrowded prison population is not the way to a safe society. Too many promising lives have been wasted in that futile approach. He has said, "I think too often law enforcement people focus on the enforcement side and don't deal with the prevention side, and unless you do both, how are you ever going to really get a handle on the crime problem." Those are wise words from the man who may soon get a chance to put them into action.

Marc H. Morial is president and CEO of The National Urban League. Mr. Morial succeeds Hugh B. Price as the League's eighth Chief Executive. Mr. Morial served two distinguished four-year terms as Mayor of New Orleans from 1994-2002. During that time, he also served as President of the United States Conference of Mayors in 2001 and 2002.



MARC  
MORIAL

## HC men, women upset at NMJC

### Herald Staff Report

HOBBS, N.M. — Howard College's men's and women's basketball teams took an unexpected step back Saturday night in Hobbs.

Both squads lost to New Mexico Junior College in what is considered a pair of upsets in Western Junior College Athletic Conference play.

The men fell 84-70, while the women came up short, 62-58.

In the Hawk ladies' case, they were down by as many as 20 points, but battled to pull within 3 with

six seconds left to play.

Howard had a shot to tie the game, but it didn't fall through and NMJC iced the contest at the free throw line.

The losses drop both squads to 1-2 in conference play. Each lost to Midland College, then defeated Frank Phillips College before going into the Christmas break last semester.

Howard will try to get back on track as the conference season continues tonight at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. The Hawks will host Western Texas College with the women taking the court at 5:30

p.m. The men will play following the completion of the women's game at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Tonight will be a homecoming for new Western Texas College coach Jason Sautter. Sautter was an assistant at Howard last season and helped recruit several of the Hawk players.

Also tonight, the Big Spring YMCA Youth Basketball League teams will be introduced at halftime of each game. The girls and coed squads will take the court at halftime of the women's game. Boys teams will be introduced at the break of the men's game.

## NFL playoffs

### Say what?

*Eagles, Cards make for unexpected NFC Championship*

#### By BARRY WILNER

AP Football Writer

Say that again. The Eagles visiting the Cardinals for a spot in the Super Bowl?

Well, believe it, because next Sunday, the long-downtrodden Arizona Cardinals will host Philadelphia in the NFC championship game. A franchise that had one playoff victory in 61 years before this month against a team that barely sneaked into the post-season.

Philadelphia ensured that strange matchup Sunday by eliminating the defending champion New York Giants in the first 23-11 final in NFL history. Arizona did its part with a stunning 33-13 rout at Carolina on Saturday night.

See **NFL**, Page 10

### NFL playoff schedule

#### Sunday

**NFC Championship (FOX)**  
Eagles at Cardinals, 2 p.m.

**AFC Championship (CBS)**  
Ravens at Steelers, 5:30 p.m.



AP photo/Julie Jacobson

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb (5) celebrates after they scored a touchdown during the fourth quarter of an NFL divisional playoff game against the New York Giants Sunday at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. The Eagles upset their division rival, 23-11, advancing to the NFC Championship against the Arizona Cardinals.

## Rangers' Young requests trade

#### By STEPHEN HAWKINS

AP Sports Writer

The Texas Rangers are exploring trade options for five-time All-Star shortstop Michael Young at the player's request after he became upset about the team's plan to move him to third base.

Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said Sunday night during a hastily called conference call that the team has looked into trade possibilities but remains hopeful Young will remain in Texas.

"Our desire is for Michael to play third base," Daniels said. "Obviously though, he's got to buy into what we're doing."

The Rangers would like to move Young to third to make room for highly touted prospect Elvis Andrus at shortstop. The 20-year-old Andrus came to Texas in July 2007 in the trade that sent Mark Teixeira to Atlanta.

Daniels said he and manager Ron Washington met with the 32-year-old Young last month about the direction of the team and moving to third base.

"Reluctant, reluctant," Daniels said, describing Young's reaction. "He explained to us that he's worked extremely hard to make himself a shortstop. Obviously in 2004, he volunteered to move from second base to shortstop. That kind of shows the team-first character that has been a stable of his personality and really has made himself an outstanding player."

Daniels said he hasn't spoken to Young since before New Year's Day, but has had conversations with the player's agent.

Young switched from second base to shortstop in the spring of 2004 after the Rangers traded Alex Rodriguez to the New York Yankees. Rodriguez moved from shortstop to third to accommodate that trade.

Young has been selected to the All-Star team as a shortstop every season since, and last year earned his first AL Gold Glove award.

He is a career .300 hitter, though his streak of five consecutive 200-hit seasons was snapped in 2008 when he was hampered by a fractured right ring finger the last two months of the season. He was the AL batting champion in 2005 when he hit .331.

Young next season begins the five-year, \$80 million contract extension he signed during spring training in 2007 that prevented him from becoming a free agent. Young is due about \$62 million over the next five seasons since some of the

See **YOUNG**, Page 10

## Tebow decides to return for senior year

#### By MARK LONG

AP Sports Writer

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Tim Tebow started to walk off stage, then called an audible. The Florida quarterback turned around, grabbed the microphone and told teammates, coaches and fans exactly what they wanted to hear.

"Oh, by the way, let's do it again. I'm coming back," Tebow said.

Tebow thrilled more than 40,000 at the school's national championship celebration Sunday by announcing plans to return for his senior season,

with hopes of leading the Gators to their first undefeated season and fourth national title.

Tebow threw 32 touchdown passes in 2007, ran for 23 more scores and became the first sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy.

He did less this season, but accomplished more by leading Florida to its second national championship in three years.

Tebow completed 64 percent of his passes for 2,746 yards with 30 touchdowns and four interceptions. He also led the team in rushing for the second straight year, gaining 673 yards and

scoring 12 touchdowns.

The 6-foot-3, 240-pound left-hander was 18-of-30 passing for 231 yards, with two and two interceptions in Thursday night's 24-14 victory against Oklahoma in the Bowl Championship Series title game.

He also ran for 109 yards, most of it in the second half.

There was speculation he might head to the NFL, especially since he has talked about wanting a bigger platform to share his religious message and expand his community

See **TEBOW**, Page 10

## Sports in brief

### Big Spring basketball boosters meeting today

The Big Spring Steers Basketball Booster Club is meeting at 7 p.m. Monday in the Athletic Training Center.

All parents of Steers' basketball players from the junior high to the varsity level are encouraged to attend and discuss ways to support the Big Spring basketball teams.

For questions, call Sam Segundo at 268-3025.

### Lady Steers Booster Club meeting today at ATC

The Big Spring Lady Steers Booster Club is holding a meeting at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the ATC.

All parents of Lady Steers' athletes ranging from junior high to high school are encouraged to attend.

### YMCA basketballers being introduced at Hawks' halftime

All Big Spring YMCA Youth Basketball League teams will be introduced at halftime of the Hawks' games today.

Girls and coed squads will take the court at the intermission for the women's game, which is scheduled for a 5:30 p.m. start, while boys teams will be introduced at halftime of the men's game, which starts at 7 p.m.

Howard will be hosting Western Junior College Athletic Conference foe Western Texas College that night.

All players, coaches and their families will be admitted free into the game.

For additional information, contact Rosie Franco at 466-3050 or Stan Feaster at 264-5045.

### Lady Steers softball team raising funds at Pizza Inn

The Big Spring Lady Steers softball team will be having a fundraiser Thursday, Jan. 22, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Pizza Inn.

The Lady Steers will be helping with service and a portion of Pizza Inn's profits during that time will go to the team.

### Coahoma softball alumni needed for annual game

The 7th Annual Coahoma Softball Alumni Game has been scheduled for 1p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, and will be played at the Coahoma High School field. Former Bulldogette softball players are needed for the game.

Any former player interested in participating should call Amy Dunn at 263-2228 or 394-4323.

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## Tomorrow's Horoscope

## BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

The Leo moon provides a theatrical frame for this Mercury retrograde. Mishaps don't have to ruin your day. In fact, challenge yourself to let the weird twists enhance your experience. For instance, a wrong turn on the way to work shows you new pretty scenery, or a lost Internet connection is an opportunity for an actual phone conversation.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). It's time to pay attention to the money person or the powers that be. Each will come calling for notice. You're up to the confrontation with your best manners and kindest way of putting things.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). Everyone has elements of the inner self that are uncomfortable to deal with. You'll be especially brave. Broaden your world view through education and you will generate a new sense of self-confidence.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Peacemaker, get out your toolbox. At this point you are prepared for the task at hand. To others this mission would be daunting, but you deftly take charge and succeed. All their fussiness remains a mystery to you.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). You have a super talent for remaining in the

present. You'll be able to build on the merits of each moment. This day holds all you need and you commence finding great satisfaction now.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). Imagination helps you unlock psychological barriers. You trade in that tightrope you used to walk for a much better contraption, like a flying carpet. You move through the superficial issues that used to hold you back.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Guidance toward your highest possible outcome arrives today through a message. You may dislike the messenger, but if you can manage to refrain from judgment of this person you will learn important news.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You need to see nature in some form. When you look at the pattern passing clouds or the branches of trees, you receive a flash of connection between you and the divine.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Regarding those "coincidences" you experience on a regular basis, it's time to stop suppressing the fact that something beyond common understanding is happening here. Gather your experiences to create a fuller picture.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Everyone who knows you thinks of you whenever they chance upon the unusual. You help others stop and think. Sunsets and colorful scenes are better appreciated because of

your influence.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You have already passed a secret test, and with an exemplary performance. So when the bright light of inspection comes your way, you have nothing to fear. Shine on.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). While others are out hunting and gathering, you contemplate the cosmos. Your colleagues may not always understand you, but they admire your great depth. You are reliable when it counts.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). Something very curious happens today: Your partner does not tell you that you are wrong! No need for you to freak out; this person is merely taking stock of what is important. You are at the top of the list.

**CELEBRITY PROFILES:** Amazon.com founder, president and CEO Jeff Bezos is one of America's top leaders and most prominent dot-com entrepreneurs with a net worth estimated over \$8 billion. His intelligence was noted when he was a toddler and tried to disassemble his crib with a screwdriver. Bezos has natal sun, Mercury and Mars all in the sign of ambition with a moon in sophisticated Sagittarius.

*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.*

## Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: My ex-husband was one of those who thought the grass was greener on the other side. After a long marriage, he had an affair. I never thought he could betray our family like that.

Our two teenage children are still devastated. Although I have encouraged them to call and see their father, they refuse. We have tried counseling and I feel it helped all of us, but the kids are still very angry.

The problem is, their father blames me. He harasses me daily, threatening to delay his child support checks, take us back to court, and on and on, all because the children don't want to have contact. I have explained that I am not stopping the children from seeing him, but it falls on deaf ears. He needs to take responsibility for what he did, address it to the kids and move on. I am not at fault for how they feel. I have tried repeatedly to help them mend fences, but



KATHY MITCHELL  
MARCY SUGAR

they simply aren't ready.

I am in a good place with my life now, but my ex continues to say mean and hateful things to me. I have told him that I forgive him even though I don't understand why he cheated, and that he needs to forgive himself and stop blaming me for the mess he has made of his life.

I am hoping if he reads this he will come to the same realization. What else can I do? -- The Ex-Wife

Dear Ex: We think your husband's guilt is so overwhelming that he is taking it out on everyone else. Tell him you agree the children would benefit from having a relationship with their father, and suggest family counseling for all of you. If he is truly interested in re-establishing contact, he will cooperate.

Dear Annie: My sister and brother use too many antibiotics. And they both use only as many pills as they need to feel better and save the rest. I've told both of them that abuse of antibiotics is the No. 1 reason we have superbugs that won't be cured by existing medications. I've warned them they could get seriously ill, but they both ignore my advice.

How can I get them to stop self-medicating with antibiotics for stuff like a bad cold? Also, I believe some doctors prescribe unnecessary antibiotics

to get people like my siblings off their back. This strikes me as malpractice. How can this abuse be stopped? -- Concerned

Dear Concerned: Doctors should not be prescribing antibiotics for viral infections (like a cold) because they are generally ineffective. But patients often clamor for something and doctors too often accede to their patients' demands. Even when an antibiotic is necessary, by not using the full amount, the infection isn't entirely killed off and what's left is more resistant to the drug, making future infections more dangerous. Unfortunately, there is no medication that will make your siblings smarter and more responsible. Sorry.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Undecided in Iowa," who is looking into the Air National Guard. As a 28-year-service member, I am proudly facing my first combat deployment and my employer is bending over backward to work with me.

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Dear Proudly Serving: Thanks for the very useful information for anyone interested in serving in the military.

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# YOUNG

Continued from Page 5

money was paid as a signing bonus and more is deferred.

That contract was second-largest in team history, behind only the \$252 million, 10-year contract Rodriguez got in December 2000.

Young, a minor leaguer when traded from Toronto to Texas in 2000, is the Rangers' longest-tenured player. He played in two games that season and then 106 as a rookie in 2001.

Daniels said there is a "level of interest" from other teams about Young, but that there have been no proposed deals that would make sense for Texas. The GM still is hopeful Young will agree to the switch, something that had been expected during his contract that goes through the 2013 sea-

son.

"We are going to continue to talk to him and hope to come to a resolution where he agrees that's the best thing for the club," Daniels said. "We have not reached that point."

Andrus hit .295 with four home runs, 65 RBIs and 56 stolen bases in 118 games for Double-A Frisco last season. He had a .944 fielding average with 32 errors.

The Rangers still have two-time All-Star third baseman Hank Blalock, but he is expected to be the team's primary designated hitter. Blalock was limited to 123 games the last two seasons by injuries, including problems with his right shoulder. Blalock volunteered last season to move to first base.

Ramon Vazquez started a team-high 60 games at third base last season, and rookie Chris Davis and Blalock each started 31. Davis is expected to be the team's starting first baseman this season.

# TEBOW

Continued from Page 5

work, but Tebow said he never strongly considered leaving early.

Coach Urban Meyer set him up with several NFL coaches to talk about his pro prospects. Although Tebow said he got mixed feedback, nothing he heard swayed his decision.

"It was tough because some of that stuff is tempting at the next level and everything that goes along with it, especially ending on a great note ending with the national championship and moving on from there," Tebow said. "I love these guys and coach Meyer

and this program too much and I feel we can still end on a bang next year."

The Gators had three seniors in the starting lineup against the Sooners, meaning just about everyone could return next season. Receiver Percy Harvin and linebacker Brandon Spikes, fellow juniors considering turning pro, didn't address their futures Sunday. The deadline for underclassmen to apply for the NFL draft is Thursday.

Meyer said Tebow's announcement clearly means a lot.

"There's the functional football player part of it, but we all know it's much deeper than that," he said. "He is so good for college football."

# NFL

Continued from Page 5

"I know it is going to be a great atmosphere and

# sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

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

it is going to be electric," Cardinals coach Ken Whisenhunt said. "The home-field advantage is huge for us because we don't have to travel."

The Eagles do have to go cross-country, but they are flying high after road playoff wins at Minnesota and the Meadowlands. Remember, Philly needed Tampa Bay and Chicago to lose, then to beat Dallas on the final weekend of the season just to get in, and all that happened.

"In the locker room, there was so much energy in there. We were ready to play early in the week," quarterback Donovan McNabb said. "The city of Philadelphia is buzzing; this team is buzzing."

Pittsburgh and Baltimore are buzzing, too. The Steelers (13-4) were the only home team to win this weekend, beating San Diego 35-24. Seeded second in the AFC, they will play their division archrivals, the Ravens (13-5), who knocked out No. 1 Tennessee 13-10 on Saturday.

"What else would you expect, us and the Ravens," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "It would be big if it was a scrimmage. This is for the AFC championship."

The Eagles are 3-point favorites at the Cardinals, while the Steelers are picked by 5 by the oddsmakers.

### NFC

The early game next Sunday features a franchise that has made a habit of getting this far in this decade. It will be the fifth NFC title contest in eight years for the Eagles (11-6-1); they went to the Super Bowl only once, though, losing after the 2004 season to New England.

"This team, we have a lot of unity," said high-priced cornerback Asante Samuel, whose early interception led to a touchdown. "We stick together and we know what we have to do to execute. We're playing consistent."

That's exactly how the Eagles performed on Thanksgiving night, when they blitzed the Cardinals 48-20 at Philadelphia. But this game is in

University of Phoenix Stadium, where the Cardinals (11-7) are 7-2, including a wild-card win over Atlanta.

Experience might not be such an advantage for the Eagles, either. Arizona quarterback Kurt Warner led the St. Louis Rams to the 1999 championship and lost the 2001 NFL title game to New England. Running back Edgerrin James had plenty of postseason work when he was with the Colts.

And Whisenhunt won a Super Bowl as an assistant coach with the Steelers after the 2005 season.

This weekend's results meant that a team with nine wins in the regular season will be in the Super Bowl for the first time since the 1979 season, when the Los Angeles Rams got there, only to lose to the Steelers.

### AFC

Expect brute force versus brute force when the Ravens and Steelers put their defenses on the field.

Also expect lots of jawing, maybe even some taunting, and all kinds of highlight hits from two teams that despise each other.

Baltimore is on a roll, with two impressive road wins in the postseason: 27-9 at Miami, and then the resilient performance against the Titans in which the Ravens forced three turnovers.

There won't be any nerves on either side, nor any lack of familiarity, naturally. Pittsburgh swept Baltimore during the season, 23-20 in overtime and 13-9. Those games were filled with close calls, clutch plays and immeasurable animosity.

Pittsburgh's offense looked great against San Diego, with a balance of running and passing and clock domination. Then again, the Chargers' defense isn't quite what Baltimore brings.

"It's about playing a physical football game and causing turnovers," said Ravens safety Ed Reed, the only unanimous choice for the All-Pro team. "In crunch time like this, ball security is huge on either side of the ball."

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