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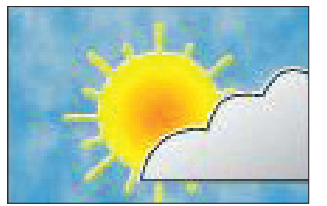
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H BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY

MARCH 10, 2009



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Candidates clamor for council seats

After last-day filing flurry, Big Spring, Coahoma will have contested elections in May

By **BILL McCLELLAN**
News Editor

Final-day filings left Crossroads municipalities with a host of candidates, setting up contested races in Big Spring

and Coahoma. The flurry put three candidates in each of the district seats up for election on the Big Spring City Council. Those filing were Raul Marquez, John Huckabee, Bahola

DeLeon and Steve Campbell. Marquez, a longtime local business owner, joins incumbent Manuel Ramirez Jr., a Big Spring VA Medical Center employee, and Terena Restman, a horse trainer and

breeder, in the race for District 2. Huckabee, owner of Huck's Automotive, lined up with incumbent Gloria McDonald and Joyce Crooker in a bid for District 4.

And Bahola DeLeon, a VA Medical Center employee, and retiree Steve Campbell filed for District 6, which is also being courted by Terry

See **CITY**, Page 3

School filings heat up

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

Two Howard County school districts will have contested trustee elections in May.

Monday was the final day to file for area school board elections and two candidates beat the deadline in Big Spring and Coahoma.

Edwin Ware, the comptroller at Bob Brock Ford, filed his candidacy for the Big Spring ISD District 2 race in which he will face incumbent Maria Padilla in the May 9 election. Tony Kennedy, the District 4 incumbent, will be unopposed in the election.

Four candidates will square off for three at-large seats on the Coahoma ISD school board this May. Challenger Brian Moore, the assistant chief for



Padilla Ware



HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Marty Rice looks under the hood of a 1984 Ford bus at the old Boy's Club building on E. Third Street Saturday morning. Local Rotary club members will auction the bus, pool tables, wood shop equipment, leather working tools and many other items from the club at 10 a.m. March 21. Proceeds will go toward renovating the Kids' Zone playground in Comanche Trail Park.

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Obama outlines education plan, tighter standards for instructors

By **PHILIP ELLIOTT**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is promoting tighter standards for teachers and a reduced dropout rate for students as part of an education plan that, at least for now, lacks any new legislative component.

Obama plans to call on Americans to educate themselves as well as their children during his appearance Tuesday at the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. It is his first major speech devoted solely to education since taking office, but officials say he plans neither to detail any requirements to achieve his goals nor to change President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind program.

Instead, a senior administration official said, Obama would speak to the importance of increasing the rigor of

Obama also planned to continue his support for charter schools, although officials call them 'laboratories of innovation.'

the standards in place and challenge states to adopt world-class standards rather than a specific standard. The official would speak only anonymously to preview the president's midmorning speech.

Schools are struggling to meet the existing requirements as millions of residents have lost their jobs and state and local governments have seen tax reve-

nues tighten. Obama's economic stimulus plan includes a \$5 billion incentive fund to reward states for, among other things, boosting the quality of standards and state tests — much-needed money for some states.

"I know that talking about standards can make people nervous," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said recently. But he said a high school diploma has to mean something, no matter in which state the student earned it.

Obama advisers say they will use the economic woes as a way to sell the country on his agenda. A second senior administration official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said higher standards would be part of their discussions about how to deal with Bush-era education policy, but not just yet.

See **EDUCATION**, Page 3

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Police blotter

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

- DAVID HERNANDEZ MONTEZ, 40, of 801 Willia, was arrested Sunday on charges of aggravated robbery and public intoxication.
- CELEST JONES BINGHAM, 45, of 407 S. Lancaster, was arrested Sunday on a charge of animal at large
- THEFT was reported in the 400 block of Birdwell Lane.
- ROBBERY was reported in the 1700 block of FM 700.
- MANUFACTURE/DELIVERY OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE was reported in the 400 block of Fourth Street.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported:
 - in the 1800 block of FM 700.
 - in the 400 block of Fourth Street.
- BURGLARY OF A BUILDING was reported in the 700 block of Third Street.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87.
- AGGRAVATED ROBBERY was reported in the 4800 block of Highway 80.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of E. Fourth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 1800 block of Goliad. One person was transported to

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity: (Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 54 inmates.)

- KIMBERLY ANN MEANS, 17, was arrested Monday by DPS on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.
- JOSHUA KEITH DELGADILLO, 17, was arrested Monday by DPS on a charge of no driver's license.
- TANDI JO BARBEE, 26, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.
- AMBER DAWN RUSSELL, 25, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.
- BILLY ERVIN ROSE, 60, was transferred to the County Jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.
- RONALD LOUIS JONES, 54, was transferred to the County Jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.
- CAMMIE DENISE MCALISTER, 25, was arrested Monday by DPS on charges of open alcohol container, violation of a promise to appear (two counts), ride not secured by a safety belt, displaying an expired license plate, driving while license invalid and no liability insurance.

Support Groups

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 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.

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.

- Celebrate Recovery, a 12-Step program, meets from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St.

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

SMMC.

- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 1800 block of Goliad. Service refused.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1300 block of Wright. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 2900 block of W. Highway 80. Service refused.

- 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.

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.

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.

Take Note

- Howard County A&M Club is accepting applications from high school students who are graduating in May and have been accepted at Texas A&M for fall 2009. Students must be Howard County residents who plan to enroll for at least 12 hours. Deadline for applications is April 1. More information and the application may be found on the club Web site at <http://bondwebs.com>.




- The Family History Center (genealogy library) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be open from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays. If you need assistance in searching out your ancestors, bring all the information you have about your family and we will be happy to assist you. For more information, contact R.A. McKay at (432) 553-8127.

- Coahoma alumni will hold an all school, all classes reunion Saturday, Aug. 1 at the Coahoma school building. Individual classes are encouraged to plan their class get-togethers Friday night or Saturday night.

- This year's reunion theme will highlight sports and former coaches Bernie Hagins and Norman Roberts will be honored, along with all former athletes and coaches at Coahoma ISD. Funds will be raised for the Coahoma Scholarship Fund as well. The Coahoma Alumni Association is trying to update its e-mail and mailing address lists and asks that you contact Patti Meets at pmeets@basin-net.

Sheriff

Your Local Weather

Wed 3/11	Thu 3/12	Fri 3/13
 43/34 Cloudy skies early. A few showers developing later in the day. Cold.	 46/36 Chance of showers. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the mid 30s.	 54/37 Occasional showers possible. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the upper 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

TODAY

- 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.
- Eagles Lodge Ladies Auxiliary meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third.

THURSDAY

- Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.
- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Friends of the Library meets at noon in the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.
- Big Spring Main Street meets at noon in the Railroad Museum located at Second and Main streets.
- League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. The public is invited.
- American Legion Auxiliary meets at 6 p.m. at 3203 W. Highway 80.
- The Prospector's Club meets at 7:30 p.m. at 606 E. Third St. The public is invited to these meetings. For more information contact Lola Lamb at 263-3340.
- Neighbors and Newcomers Club meets. New members are welcome. Call 263-2005 for more information.

FRIDAY

- Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281.
- AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant.

Lottery

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 8 - 23 - 27 - 32. Bonus Ball: 5.

Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: 0.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 15 - 19 - 21 - 24 - 33. Number matching five of five: 1. Prize: \$26,282.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 4 - 2 - 2 - 7. Sum It Up: 15.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 6 - 5 - 9. Sum It Up: 20.

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News in Brief

Lawmakers fight back against critics of pet projects

WASHINGTON (AP) — The idea of devoting \$1.8 million to research controlling the smell of pig dung stinks to high heaven to opponents of Congress' proclivity for pork-barrel projects.

"Pigs stink. We know why," said Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla. "We know where they live. So is that a priority right now?"

Spending \$380,000 in the middle of a severe recession to fix up lighthouses in Maine doesn't smell a lot better to Coburn and few other Republicans who day after day attack the 8,000 pet projects lawmakers have put into a bill setting a good part of the government's agenda for the next six months.

What's new is that more and more lawmakers are standing up to defend their earmarks as vital for people back home. Barack Obama promised during his presidential campaign to curb the practice and demanded that last month's \$787 billion stimulus bill contain "not a single pet project."

"In farm country, manure and odor management are profoundly serious challenges that can be mitigated through scientific research," Senate Agriculture Com-

mittee Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said in a Senate speech last week.

His defense of swine odor research and a \$5.7 million earmark for school construction in Iowa covers four pages in the Congressional Record.

Report: 1 in 50 American children experiences homelessness

NEW YORK (AP) — One of every 50 American children experiences homelessness, according to a new report that says most states have inadequate plans to address the worsening and often-overlooked problem.

The report being released Tuesday by the National Center on Family Homelessness gives Connecticut the best ranking. Texas is at the bottom.

The report analyzes data from 2005-2006. It estimates that 1.5 million children experienced homelessness at least once that year, and says the problem is surely worse now because of the foreclosures and job losses of the deepening recession.

"If we could freeze-frame it now, it would be bad enough," said Democratic Sen. Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, who wrote a forward to the report. "By end of this year, it will be that much worse."

CITY

Continued from Page 1

Hansen, vice president at Howard College. The incumbent in that district, Greg Biddison, decided not to seek another term.

Incumbents electing not to run again was the norm at Coahoma, where councilmen David Elmore and Ricky Stone and Mayor Bill Reed all opted out of another term. There are no shortage of candidates, however. Filing for city council were Ronnie Dodson, Elmer Lindsey, Jay Holt and Ray Lee. Casting a bid to replace Reed, a long-time fixture at city hall, were Warren Wallace and Linda Luce.

There will not be any city elections at Forsan or Stanton.

In Forsan, incumbents Mary Gressett, Fred Hogan and Marty Whetsel filed to run for another term but have no challengers. In Stanton, at-large incumbent Tommy Haislip and District 4 incumbent Steven Villa filed. They also have no opponents.

Election day will be May 9 with early voting set April 27 through May 5.

ISD

Continued from Page 1

health administration at the Big Spring VA Medical Center, joined incumbents Jody Reid, Alan Wright and Kirk Allen on the May 9 ballot.

The only other contested school board race

in this area will be at Sands Consolidated Independent School District — and that race attracted the largest field.

Sands CISD voters will select three at-large trustees from among seven candidates May 9. Incumbents Amy Parker and Tommy Staggs will be joined on the ballot by challengers Wes

Hughes, Nate Avey, Matt Snell, Rick Timmins and Bill Barnes, Superintendent Wayne Blount said.

Forsan ISD will likely cancel its trustee election after no candidates stepped up to challenge incumbents Lewis Boeker and Misty Rhoten for their at-large seats, said Judy Park, superinten-

dent secretary for the district.

As of Friday, Stanton ISD had no contested races for three positions up for election in May. Incumbents Ramiro Reyes (District 2) and James "Pinky" Jones (at-large) have filed for re-election, while challenger Danny Ireton has filed for the District 6

seat being vacated by incumbent Reggie Franklin, who is not seeking another term.

Attempts to contact Stanton ISD officials today were unsuccessful.

Glasscock County and Grady school districts will have elections in November, while Howard College will not have trustee elections

this year, officials said.

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

EDUCATION

Continued from Page 1

White House aides characterized the president's speech on Tuesday as a first step in an agenda to change American schools. Aides say the president will again call for the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by the year 2020, as well as pre-kindergarten programs that would send chil-

dren to classrooms prepared to learn.

Obama also planned to continue his support for charter schools, although officials call them "laboratories of innovation." Educators' unions generally oppose charter schools because they divert tax dollars away from public schools, one spot where he splits with the traditionally Democratic Party-backing constituency.

He also was set to draw criti-

cism from unions for his proposals for an "innovative compensation" plan that would pay some teachers more than others. Such a merit-based pay system is anathema to teachers' groups and likely to earn Obama a rebuke.

Other items Obama planned to mention would be a simpler form for federal financial aid to college, increased investment in technology and changes to higher education. All were

parts of his campaign platform.

Aides said Obama would not propose new spending during the speech, although he already has taken steps on education. His \$787 billion economic stimulus package provides \$41 billion in grants to local school districts. He also plans to send \$79 billion in state fiscal relief to prevent cuts in state aid and another \$21 billion for school modernization.

Tomorrow's Horoscope

Make a wish! The full moon in Virgo is like a supportive and delightfully practical friend who can improve your world with the simplest of fixes. And if you don't quite know where to start, the full Virgo moon will help you focus your attention so that you may analyze your situation to determine the most efficient route to the new you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You believe that your relationship should be about the same in private as it is in public, though this is rarely the case for most people. Consider the differences between these two scenarios and fix what needs fixing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). No one has an exclusive contract on your time except you. You are a free agent, even if there are people who need you and rely on you. Take your schedule back into your own hands.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You know what you need to do, and yet moti-

vation is pretty low. This is an invitation to change your goal to something much juicier. If that's not possible, then add an irresistible incentive.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There is no time for fluff. And yet, a certain amount of small talk and social nicety will be necessary to complete tasks without seeming like a heartless robot. You can stay on purpose and still be compassionate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You have reached your maximum point of seriousness and it's time to go the other direction. Seek a flirty, funny, silly influence to get you back to your usual buoyant self.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Someone close to you is in dire need of a reprimand. Everyone can see the problem, but no one wants to be the one to fix it. If the job gets turned over to you, you'll handle it in your typical style — quiet and classy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It takes a heightened awareness to find the answers you seek. Use all of your observational powers, including your olfactory sense, to solve this mystery. It's like you can smell

the truth.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Needing to be the best can help you break records and push back limitations. It can also cause tunnel vision and inadvertent rudeness. Be extra mindful of the space and feelings of those around you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). In certain instances it has been easy for you to let go of negative baggage. The current nugget of emotional dead weight you're trying to drop might require more work. Celebrate your small steps.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You haven't quite hit on the exact right endeavor to pursue yet. Brainstorming

is a highly productive use of your energy. When it's a fantastic idea, all the elements will fall in place and you'll do very well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It seems that someone is pressuring you to move before you are ready. Take your time. Just because someone else has a different sense of pacing than you do doesn't mean that your pace is wrong.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Wanting something too much causes insecurity. If you feel yourself trying too hard, back up and get grounded. You're enough as you are right this moment. Anything else you do will be icing

on the cake.
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Columbo Manzanarez, 71, died Saturday. Funeral Mass was at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church with burial at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Ron Midkiff
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News Editor

OTHER VIEWS

Solons eye non-existent vote problem

Texas Democrats are rallying their troops; Republicans are sounding their trumpets. Both want a big show of force at the Capitol when the Texas Senate hears testimony Tuesday on legislation that would require voters to present photo identification when they vote.

There hasn't been a huge outbreak of people trying to impersonate voters, but the item was deemed an emergency bigger than the state's sinking economy, bigger than education or any number of other issues you can mention but won't hear about once the brawl starts.

The legislation has the votes to pass easily out of the Senate. The test was earlier when senators voted to abandon a long-standing tradition that bills must enjoy the support of two-thirds of the 31-member Senate to be considered.

Senate tradition went down on an 18-13 vote in January. Only Sen. John Corona, R-Dallas, broke ranks with his party. Corona said then that he supports voter ID but opposed trashing tradition.

So there is little doubt that some sort of voter ID bill will leave the Senate. What happens to the legislation in the House, where Republicans hold a two-vote majority, remains to be seen.

A bill that makes it through both houses and will surely be signed by the governor won't be out of the legal woods, though. Texas is subject to the federal Voting Rights Act, and changes in election law must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice. A U.S. Supreme Court decision upheld a voter ID bill in Indiana, but that state is not covered by the federal voter protection law.

Republican House leaders are already looking for ways to armor plate a voter ID bill before it undergoes Justice Department scrutiny. A phase-in period, provisions for free identification cards and exceptions are all being explored, using Justice David Souter's dissent in the Indiana decision as a guide. The much bigger question is a simple "Why?"

There are occasional cases of voter fraud, but most involve mail-in ballots and occur on such a small scale that they barely register.

Steve Bickerstaff, an election law expert, maintains that in election contests, lawyers go digging for possible fraud because tainted ballots could nullify the election the result challengers seek. Asked whether he had ever encountered a case of voter impersonation in his career spanning three decades, Bickerstaff said no.

Bottom line: There will be a bill, perhaps even however farfetched it may seem one that a brand new Justice Department will bless. However, enacting it will be a time-consuming, shrilly partisan exercise that won't improve the Texas economy, Texas education system or Texas health care. Indeed, the bipartisan cooperation necessary to tackle these problems will be put on the chopping block starting Tuesday when senators hear testimony on a bill that is pretty much a foregone conclusion.

Legislation like this stokes emotion but solves little. But then, Texas legislators have far more experience solving nonexistent problems than resolving real ones.

THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN
AUSTIN

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

When others give us a frosty reception, Lord, may we show them Your love instead of returning the favor.

Amen

Defense budget testing Obama

When President Barack Obama addressed a joint session of Congress in February, one of the more extraordinary lines of his speech came buried in the middle. In a passage about cutting government waste, Obama pledged to "reform our defense budget so that we're not paying for Cold War-era weapons systems we don't use."

The idea that we should continue funding multibillion-dollar weapons programs to fight an enemy gone for 20 years seems simple. But the task will prove more difficult than it sounds.

Mr. Obama's first test will come with a decision over the Air Force's F-22 Raptor, a supersonic stealth jet designed back in the 1980s to fight the Soviets. The F-22 has survived the end of the Cold War but hasn't seen a day of combat in Iraq and would be of little use rooting out Al Qaeda along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

Meanwhile, the cost of the plane has swelled to over \$350 million per unit, and we have spent over \$60 billion to buy just 180 planes—less than the 750 or so we were promised at about twice the estimated price.

In short, the F-22 is a model case for a Cold War weapon we don't use.

The administration faced a deadline of March 1 (after the

time of this writing) to decide whether to buy another 200 planes from Lockheed Martin and Boeing or to pull the plug.

Right on cue, reports emerged before Obama's speech of Lockheed Martin and Boeing advertising a website called "www.preserveraptorjobs.com," calling on the public to write their congressional representatives demanding the government renew its contract—rebranded as a jobs engine.

The notion that we should use the Pentagon as a massive, government funded jobs program instead of our first line of national security is ludicrous. Yet, this is the political world of military spending.

In January, Fox News released a story quoting a senior defense official saying that the new administration was planning on cutting over \$50 billion in defense. This report came on the same day Obama was scheduled to meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

A Republican spokesman for the House Armed Services Committee blasted out an email with the Fox report, and the Associated Press circulated a story nationwide.

In truth, however, the numbers proposed in the president's budget actually showed the administration increasing defense spending, just not to the full "wish list" requested by Pentagon bureaucrats looking to boost their bottom line.

The political setup was obvious: opponents of the administration and people who have thrived off bloated Pentagon

programs—through big defense contracts and congressional pork—were looking to box the new president into a corner by making him look weak on defense.

The problem is that America desperately needs substantial cuts in defense and a top-to-bottom overhaul of the Pentagon. But any serious attempt at reform is bound to face the same fierce and dishonest resistance.

The amount the administration is thinking of spending next year on the Pentagon is in the neighborhood of \$537 billion (with nine zeroes), more than the \$513 billion from this year.

Neither of these figures includes the spending on two simultaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, nor do they account for the tens of billions dedicated to homeland security and nuclear weapons, all of which fall in the category of national security. And underneath this mountain of taxpayer money is a Pentagon that has grown to its largest size since World War II and cannot even complete a government audit.

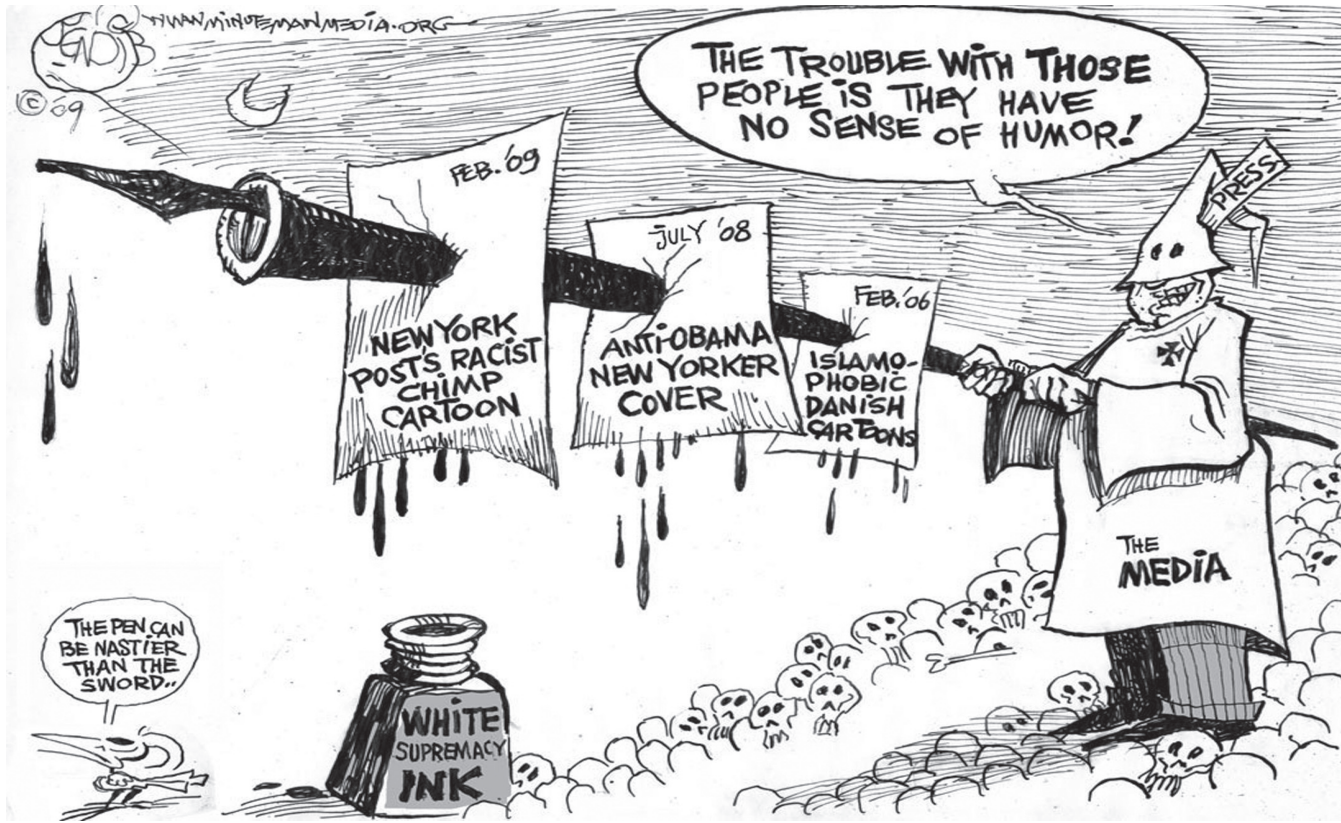
Only in the up-is-down, down-is-up world of military spending can a leader increase funding for a gargantuan government agency and be accused of cutting it. But these are the realities Obama will face as he promises to cut weapons we don't need.

With the F-22, we'll discover soon enough whether words will meet action.

Vice Admiral Jack Shanahan (Ret.) is the former commander of the U.S. Second Fleet.



JACK SHANAHAN



Corporate execs overpaid, undertaxed

In today's mad world, underpaid workers are bailing out banks and corporations run by overpaid, undertaxed bosses who milked their companies and our country like cash cows.

While workers across America were losing jobs, homes and health insurance, Merrill Lynch paid nearly 700 employees more than \$1 million each in bonuses last year, amounting to a \$3.6 billion bonus bonanza while Merrill lost \$27 billion.

Workers have been sacrificing for years.

Average worker paychecks are worth less now than in 1973, but CEOs and other rich Americans not only make much more, they pay less in taxes. Average full-time workers made \$41,198 in 1973 and \$37,606 in 2008, adjusted for inflation.

CEOs made 45 times as much as workers in 1973 and more than 300 times as much as workers now. The top tax rate was 70 percent in 1973 and just 35 percent now; taxpayers pay the top rate on the portion of taxable income that falls within the highest bracket and pay lower rates on income below that.

The top rate for capital gains on the sale of stock and other assets was 36.5 percent in 1973 and 15 percent now.

Irrational pay and tax cuts have generated a massive redistribution of income and wealth from workers to CEOs, hedge fund managers and others in the

richest 1 percent.

By 2006, the richest 1 percent had increased their share of the nation's income to the second-highest level on record.

The only year higher was 1928 — on the eve of the Great Depression.

According to the latest IRS data, excluding tax-exempt interest income from state and local government bonds, the richest 400 taxpayers had an average adjusted gross income of \$263 million each on their federal income tax returns in 2006 — up from \$221 million in 2005 and \$67 million in 1992, adjusted for inflation. Remember, that's annual income, not accumulated wealth. This \$263 million comes to more than \$5 million a week.

In 2006, the 400 ultrarich were taxed at an average rate of 17 percent — down from 26 percent in 1992. The ultrarich get most of their income from capital gains. The capital gains tax was cut from 28 percent in 1992 to 20 percent in 1997 and cut again to 15 percent in 2003. To make matters worse, the rich cheat more on their taxes. "Forbes" recently reported on a study using IRS data showing that taxpayers with income between \$500,000 and \$1 million a year understated their adjusted gross incomes by 21 percent in 2001, compared to 8 percent for those earning \$50,000 to \$100,000, and lower rates for those earning less.

We should raise taxes at the top so the nation's richest bosses no longer pay lower effective rates than workers and we can start reversing the obscene rise in inequality rather than reinforcing it. President Obama's plan to cap CEO cash pay at \$500,000 for senior executives at

companies on the government dole sounds better than it is, affecting few firms and full of loopholes.

At the very least, President Obama should not delay restoring the top tax rate to the 39.6 percent rate that prevailed in 2000. The Bush tax cuts saved the top 1 percent nearly half a trillion dollars between 2001 and 2008, reports Citizens for Tax Justice.

The \$79.5 billion in tax cuts for the top 1 percent in 2008 was more than the budgets of the Department of Education and Environmental Protection Agency combined. In 2008, it took an annual income greater than \$462,000 just to get into the top 1 percent. Even better, we should add a top rate of 50 percent on income above \$1 million, as advocated by Netflix CEO Reed Hastings among others.

People for whom \$1 million and above is an annual paycheck should pay more so people for whom \$1 million is an unattainable lifetime fortune don't have to.

If we don't start taxing the wealthy more now, then you can be sure that the mountain of debt created by tax cuts and the bailout will be used to drive "entitlement reform."

Workers' last forms of security — Social Security and Medicare — will be on the chopping block to pay for the wreck the truly entitled made of our economy.

Holly Sklar is co-author of "A Just Minimum Wage: Good for Workers, Business and Our Future" (www.letjusticeroll.org) and "Raise the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work for All of Us." hsklar@aol.com

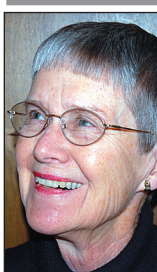


HOLLY SKLAR

Bird Poop:

Barn owls are rescued from chimney

As the calendar turned to March, we anticipated the surge of phone calls regarding birds trapped in chimneys. With the avian breeding season came the discovery and panic of homeowners throughout the county. Suddenly, they had an uninvited guest.



BEBE McCASLAND

shortly after the house had become quiet and dark. Since it could see the smallest mouse in the dark of night, the bird easily recognized its chance for freedom. With its long, broad wings, it had flown silently through their den and out the door.

Future rescues would not be as easy. North of town on the road to Vealmoor, a barn owl stood on a fireplace floor. Having come through the damper, it was trapped with no place to hide. The entry/exit to the house was not readily available.

In this case, Art held a sheet around me as I slowly opened the fireplace doors. Not seeing the possibility of escape on either side of me, the bird paced back and forth. Successfully grabbing the raptor, I carried it outside.

Before release, the homeowner could appreciate the golden or tawny appearance of the barn owl's back and wings. Intermixed with this color were hues of gray. The mottling with bits of black and white enhanced this elegant night creature. Its long, heart-shaped face, rimmed with a dark border around white facial disks, intrigued our host.

With a movement upward, I let go of the bird's legs. Immediately it began a graceful flight toward a distant mesquite. Learning that the owl could fly in the late afternoon light, the homeowner knew that once the sky darkened, the raptor, with its extraordinary sight and hearing, would hunt their farmland for mice, rats and rabbits.

A few years later, two owl calls in a matter of days took me to opposite ends of the county. To the north, a "barnie" required some planning. Having to get situated inside a fireplace, I grabbed sheets, gloves and carrier. After covering the homeowners' light-colored carpet, I crumpled myself on the hearth floor. Then I realized I had forgotten my mask. The sooty dust from my movements would be unpleasant. I'd have to

Driving east of town one year, I headed toward my first encounter with this spring event. As I left my vehicle, a homeowner pleaded with me to see if I could get the bird out the chimney to freedom by using a rope. She even had a ladder already positioned for my climb to the rooftop.

Knowing that this effort was futile, I started upward to appease the woman. Having been given a long, thick rope the width of a hoe handle, I doubted that it could be extended far enough down the chimney. It was unlikely for the bird to grip and pull itself upward. Although I was correct, the view from the rooftop was breathtaking.

To the southwest was Signal Peak and South Mountain. In between was nothing but open, undeveloped land. The brush country, spotted with mesquites, gullies and the rising bluffs beyond, offered the best hunting for this nocturnal bird of prey.

After securing the thick hemp to the outside of the chimney, I looked down the flue to discover it empty. A voice from below advised that whenever her husband had looked down the chimney, the bird had jumped from the damper to the grate in the fireplace. If anyone were in the room, the bird would jump upward and retreat above the damper for safe-keeping. This hide-and-seek game had been going on for two days.

Telling the woman that the bird could not even jump high enough to access the heavy rope, I assured her that we could grant the barn owl its freedom without damaging her home. After dark, the front door and glass doors on the fireplace would be left wide open. No lights would be left on in the house. If they wanted to watch the owl leave, they could sit perfectly still on the couch. Since their entry offered a direct flight from the hearth to the outdoors, I felt the owl would leave quickly.

Late that evening my phone rang. "It was the most beautiful thing we've ever seen," the lady said. The owl had jumped on to the grate, then the hearth,



Courtesy photo

As it takes flight at dusk, the buffy white underparts of a barn owl give it a ghostly appearance. Calling to its mate with an eerie shriek, the bird has earned a place in literature as well as being championed for rodent control.

work quickly.

The man and his wife held another sheet over the opening to contain the dust and keep the owl from getting into their den if it slipped past me. Ready to reach up into the damper area, I heard the husband caution, "Wait just a minute!" As he pulled the sheet back, he handed me a mask. "You're going to need this."

Grateful for his kindness, I reached up into the damper. In trying to escape the gloved hand that kept coming toward it, the barn owl jumped over my wrist several times. Wondering if I'd ever get my hand around its leg, I was surprised when it suddenly jumped from the damper on to my legs. As we stared at each other, I marveled at its penetrating black eyes. Since I was partially prone on the brick, the owl wasn't as frightened as if I had been upright. After grabbing its legs, I thanked the couple for all their effort as I placed it in a carrier.

To the south, Art and I wondered about the coloration of a fireplace's glass doors as I folded myself inside. Above the damper, another barn owl eluded capture. Resting for a moment, I removed a glove and felt of the darkened glass. The same material was on the damper and hearth.

Resuming my effort, I managed to grab a leg, then felt the impact of the owl's other foot as it struck and wouldn't let go. Turning, I used my other hand to force the

bird against the wall of the chimney. With its wings folded and held with one hand, I used my other to extract the wiggling, screaming raptor through the opening. Once outside, the bird readily left. On the way back to our vehicle, I told Art what he suspected was true. The homeowner had been cooking in the fireplace. Hot grease had coated the glass, damper, hearth, and eventually my clothes and gloves.

If a prize were given for the most owls in a fireplace, the winner would be a few years ago in the Tubbs area. Three owls had taken


residence inside a rough, stone chimney, which they could easily access because of the uneven placement of the materials. Hearing them inside, the homeowner had dismantled a stove that had been carefully housed inside. Managing to get into the den, one owl was netted and another soon joined it. When the third owl decided to investigate the house, the homeowner opened a door and the bird took advantage of it.

As each barn owl has been rescued from a fireplace, we advised a cover for the chimney. With wooden barns

and frame houses disappearing, metal structures with roll-up doors are replacing them. Adaptable, the owls seek other nest sites in which to raise their young: hangars, recessed areas in bluffs, attics of new homes under construction, and chimneys.

After numerous rescues, I expect when I croak, I'll come back as a chimney sweep. Surely my apprenticeship has been met.

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



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Wacky Facts

- Legend says that each leaf of the clover means something: the first is for hope, the second for faith, the third for love and the fourth for luck.
- According to the Guinness World Records, the highest number of leaves found on a clover is 14! — *kaboose.com*

KID NEWS

Chatter Box

"Geographically, Ireland is a medium-sized rural island that is slowly but steadily being consumed by sheep."

— *Humorist Dave Barry, brainyquote.com*



to catch a leprechaun

It's an alarming trend that shows no sign of abating: every year, more and more people fall victim to leprechaun-related mischief around St. Patrick's Day. "It's never the same," reports Margaret Bentley, of Painesville, Ohio. "The children talk about it for weeks in advance, wondering what things the leprechaun will do when he visits our house." Similarly, the kids in the Dezotell family of Seekonk, Mass., can only imagine what the next St. Patrick's Day home invasion will bring. Green milk? Green toilet water? Green footprints? Trails of

shamrock confetti? "One year the kids woke up with green kiss marks on their foreheads," recalls mom Monique, still clearly shaken.

Is it any surprise, then, that kids like 8-year-old Jacob Dezotell have decided to fight back? Every St. Patrick's Day since he was in kindergarten, Jacob and his sister, Elise, 7, have tried to capture a leprechaun. Despite powerful bait (Lucky Charms cereal!), their traps have caught only chocolate gold coins and candy bars, accompanied by notes taunting them with "Good try," or "Can't catch me!" As everyone knows, leprechauns hoard pots of gold, and if caught, must reveal the treasure's location to their captor. But that's not the



payback Jacob seeks. Because the elusive elves are always leaving him chocolate, he figures they must have even more of that than gold!

It's for the sake of Jacob, Elise and all the other St. Patrick's Day mischief fighters that we offer here a state-of-the-art leprechaun trap. It is easily made from ordinary household materials and uses lures and baits drawn from the latest research in leprechaun psychology. Take our design and customize it to make something unique: leprechauns won't be fooled by the same trap twice!

— *JoEllen Mitchell, FamilyFun magazine*



leprechaun hat pit trap

Leprechauns have big egos, so a giant version of their own hat is irresistible to them. Once they step on the false top, you'll have caught a 10-gallon prize.

Natural materials make these woodland creatures feel at home. Our ladder is made from twigs held together with wood glue.

So that the top doesn't give way too soon, use a lightweight bait, such as a crumpled piece of gold foil.

Our hat, a recycled oatmeal container, is wrapped with green felt secured with double-sided tape. To make the trap, we cut a hole in the lid, then cunningly concealed it with a circle of green felt that will give way when the leprechaun steps on it.



Do Not Climb Ladder!

The little guys love to break rules. Warning signs are sure to lure them in.



HEATH ROBBINS/
FAMILYFUN MAGAZINE

Help!

Hey, no cheating!

DEAR AMERICAN GIRL: The girl who sits next to me in class always cheats off my paper! Our teacher told her to stop, but she said she doesn't cheat. I can't move, so what can I do? — *Not Fair*

■ Talk to your teacher again.

This time, ask if you can use a blank cover sheet. As you take the test, slide the cover sheet over your answers so no one can see them. With a little luck, your neighbor will find it easier to do her own work than to copy yours. However, if you are having a hard time focusing on your work because of this girl, ask to move seats.



DEAR AMERICAN GIRL: I'm always picked last in gym. It really hurts. What can I do? — *Loser?*

■ Tell your gym teacher how you feel and ask her to try other ways of choosing teams. You could split up alphabetically, or by whose birthdays come before June 30 and whose come after. You could even line up from shortest to tallest and put every other person on the same team. No matter what happens, if you try your best when you play, you're a winner.

Visit "Fun for Girls" at americangirlmagazine.com to get or give advice. © 2009 American Girl, LLC. All rights reserved.

Laugh Lines

Why do people wear shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day?
Regular rocks are too heavy!

Why can't you borrow money from a leprechaun?
Because they're always a little short!

What is out on the lawn all summer and is Irish?
Paddy O' Furniture!

Why are leprechauns so hard to get along with?
Because they're very short-tempered!

— *BASICJOKES.COM*

St. Patrick's Day puzzle

Can you unscramble the words below that have something to do with St. Patrick's Day?

S C M R K H O A

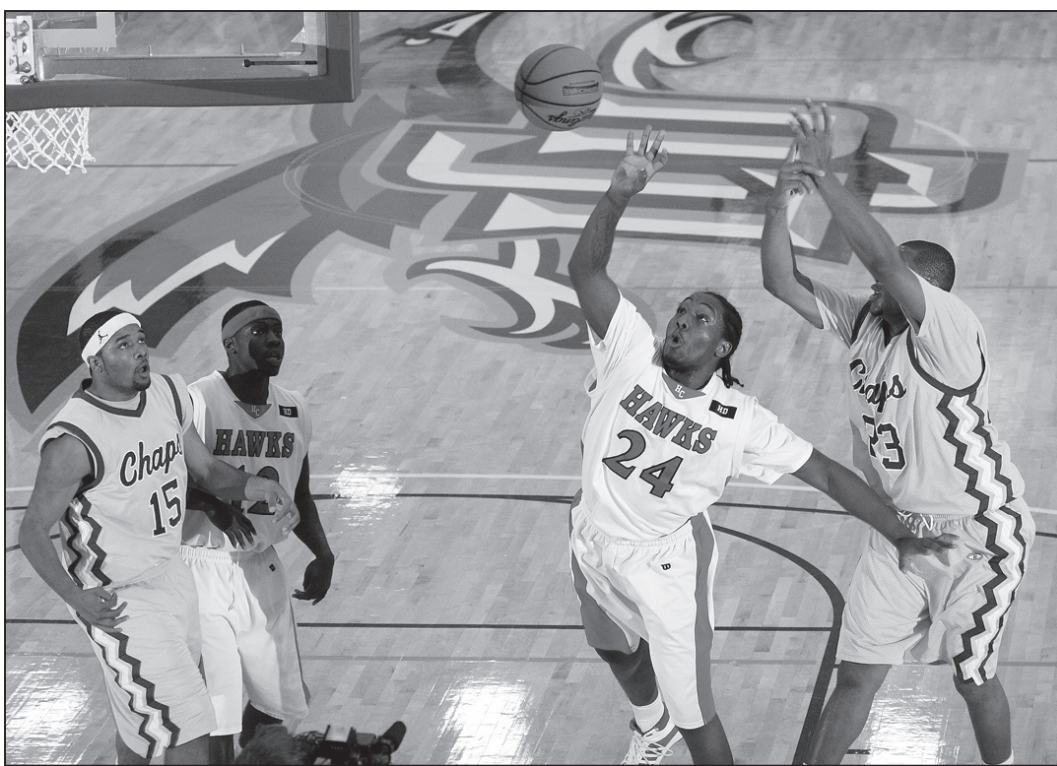
P C H E A R N L E U

H I S I R

O T P F O L O G D

MARTY WESTMAN/ISTOCK

ANSWERS: SHAMROCK, LEPRECHAUN, IRISH, POT OF GOLD



HERALD photo/Tony Claxton

Howard College forward Markeys Deans (24) shoots for two with Midland's David Terrell (23) guarding him. Midland's Kavon Lytch (15) battles with Howard's Latrail McCoy for positioning for the rebound Monday at Lubbock Christian University's Rip Griffin Center. Howard lost to Midland, 60-48, in the semifinals of the Region V Tournament.

Chaps eliminate Howard, 60-48

By JONATHAN HULL
Sports Editor

LUBBOCK – Midland College's and Howard College's men's basketball teams know each other well and it showed Monday night.

The Hawks and Chaps fought on the hardwood for a third time this season, but this time it was for a bid to the Region V Tournament championship game at Lubbock Christian University's Rip Griffin Center.

In an extremely physical game, the Chaps landed a couple more uppercuts than the Hawks, pulling out a 60-48 victory.

The Hawks struggled to score throughout the game, shooting 29.6 percent from the field. Meanwhile,

Midland shot better than 60 percent.

"When you play against great teams, they often expose your weaknesses," said Howard Head Coach Mark Adams. "That's what Midland did to us today. We have struggled to score at times this season and I just couldn't figure out how to get the offense going today."

Howard and Midland were tied at 22 at intermission, but a slow start to the second half ended up costing the Hawks.

Midland scored 10 of the first 14 points posted in the second 20-minute frame, taking a 34-26 advantage.

See **HOWARD**, page 12

One to go

Howard women advance to Region V final

By JONATHAN HULL
Sports Editor

LUBBOCK – Four years ago, Howard College's women's basketball team didn't even win a single Western Junior College Athletic Conference game.

Now, the Hawks are one game away from claiming a Region V title and moving on to the National Tournament in Salina, Kan.

Howard College was dominant in the second half of a semifinal game at the Region V Tournament at Lubbock Christian University's Rip Griffin Center, routing Collin County Community College, 76-52.

The game was tied at intermission, 30-all, but the Hawks methodically distanced themselves from the Lady Cougars in the second half for the convincing 24-point victory.

"We really turned up the heat defensively in the second period and pulled away from them," said Howard Head Coach Earl Diddle. "Collin County is a good team. They have a lot of skillful offensive players and they gave us some trouble in the first half. I'm really proud of how our girls played defense in the second half. They came out focused and really wanted this

See **HC**, page 12



HERALD photo/Tony Claxton

Howard College's Miesha Blackshear lays in two points in the Hawks' 76-52 victory over Collin County Community College in the semifinals of the Region V Tournament at Lubbock Christian University Monday. Howard plays Odessa College in finals of the regional tournament at 5 p.m. today.

CHS rallies past BSHS

Herald Staff Reports

COAHOMA – Local weather reports for Monday indicate there was no precipitation in Coahoma.

However, the threat of it was enough to call off a softball game and the ending came with some controversy.

Coahoma's Bulldogettes claimed a 7-6 victory over Big Spring in a game shortened by a mutual agreement among the two schools athletic directors with the threat of a storm looming.

The fifth inning wasn't completed, though, and a brief debate was had between the two coaches for the team as to who the rightful winner was.

Big Spring led 6-2 heading into the bottom of the fifth inning, when the Coahoma bats finally caught fire, scoring five runs before the game was called.

In the end, a rule was found in the NFHS Softball Rules Book explaining the situation, which awards the victory to Coahoma.

The Lady Steers got on the board first, taking a 1-run advantage in the top of the second inning. Coahoma tied the game in the bottom of the third, but saw Big Spring explode for five runs in the top of the fourth.

Down 6-1, Coahoma scored six runs in the next two innings to pick up the win. It's the eighth consecutive victory for the Bulldogettes.

Heather Newton got the win, giving up six runs – five earned – in five innings pitched on 10 hits, while

See **SOFTBALL**, page 12

Sports in brief

BSGSA registration continues Saturday

The Big Spring Girls Softball Association is holding sign-ups for the 2009 season at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Big Spring Mall.

Girls ages 4-14 are eligible to play with a registration fee of \$65.

The fee covers full uniform.

Late registration after Saturday will include a \$10 extra charge.

For more information, contact Lucy Ramirez at 466-3670.

Lady Steers boosters meeting March 16 at ATC

The Big Spring Lady Steers Booster Club is meeting at 5:45 p.m. March 16 in the Athletic Training Center.

All parents of Lady Steers athletes in junior high or high school are encouraged to attend.

Moss Creek hosting ATV and side-by-side races

The Texas Crossroads Racing Circuit is having an event hosted by Moss Creek Lake March 22.

Events feature a variety of ATV and side-by-side vehicles. Registration starts at 7 a.m. with the first races taking place at 8 a.m. A required \$15 for TCRC membership will be charged along with entrance fees for each individual race.

For more information or directions to to event, visit www.texasrcr.net.

BSCC hosting 3-person scramble April 4-5

The Big Spring Country Club is hosting a 3-person scramble tournament April 4-5 with a 1 p.m. shotgun start both days.

Entry fee is \$60 per player plus golf cart. Private carts are welcome.

Entry includes barbecue on the course April 4 and practice rounds the day before.

Field will e flighted by first round score with number of flights being determined by the number of entries.

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Table with columns for station (WFAA, KMID, etc.), time slot, and program details.

DENNIS THE MENACE comic strip panels 1-3.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS comic strip panel 1.

HAGAR comic strip panels 1-3.

"I THINK I LEFT SOMETHIN' IN MY POCKET." "OH, GOOD! HE'S STILL ALIVE!"

"Watch out, Mommy! We're 'bout to start our litarod!"

BLONDIE comic strip panels 1-3.

BC comic strip panels 1-2.

WIZARD OF ID comic strip panels 1-2.

This Date In History

Today is Monday, March 9, the 68th day of 2009. There are 297 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On March 9, 1862, during the Civil War...

AGNES comic strip panels 1-2.

HI AND LOIS comic strip panels 1-2.

THE OTHER COAST comic strip panels 1-2.

CHEZ HOUND comic strip panels 1-2.

SNUFFY SMITH comic strip panels 1-2.

BEEBLE BAILEY comic strip panels 1-2.

BEEBLE BAILEY comic strip panels 1-2.

BEETLE BAILEY comic strip panels 1-2.

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS 1 Farther down 6 First-place medal 10 Practice boxing 14 San Antonio landmark 15 Fencing weapon 16 Walking stick 17 Ship's carrying capacity 19 Religious ceremony 20 Small speck 21 Postal delivery 22 Greeted rudely 24 Taunts 25 Pub beverage 26 Entraps 29 Parallel-bars user 33 bear (Arctic beast) 34 Gets a glimpse of 36 Location 37 Tremendously 38 Cereal grain 39 "How sad!" 40 Teaming (with) 41 Yours and mine 42 Keep from happening 43 Burger topper 45 Stockholm natives 46 Fresh from the oven 47 Late-blooming flower 49 Uses a broom 52 Sheep sounds 53 Likely 56 Become weary 57 Internet surfer's need 60 With no warranty 61 Military no-show, briefly 62 New Hampshire neighbor 63 "Of ___ I sing" 64 Dole (out) 65 Wipe the chalk from 10 Idle-computer monitor display 11 Twosome 12 Poker player's payment 13 Marsh plant 18 Catches, as a crook 23 Shade tree 24 Prepare Parmesan, perhaps 26 Fire starter 27 "That's the truth!" 28 Up in the air 29 Obtains 30 Was under the weather 31 Fixed gaze 32 Finals and midterms 34 Miestrone, for one 35 Corn portion 41 Defeated in a pool race 42 "Very cool!" 44 Move like a rabbit 45 Top-billed actor 47 Monastery leader 48 Pricey fur 49 Numerical fact, for short 50 6 Down offering 51 One of the Great Lakes 53 Largest continent 54 Farm enclosures 55 Birch or beech 58 Lamb's mom 59 Armed conflict

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-65.

Answer to previous puzzle grid with words like HATARI, ENAMORED, MILANO, etc.

HOLEY QUARTET by Gail Grabowski Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Word search grid with words like HOLEY QUARTET, etc.

