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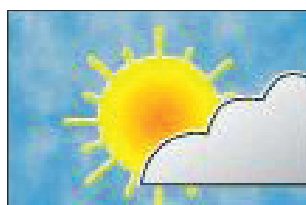


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HIGH SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY

MARCH 17, 2009



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Health fair booth space going quickly

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Organizations wishing to purchase booth space at the 27th annual Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce Health Fair still have a few days to do so at a discount, according to officials with the local Chamber office.



ValVerde

Executive Director Debbye ValVerde with the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce — which coordinates the event each year — said Friday is the final day to purchase booth space for \$80.

After that, booths will cost \$100 until April 3, at which time no more reservations will be taken, she said.

“Each booth space is 10-feet by 10-feet and includes a skirted table, two chairs, a trash can and a sign with the name of the vendor,” said

ValVerde. “After the April 3 deadline, no booths will be accepted. So area vendors and businesses planning to participate in the Health Fair need to reserve their place as soon as possible.”

The fair, which is slated from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday, April 18, in the Doro-

thy Garrett Coliseum, will feature a number of different free screenings for area residents to take advantage of and live up to the event’s theme of “Know Your Numbers.”

“We have a number of free screenings already lined up,”

See **FAIR**, Page 3

Diabetes linked to Alzheimer’s

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — Diabetes can hurt the heart, the eyes and the kidneys. New research indicates a more ominous link: That diabetes increases the risk of getting Alzheimer’s disease and may speed dementia once it strikes.

Doctors long suspected diabetes damaged blood vessels that supply the brain. It now seems even more insidious, that the damage may start before someone is diagnosed with full-blown diabetes, back when the body is gradually losing its ability to regulate blood sugar.

The link has staggering societal implications: More than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer’s, and cases already are projected to skyrocket in the next two decades.

In fact, the lines are blurring between what specialists call “vascular dementia” and scarier classic Alzheimer’s disease. Whatever it is labeled, there is reason enough to safeguard your brain by fighting diabetes and heart-related risks.

“Right now we can’t do much about the Alzheimer’s disease pathology,” those sticky plaques that clog patients’ brains, says Dr. Yaakov Stern, an Al-

See **DIABETES**, Page 3



AP photo

Reports that American International Group Inc. went ahead with \$165 million in bonuses after receiving more than \$170 billion in federal rescue money has angered many officials and the public.

Furor over bonuses may prompt strict limits on AIG bailout money

By **PHILIP ELLIOTT**

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration says it’s trying to put strict limits on the next \$30 billion installment in taxpayers’ money for insurance giant AIG amid questions about whether it responded fiercely enough to executive bonus payments.

President Barack Obama and his top aides expressed outrage at reports that American International Group Inc. went ahead with \$165 million in bonuses even though the company received more than \$170 billion in federal rescue money. Obama directed Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to see whether there was any way to retrieve or stop the bonus money — a move designed as much for public relations as for public policy.

“I mean, how do they justify this outrage to the taxpayers who are keeping the company afloat?” Obama said Monday, in announcing a plan to help small businesses.

The financial bailout program remains politically unpopular and

has been a drag on Obama’s new presidency, even though the plan began under his predecessor, President George W. Bush. The White House is aware of the nation’s bailout fatigue; hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars have gone to prop up financial institutions that made poor decisions, while many others who have done no wrong have paid the price.

The burgeoning controversy raged Tuesday as Sen. Richard Shelby, ranking Republican on the Banking Committee, charged that Geithner had known about the AIG bonus payments before they were made and failed to stop them.

“I don’t know what President Obama knew about it,” Shelby said. “I’d say he probably didn’t know about it.”

Shelby said that Geithner “either knew or should have known what was going on. We need to know, what are the details of this? When were the bonuses signed up? Who’s getting it?”

The Alabama senator stopped

See **AIG**, Page 3



AP photo

Sen. Charles Grassley is more than a little upset over AIG bonuses.

Grassley says AIG execs should quit or commit suicide

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Iowa Sen. Charles Grassley suggested that AIG executives should accept responsibility for the collapse of the insurance giant by resigning or

See **GRASSLEY**, Page 3

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Obituaries

Raymond Foster



Rayburn Autry Foster, age 79, of Promontory Park in Comanche County died Sunday evening at his home following a sudden illness.

Memorial services will be held Wednesday, March 25, at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Marietta, Okla. His body was cremated under the direction of Heartland Funeral Home of Comanche.

He was born Oct. 9, 1929, at Shady Dale, Okla., the son of the late Carl and Vera Foster. He graduated from high school and later graduated from Oklahoma A&M, which is now Oklahoma State University. He taught agriculture at Stephenville and later went into the ranching business in West Texas.

He had been a resident of Comanche County for the past two years. He was a Baptist.

He is survived by a daughter, Linda Russell and her husband of Marietta, Okla.; three grandchildren, Clayton Foster of Robert Lee, and Taylor Foster and Stephen Nix, both of North Richland Hills; a sister, Joyce Burnett of Pittsburg, Kan.; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by a son, Stephen Foster.

Friends may sign the guestbook at www.heartlandfuneralhome.net

Paid obituary

Samuel Rivera



Samuel Rivera, 49, died Saturday, March 14, 2009, in San Angelo. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2009, at 3 p.m. in St. Ann's Catholic Church with the Rev. Ruben Covos officiating. Burial will follow in the Colorado City Cemetery under the direction of Kiker-Seale Funeral Home.

He was born April 20, 1959, to Steve H. and Frances Hernandez Rivera in Colorado City. "Big Sam" graduated from Colorado City High School in 1977. He was a farmer most of his life and most recently employed by Globe Energy.

He was a member of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Colorado City.

He is survived by his wife of eight years, Barbara Rivera of Colorado City; a son, Nathaniel Cade of Colorado City; a step-son, Daniel Zachary Johnson of Brandon, Miss.; brothers, Joe Rivera and wife Yoly, Rene Rivera and wife Leslie, Johnny Rivera and wife Christina and Arthur Rivera and wife Cami, all of Colorado City; sisters, Yolanda Rivera of Hurst and Estela Perez and husband Adolfo of Venezuela; and many nephews and nieces.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Steve H. and Frances; brother, Antonio Rivera; and sister, Juanita Mendoza.

Rosary was Sunday, March 15, 2009, and Monday, March 16, 2009, at Kiker-Seale Funeral Home.

L.C. Money

L.C. Money, 85, of Big Spring died Monday, March 16, 2009, in a local nursing home. Memorial funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Friday, March 20, 2009, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with Chaplain Lynn Robertson officiating.

A gathering with friends and friends will be held Thursday from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the funeral home.

He was born April 10, 1923, in Somerville and married Margaret Wooldridge Dec. 23, 1981, in Big Spring. She preceded him in death Aug. 21, 1995. He then married his wife of 12 years, Thelma Banks. L.C. was a Baptist.

Survivors include his wife, Thelma Money of Big Spring; five sons, Robert E. Money, James E. Money, Anthony Money, L.C. Money Jr. and Keith A. Money, all of Arlington; one daughter, Beth Ann of Arlington; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren; one brother, Bunyon Money of Dallas; two sisters, Lillian Moore of Columbus, Ga., and Johnnie Mae Evans of Anniston, Ala.; and several cousins and nephews.

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

Take Note

• Mobile Meals needs volunteers. If you can donate one hour per week to our organization delivering meals between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., you will be helping the senior citizens of Big Spring. Contact Macaria Cantu at 263-4016

• Family Math Night open house will be held from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. today at Coahoma Elementary School. There will be games for the entire family. Learn while you play with your children. Coahoma Lion's Club Pancake Dinner will be held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Police blotter

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

- MICHAEL ROBLES, 36, of 2806 Dow, was arrested Monday on a charge of criminal mischief.
- KARISSA MITCHELL, 23, of 800 W. Marcy, was arrested Monday on two local warrants.
- KOLBY THURMAN, 26, of 1310 Baylor, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of felon in possession of a firearm.
- RESISTING ARREST, SEARCH OR TRANSPORTATION was reported in the 1000 block of 15th Street.
- POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA - TWO OUNCES OR LESS was reported in the 1000 block of 15th Street.
- POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS DRUG was reported in the 1000 block of 15th Street.
- DISORDERLY CONDUCT - LANGUAGE was reported in the 700 block of Eighth Street.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 3600 block of Calvin.
- ASSAULT CAUSING BODILY INJURY - FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported in the 1900 block of Highway 87.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 57 inmates at the time of this report.

- EDDIE JOE ALVARADO, 35, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on charges of no driver's license and violation of a promise to appear.
- JOE LEO LUERA, 20, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on charges of minor in possession of an alcoholic beverage and violation of a promise to appear.
- STEVE ALAN HANNABASS, 51, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid.
- JOHN ANTHONY PANTOJA, 18, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of public intoxication and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less in a drug free zone.
- RAY JOHN-MANUEL ZAPATA, 28, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of forgery by passing, possession of a prohibited weapon and theft.
- VICTORIA HANNABASS, 20, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for a motion to revoke probation for possession of marijuana - two ounces or less and a charge of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.
- MATTHEW JAMES GWIN, 18, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on charges of evading arrest or detention with a vehicle and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.
- ANTHONY GENE PUSATERO, 17, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on charges of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less and tampering/fabricating physical evidence with intent to impair.
- RANDALL KIRK KIRKHAM, 18, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of E. 18th Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of Holley Drive. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2000 block of Rickabaugh. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1100 block of Pennsylvania. One person was transported to SMMC.

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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

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

WEDNESDAY

- Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Free blood pressure screenings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St., provided by InHome Care.
- Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third St.

THURSDAY

- Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.
- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in the Big Spring City Council Chambers, 307 E. Fourth.
- 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 Post 506 meets at 6 p.m. Call 263-2084 for more information.
- Rackley-Swords 379, Vietnam Veterans of America meets at 7 p.m. at 309 S. Main St.
- Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

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

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 1 - 9 - 26 - 33 - 36.
Number matching five of five: 0.

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 24 - 29 - 31 - 34. Bonus Ball: 26.
Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: 0.
Prize: \$200,000.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
5 - 2 - 2 - 1. Sum It Up: 10.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
8 - 4 - 1. Sum It Up: 13

BIG SPRING HERALD

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FAIR

Continued from Page 1

said ValVerde. "They include blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose checks, as well as PSA screenings, which check for prostate cancer in men. There will also be fluoride treatments for kids and fingerprinting and pictures

taken of senior adults and children."

ValVerde said the United Blood Service Blood Mobile will also be on the premises for area residents looking to give the gift of life.

"Dimple the Clown will be there, along with H-E-B Buddy," said ValVerde. "There will be food demonstrations and a lot more, so it should

appeal to everyone in the family."

Admission for the annual fair is free, and according to ValVerde, it's the event's numerous sponsors that help keep it that way.

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

definitely have to charge."

Among this year's sponsors are Big Spring Air Evac Lifeteam, Alon USA - Big Spring Refinery, All District Screen Printing, Big Spring Herald, Caring Hearts Home Health, Cornell Companies, Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center, H-E-B, KBST/KBTS, KBYG, Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home,

Parkview Nursing & Rehab and Parkplace Retirement Living, Scenic Mountain Medical Center, Warren Chiropractic and Big Spring Physical Therapy, and West Texas VA Health Care Systems.

For more information on the Health Fair, contact the Chamber at (432) 263-7641.

DIABETES

Continued from Page 1

zheimer's specialist at Columbia University Medical Center. But, "if you could control these vascular conditions, you might slow the course of the disease."

The link has staggering societal implications: More than 5 million Americans have Alzheimer's, and cases already are projected to skyrocket in the next two decades as the population ages. The question is how much the simultaneous obesity-fueled epidemic of Type 2 diabetes may worsen that toll.

There are about 18 million Type 2 diabetics who are considered to have at least two to three times a non-diabetic's risk of developing Alzheimer's. Still, Type 2 diabetes often leads to heart disease and other conditions that kill before Alzheimer's typically

strikes, in the 70s.

Don't panic if you are diabetic, stresses Dr. Ralph Nixon of New York University, vice chairman of the Alzheimer's Association's scientific advisory council. Genetics still are the prime risk factor for dementia.

"It by no means means that you're going to develop Alzheimer's disease, and certainly many people with Alzheimer's don't have diabetes," he cautions.

But the latest research strengthens the link, and has scientists asking if diabetes and its related "metabolic syndrome" increase risk solely by spurring brain changes that underlie Alzheimer's — or if they add an extra layer of injury to an already struggling brain, what Nixon calls "essentially a two-hit situation."

Among the findings:

—Brain functioning subtly slows as Type 2 diabetics' blood-sugar rises, well before people have any obvious

memory problems.

In a major national study, doctors gave a battery of cognitive tests to nearly 3,000 diabetics. Every 1 percentage point increase in their A1C score — an average of glucose control over a few months — meant small but meaningful drops in memory, the ability to multitask, and other cognitive tasks, Wake Forest University scientists wrote last month in the journal Diabetes Care.

The government-funded study is testing whether better treatment to lower those A1C scores in turn improves brain function.

—At Columbia, Stern is co-directing a powerful study: Hundreds of aging New York City residents agreed to regular testing while they were still healthy, allowing scientists to catch the earliest signs of dementia. Stern tracked yearly changes in 156 who developed Alzheimer's, and found that those who had a history of diabetes

and high cholesterol worsened faster, he reports this month in a special issue of Archives of Neurology dedicated to the link.

—Type 2 diabetes occurs as a result of insulin resistance, as the body gradually loses sensitivity to this hormone that is essential for turning blood sugar into energy. A similar effect in the brain helps explain the dementia link, Dr. Suzanne Craft of the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System concludes in a research review also published in that journal. Insulin influences memory in a variety of ways, and an insulin-resistant body in turn affects brain cells' insulin-related activity.

Other factors — such as brain inflammation and cell-damaging oxidative stress — may play a role, too. But clearly more affected is a silent dysfunction of glucose control, not something that suddenly begins after diabetes is diagnosed.

AIG

Continued from Page 1

short of calling for Geithner's resignation, saying "he's under fire from all sides now."

"I don't know if he should resign over this," Shelby said. "He works for the president of the United States. But I can tell you, this is just another example of where he seems to be out of the loop. Treasury should have let the American people know about this."

Administration officials said over the weekend that Treasury determined the government had no legal authority to block the current payments by AIG — which are part of a larger total payout reportedly valued at \$450 million.

Instead, Geithner asked that the company scale back future bonus payments where legally possible, the administration said. Geithner was charac-

terized as having called AIG Chairman Edward Liddy on Wednesday to demand that Liddy renegotiate AIG's current bonus structure.

In a letter to Geithner dated Saturday, Liddy informed Treasury that outside lawyers had informed the company that AIG had contractual obligations to make the bonus payments and could face lawsuits if it did not do so.

Expressions of outrage across the political spectrum reached a new crescendo Monday when Sen. Charles Grassley suggested in an Iowa City radio interview that AIG executives should take a Japanese approach toward accepting responsibility for the collapse of the insurance giant by resigning or killing themselves.

"Obviously, maybe they ought to be removed," the Iowa Republican said. "But I would suggest the first thing that would make me feel a little bit better toward them if they'd

follow the Japanese example and come before the American people and take that deep bow and say, I'm sorry, and then either do one of two things: resign or go commit suicide."

Grassley spokesman Casey Mills said the senator wasn't calling for AIG executives to kill themselves, but said those who accept tax dollars and spend them on travel and bonuses do so irresponsibly.

In another development, New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo said he has issued subpoenas for the names of American International Group employees given bonuses despite their possible roles in its near-collapse.

Cuomo said his office will investigate whether the \$165 million in payments are fraudulent under state law because they were promised when the company knew it wouldn't have the money to cover them. AIG reported this

month that it lost \$61.7 billion in the fourth quarter of last year, the largest corporate loss in history, and it has benefited from more than \$170 billion in a federal rescue.

"When a company pays funds that the company effectively doesn't have, it's akin to a looting of a company," Cuomo said. "You could argue if the taxpayers didn't bail out AIG, those contracts wouldn't be worth the paper it's printed on."

News that AIG still needs billions in taxpayer dollars to prevent a collapse did little to build public confidence, Obama aides acknowledged. Seeking to turn the public tide, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs aggressively criticized AIG and said administration officials were working to put strict limits on the next \$30 billion installment for the company.

"Treasury has instruments that can address the excessive retention bonuses, and add provi-

sions to ensure that taxpayers are made whole," Gibbs said.

The AIG news overshadowed what Obama's aides had hoped to spend the first part of the week discussing: billions of dollars to help the nation's small businesses in the hopes of getting credit flowing again. Obama heaped praise on the little guys of American industry, often overshadowed in the blitz of government bailouts.

Two months into office, Obama's job approval rating is 61 percent, according to Gallup polling. That number has been relatively stable so far this month but has dropped from the 68 percent when the president took office. The major factor has been a decline in support among Republicans, from 41 percent to 26 percent.

A separate poll out Monday by the Pew Research Center put Obama's approval at 59

percent, slipping from 64 percent last month. The Pew poll found that a growing number of Americans see him as listening more to the liberals than to the moderates in the Democratic Party.

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GRASSLEY

Continued from Page 1

killing themselves.

The Republican lawmaker's harsh comments came during an interview Monday with Cedar Rapids, Iowa, radio station WMT. They echo remarks he has made in the past about corporate executives and public apologies, but went further in suggesting suicide.

"I suggest, you know, obviously, maybe they ought to be removed," Grassley said. "But I would suggest the first thing that would make me feel a little bit better toward them if they'd follow the Japanese example and come before

the American people and take that deep bow and say, I'm sorry, and then either do one of two things: resign or go commit suicide.

"And in the case of the Japanese, they usually commit suicide before they make any apology."

Japanese executives often take responsibility for scandals within their companies by issuing public apologies on camera and stepping down. It is rare, however, that business executives have gone so far as to take their lives. In feudal Japan, ritual suicide was considered an honorable death under the samurai warrior ethic.

Grassley spokesman

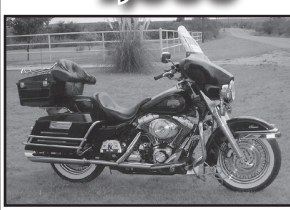
Casey Mills said the senator isn't calling for AIG executives to kill themselves, but said those who accept tax dollars and spend them on travel and bonuses do so irresponsibly.


"Senator Grassley has said for some time now that generally speaking, executives who make a mess of their companies should apologize, as Japanese executives do," Mills said. "He says the Japanese might even go so far as to commit suicide but he doesn't want U.S. executives to do that."

The senator's remarks added to a chorus of public outrage over the disclosure that AIG intends to pay its executives \$165 million in bo-

nuses after taking billions in federal bailout money. President Barack Obama on Monday lambasted the insurance giant for "recklessness and greed" and pledged to try to block payment of the bonuses.

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Stella (Rainey, Hull) Lee is 100 yrs young today, March 17
A reception will be held on Sat., March 21 at the Fellowship Hall at Birdwell Lane Baptist Church, 1512 Birdwell Lane. From 2 to 4 p.m.
All family and friends are invited to help her celebrate!

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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
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OTHER VIEWS

Governor's move rejecting stimulus wasn't warranted

Gov. Rick Perry's line in the sand is hard to figure. The governor balked at taking federal stimulus dollars to help unemployed Texans get through tough times. He says taking the money is unwise because it would impose permanent costs on Texas business owners after the \$555 million in stimulus dollars runs out.

Perry has a point. The state of Texas shouldn't be adding costs to business owners unnecessarily, especially in these difficult times.

But there's another point that merited the governor's consideration and a change of his mind. There's likely a way to do this that wouldn't add those long-term costs Perry is worked up about. It's one that would benefit hundreds of thousands of out-of-work Texans who need and deserve a hand.

The governor doesn't have to accept this on our say-so. It's according to Texas House Speaker Joe Straus, R-San Antonio. In a visit with the Chronicle editorial board, Straus said it may be possible to do a "hard sunset" on the program.

Translated from the Austinese, that means that the program could be ended when the federal stimulus dollars run out. There would be no permanent costs to the state's business owners; no permanent changes to the state system dictated by Washington, as Perry evidently fears. Meanwhile, think of the good this would do tiding deserving folks over till the good times return. Straus said language in the stimulus bill may even offer guidance.

Shouldn't those possibilities be fully explored in Austin before the stimulus dollars are rejected out of hand, as Perry did? We believe they should have. A veteran of the Texas political wars summed it up best: "You're letting a penny stand in the way of a dollar" by rejecting the stimulus dollars out hand.

Gov. Perry seems to be kicking before he's spurred. Maybe his hard-line position has something to do with the politics of the 2010 governor's election. We don't know.

We do know this: A huge number of Texans need help right now. Those stimulus dollars would offer it. They should not be refused.

THE CHRONICLE
HOUSTON

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A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May we come to You, Lord, when we need help.

Amen

When a plea bargain isn't

Bernard Madoff pleaded guilty in federal district court in New York to all 11 counts against him, waiving his right to an indictment, avoiding the humiliation of a trial, and depriving his victims and the public of what might have been a public course in how Ponzi schemes work, and how even sophisticated investors can be played for dupes. The Madoff case was one of those where a public trial might have served a valuable purpose, an occasion for collective disgust and anger, and the only kind of satisfaction most of Madoff's victims are likely to see.

Which is precisely why Madoff and his lawyers opted out.

In the usual case, that is to say in about 99 percent of all guilty pleas, the defendant gets some kind of break — sometimes a very big one — in exchange for sparing the system the burden of a trial. The Supreme Court has held that so fundamental and entrenched is this system that even a life or death deal — a life sentence if you plead, a death

sentence if you stand trial and lose — does not unfairly burden the right to choose a trial.

But Madoff is not the usual defendant. His victims, most of whom will never see a penny from him, would not have stood for anything that looked even remotely like a deal, and neither would the public in these ugly economic times. The spirit of forgiveness is hard to muster for a guy with beach houses, boats and fancy penthouses, who seems to have lost more than \$60 billion of other people's money, including substantial assets that had been set aside for charitable use. This is a case that would be hard for the prosecution to lose.

Very hard. So, the prosecutors have made clear, no deal was offered. But you can't stop a person who wants to plead guilty from doing so. The defendant has the right to a trial, not the government, even if in some cases the public may want or even need the ritual of a public trial.

Madoff, who is 70, is looking at a life sentence for his crimes. He had to know that coming into the courthouse to plead guilty. His bail was bound to be revoked the minute he stood convicted, not because he is a greater flight risk today than yesterday, but because he is no longer an inno-

cent man, which makes it easier, legally speaking, to deprive him of his liberty. He had to know that, too. Goodbye, penthouse. Goodbye, freedom. Game over.

By pleading guilty, Madoff cut his losses, not in the way most defendants do, by getting rid of a couple of counts or getting the charges reduced or getting a deal for a lower sentence based on cooperation, but in the only way he could: He limited the time he will spend in the spotlight, limited the opportunity for public outcry, deprived his victims of a daily ritual for the weeks or months the trial might have lasted. We who might have liked to see him squirm, to watch his face as the mountains of lies were laid bare, will be deprived of that opportunity. We will not see him suffer. Neither will his family.

Even on this his worst day, he emphasized that the business run by his sons and brother was separate and legitimate.

His family is OK. They will not have to spend millions on a hopeless effort to defend him.

I suppose that speaks well for him, if only the same could be said for his victims.

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SUSAN
ESTRICH



Calling on Democratic capitalists

Don't use the term "Marxist," in connection with President Barack Obama's policies, lightly or even to inflame, but to express my genuine fear that if we don't put the brakes on his agenda to remake America in his image, we'll end up both enslaving and bankrupting America by the end of his tenure.

Perhaps conservatives used the term "Marxist," "socialist" or even "Commie" too loosely on some occasions to describe the liberals' political sympathies, but that debatable question now seems moot, given our new president's overt contempt for capitalism.

This guy makes Bill Clinton look like John Birch, and yet to this day, few Democrats have dissociated from him. So where are the Democrats who have always professed their conservatism? How can they sit by idly as we witness this administration's ongoing assault on capitalism?

Where are those liberals who have always insisted that on economic issues, they differ with conservatives only in degree, not in kind — that they are actually committed capitalists who just believe in somewhat greater government control, a somewhat larger safety net and marginally higher taxation? Where are those Democrats who, for the past 20 years, have been condemning soaring deficits and an exploding national debt? Is there anything Obama could say or do that would cause them to break ranks in defense of the capitalistic system to which they claim allegiance? With a few exceptions, it does not appear so.

When President Clinton initiated his class warfare rhetoric against Reaganomics and "trickledown economics," when

he described a slightly slowed-down economy as "the worst economy in 50 years," he was mostly trying to get elected, and it worked. Remember "it's the economy, stupid"? True, he did raise taxes when elected, and he and his wife tried to nationalize health care. But in the end, he was more about himself than permanently transforming the country.

While President Obama may also be narcissistic, as some have noted — consider his utter lack of discomfort at being deified — he is truly devoted to changing this nation structurally and has inherited an ideal "crisis" climate in which to actualize his ambitions.

When Obama said he wanted to spread the wealth around, we now know (many of us knew then) that he wasn't talking about fooling around at the margins. He was talking about major wealth redistribution and punitive action against upper-income earners.

While this may tickle the ears of grass-roots class warriors, it's the anthem of America's destruction.

When government decides how much money each of us should have, we are no longer free. Make no mistake: Obama will not use the tax code and other weapons of government just to fund government services, but to determine how income is distributed. Don't let the difference be lost on you.

When Obama says that "there is something wrong when we allow the playing field to be tilted so far in the favor of so few ... and (that) it is our duty to change it," he is not just saying that higher-income earners don't pay their fair share of taxes (which is absurd on its face). He is saying that they make too much money — as if that is any of his or government's business.

While liberals deny this, all income groups did better under the Reagan tax cuts, from the

lowest 20 percent to the highest 20 percent, precisely because marginal rate cuts provided an incentive for production by enhancing the connection between efforts and rewards. People work harder when they're allowed to keep greater portions of the fruits of their labor. Production increases across the board, as does prosperity, thus the term "trickle down."

Conversely, when you separate efforts from rewards, you get less production and less prosperity. True, the higher-income earners earn and keep less, but that does not do middle- or lower-income earners any good.

When the coercive power of government is used to equalize incomes, it guarantees less prosperity across the board and spreads the misery, which is one of the many reasons Marxism and socialism have failed everywhere they've been tried.

President Obama manifestly believes that government has the right, nay, the duty to take "from each according to his abilities" and distribute to each "according to his needs," or at least the needs as defined by the omniscient, omnibenevolent government. Whether you call that Marxism or euphemize it as "managed capitalism," it is a formula for ending America's unique prosperity and liberty, as there exists an inextricable connection between economic liberty and political liberty.

Never in our history have we been headed at such break-neck speed toward our own financial, political and cultural destruction. One can only pray that before it's too late, enough Democrats will come to their senses and help get this freight train under control.

David Limbaugh is a writer, author and attorney. To find out more about him, visit his Web site at www.davidlimbaugh.com.

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Bird Poop:

A bird in hand hard to identify

Shoe boxes, at this time of the year, seem to multiply in our garage. As I added one more to the collection, I thought of the variety of birds that had been delivered inside their cozy quarters. From a size four to the mammoth boxes for cross-training and performance walkers, we had accumulated a conglomeration that would make a shoe store envious.



BEBE McCASLAND

Our latest arrival was petite in comparison. With feminine colors, the cardboard creation had suited the size of the bird whose spring migration had been halted abruptly. Having found it lying in a pile of leaves, the woman who rang our doorbell had called to say she was on her way.

Glancing inside the box, I knew from its general appearance that she might have found a warbler. "I'll have to call you. I'm not sure which one," I admitted as I pointed out to her that it had no distinguishing marks, such as wing bars.

Since the bird needed time to recover on its own, I isolated it away from any noise or motion. Having forgotten the large membership to which warblers belong, I started opening several reference books. After looking for the most nondescript and plain migrant among the colorful choices, I narrowed my selection to either the Tennessee or orange-crowned warblers.

Not sure about either, I tip-toed toward the sleeping visitor. Having been knocked unconscious, the warbler did not respond as I gently raised the bedding on which it lay. Carefully turning the bird, I noticed how the natural light from a window highlighted its head. Obvious was an eye ring that appeared to be split. Above the eyes were narrow, yellowish eyebrows. From a distance it would have been hard to distinguish this bird's markings.

One moment its upper parts appeared grayish, then a faded, dusty or drab olive green. Although fairly consistent in color, its faded greenish-yellow underparts were lightly streaked. It was as if nature's artistry had used a water-colorist's wash to enhance the dull outfit it had chosen.

Still not convinced, I carefully moved the feathers on the crown of its head. Similar to the red streak I had seen on kingbirds was a hidden, brownish-orange patch. In both species it would seldom be noticed, unless the birds were agitated, alarmed, or aroused. Years earlier,

a friend had warned that the hardest bird to identify was the one you held in your hand. The truth of that adage was now apparent.

With the concealed coloration, I realized that what I had just examined was possibly one of many I had seen and heard during the fall and now in March. Having come through our area from the northern forests of Alaska and Canada, the orange-crowned warblers were returning from their winter sojourn in a warmer climate.

As the migrants had flitted back and forth in the tops of our mesquites and oaks, we had sensed they were hunting for leafhoppers, aphids, tiny caterpillars, and flies. To know that they were also after



Courtesy photo

About five inches long, and weighing a fourth of an ounce, the orange-crowned warbler frequents dense thickets and shrubs, live oaks, brush and tall grasses in its search for insects. Often heard before being seen, its call, "chipe-e, chipe-e," announces its presence.

wasps and scale insects made them environmental friends.

Awakening later in the day, the warbler chose to dine on small meal worms and berries. After remaining with us for another

twenty-four hours, it readily accepted an invitation to search our trees and shrubs when set free. Our experience

with what had seemed the essence of hyperactivity in the treetops gave us a new perspective of a little bird for

little bugs.

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

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Wacky Facts

■ In the spring many people in India celebrate the festival of Holi, known as the "carnival of colors." Children, friends and neighbors run out onto the streets and throw colored water or powder all over each other.
— *World Almanac for Kids*

KID NEWS

Chatter Box

"A little Madness in the Spring
Is wholesome even for the King."
— *Emily Dickinson (1830-1886),
considered one of America's
greatest poets,
on americanpoems.com.*



Try This

Spring

Indoor & outdoor fun

Frosty mornings, bright afternoons and rain in between. Welcome to wacky-weather spring! No matter what elements the season may bring to your neck of the woods, these boredom-busting activities offer a forecast of sunny smiles.

I'm painting in the rain

If you can sing in the rain, why not paint? A soggy day can transform drawings into impressionist art. Draw on card stock with washable markers, then place the papers outdoors in the rain until the colors have run. Bring the paintings back inside and put them on a flat surface to dry.



Easiest kite ever

Made from a single sheet of paper, this breeze of a kite is all you need to catch the fickle March winds.

YOU WILL NEED

- Kite template from **Family Fun.com/magazine** printed on an 8½-by 11-inch sheet of office paper
- Embroidery thread or kite cord
- Single-hole punch
- Stapler
- Scissors
- 5-foot-long ribbon
- Clear tape

1. Cut out the kite from the template and make creases as shown. Reinforce the side points with tape as shown, then punch a hole in each point.
2. To make the kite harness, tie the ends of a 2-foot length of embroidery thread or kite cord to the holes.
3. For the kite string, tie one end of a length of thread or cord to the harness. Make the loop loose so that the string slides easily along the harness. Our string, for running with, was about 8 feet long. For a higher flying kite, you can use a longer string.
4. Staple the ribbon to the bottom of the kite for a tail.

— *FamilyFun magazine*

Women in history word search

March is Women's History Month. Find the names of these famous women.

MAYA ANGELOU	SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
SUSAN B. ANTHONY	ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON	J.K. ROWLING
MIA HAMM	SOJOURNER TRUTH
MARION JONES	OPRAH WINFREY

W R T J Y U X S T K M I A H A M M H
S U S A N B A N T H O N Y I K S U T
E R R T Y U I S T K L U O L L U H S
H T D R O R O S E R K S U L K S T C
A L I N U O L E G N A A Y A M N U M
U E R N R E U N N R F J T R F J R T
O V A I S Y B R I L I U F Y I U T E
P E P N E L S H L R S N L R S N R L
R S G H A L E W S L R S O L O E O
A O X Q R R E S O S I E Z D I N N I
H O K M I R U O R S N R O H D R R V
W R E A G C Z B K O O R I A O R U T
I R C D O A H K J L F O P M F O O B
N O U R L W R N I H F F N C F F J O
F N C A D Q H J N A U S L A U O S
R A L H F I S B L U D K R I D K S M
E E C D R A H K E L F O P N F O P S
Y L U A L W R E I T F F N T F F N O
S E M A D Q S H J N A U S O A U S S
G S A N D R A D A Y O C O N N O R K

MARTY WESTMAN/MCT

Spring no-snow globe

Here's a twist on the traditional snow globe: fabric flowers, plastic figures and a pinch of glitter in a recycled jar celebrate the coming of the warmer season.

YOU WILL NEED

- Clean jar with lid
- Fabric flowers
- Small plastic figures
- Hot glue gun
- Floral wire (optional)
- Glitter and confetti
- Teflon tape, also called plumber's tape, found in hardware stores
- Scissors
- Green paper

1. Turn the lid upside down. Loosely arrange the flowers and figures on it, periodically placing the

jar over the items to check for fit.

2. With an adult's help, use the hot glue gun to adhere the flowers and figures to the lid. To attach the butterfly in our globe, we first hot-glued the figure to one end of a piece of floral wire, then hot-glued the wire's other end to the lid.

3. Fill the jar with water to within a half inch from the top and add the glitter and confetti.

4. Dry the rim of the jar and wrap one layer of Teflon tape around the threads to ensure a leak-proof seal. Immerse the decorations in the jar and tighten the lid.

5. Cut and fringe the green paper to make a decorative base and glue it around the lid.



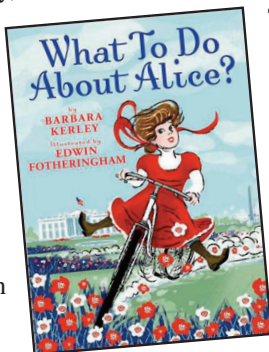
PHOTOS BY PETER N. FOX/COURTESY OF FAMILYFUN MAGAZINE

March is Women's History Month — the perfect time to pick up a book about a strong woman.

Here are two good new ones.

"What to Do About Alice?"

by Barbara Kerley, is an entertaining look at what it's like to be a president's daughter — or more accurately what it's like for a president to have a daughter who has a pet snake, rides down the White House stairs on trays or jumps clothed into ships' swimming pools.



Subtitled "How Alice Roosevelt Broke the Rules, Charmed the World, and Drove her Father Teddy Crazy," Kerley's picture-book biography is marvelously illustrated by artist Edwin Fotheringham. Though Alice lost her mother as a baby and had to wear leg braces when she was a child, Kerley writes, she never wanted to hear anyone say, "poor little thing." So she threw herself into life from the time she was a young child, creating adventure wherever she was. You will delight in her es-

Reading Rack

capades. Fotheringham's pictures dance from page to page, showing her bouncing on the sofa or coasting her bike down a hill — no hands, no feet.

After Theodore Roosevelt became president, when Alice was 17, she burst into the public spotlight.

Roosevelt famously said, "I can be president of the United States, or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both."

"Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa," by

Jeanette Winter, is the inspiring story of the Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Winter begins with a brief look at Wangari's childhood in a village "under an umbrella of green trees in the shadow of Mount Kenya in Africa." The girl excels in school and wins a scholarship to study in America. When she returns to Kenya six years later, she discov-

ers the trees have been razed to make room for buildings. She plants seedlings in her backyard, then starts a farm for baby trees.

She convinces the village

women to plant seedlings,

drawing ridicule from

men in the government.

The women persist, and

word gets out. The

planting spreads. Wan-

gari is jailed at one point

for trying to protect

older trees.

But eventually there

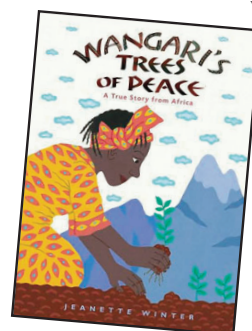
are too many people

planting seedlings. The

momentum can't be stopped. Kenya

is green once again.

— *Rebecca Young*



Hawks take 2 from MC

Herald Staff Report

A loud response was given Monday by the Howard College softball team to rival Midland College, letting the Lady Chaps know the Hawks aren't going to just roll over in the Western Junior College Athletic Conference.

After being routed 8-1 and 7-0 in a doubleheader at Midland Sunday, Howard responded with a sweep of two games played at Foundation Field Monday, winning 4-3 and 1-0.

After the first inning, it appeared another long afternoon was in the works for the Hawks (21-15) as Midland posted a quick three runs.

However, Howard pitcher Diana Espinal calmed down and didn't allow another run in the game, setting the stage for a dramatic finish.

After an error and a single put two runners on with no outs in the bottom of the seventh inning, freshman Emily Imken, who is from Midland, blasted a 3-run homer to tie the game.

Jessy Cadena later hit a 1-out double and was replaced on the basepaths by Katrin Florence. Michelle Mun knocked in Florence to seal the win for the Hawks.

In Game 2, the Hawks scored in the first inning after Ashley Calle reached base on an error and Heather Sanchez followed with an RBI double. Sanchez's hit was the only one of the second game for the Hawks.

Katie Smith pitched the shutout, stranding seven hits over seven innings.

Howard picks back up with WJCAC play at 1 p.m. March 25 with a doubleheader against Western Texas College at Foundation Field.

Game 1
Midland 300 000 0—3 7 1
Howard 000 000 4—4 5 0
Clarissa Molina, Kristen Marris (7) and Dina Ortiz. Diana Espinal and Emily Imken. W – Espinal. L – Marris. 2B: MC – Logan Zamora. HC – Jessy Cadena. 3B: MC – Charlene Romero. HR: HC – Imken.

Game 2
Midland 000 000 0—0 7 1
Howard 100 000 0—1 1 2
Kristen Mariss and Dina Ortiz. Katie Smith and Monica Buccellato. W – Smith. L – Marris. 2b: HC – Heather Sanchez.



AP Photo/Eric Landwehr

Members of the South Dakota State women's basketball team react to being shown live on ESPN's NCAA Women's Basketball Selection Show Monday in Brookings, S.D. South Dakota State qualified for its first-ever appearance in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament and will face Texas Christian University in Lubbock Sunday.

UConn heads women's field

A&M, Texas, Baylor, TCU make NCAA tournament

The Associated Press

Connecticut's entire season resembled a tuneup, leaving no doubt Geno Auriemma's team would draw the overall No. 1 seed for the NCAA women's basketball tournament.

So when the brackets were announced Monday night, there was only one mystery: Can anyone handle the Huskies and prevent them from winning a sixth national championship?

"We don't care who we play. We don't care where we play," Auriemma said. "We don't care what time we play. I'm anxious to get started, and I know our players are as well."

Nine teams have entered the NCAA tournament unbeaten; only four have emerged unscathed. UConn and Auriemma were the last in 2002.

Oklahoma, Maryland, and Duke earned the other three No. 1 seeds. The Sooners are in the Oklahoma City regional, the Terrapins are

headed to Raleigh and the Blue Devils will make the cross-country trek to Berkeley.

Tennessee also extended its run as the only team to make every NCAA tournament but earned a No. 5 — its lowest seed ever, creating a tough road to a third consecutive title.

The Final Four is scheduled for the Scottrade Center in St. Louis on April 5 and 7. When the city last hosted the championship in 2001, UConn lost in the semifinals.

The Huskies (33-0), who have run through their opponents this season winning by an average of 31 points, will open up against Vermont on Sunday. A potential second-round opponent for UConn is former assistant coach Tonya Cardoza and Temple. The Owls must beat Florida to meet the Huskies.

If the Huskies advance to the regionals, they'll take a trip down I-95 to Trenton, N.J., where California, Texas A&M or Florida State could be waiting. The Seminoles lost to UConn

by 12 in the Caribbean Classic.

One team UConn won't play until at least the Final Four would be Tennessee.

Coach Pat Summitt said she was not surprised her 22-10 team received a No. 5 seed. The team also took 10 losses into the tournament in 1997, grabbing a No. 3 seed and winning the title.

Tennessee's previous lowest seed was fourth — in 1986, and the team has advanced to the regional semis every season.

The Lady Vols have been a fixture atop the bracket since the first NCAA tournament in 1982. They've earned a top seed 19 times, a No. 2 seed four times and a No. 3 seed three times.

Not this time.

"For once in a long time, we're not the top dog. We're the underdog," Summitt said. "They have nothing really to lose and everything to gain

See **WOMEN**, Page 12

Artest leads Rockets to win over Hornets

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Ron Artest could not have started any worse or finished much better.

Houston's veteran leader scored all of his 18 points in the second half, and the Rockets overcame the absence of center Yao Ming in a 95-84 victory over the New Orleans Hornets on Monday night.

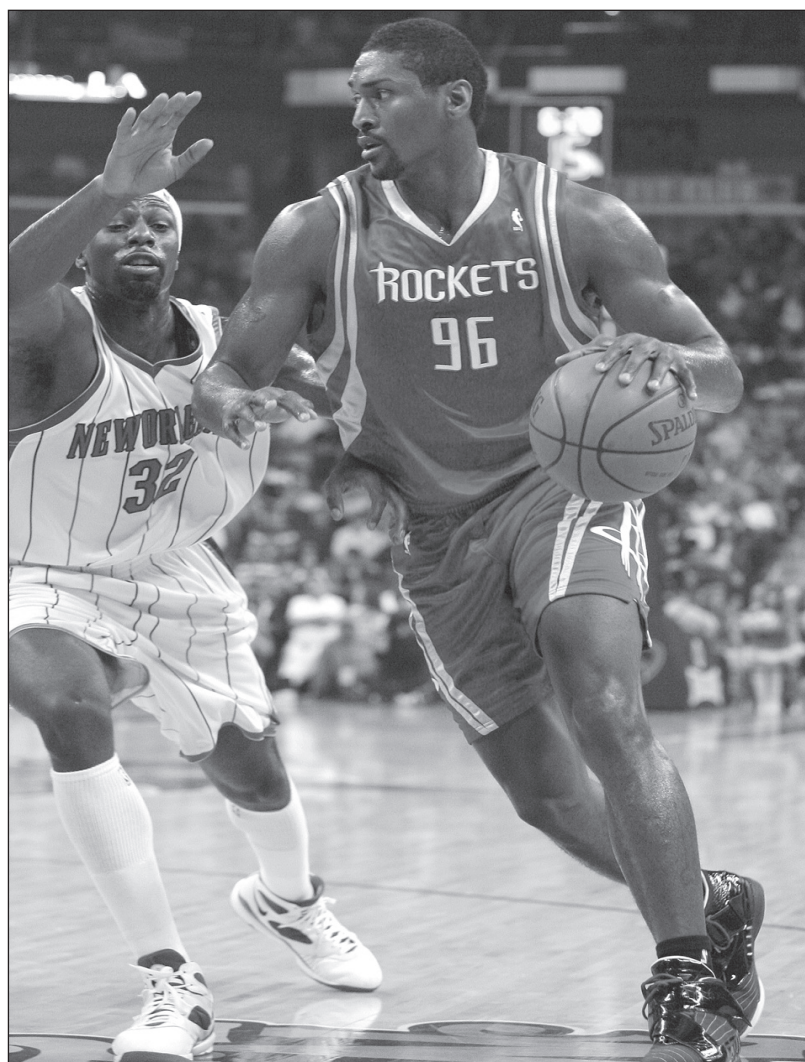
Artest missed his first 11 shots, nine in the first half, but hit four tough shots in a row as the Rockets rallied back to take the lead from an 11-point deficit in the third quarter.

"When you play in this league against many, many good players, you kind of pick up things and learn how to get through situations like that," Artest said. "Sometimes you're going to have a first half like that, and that's why you have a team and we still win by 12 (actually 11). That just shows what type of team we have."

Luis Scola and Aaron Brooks each scored 14 points, and Scola had 12 rebounds to help the Rockets end New Orleans' five-game home winning streak.

Chris Paul had 29 points and 11 assists, while David West had 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Hornets, who've lost two straight.

"We lost one that we should have won," Paul said. "They got just about everything



AP Photo/Brian Lawdermilk

Houston forward Ron Artest moves the ball around New Orleans Hornets forward Julian Wright (32) during the first half of their NBA basketball game in New Orleans Monday.

Thunder spoil Popovich's 1,000th with 78-76 win

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Gregg Popovich didn't coach 1,000 games in the NBA without having a few leads slip away on him.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma City Thunder, he can add another to that list.

Kevin Durant scored 25 points, Thabo Sefolosha added 12 and the Thunder spoiled Popovich's 1,000th game as San Antonio's coach by overcoming an early 17-point deficit to beat the Spurs 78-76 on Monday night.

San Antonio built its big lead in the opening 10 minutes, but that did nothing to secure a successful finish as Popovich became only the 24th coach to reach 1,000 NBA games.

"Oftentimes, it's a coach's worst nightmare," Popovich said. "We've all had the leads. We've all lost them because it's a game. It's 48 minutes long. There are a lot of possessions. It can happen and it does happen often."

The Thunder didn't lead until midway through the fourth quarter, but kept San Antonio to its season low in scoring and escaped when Tony Parker missed a

See **THUNDER**, Page 12

See **ROCKETS**, Page 12

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Once homeless, fat cat now living the good life



(AP Photo/Courier-Post, John Ziomek)

Turnersville resident Donna Damiani, center, and her children Melissa, left, 12, and Vince, 17, hold the cat named "Prince Chunk," at their home in Washington Township, N.J. The Damiani family finalized the paperwork for the cat's adoption in February 2009, though they've been caring for the cat since Summer 2009.

By SAMANTHA HENRY

Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The family that adopted the state's most famous stray cat, an enormous white tabby named Prince Chunk, wants to make sure that pet owners who are struggling financially aren't forced to give up their beloved animals.

Prince Chunk skyrocketed to feline fame after being found last August wandering around the south Jersey town of Voorhees after his owner lost

her home to foreclosure.

The cat initially was called Princess Chunk by the Camden County Animal Shelter, which took him in when he was reported to weigh a whopping 44 pounds, just shy of a world record. He garnered national headlines and made the rounds of several television talk shows and the New York tabloid covers.

It was soon discovered that Princess was a Prince, and the Damiani family, chosen from 500 appli-

cants to adopt him, said Chunk weighed only about 22 pounds on the scale at its Washington Township home.

The Damianis have been caring for the cat since August, but they signed his adoption papers Feb. 17, said the family's 18-year-old son, Vincent Damiani.

"He's basically a victim of the economy," Damiani said of Prince Chunk. "He lost his home due to foreclosure, and in the current economic situation, I think it's important for people to know that they are not alone. We'll do everything we can to help them."

Damiani says the family plans to help by establishing the Prince Chunk Foundation, which it hopes to have registered by the spring or summer. It hopes to raise money that will be used to provide temporary assistance to financially struggling pet owners so they're not forced to give up their animals.

"The unemployment rate is about 8 percent right now, and people have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their animals, and that shouldn't be the case," Damiani said.

Damiani said the family is grateful to the shelter and for the many supportive calls, letters and inquiries about Prince Chunk it has received from across the country.

As for New Jersey's most famous fat cat, Damiani said his family cherishes the cuddly, affectionate pet, who has "a great personality."

The family has built him a litter box shaped like a castle and says a strict vet-supervised diet has helped the portly feline shed more than 2 pounds since August. Damiani says the vet has assured him the cat is perfectly healthy, just unnaturally large.

Prince Chunk also is fond of his new adoptive animal siblings, according to Damiani, who says he gets along great with the family's kitten, Tito, and its three dogs: a terrier named Romeo, a Pomeranian named Marla and a Chihuahua called Noel.

The only family pet bigger than Chunk, Damiani says, is Romeo, who tips the scales at about 80

Tomorrow's Horoscope

St. Patrick is said to pardon follies and promise joy on this, his holiday. The Sagittarius moon rules the sky now, a lucky omen for Irish and non-Irish alike. Sagittarius is associated with Jupiter, the Big Daddy of abundance. So make a play for the thing you wouldn't mind having a lot of and prepare for the likelihood of a wind-fall.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Though it may have taken a long time to figure out your plan, stay open to the possibility that there is an even better way to approach your task. Use the people who have been there before as a resource.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You may be on a solo mission, but people you know will still have something to say about what you're doing. You're the only one who really understands what needs to be done in your life. Try not to get engaged in a debate.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're a master communicator. You know how to open people's ears and get them ready to receive your words. You'll expertly modify your message so it's appropriate for the people who need to hear it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It may seem that no one understands you. That's partly because you're working on something very specific to your own vision and it's just not time to bring it to the world yet. Have faith in yourself.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You have molded a situation to suit you perfectly and now you are perfectly happy with the way things have turned out. Because of this, others get a feeling of comfort and security when they are around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your road is not perfectly smooth and easy, but it's the little snags that make it fun. While figuring your way out of a pinch you'll make new friends and gain fresh perspective.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be tempted to ask people what they think of your work, but don't. The only opinion that matters is yours. The best way other people can help you now is to let you do your own thing your own way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you think about it, some of the things you were recently dissatisfied with turned out to be blessings in disguise. So you just can't tell what kind of luck you're having now. You may as well assume it's good!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Social happenings are important to keep up with. Make sure that you haven't forgotten a birthday or missed

the RSVP date on a party invitation. Relationships are your true wealth.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Though you try not to compare yourself to others, when you see someone who is doing amazingly well, you can't help but take a quick inventory of your own life. You'll realize that much is going well for you now, too.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be as happy as you are generous. Organize the next move you'll do for charity. When you're helping others you are at your best. You'll notice a talent you didn't know you had.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll be asked to make a commitment. It may seem like a small matter, but once you give your word a certain course is set. So consider very carefully even the most trivial of promises.

YOUR LUCKY ST. PATRICK'S DAY CHARM: Everyone knows that four-leaf clovers are lucky, but can other items bring you good fortune? **ARIES:** Arrowheads and carved or polished rocks are lucky for you. **TAURUS:** Coins are lucky for you, especially ones that come from foreign lands. **GEMINI:** Pens bring you luck, especially if they are well crafted in silver or gold. **CANCER:** Because you are so sensually attuned, scented oils have a favorable effect on your fortunes. **LEO:** Crystals are lucky for you, especially if they are uncut and unpolished. **VIRGO:** Animal teeth and bones are lucky for you — for instance, an alligator tooth. **LIBRA:** Carry a sweet note, card or picture from your beloved for good luck. **SCORPIO:** Holy water in a vial will bring you luck, or any water that has been prayed over and blessed. **SAGITTARIUS:** Postcards and stamps are lucky for you, especially if they've been sent to you from afar. **CAPRICORN:** Because of your relationship to Saturn, timepieces, especially watches, bring you luck. **AQUARIUS:** Small and funny-looking charms are lucky for you, such as a bobble head, stretchy monkey or crazy troll. **PISCES:** Depictions of mythical and religious figures such as gods or saints bring you luck.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Comedian and film actor Dane Cook is a sensitive Pisces who has created a stage persona that allows him to talk about anything he wants to get off his chest, and do it in a way that makes people laugh. His natal Mercury is in quick-thinking Aries so he has the advantage of being one step ahead of his audience. His moon, Venus and Mars in Taurus are excellent moneymaking planets.

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

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Annie's Mailbox®

Dear Annie: My situation is tough. I am a pregnant teenager, 16 to be exact. Aside from my family and a few friends, no one knows the whole truth, which is that I was raped.

I no longer want to leave my house because I get harassed constantly when I'm out in public.

I hear derogatory things like, "There is a baby having a baby." I am not sure how to address situations like this. There are not many pregnant teenagers in my area.

I am only about four months along and excited for my child, but the people in my community are making my life miserable. Is there anything I can possibly do to make them mind their own business? — *A Teen in Need*

Dear Teen: Not really. It will serve no purpose to hide or be ashamed. This is not your fault. Maintain your dignity at all times and respond politely to anyone who addresses you. Those who look askance at your condition will eventually get used to it and you will be less annoyed by them. In the meantime, if you have not yet had counseling, please contact RAINN (rainn.org) at 1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673).

Dear Annie: I have finally met the woman who fulfills me in every way. "Nora" is thoughtful, caring, beautiful and, most important, trustworthy.

Here is my dilemma: She often has a foul body odor. This turns me off when I would like to be intimate.

Do you know of any female hygiene products I could buy for her that might help? We have a newborn son, and Nora refuses to use an antiperspirant because of the aluminum content.



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

However, the deodorant she currently uses does not seem to be strong enough. Also, she has somewhat hairy armpits, which adds to the problem. She doesn't believe in shaving them.

Is there a tactful way to approach either of these subjects, or should I just keep my mouth shut? — *Holding My Nose*

Dear Holding: Some women object to shaving body hair, and if Nora is one of them, we think you should try to accept it as best you can.

The body odor is a different issue, and you should discuss it with her.

If she recently gave birth, her hormones may still be a bit out of whack and will settle down over time. It's also possible she has an infection and should discuss it with her doctor.

Otherwise, she can check online or at health food stores for other natural deodorants that may work better. Until then, when you want intimacy, suggest showering together. It can be both sensual and helpful.

Dear Annie: I rolled my eyes when I read the letter from "Devastated in Oklahoma," whose angry husband cheated on her years ago. What upset me was her state-

ment: "I am attractive and in good health. I'd probably have no trouble meeting someone else, but at this point I'd rather not risk it."

What is wrong with this woman? Why does she have to have a man? There are plenty of single people with lots of friends who are active in groups and volunteer in their community.

In deciding she must have a man in her life, she is choosing to continue putting up with his rages and possibly getting an STD if he has another affair. It seems to me being single and busy with friends trumps anger and disease. — *Sick of Dependent People*

Dear Sick: Not everyone is comfortable ending a marriage, especially after so many years, and we think the decision about what to put up with is hers to make.

But counseling can help clarify things, which is why we recommend it so often.

Annie's Snippet for St. Patrick's Day: May your thoughts be as glad as the shamrocks. May your heart be as light as a song. May each day bring you bright happy hours that stay with you all year long.

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

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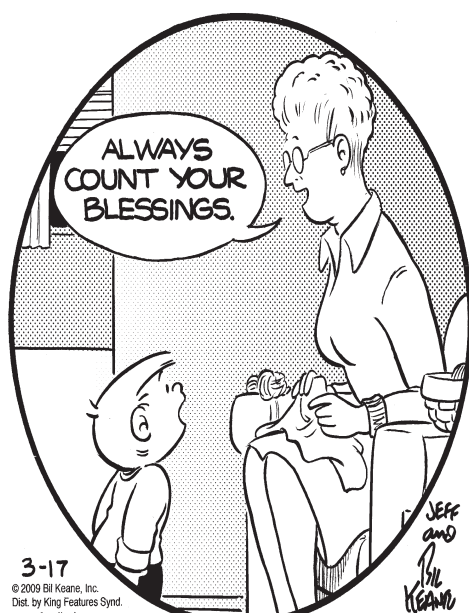
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5 :PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura Noticiero	Lopez Lopez	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Raymond Friends	Scrivner Uri Harel	BBC Business	Cash Cab Cash Cab	Charles S. Dutton	CSI: NY	Bones	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Phineas	Horn Basket	SportsCenter
6 :PM	News ABC	Entertain Fortune	Jeopardy! Tontas Cielo	Two Men Two Men	Entertain	12 Cora-zones	Millionaire	Seinfeld	Dr. Young Hagee	News-Lehrer	Made Made		CSI: Crime Scn	Movie: Old School, Vince Vaughn	Movie: Barbershop, Cedric the Entertainer	Suite Life Montana	College Basketball: NIT 1st Rd.	Bracket College Basketball: NCAA tourn.
7 :PM	Dancing-Stars	Dancing-Stars	Cuidado-Angel	American Idol	NCIS	Doña Barbara	The Biggest Loser	Fam. Guy	Israel	Nova (DVS)	Dirty Jobs	Movie: The Man From Snowy River	CSI: Crime Scn	Trust Me			College Basketball: NIT 1st Rd.	
8 :PM	Dancing-Stars	Dancing-Stars	Mañana es		The Mentalist	El Rostro de Analia		Fam. Guy	Light of the Southwest	Frontline (DVS)	Dirty Jobs		Uit. Knock-outs	Trust Me		Phineas Phineas	College Basketball: NIT 1st Rd.	
9 :PM	Primetime: You	Primetime: You	Aqui y Ahora	TMZ	(01) Without a Trace	Sin Senos	Law & Order: SVU	Office		Independent Lens	Wreck. Nation		DEA	Trust Me	Baldwin	Wizards	College Basketball: NIT 1st Rd.	
10 :PM	News	News	Impacto	Raymond	News	Noticias	News	Sex & Israel	Cortes	Charlie Rose	Made	Movie: Quigley Down Under, Alan Rickman	Real Vice	Saving Grace	Movie: Barbershop, Cedric the Entertainer	Suite Life So Raven	College Basketball: NIT 1st Rd.	SportsCenter
11 :PM	Nightline	Nightline	Noticiero	King-Hill	Late Show	Decisiones de	Tonight Show	Movie: Unfaithful, Olivier Martinez	Ministerio-Vida	Smiley Smiley	Dirty Jobs		Real Vice	Trust Me				
12 :AM	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	Extra Contra Viento	La Casa de la Risa	RENO 911	Late Late Show	Decisiones de	Late Night-Jim	Church	Light of the Southwest	Smiley Smiley (Off Air)	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Rudy, Charles S. Dutton	Disorderly Con.	Trust Me	Baldwin	Kim	NASCAR	Gameday
1 :AM	Paid	Paid	Mujer... Güereja	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Wreck. Nation		Amazing Video	Movie: Old School, Vinno	The Deal	Baldwin	Emperor Dragon	Baseball	SportsCenter

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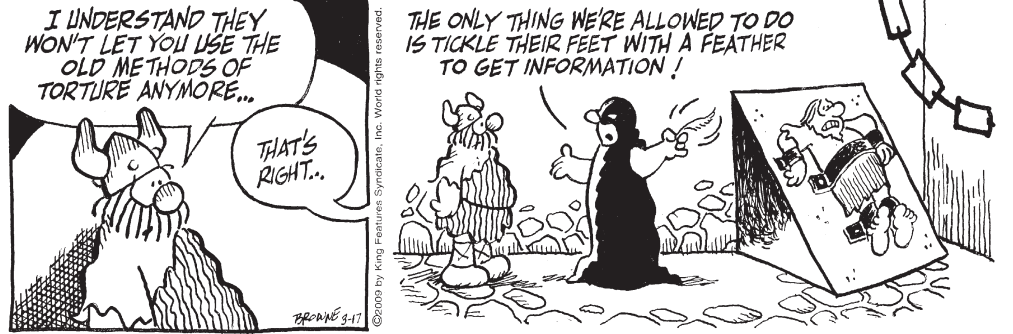
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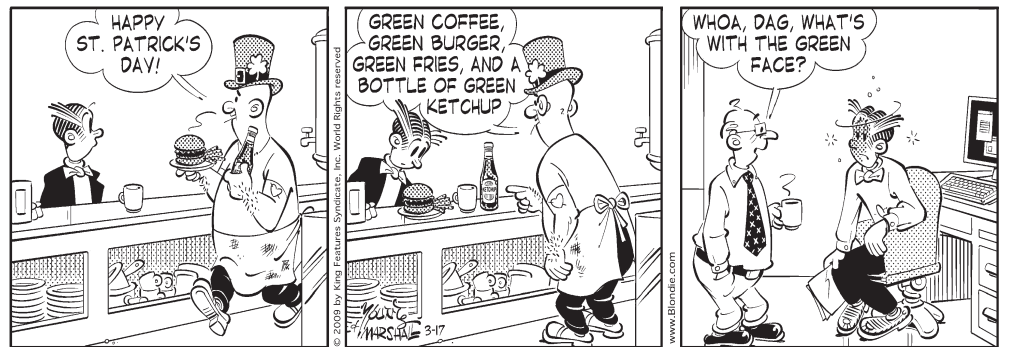


"But I'm not very good at arithmetic."

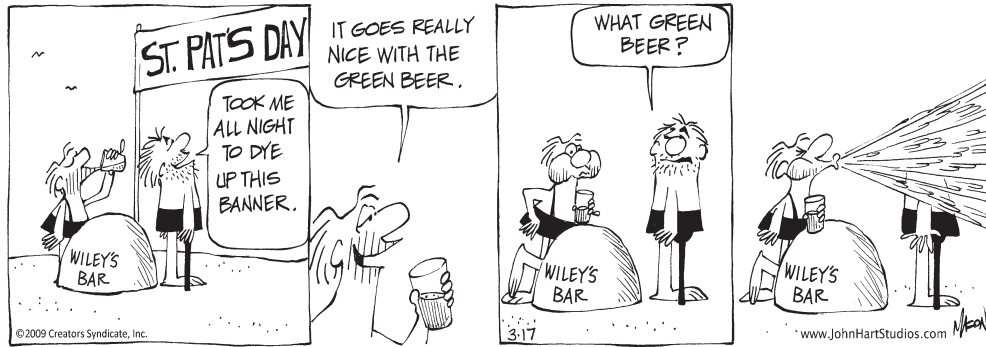
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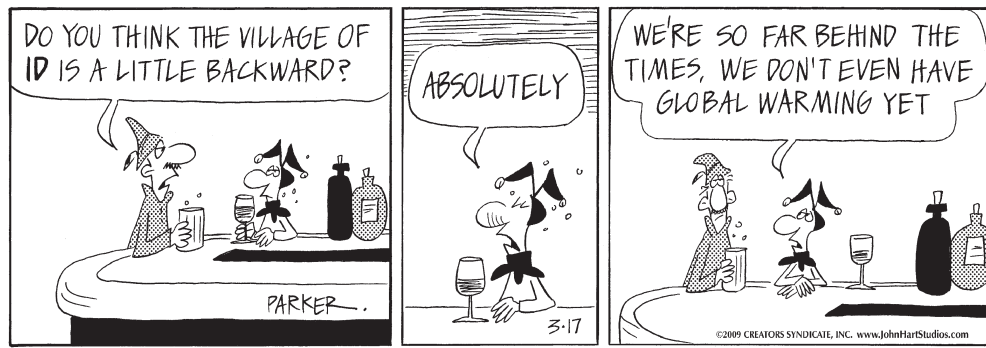
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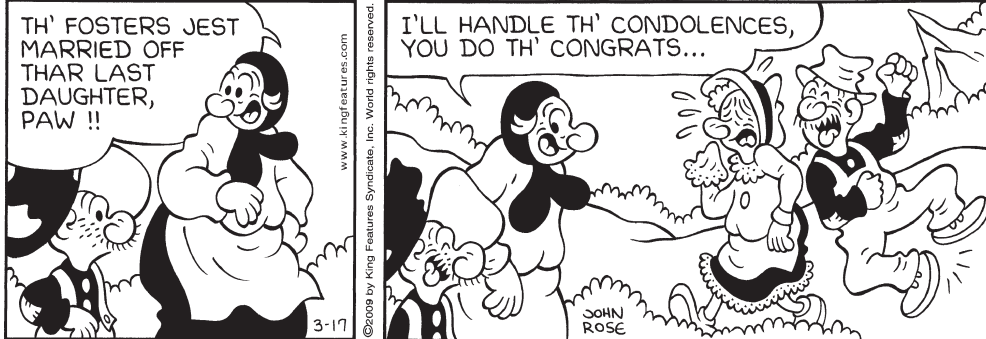
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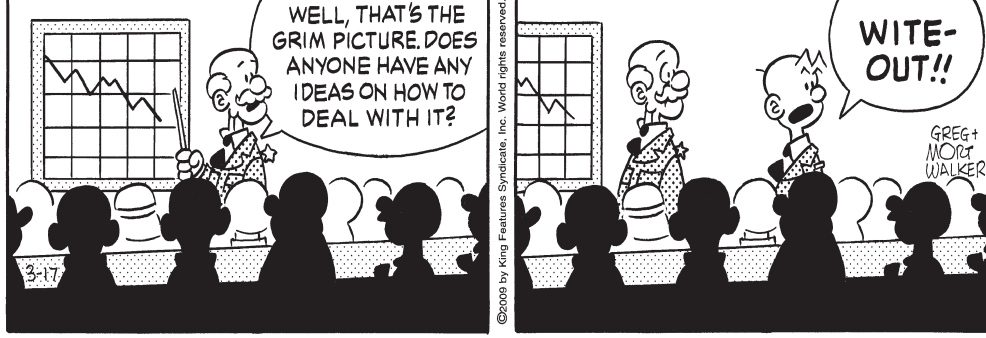
THE OTHER COAST



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This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, March 17, the 76th day of 2009. There are 289 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 17, A.D. 461 (or A.D. 493, according to other authorities), St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, died in Saul.

On this date:

In 1776, British forces evacuated Boston during the Revolutionary War.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt first likened crusading journalists to a man with "the muckrake in his hand" in a speech to the Gridiron Club in Washington.

In 1910, the Camp Fire Girls organization was formed. (It was formally presented to the public on this date two years later.)

In 1941, the National Gallery of Art opened in Washington, D.C.

In 1950, scientists at the University of California at

Berkeley announced they had created a new radioactive element, "californium."

In 1958, the U.S. Navy launched the Vanguard 1 satellite.

In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet for India in the wake of a failed uprising by Tibetans against Chinese rule.

In 1966, a U.S. midget submarine located a missing hydrogen bomb which had fallen from an American bomber into the Mediterranean off Spain.

In 1969, Golda Meir became prime minister of Israel.

In 1992, 29 people were killed in the truck bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Today's Birthdays: The former national chairwoman of the NAACP, Myrlie Evers-Williams, is 76. Rock musician Paul Kantner is 68. Singer-songwriter Jim Weatherly is 66. Singer-songwriter John Sebastian (The Lovin' Spoonful) is 65. Rock musician Harold Brown (War; Lowrider Band) is 63. Actor Patrick Duffy is 60. Actor Kurt Russell is 58. Country singer Susie Allanson is 57. Actress Lesley-Anne Down is 55. Country singer Paul Overstreet is 54. Actor

Gary Sinise is 54. Boston Celtics general manager Danny Ainge is 50. Actress Vicki Lewis is 49. Actor Casey Siemaszko is 48. Writer-director Rob Sitch is 47. Actor Rob Lowe is 45. Rock singer Billy Corgan (Smashing Pumpkins) is 42. Rock musician Van Conner (Screaming Trees) is 42. Actor Mathew St. Patrick is 41. Actor Yanic Truesdale is 40. Rock musician Melissa Auf der Maur is 37. Rock musician Caroline Corr (The Corrs) is 36. Actress Marisa Coughlan is 35. Rapper Swifty (D12) is 34. Actress Natalie Zea is 34. Actress Brittany Daniel is 33. Singer Stephen Gately is 33. Actress Eliza Hope Bennett is 17.

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Answer to previous puzzle

CHIN	SLOWS	STOP
RUDE	PARIS	ARIA
ALOE	ERASE	BEND
BALDEAGLE	BEAKS	LURES
BIRD	SEWERS	GETSWET
ARESO	SHADE	ALE
IRA	MOATS	TAR
NOR	FALSE	BEETS
TRAPEZE	DECREE	SORE
STEEL	LEMON	FLATPAINT
AVID	ALIKE	IDEA
CELL	HIDES	ROOM
KNEE	SPENT	SSTS

Newsday Crossword

GREEN MENU by Sally R. Stein
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15							16
17						18						19
20						21						22
23					24			25		26		
					27			28		29		30
											31	32
33	34	35	36		37							38
39					40			41	42			43
44				45				46				47
48					49			50				51
					52			53		54		
58	59	60			61			62				63
64					65							66
67								68				69
70								71				72

ACROSS

1 Shuts loudly, as doors

6 Lions and tigers

10 Political syst.

14 Main theme

15 Spiny houseplant

16 Software buyer

17 Make amends

18 Tiny bit

19 Female singing voice

20 Green vegetable

22 Price

23 Summer forecast

24 Overly

25 Capital of Peru

27 Covers with turf

29 Specifying

33 Quickly, in memos

37 Board-game cube

38 Steer-roping contest

39 Bangkok native

40 Hourglass fillers

43 Be in first place

44 ___ code (telegraphy system)

46 Christmas mo.

47 Sits down for dinner

48 Group of seven

50 Kilt wearer

52 All the time

54 Regret

55 State south of Ga.

58 Stylish

61 Fruit with a green rind

64 Mascara target

65 Israeli

66 Run off, as newspapers

DOWN

2 Store secretly

3 Toward the left, at sea

4 Short skirt

5 Aromas

6 Southeast Asian land

7 "I cannot tell ___"

8 Sum's bottom line

9 Shown to one's seat

10 Green Mexican party dip

11 Norway's capital

12 Doggie docs

13 Slow running pace

21 Items in inventory

26 Scratch up

28 Mats away

30 Creative thought

31 Orderly

32 Mount Olympus residents

33 24-hr. cash sources

34 Sneaker, for instance

35 Org. for seniors

36 Green ice-cream flavor

41 Diminish

42 Clean thoroughly

45 "Electric" fish

49 In the direction of

51 House of worship

53 Not allowed

55 Spark producer

56 Solitary sort

57 Fidgety

58 Earthenware material

59 Angel's topper

60 Brit's exclamation

62 Recipe abbr.

63 Country that celebrates March 17th

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Cutler wants out from Denver, skips first team meeting

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Jay Cutler says he wants to break up. The Denver Broncos say they want to make up.

The Pro Bowl quarterback was a no-show on Monday for coach Josh McDaniels' first team meeting and the start of the Broncos' offseason workouts, and if he gets his way, he'll never step foot in the team's training facility again.

"The Denver Broncos confirm that Jay Cutler has requested a trade," team spokesman Jim Saccomano told The Associated Press on Monday.

McDaniels declined interview requests after telling The Denver Post that he wanted to meet again with Cutler to try to resolve their differences before he considers a trade.

McDaniels briefly addressed his broiling quarterback controversy when he gathered his team as a group for the first time Monday morning.

"He just addressed it and said, 'I'll take care of it,'" recounted defen-

sive lineman Kenny Peterson.

Cutler is upset that the Broncos tried to trade him for New England quarterback Matt Cassel last month and what he considers McDaniels' misleading answers to his inquiries about those discussions.

The Broncos declined interview requests Monday for McDaniels, general manager Brian Xanders and owner Pat Bowlen. Cook didn't return calls to The AP.

The sides met face-to-face for the first time Saturday and Cutler came away convinced McDaniels wanted someone else under center while the Broncos were incredulous that the gathering didn't result in a resolution to this nasty spat. They told Cutler they expected him to attend Monday's meeting and workout even though it's voluntary.

Cutler told ESPN he would attend every mandatory minicamp and training camp but would skip the off-season training program.

THUNDER

Continued from page 7

3-pointer from the left side in the closing seconds.

Popovich could only shrug with his palms of his hands pointed toward the sky as the clock struck zero.

"It's called basketball," Popovich said. "It's a basketball game. It happens all the time."

Parker scored 28 points to lead San Antonio, and Tim Duncan had 14 points and 12 rebounds. Matt Bonner added 10 points.

Oklahoma City won for the fourth straight time at home.

"Playing a phenomenal team like the Spurs

always helps us out in the confidence area," Durant said. "I think our defense just won the game for us."

"I know the Spurs can attest to that. They've won a lot of games defensively, and we can learn from a team like them."

Among the 23 coaches with the most games on the sidelines, only Phil Jackson (731) and Pat Riley (716) had more wins in their first 1,000 games than Popovich, who is 676-324.

Popovich became only the seventh to coach his first 1,000 games with one team.

But after a stellar start, San Antonio didn't look much like the team with the second-best record in the Western Conference.

ROCKETS

Continued from Page 7

they wanted in the second half with layups and free throws and that's what hurt us."

Yao sat out with flu-like symptoms and 42-year-old Dikembe Mutombo, playing in only his fifth game this season, started in his place.

Mutombo scored only one point on a free throw but had six rebounds and blocked Hornets swingman Julian Wright three times on drives to the hoop, wagging his finger every time.

Mutombo said there was a practical purpose to the finger-wagging beyond showing anyone up.

"I've got to stop and

take a breath," he said, smirking.

"I'm old. I don't need to be running up and down."

Carl Landry and Von Wafer each scored 12 points and Shane Battier 11 as the Rockets, holding on to the third seed in the Western Conference, prevented the Hornets from passing them in the standings.

The Hornets, who led 47-43 at halftime, appeared to be taking control of the game when alley-oop dunks by Wright and Tyson Chandler highlighted an 8-0 run to give New Orleans a 55-44 lead in the third quarter. Houston coach Rick Adelman called timeout, and the Rockets returned in far better form.

Artest got his first

With Houston's win against New Orleans, the Rockets moved within 1½ games of the Spurs.

"A game that we should have had and continued to add to our record, but we let one slip away," Duncan said. "It is over now, it is gone. We just have to worry about tomorrow and trying to clean up tomorrow."

The Thunder took their first lead at 70-67 on Chucky Atkins' 3-pointer from the left wing with 7:37 left. Durant pushed the edge to 76-72 with a jumper from the left wing, and the lead was back to four when Russell Westbrook answered Parker's two free throws with another jumper at 2:19.

Popovich stood with his arms crossed as the Spurs' chances slipped away, with Nenad Krstic snagging an offensive rebound in the final two minutes to let Oklahoma City drain the clock further.

The Thunder improved to 19-48, moving within one win of last season's win total, by committing only three turnovers in the second half after a miserable start.

Earlier this season, Oklahoma City cut a 26-point deficit to two in the final minute of a 109-104 loss at San Antonio.

"We've been in that position before with those guys, so we knew that they were eventually going to let us back in the game," Durant said. "We fought hard."

points on free throws, then made his next four shots and added an assist on Scola's driving scoop during a 16-2 spurt that put Houston ahead 62-59.

New Orleans got only five points the rest of the quarter, all from Paul, whose floater as he was fouled cut Houston's lead to 67-64 heading into the final period.

James Posey's 3 to open the fourth quarter tied the game, and the Hornets led 75-73 on Posey's baseline drive with 7:01 to go.

Houston responded with an 8-0 run during which Landry swatted away Paul's floater and later hit two free throws. Artest also scored on a finger roll during the surge.

"There's nobody at my position that can keep me from getting to the

basket, so I have to keep that in mind," Artest said. "Tonight, I should have gotten to the hole a little earlier."

After West's jumper briefly stopped to run, Artest scored again on a driving layup and Landry dunked on a fast break to make it 85-77 with 3:47 left.

The Hornets were stagnant after that, and Chandler fouled out while battling Landry for a rebound with 1:18 to go.

Despite the absence of Yao, Houston finished with a 38-37 edge in rebounding and outscored New Orleans 27-19 at the free-throw line.

"We can play without whoever," Landry said. "But it helps that everybody's ready when they have the opportunity to play."

WOMEN

Continued from Page 7

in laying it all on the line."

They'll play Ball State in their opener Sunday.

Duke's a No. 1 seed for the third time in the past four seasons and potentially must beat No. 2 Stanford in the regional finals to get back to the Final Four for the first time since 2006. The Blue Devils play Austin Peay in the first round at Michigan State — coach Joanne P. McCallie's former school. She could meet up with the Spartans in the second round if

they can beat Middle Tennessee State.

"I don't know if that's some drama by the committee," McCallie said. "For us, it's about us and what we want to accomplish and do. We finally have an opponent, and that's our one concern, the one opponent we have."

If all goes right, Duke could face former coach Gail Goestenkors and Texas in the regional finals.

In that same Berkeley regional, Stanford will play UC Santa Barbara in the Cardinal's opener. The Cardinal were a No. 2 seed last season and knocked off Maryland in the regional final before getting to

the title game.

Despite having two players taken in the first round of the WNBA draft last season, the Terps earned their top seed in the Raleigh regional after winning the Atlantic Coast Conference regular season and tournament titles. Maryland (28-4), which won the national title in 2006, will face Ivy League champion Dartmouth on Sunday at home in the opening round.

Maryland is one of 12 teams that will be playing its opening round game on its own court or very close to home. The field went back to 16 first and second round sites for the first time

since 2004, when it set an attendance record.

"We keep everything in mind with the economy and travel for teams," women's basketball committee chair Jacki Silar said. "One of our principles is to try to keep our teams as close to home as possible. This was no different from years past. The committee spends a great deal of time of aligning teams as close to their campuses as possible."

Tournament newcomer South Dakota State will have a bit of a trip heading down to Lubbock to face TCU in the first round. The other three teams at its site all hail from Texas.

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.

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

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker
Gain Versus Loss

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

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

WEST
♠ K 8 3
♥ 10 7 4
♦ 8 3
♣ 9 7 5 4 2

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

SOUTH
♠ A Q
♥ A K Q 5
♦ Q 10 7 2
♣ Q J 6

The bidding:
South West North East
2 NT Pass 3 NT All Pass
Opening lead — four of clubs.

Experience shows that when a side has 26 points or more in the combined hands, a game can nearly always be made. But mere possession of these points doesn't mean the game is automatically awarded to the side that has them. There is first the question of selecting which game to bid, and then there is the question of how declarer manages his assets.

Take this case where West led a club and declarer played low from dummy, losing the finesse to East's king. Back came the jack of spades,

the queen losing to the king, and a spade continuation drove out the ace.

When declarer then tried his third finesse — this time in diamonds — East won and cashed his spades to put South down two.

The hand shows how easy it is to fall victim to habit. It is admittedly tempting to finesse West's opening club lead, but declarer should put up the ace more quickly than he can say Rumpelstiltskin.

Taking the ace assures the contract, while taking the finesse jeopardizes it. The finesse should therefore be rejected.

If South were dealing only with the problem of winning the maximum number of club tricks, he would of course finesse. But that is not his assignment. He is trying to make three notrump, and he should not permit himself to be diverted from that goal by the opportunity to take a club finesse. Instead, he should take the ace of clubs, cross to the ace of hearts, lead the queen of diamonds and finesse.

If the diamond finesse loses, South has nine tricks. If it wins, he has at least 10 tricks. He should not concern himself with the location of the king of clubs. The 30 points he may gain by winning a club finesse are a drop in the bucket compared to the value of making a game.

Tomorrow: A positive approach.

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