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**Steers' playoff run comes to end against Everman.**  
Page 1B

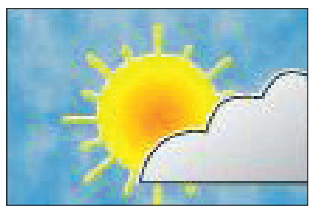


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# BIG SPRING HERALD

**MONDAY**

NOVEMBER 30, 2009



VOLUME 104, NUMBER 309

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

## Yuletide to begin with a bang

### Weekend kicks off season

By **STEVE REAGAN**  
Staff Writer

The Christmas season in Big Spring will start with a bang this weekend.

The Big Spring VA Medical Center will kick-start a weekend full of Christmas activities when it holds its annual "Lighting of the Lights" ceremony. The event, which will conclude with the lighting of thousands of lights decorating the hospital, will begin at 6 p.m. Friday.

"Holiday carols will be led by veterans, refreshments will be served and, last but certainly not least, Santa will visit with all children," said Lauri Phillips, acting public affairs officer for the medical center.

VAMC Director Daniel Marsh, assisted by children in the audience, will light the lights on the indoor Christmas tree, simultaneously illuminating the display of outdoor lights.

"We invite the community to join in this festive occasion," Phillips said.

#### Christmas Parade Saturday

Preparations are almost complete for the 24th annual Big Spring Herald Community Christmas Parade, which will take a different route this year thanks to road renovation on Gregg Street.

See **SEASON**, Page 3A



HERALD file photo

Santa and Mrs. Claus, pictured here during the 2008 Big Spring Herald Community Christmas Parade, will again be on hand Saturday when the parade's 24th edition gets under way. The parade's route will be different than usual, as a result of road renovation on Gregg Street. The parade will begin at the corner of Eighth and Scurry Streets, proceed to Fourth Street where the procession will turn east on Fourth to Benton Street, turn left one block to Third Street and proceed west on Third to the Howard County Courthouse where the parade will end.

#### INDEX

- Comics 8B
- Classified 5-7B
- Honor Roll 2-4B
- Obituaries 2A
- Opinion 4A
- Sports 1B



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#### 25 SHOPPING DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS



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## Holiday shopping off to mildly encouraging start nationwide

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**  
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — After shoppers gave retailers a somewhat encouraging start to the holiday shopping season, stores now turn their attention to the online promotions known as Cyber Monday and bringing back customers the rest of the season.

The good news is that holiday shopping held steady through the Thanksgiving weekend after retailers saw a huge crowd of bargain shoppers for early morning deals Friday.

But economic worries about jobs were still apparent as shoppers mostly stuck to their lists and focused on practical items for themselves and for their loved ones. The big worry is that consumers may not return until the final hours before Dec. 25.

According to preliminary figures

released Saturday by ShopperTrak, a research firm that tracks more than 50,000 outlets, sales rose 0.5 percent to \$10.66 billion Friday, compared with a year ago. That was on top of a 3 percent increase last year.

Online sales Thursday and Friday, however, rose 11 percent to \$913 million, according to data released Sunday by comScore, an Internet research firm. Online business got a big boost as stores pushed online promotions the week leading into the Thanksgiving weekend.

The National Retail Federation trade group said Sunday it's sticking to its forecast for holiday sales to decline 1 percent from last year.

A year after suffering the biggest sales decline in four decades, the nation's merchants pulled out all the stops in stores and online to keep the momentum going for the holiday

weekend, further blurring the lines between their Web-based and land-based businesses.

Major merchants including J.C. Penney Co. and Sears Holdings Corp. broke new ground by making many of their Black Friday specials available on their Web sites at the same time.

The heavy online push could steal some thunder from sales on Cyber Monday, the day when sellers unveil another raft of discounts online to lure shoppers looking in after returning to work.

Marketing gurus have started calling the season a "Twitter Christmas" as merchants have been tweeting deals and previewing discounts on Facebook pages.

Sears tweeted its bargains

See **SHOPPING**, Page 3A

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# Sands loses quarterfinal game to Borden Co.

## Herald Staff Report

Sands hoped this was the week it figured out how to beat Borden County.

As it turned out, this was not that week.

Sands dropped an 86-36 decision at Lowrey Field in Lubbock on Saturday, ending the Mustangs' season at 11-2. Borden County moves on to face Motley County this week in the state semifinals.

The Mustangs turned the ball over five times in the contest, two of which resulted in Borden County interception returns for touchdowns.

"Going into it we knew they had the better athletes and the overall better team, that's why they're defending state champions," head coach Wayne Henderson said. "But you can't turn the ball over five times and expect to beat anybody."

Daniel Armendariz led the way for the Sands offense, rushing 14 times

for 132 yards and two touchdowns. He threw for 100 yards and one touchdown with one interception.

"We take the second play from scrimmage and score, and then recover the onside kick, but from there it was all downhill," Henderson said. "I thought legitimately they made some good plays out of the five turnovers."

"I just hate that it ended that way. You put all that time and effort into it, and I don't care how deep you get,

it's just not good."

With realignment, Henderson said Sands may move up to Division I six-man, where the team will rely on a strong class of what will be juniors next season.

"We have a good group of sophomores, and they got lots of playing time this year, so we'll have to see what happens," he said.

Borden County 86, Sands 36					
Sands	12	16	8	0	-- 36
Borden Co.	26	14	24	22	-- 86

# DOUBLE TROUBLE



HERALD Photo/Tony Claxton

**Tevian Parnell reaches for the end zone Saturday in Mineral Wells. Parnell had nine grabs for 160 yards.**



HERALD Photo/Tony Claxton

**Matt Ritchey and Kyler McGee tackle Everman running back Cory Franklin on Saturday in Mineral Wells.**

Everman 49, Big Spring 18	
Everman	14 14 14 7
BSHS	7 3 8 0
First Quarter	
E- Browning	3 run (Abston kick)- 9:13
E- Fletcher	1 run (Abston kick)- 4:43
BS- Straughter	15 pass from Tannehill (Tannehill kick)- 3:06
Second Quarter	
E- Franklin	51 run (Abston kick)- 11:01
E- Jones	50 pass from Browning (Abston kick)- 6:39
BS- Tannehill	26 field goal- 1:38
Third Quarter	
E- Bellazin	21 punt block return (Abston kick)- 10:36
BS- T. Parnell	45 pass from Tannehill (Tannehill to Yanez conversion)- 8:28
E- Sanders	11 pass from Davis (Abston kick)- 3:28
Fourth Quarter	
E- Bailey	2 run (Abston kick)- 9:54
Statistics	
Rushing-	Everman, Franklin 15-143, Browning 11-101, Fletcher 9-54, Cook 2-4, Bailey 2-0. Big Spring Anderson 17-74, Ritchey 2-9, Tannehill 6-(-2)
Passing-	Everman, Browning 3-6-104-0, Davis 1-1-11-0. Big Spring, Tannehill 29-46-320-3
Receiving-	Everman, Franklin 2-54, Jones 1-50, Sanders 1-11. Big Spring T. Parnell 9-160, Straughter 5-45, Ritchey 5-35, Plakhotny 3-23, Anderson 3-15, Yanez 1-12

# Everman ends Steers' season again in 49-18 decision

## By JOE ZIGTEMA

Sports Editor

MINERAL WELLS — One chain link.

That piece of metal in Mineral Wells on Saturday played a key role in Big Spring's 49-18 loss to Everman on Saturday at Ram Stadium in Regional action.

Late in the third quarter, Everman faced a fourth down and inches from the Big Spring 44 yard line. The Steers appeared to stop Everman running back Cory Franklin short, and after the chain crew measured for the first down, the Big Spring sideline erupted only as the referee awarded a first down to the Bulldogs.

Was he short? The Steers said yes. The referees said no.

"I saw it short," head coach Phillip Ritchey said. "That's all I saw. I didn't think it was a first down. He said the ball broke the plane of the stick, and I disagreed with him."

The Steer sideline was flagged for a personal foul following the measurement, and Everman's Shawn Sanders caught a touchdown pass from Robert Davis a few plays later to put the game effectively out of reach for the Steers.

"That's an enormous moment right there because we were still in the game," Ritchey said. "(If) we get the ball right there and go score, it could have been a different result. The game was not over at that point for sure."

That wasn't the only moment that doomed the Steers on Saturday. Franklin and quarterback Barry Browning both ran for 100 yards on Big Spring's defense, a blocked punt return for a touchdown to begin the second half and five turnovers were all factors in ending the Steers' season.

"We had to play a really good game today to have a chance to win the game," Ritchey said. "Our kids played hard, we prepared hard, we were well-prepared for what they did. "You just have to make plays and we just didn't make plays."

"It just wasn't meant to be." The loss finishes Big Spring's season at 10-3 and at the hands of Everman for the second consecutive year.

The Steers were overwhelmed with Everman's speed on both sides of the ball and the Bulldogs' power running attack.

"We like our running game," said Everman coach Dale Keeling, whose team moves on to face Aledo in Burlson on Saturday at 3 p.m. "Our backs ran really hard tonight, we blocked well, they're a good football team and to score like that against them is saying a lot about our kids."

Likewise, the Bulldogs held running back Monte Anderson to just 74 yards on 17 carries.

"It was real tough," Anderson said. "They're just a big, fast, physical team. There was nothing we could do about it, but you just hope for the best."

Receiver Tevian Parnell was a bright spot for the Steer offense, hauling in nine balls for 160 yards, including a 45-yard touchdown reception on a fourth down in the second half. Quarterback Tyler Tannehill threw for better than 300 yards, including a pair of touchdowns, and kicked a field goal for Big Spring.

"I hoped we could stop more what they did with the pass, but again when you're playing a good football team you can't stop everything they do," Keeling said. "We just don't want to get in one of those 48-46 games because that's not what we do."

Everman scored on its first possession of the game on a three-yard run from Browning, helped out by a 35-yard pass from Browning to running back Cory Franklin down to the three.

After Tannehill threw his first interception, fullback Ruben Fletcher plunged in from one yard out to cap an eight-play drive, and Everman led 14-0 eight minutes into the game.

The Steers fought back from there as Anderson broke free on a 32-yard run to set up a 15-yard touchdown pass from Tannehill to Thaddeus Straughter, cutting the lead to seven.

Two big plays in the second quarter led to two Everman touchdowns, a 51-yard run from Franklin and a 50-yard pass play to Josh Jones. A Big Spring field goal just before half made the score 28-10 at the break.

"They had a bunch of athletes that could run the ball well and make plays, and they're real fast and they got us on big plays," linebacker Matt Ritchey said. "They just beat us."

Big Spring gave up another big play on its first possession out of the locker room, when the Steers went three and out and punted from their own 23. Everman's Tevin Jenkins blocked Matt Ritchey's punt, and Aaron Bellazin took it 21 yards for the score to make the game 35-10.

"We told our kids at half this first series is a game breaker or maker for them," Keeling said. "If they come out and score on us, they're right back in it and things are not good. If we get a three and out then we're in good shape, and we got better than a three and out."

The Steers did respond to that touchdown with Parnell's touchdown reception, but the Bulldogs' next possession, where the spot argument occurred, all but sealed the Steers' fate.

"I look back on everything, and it was an incredible season," Anderson said. "I'm very proud to be a part of this team and the senior leadership. I love my senior class, and I love this team."

Phillip Ritchey echoed Anderson's sentiments.

"They're going to look back on this season and remember being a part of one of the best Big Spring teams that's ever been," he said of the team's 18 seniors. "That's something that they'll be proud of forever."

# Sports in brief

## Coahoma Little Dribblers sign-ups coming up

The Coahoma Little Dribbler sign-ups are coming up this week.

Sign-ups will begin on Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. at the Coahoma Elementary Gym. They will be held again Saturday from 5-7 p.m. at the Coahoma Elementary Gym.

The last chance to sign up will be Dec 7 from 6-8 p.m. at the Coahoma Dairy Queen. For more information, call Brian and Karen Moore at 517-4006, or Derek and Mendy Ward at 394-4128.

## Howard College wins two games in Florida

The Howard College men's basketball team is 11-1 after sweeping three games in Florida over the weekend.

The team beat Gulf Coast Community College, Northwest Florida State College and Chipola College by scores of 87-80, 76-72 and 52-50, respectively.

The team is off until Jan. 1, when it takes on Moberly Area Community College in tournament action in Kansas City.

## Big Spring Alumni seeking former gridders

Former Big Spring football players have one more chance to play in a full gear, full contact football game with other Big Spring Alumni.

The cost to play is \$75 and this includes all football equipment. The game will be played sometime in February or March against an opponent TBD.

The next practice is at 10 a.m. next Saturday at the football field.

Interested alumni can contact team captain Arthur Barrera at 816-6418.



## Obituaries

### Kandace Lynn Mullins



Kandace Lynn Mullins died Saturday, Nov. 28, 2009. A memorial service is set for 4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3, 2009, at The Innerchange, 22478 Bucksville Rd., in McCalla, Ala.

She was preceded in death by her father, Dewaine Mullins.

Survivors include her grandfather, Winford Mullins; fiancée, Seth Minter; mother, Ronda Anderson, a former Big Spring resident; stepfather, Bill Anderson; siblings Brian and Teresa Mullins and Kade Anderson; and uncle, Gregg Williamson.

### Stella 'Nanny' Hull Lee

Stella "Nanny" Hull Lee, 100, of Big Spring, died Saturday, November 28, 2009 at her residence. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

## 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.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Randolph and March. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 900 block of FM 2599. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the area of the State Hospital. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of State. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 100 block of 11<sup>th</sup> Place. Service refused.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 3600 block of Boulder. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1500 block of Sycamore. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 100 block of Loyd. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of Westover Road. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 4000 block of W. Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2300 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2300 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 900 block of Mountain Park Drive. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of Marcy. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 2700 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of N. Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 4200 block of Hamilton. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 600 block of Bucknell. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of Harding. One person was transported to SMMC.

## Support Groups

- TODAY**
- 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.

## Police blotter

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

- MARY ANN GARZA, 32, of 1204 Frazier, was arrested Saturday on a charge of driving while license suspended.
- GABRIEL LEE MARTINEZ, 21, of 1611 Owens, was arrested Sunday on two local warrants.
- MARTIN ALVARADO, 28, of 1603 Cardinal, was arrested Sunday on a local warrant.
- CASEY LYNN SMITH, 17, of 1200 Johnson, was arrested Sunday on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- ROBERT MATA, 28, of 1101 Mesa, was arrested Sunday on a Parmer County warrant.
- THEFT was reported in the 4800 block of Highway 80.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported: in the 1400 block of Sixth Street. In the 1600 block of Lincoln.
- POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA – TWO OUNCES OR LESS was reported in the 1100 block of Lamesa.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported: in the 1900 block of Martin Luther King Blvd. In the 1600 block of Lincoln.
- ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported in the 1600 block of Settles.

## Sheriff

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

- Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 77 inmates at the time of this report.
- MARTIN ALVARADO, 28, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of debit card abuse.
  - KORLEY DAVID BENNETT, 24, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
  - LARRY RAY BOUNDS, 44, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
  - GUADALUPE Y. CANALES, 25, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction.
  - GARY LEW CHRANE, 58, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of terrorist threat.
  - ERNEST WILLIAM CLARK, 69, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on charges of criminal trespass and public intoxication.
  - JESSE JAMES COLLINS, 22, was arrested Wednesday by DPS on a charge of injury to a child/elderly/disabled with intent to cause serious bodily injury.
  - MELISSA CRAWFORD, 34, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on charges of failure to appear (two counts), failure to maintain financial responsibility and failure to yield at an intersection.
  - ALLISON REDDING EDMONDSON, 37, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on charges of driving while intoxicated and driving while license invalid with a previous conviction.
  - MANUEL ESCAMILLA, 24, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of assault Class C – family violence.
  - MARY ANN GARZA, 32, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.
  - JOSE ALFRADO GOMEZ, 26, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
  - RUSSELL GREY GRANT, 25, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
  - HOWARD JOHNSON, 25, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to identify – giving false information.
  - JEFFERY NATHAN JONES, 24, was arrested Wednesday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
  - GABRIEL LEE MARTINEZ, 21, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on contempt charges for consumption of alcohol by a minor (two counts).
  - JERRY MARTINEZ, 39, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on charges of criminal mischief, disorderly conduct – language and public intoxication.
  - ROBERT MATA, 28, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to appear.
  - MARK ANTHONY MOLINA, 45, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
  - CHRISTOPHER LEE MYRICK, 33, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on charges of violation of parole, possession of marijuana – two ounces or less, possession of a dangerous drug and possession of drug paraphernalia.
  - ALEX FERRELL PAREDEZ, 18, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on contempt charges for no seat belt and violation of a promise to appear.

## Today's Weather

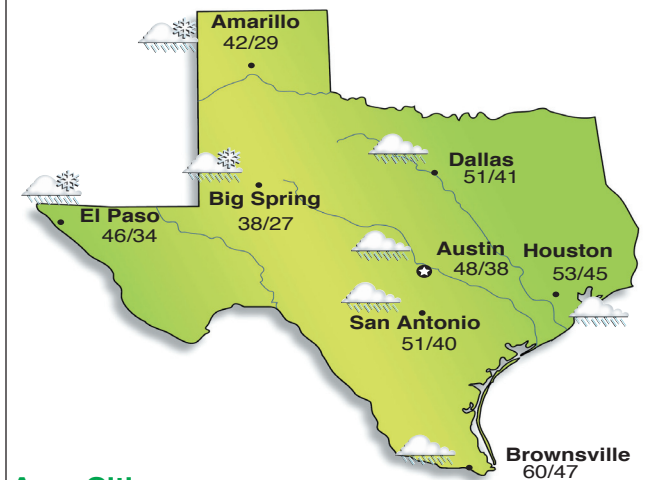
### Local 3-Day Forecast

Tue 12/1	Wed 12/2	Thu 12/3
<b>38/27</b> Cloudy with rain and snow. Cold. High 38F. Winds N at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precip 80%.	<b>44/26</b> Snow showers early. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the mid 20s.	<b>48/28</b> Sunshine. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the upper 20s.
<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:29 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:30 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:31 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM



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## Texas At A Glance



### Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abiene	42	32	mixed	Kingsville	58	44	rain
Amarillo	42	29	mixed	Livingston	49	42	rain
Austin	48	38	rain	Longview	53	44	rain
Beaumont	51	48	rain	Lubbock	39	30	mixed
Brownsville	60	47	rain	Lufkin	50	45	rain
Brownwood	46	37	rain	Midland	39	31	mixed
Corpus Christi	57	46	rain	Raymondville	60	44	rain
Corsicana	50	40	rain	Rosenberg	53	45	rain
Dallas	51	41	rain	San Antonio	51	40	rain
Del Rio	51	38	rain	San Marcos	49	39	rain
El Paso	46	34	mixed	Sulphur Springs	54	44	rain
Fort Stockton	40	32	mixed	Sweetwater	40	32	mixed
Gainesville	50	38	rain	Tyler	52	43	rain
Greenville	51	40	rain	Weatherford	47	36	rain
Houston	53	45	rain	Wichita Falls	48	33	rain

- MIGUEL ANGEL REYES, 31, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.
- CHRISTOPHER RUST, 23, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.
- JENNIFER NICOLE SALINAS, 23, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on contempt charges for failure to appear (two counts), failure to maintain financial responsibility, no driver's license and unrestrained child under the age of 5 years.
- CASEY LYNN SMITH, 17, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- ASHLEY LESHEA STILES, 20, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- JESUS ACOSTA TARIN, 49, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of a dangerous drug and contempt charges for parent contributing to the non-attendance (three counts).
- WALLACE TERRY VIASANA, 55, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a charge of aggravated assault with a weapon.
- LITTLE JOHN WINFIELD, 47, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction.

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# '12 Days of Christmas' items' cost would top \$87K

**DAN NEPHIN**  
Associated Press Writer  
PITTSBURGH — Making one's true love happy will cost a whopping \$87,403 this year, a minuscule increase from last year, according to the latest cost analysis of the items in the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas."  
That's the grand total for the single partridge in a pear tree to the 12 drummers drum-

ming, purchased repeatedly as the song suggests, according to the annual "Christmas Price Index" compiled by PNC Wealth Management. The price is up a mere \$794, or less than 1 percent, from \$86,609 last year.  
The cost of buying each item just once is increasing this year to \$21,466, up 1.8 percent from last year's \$21,081.  
Jim Dunigan, managing ex-

ecutive of investment for PNC Wealth Management, which has been calculating the cost of Christmas since 1984, attributed the modest increase to lower energy costs and fewer wage increases.  
It's the smallest increase since 2002, when the cost actually decreased, according to PNC.  
The main driver behind the higher cost is that the price of

gold has increased 43 percent, bringing the five gold rings up \$150 to \$500.  
Although wage increases were modest, nine ladies dancing, at \$5,473 per performance, is the costliest item, surpassing that of any of the material goods.  
The most expensive goods are the seven swans a-swimming at \$5,250, but their cost decreased 6.3 percent from

last year's \$5,600. Dunigan said their cost tends to be the most volatile because of supply and demand; they were up 33 percent last year over 2007.  
Costs for the 10 lords a-leaping (\$4,414 per performance), 11 pipers piping (\$2,285 per performance) and 12 drummers drumming (\$2,475 per performance) remained the same as last year.

## SEASON

Continued from Page 1A

Plans call for the route to begin lining up south on Scurry Street at the intersection of Eighth Street. The procession will actually begin at Scurry and Eighth, proceed north on Scurry to Fourth Street, turn east and proceed to Benton Street before turning north for one block and then proceeding west on Third Street and ending at Scurry Street.

More than 40 entries have been received to date.  
"This is going to be one of the best Christmas parades the Herald has ever put on," Herald Advertising Director Rick Nunez said. "The route for this year's parade may be different, but we promise it will be as exciting as ever."

The theme for this year's event is "A Cotton Pickin' Christmas." Grand Marshal will be Kathryn Wiseman.  
Entrants are eligible for three cash prizes — \$100 for the Best of Show Award (for best interpretation of theme); \$75 Mayor's Award (for best use of lighting); and \$50 Grand Marshal's Award (for best costuming).

In addition, first-place plaques will be awarded in the following categories — individual or family; civic group, school or church; commercial; and industrial. Also, a special award will be presented to the best sheriff's posse, riding club or other mounted entry.

Only entries received prior to the deadline will be considered for prizes, but additional participants will be welcomed right up to the start of the parade. Nunez said that persons wishing to participate need to show up in the vicinity of 12th and Scurry streets by 4:30 p.m. the day of the parade.

Officials promise community residents a colorful start to the season.  
"We are very excited to once again be hosting the Community Christmas Parade," Herald Publisher Ron Midkiff. "This is our Christmas gift to Howard County and we're hoping for another successful event."  
For more information, contact Nunez at 263-7331.

**Living Christmas Tree**  
The 31st annual Living Christmas Tree will be held at 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at First United Method-

ist Church, located at Fourth and Scurry. It is free to the public, but tickets must be obtained at the church office. A dress rehearsal at 2 p.m. Saturday also is open to the public.

The Living Christmas Tree, for the uninitiated, is exactly that — a three-meter tall, 2,000-pound Christmas tree populated by more than 70 singers dressed as ornaments.

While the event will be familiar to those who have attended before, the program is tweaked every year to provide something new. Aside from long-time classics, newer holiday standards will be performed.

**Christmas Tree Forest**  
The third annual Christmas Tree Forest will debut Saturday and run through Jan. 5 at Heritage Museum, Director Nancy Raney said.

"We're calling it 'A Homespun Christmas' this year," Raney said. "We'll have quilts on display throughout the museum and the various Christmas trees on display will be decorated with that theme in mind."

Also Saturday, the museum will hold "Breakfast With Santa," in

which local youngsters will get a chance to meet St. Nick.

"Each year, when we do our Christmas program, we try to add something new or make some changes," said Tammy Schrecengost, Heritage Museum curator. "This year we were looking for something new and just asked ourselves, how much fun would it be for the children to be able to have breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Claus?"

"We'll have doughnuts and other breakfast finger foods, and we'll also have coffee and refreshments for the parents. I think it will be a lot of fun for everyone."

Schrecengost said the children will be allowed to break bread with the big guy in red in 30-minute intervals, beginning at 8 a.m.

And while there's no admission being charged to participate, Schrecengost said they are suggesting donations be made.

"We're asking for a donation of either a new toy, which will go to Spring Tabernacles annual toy giveaway, or a non-perishable food item to go to the Isaiah 58 food drive," she said. "We're not going to turn any children away, but

we're hoping we can use this opportunity to help out both local charities that are big parts of the holiday season for many local families."

Schrecengost said local baking expert Gale Pittman will also be on hand to help children design a special treat for the holiday season between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

"They are going to be making gingerbread men," she said. "There is a \$3 charge to cover material costs, and the kids will get the chance to decorate their own large holiday cookie. It's always a lot of fun and Gale is so good at working with the kids. And what could be better than being able to take home your own gingerbread man for the holiday? Parents need to call ahead and reserve a spot for their child for this activity."

Also during the day-long event, kids will get the chance to have their picture taken with Santa, said Schrecengost.

Throughout the days leading up to to Christmas, the museum will host a variety of holiday events, including a visit from Santa Claus and his missus and classes to teach children the finer points of decorat-

ing a gingerbread man cookie.

The event, which Raney and other organizers call a huge success, was actually started by local baker Gale Pittman in the 1990s. After a hiatus of several years, he suggested to Raney and Curator Tammy Schrecengost that the museum could revive the display and the two women readily agreed.

"We always did something around Christmas, but nothing to this extent," Raney said. "We thought it would be a great project for the museum and a great partnership between us and Gale."

Raney said the best thing about the exhibit is that it serves as kind of a kick-start for the holiday season.

"I feel like we kind of kick off Christmas here in Big Spring," she said. "It works out really well. You have the Community Christmas Parade and the Living Christmas Tree on that same weekend, and here we are in the middle of those two events."

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

## SHOPPING

Continued from Page 1A

through the weekend, spokesman Tom Aiello noted Sunday.

"Forget Black Friday for bricks and Cyber Monday for clicks — this year it's all about making it easy for customers to satisfy their shopping fix ... wherever and whenever," said John Long, a retail strategist at Kurt Salmon Associates.

Long, however, noted that "we're still seeing cautious spending. The pie isn't increasing whether you decide to buy in the stores or online."

Laura Gurski, a partner in the retail practice at A.T. Kearney, a global management consultant, believes the weekend's results offered signals that consumers, many of whom had cut spending all year to bare-bones necessities, had saved up for the holidays and were opening their wallets — even if just a little.

Shoppers' cautious mood was evident.

Allentown, Pa. resident Jamie Sandrock, 27, who was visiting New York City on Saturday and was outside toy store FAO Schwarz, said she got up at 7 a.m. Friday and took advantage of online deals on Amazon.com, American Eagle Outfitters and Sephora.

That's a big change from the Black Fridays of years past, when Sandrock would get up at 3:30 a.m. to head to Tar-

get or Best Buy.

"Last year, I was part of the stampede," she said. "This year, I didn't have to shower. I didn't have to get dressed. All I had to do was click."

But Sandrock, who has been trying to find a job in nursing since she graduated from college in May, said she's slashing her holiday spending to \$350 from last year's \$500.

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

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**John A. Moseley**  
Managing Editor

**Bill McClellan**  
News Editor

## OUR VIEW

# Remember to shop at home first

It's that time again — the holiday shopping season. Virtually each of us is thinking about what would make good gifts. Well, that's the case, unless you are one of those organized souls who do their shopping ahead of time, taking advantage of sales throughout the year or making purchases the minute you spot the right gift.

But few of us can admit to being that organized. In fact, a great many of us wait until the very last moment to begin purchasing Christmas gifts. Those of us in that group are still waiting for that boost of adrenaline we need to begin tackling the task at hand.

At some point, however, we'll all have reached the same end.

Then it's simply a matter of where we'll do our shopping.

And like we do in this space every year, we strongly suggest shopping at home.

Yes, we know, we're always championing that cause, but the reason we do so is that it's a very, very important matter.

We know there are always those who are convinced bigger is better and will be heading to shopping malls in larger cities. And there are those who've opted for the supposed convenience of sitting at home and making selections over the Internet.

It seems to us, however, that passing up on what Big Spring has to offer makes little or no sense.

First of all, many of those sales prices touted by stores in larger cities are no real bargain when one adds the cost of making a trip out of town. It's not just the gasoline expense, which is no laughing matter with prices at the pump these days, but such trips often involve other costs like a restaurant meal.

In fact, in many cases, such shopping expeditions prove to be anything but economical ... both financially and physically.

More importantly, though, we all need to remember that any purchase made elsewhere does nothing to benefit our local economy.

So, if you're still in the midst of your holiday shopping or preparing to get started, take a minute and look around our community first.

Make sure you help your friends and neighbors stay in business.

Big Spring has plenty of interesting and diverse shops with a variety of gift items — everything from the hottest item to hit the stores to antiques is right here at home.

As a result, for the most part we are only limited by our imagination and, hopefully, on what we can afford.

So, shop Big Spring. We're convinced you'll be impressed with what you find.

In the process, you'll not only be helping local merchants. You'll be helping yourself. In other words, you'll be helping us all.

## LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

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

## A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May we observe all the wonderful blessings You, Lord, have given us.

Amen

# Playing politics with security

Two recent events right here in Texas provide a stark reminder that the War on Terror has not ended. On Nov. 5, Nidal Malik Hasan, an apparent jihadist terrorist, coldly gunned down 13 soldiers and one unborn child in a murderous rampage at Fort Hood. On Sept. 24, another accused terrorist, Hosam Smadi, was arrested for plotting to blow up a Dallas skyscraper.

Despite these horrific incidents, too many people remain complacent and fail to recognize the true nature of the threats we face as a country.

The Obama administration's recent decision to transfer Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, and four other 9/11 conspirators to federal criminal court is a glaring example of today's complacency.

Just a few months ago, the U.S. Senate voted 87-7 in favor of a Sense of Congress resolution that terrorists should be tried by military commissions.

Indeed, in a 2006 speech, then-Senator Obama insisted that Mohammed would get a "full military trial" and that was how it should be.

Now President Obama is reversing his position. And as a result, Mohammed and his alleged co-conspirators will be tried

near Ground Zero and afforded greater Constitutional protections in our civilian courts than those provided to U.S. military personnel charged in a U.S. court-martial.

Most dangerous of all, Mohammed will now be able to demand that the government reveal the evidence against him in open court.

The problem, of course, is that evidence against Al Qaeda members includes highly classified intelligence information. It is critical that this information remains secret if we are to protect ourselves and our allies.

That's exactly why Congress created military commissions: to provide a fair trial when the evidence against a defendant also includes vital national security data.

Reportedly, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing trial — which was conducted in a civilian court — proved to be an intelligence bonanza for Al Qaeda.

Prosecutors were forced to hand over critical information that the U.S. government had collected on jihadist operations.

While the President's decision concerning Mohammed is alarming, it is not the end of our worries. Next month, three parts of the PATRIOT Act that facilitate critical intelligence gathering capabilities will expire unless Congress acts to renew them.

These capabilities, which were created to help fix gaps in our intelligence gathering after 9/11, include the "roving wiretaps"

that were critical to the investigation and the capture of Hosam Smadi. If this authority expires, the government will lose its ability to listen in on known terror suspects who change phones, among other things.

So what are the Democrats in Congress doing? While they have agreed to reauthorize these critical surveillance capabilities, it is only on the condition that we make a host of changes. Their bill (S. 1692) will create major problems for the FBI, DEA and other intelligence-gathering and law enforcement agencies and harm their ability to protect us.

The events of the last few weeks leave no doubt to the imagination: we are facing a continued threat of terrorism both at home and abroad.

That's why the Senate must reauthorize the expiring intelligence-gathering capabilities without the changes that tie the hands of those who protect us.

Even now, there are terrorists like Hosam Smadi and Nidal Hasan who are plotting to do us harm. We need to be able to find them, investigate them, capture them, and prosecute them.

The attack at Fort Hood was the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11. We can never go back to our 9/10 complacency. We must get serious about national security again.

*Kay Bailey Hutchison is the senior U.S. Senator from Texas and is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.*



KAY  
BAILEY  
HUTCHISON



# Bush-style spending not over yet

Thought the Bush years were over? Not so fast.

The main "accomplishment" of those years, apart from getting our country handed over to the big banks and corporations, was of course launching two wars. The cost of those wars so far is staggering, but these amounts are dwarfed by the so-called "regular" defense budget.

Most of what we spend on the military — including hundreds of high-tech planes that are churned out every year and then sit idle — isn't spent on the wars we're actually fighting. And under cover of war, these "regular" budgets have risen right along with the war funding bills.

Enter the Obama administration. It's having trouble fulfilling its promises to end those wars. But it's also having trouble bringing "regular" military spending under control.

Every year a group I lead, the Task Force on a Unified Security Budget, looks at overall U.S. security spending. We analyze the balance between spending on what we call "offense" (military force), "defense" (homeland security measures such as

screening baggage and cargo), and "prevention" (preventing wars through diplomacy, peacekeeping troops, and economic development).

In the Bush administration's last year, it devoted 87% of our security dollars to the military. In the first Obama budget that figure is: 87%. The needle hasn't moved. At all.

Why not? In his first speech to Congress, President Obama promised to "reform our defense budget so we're not paying for Cold War-era weapons systems we don't use." To their credit, his administration did manage to knock off a few this year. Though short, it was a longer list than at any time since the period of defense cuts following the end of the Cold War.

The biggest prize was the F-22 fighter jet. F-22s, which cost \$350 million each, were designed to fight planes the Soviet Union planned to build and never did. The F-22 is too exotic and costly ever to have been used in the wars we are actually fighting. It deserved to die.

It took a furious battle to keep this plane from coming back from the dead: The F-22's contractor has craftily placed jobs building the plane in 44 states. The Obama administration had to threaten to veto the entire defense spending bill if Congress reversed its plans for the F-22's demise.

But while the Obama administration successfully cut about \$10 billion in spending on such turkeys, it then added about \$20 billion in additional military spending. He got a lot of deserved credit for increasing spending on the tools of prevention — diplomacy, peacekeeping, and economic development among them. But the end result was the same wildly out-of-balance security budget the Bush team handed off.

Obama also took a stab at reforming the weapons-contracting "system" that hides billions every year in padded contracts and outright fraud. It won't fix the problem — truck-sized loopholes remain — but it's a start.

To his credit, Defense Secretary Robert Gates has been lamenting that "America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long, relative to what we spend on the military." The Obama administration's good intentions to fix these are still mostly unrealized.

*Miriam Pemberton is a research fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive multi-issue think tank that transforms ideas into action for peace, justice and the environment. She leads the task force that just published A Unified Security Budget for the United States, FY 2010.*



MIRIAM  
PEMBERTON

# Divided Senate opens health care debate

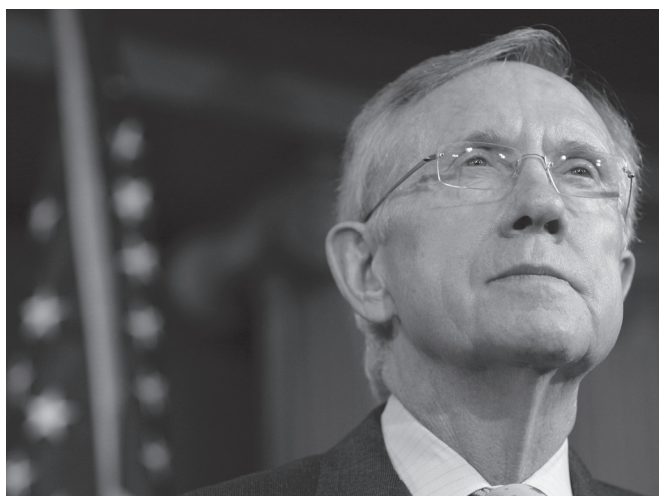
RICARDO ZALDIVAR

Associated Press Writer  
WASHINGTON —  
With the Senate set to begin debate today on President Barack Obama's signature domestic issue, the all-hands-on-deck Democratic coalition that allowed the health care reform legislation to advance is coming apart.

While majority Democrats will need 60 votes again to finish, some in the party say they'll jump ship from the bill without tighter restrictions on abortion coverage. Others say they'll go unless a government plan to compete with private insurance companies gets tossed. Such concessions would enrage liberals, the party's heart and soul.

There's no clear course for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., to steer legislation through Congress to the president's desk. You can't make history unless you reach 60 votes, and don't count on Republicans helping him.

But Reid is determined to avoid being remembered as another Democrat who tried and failed



AP photo/Alex Brandon

**Senate Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., speaks during a news conference on health care reform on Capitol Hill in Washington.**

to make health care access for the middle class a part of America's social safety net.

"Generation after generation has called on us to fix this broken system," he said at a recent Capitol Hill rally. "We're now closer than ever to getting it done."

His bill includes \$848 billion over 10 years to gradually expand coverage to most of those now uninsured. It would ban onerous insurance industry practices such as denying coverage or charging higher premiums because of someone's poor health. Those

who now have the hardest time getting cover-

age — the self-employed and small businesses — could buy a policy in a new insurance market, with government subsidies for many. Older people would get better prescription coverage.

Most people covered by big employers would gain more protections without major changes. One exception would be those with high-cost insurance plans, whose premiums could rise as a result of a tax on insurers issue the coverage.

The public is ambivalent about the Democrats' legislation. While 58 percent want elected officials to tackle health

care now, about half of those supporters say they don't like what they're hearing about the plans, according to a new Kaiser Family Foundation poll.

The Senate debate risks alienating more people because much of the discussion probably will revolve around divisive issues that preoccupy lawmakers.

"A large portion of the

debate will be spent on issues that aren't important to the workability of health reform," said Paul Ginsburg, president of the Center for Studying Health System Change.

The debate should start off modestly, with each side offering one amendment. No votes are scheduled Monday.

Reid wants to finish by Christmas; he may not

## 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.

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

## Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

### Famous Hand

South dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**

♠ 9 8 7 4

♥ 6 5 3 2

♦ A K 5 3

♣ 2

**WEST**

♠ K J 5 3 2

♥ A K 9

♦ J 7 6

♣ 8 3

**EAST**

♠ A Q

♥ Q J 10 8 7 4

♦ 10 9 8

♣ 7 5

**SOUTH**

♠ 10 6

♥ —

♦ Q 4 2

♣ A K Q J 10 9 6 4

The bidding:

South West North East

4♦ (!) Pass 5♦ Pass

6♣ Pass 6♦ Pass

7♣ Pass 7♦

Opening lead — king of hearts.

It is unlikely that the bidding shown would ever be approved by the FBI (Faultless Bidding Institute). But that's exactly how it went when the hand was played, believe it or not!

The deal was reported by a Texan named Travis White in a book he wrote back in 1934 called "Odd Tricks" (republished in 1978). It featured a collection of interesting hands, and Mr. White chose this particular illustration for his closing chapter — partly because he was a participant in the deal (he was East).

and partly because he was the victim of one of the oddest occurrences ever recorded in a rubber-bridge game.

Apparently, South was so excited by his gorgeous club suit that instead of opening with four clubs, which he intended to do, he inadvertently bid four diamonds.

It is hard to blame North for raising to five diamonds — he was only doing what came naturally. South now tried to correct his miscue by running to six clubs, but the intended meaning of this bid sailed right over North's head. Instead, he retreated to six diamonds, as probably most other Norths would have done.

This contract still didn't appeal to South, who might have passed under these strange circumstances. Instead, he tried seven clubs, hoping his partner would finally catch on. However, North blithely bid seven diamonds, which became the final contract.

West could have led a spade, a diamond or a club and defeated the grand slam, but he quite naturally led the king of hearts. After that, there was nothing much to the rest of the play. Declarer ruffed, cashed the Q-K-A-5 of trumps, discarding his 10-6 of spades, and then took eight club tricks to score 2,140 points for bidding and making the grand slam!

Ironically, seven clubs could not have been made against any lead, but after the heart lead, seven diamonds turned out to be cold!

Tomorrow: Safeguarding the contract.

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# Police: Suspect in police deaths hurt, maybe dead

**MANUEL VALDES**

Associated Press Writer

SEATTLE — A suspect in the slaying of four police officers who were gunned down in a suburban coffee shop was surrounded by police at a Seattle house early Monday, wounded and possibly dead, police said.

Negotiators were trying to communicate with Maurice Clemmons, 37, using loudspeakers, explosions and even a robot to try to prod him from hiding. At one point, gunshots rang through the neighborhood, about 30 miles from the original crime scene.

"We have determined that in fact he has been shot," said Ed Troyer,

a spokesman for the Pierce County Sheriff. "He may be deceased from his gunshot wound."

Clemmons, who has a long criminal history — including a long prison sentence commuted by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee nearly a decade ago — became the prime target Sunday in the search for the killer of Lakewood police Sgt. Mark Renninger, 39, and Officers Ronald Owens, 37, Tina Griswold, 40, and Greg Richards, 42.

Authorities had speculated early Sunday that the gunman might have been wounded at the coffee shop by one of his victims. Troyer said interviews with others



AP photo/Lui Kit Wong/The News Tribune

**Police team up at the site where four police officers were killed in an ambush at the Forza Coffee Company in Parkland, Wash., Sunday.**

detailed in the investigation confirmed that theory.

Police surrounded the house late Sunday, and

a negotiator used a loudspeaker early Monday to call him out by name, saying: "Mr. Clemmons, I'd like to get you out of

there safely. I can tell you this, we are not going away."

Any response from inside the house was inau-

dible from the vantage of a photographer for The Associated Press. But shortly thereafter, police began using sirens outside the house, and there were several loud bangs before the negotiator resumed speaking, saying: "This is one of the toughest decisions you'll make in your life, but you need to man up."

By 3 a.m. Pacific time, the loudspeakers and explosions had fallen silent. Seattle Police spokesman Jeff Kappel said Clemmons has never responded.

Clemmons is believed to have been in the area of the coffee shop around the time of the shooting, but Troyer declined to say what evidence might link him to the shooting.

Investigators say they know of no reason that Clemmons or anyone else might have had to open fire on the four as they sat working on their laptops.

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**Tomorrow's Horoscope**

It's the day before the full moon, and a great deal of tension has been building up. To make matters more interesting, Mercury in passionate Sagittarius squares

Uranus in spiritual Pisces. People who do not share the same belief systems are likely to rub each other the wrong way or touch a nerve with their choice of conversation. Tread lightly.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). Another one of your roaming moods kicks in. As a rule, you'd prefer not to do the same thing, day in and day out. You'd rather stay away from routine, even if it does take more energy. For you, the adventure is worth it.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). Strike "should" from your vocabulary. You have a choice to do something or not to do it. Today you'll be inclined to leap

into each choice you make with all your heart, and that's why people will follow you.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Making lemonade from lemons is too passe for you. You'll turn your lemons into something more exciting — a flaming sorbet or a fancy pie. With a twist and a flourish, you create magic and entertainment.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). Poet Emily Dickinson said, "Hope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul Your sense of hope right now is so strong you feel it could lift you off your feet."

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). This road you're traveling on is about to fork. You can't go down both paths, but know this: Either one you pick will turn out to be the right decision. Be confident and know all will be well.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A step taken in pursuit of your dreams is a bold step indeed. When you think your efforts are wasted, you take stock and press on. You cannot give up, and you

won't. What's more, you're closer than you think.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Travel is on your mind. And if you are planning into the far-off future, you'll get a deal, too. You are attracted to remote locations that don't usually appeal to the average tourist.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). How many times do you need to be told you're beautiful before you believe it? You light up a room with your smile, and if people aren't saying it to you, they're saying it to each other.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Be patient with yourself. The path you're on isn't an easy one, and you can't make it better by hurrying. Building the pyramids wasn't a weekend project. True success takes time.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When you find something funny, don't hold back. Lose yourself in laughter. Hold the sides of your belly and laugh maybe even to the point of snorting. That's the way your heart hits the reset

button.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Someone needs to give you a high-five. This work you've done really couldn't have been done any better, and the results just speak for themselves. Enjoy the adulation. If it hasn't come, it will.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). When you see something you like, it's normal for you to tell a friend, or all your friends. And lucky for them, you have great taste. Today you'll share a few tips and insights and enrich a few lives in the process.

**T O D A Y ' S BIRTHDAY** (Nov. 30). From the outside, many aspects of your life appear the same, and yet your life is definitely different this year — happier. You are getting better at knowing what makes you feel good and sticking to it. Hard work and sweat are featured in December. February brings financial uplift. May offers travel and fun. Gemini and Pisces people adore you. Lucky numbers are: 40, 25, 11, 24 and 18.

**HOW TO GET**

**THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WITH GRACE:** Nurturing Virgo knows that the whole point of the holidays is to share our love and be together. The practical side of Virgo asks: What is so hard about that? And the perfectionist in Virgo answers the question. This holiday will only happen once. We'll only be this age with this configuration of people at this place in time once. There will be pictures and memories, and they can't be rewritten. That's what makes everything so precious, from the food to what you'll wear, to the songs you'll hear ringing through the occasion. In this light, Virgo pours the kind of caring attention into each holiday event that some would put into a wedding. And if Virgo is not careful, morphing into a Grinch-like version of Bridezilla is altogether possible — Holidayzilla? In order to keep the holiday monster at bay, Virgo need only do one thing and do it often: Relax. Have a glass of champagne or a hot bath. Take an hour

to zone out or 20 minutes to walk or meditate. Doing these things daily through the holidays, no guilt, ensures a merry ole time for Virgo.

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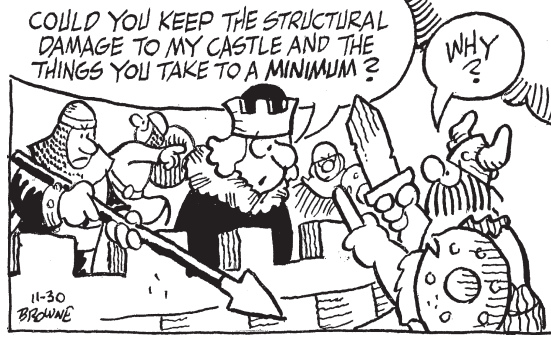
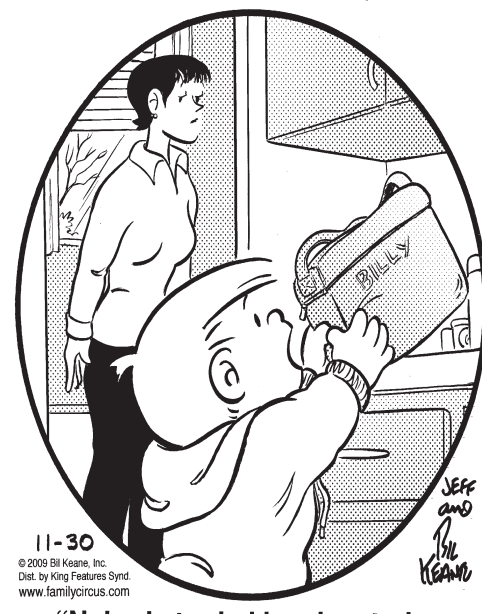
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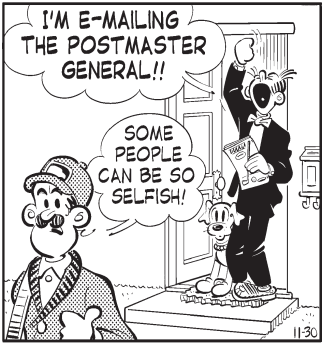
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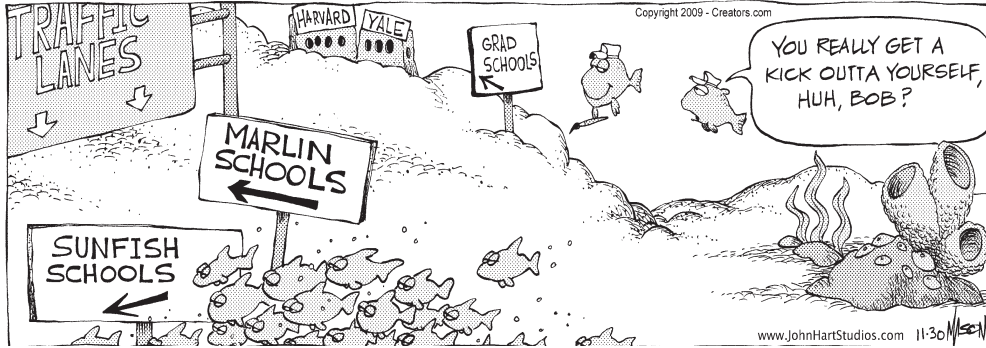
"CAN YOU STRIKE THAT LAST COMMENT FROM MY RECORD?"

"Nobody traded lunches today. EVERYBODY had turkey sandwiches."

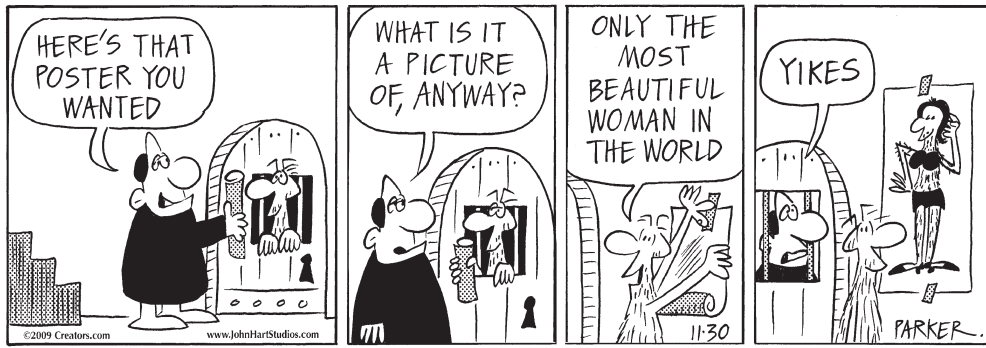
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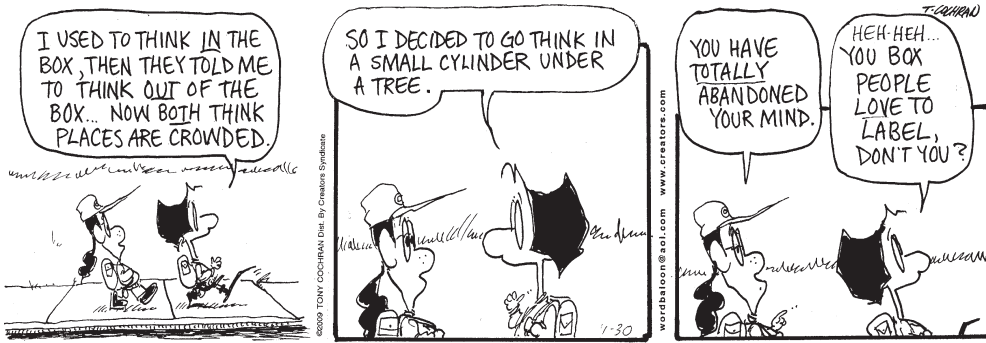
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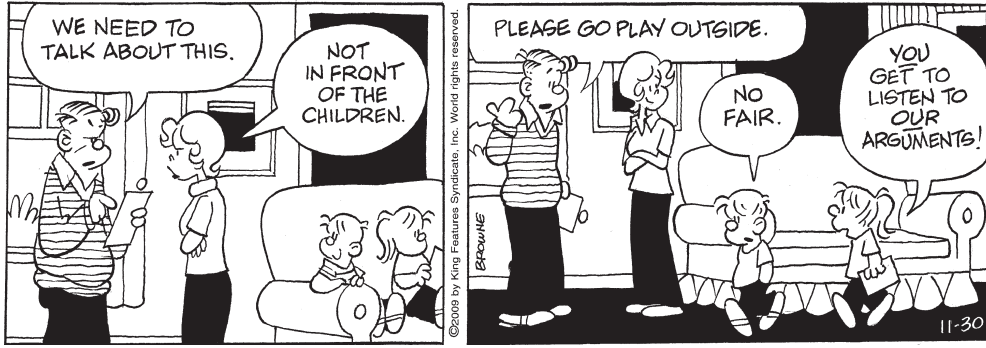
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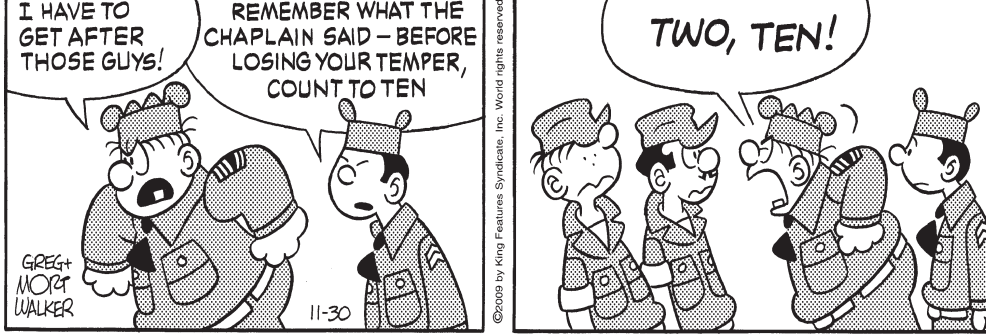
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



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This Date In History

Today is Monday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2009. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 30, 1939, the Russo-Finnish War, also known as the Winter War, began as Soviet troops invaded Finland.

On this date: In 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris, ending the Revolutionary War.

In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens - better known as Mark Twain - was born in Florida, Mo.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1936, London's famed Crystal Palace, constructed for the Great Exhibition of 1851,

was destroyed in a fire.

In 1949, Chinese communist troops captured Chongqing.

In 1962, U Thant of Burma, who had been acting secretary-general of the United Nations following the death of Dag Hammarskjold the year before, was elected to a four-year term.

In 1966, the former British colony of Barbados became independent.

In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union opened negotiations in Geneva aimed at reducing nuclear weapons in Europe.

Ten years ago: The opening of a 135-nation trade gathering in Seattle was disrupted by at least 40,000 demonstrators, some of whom clashed with police.

Today's Birthdays: Historian Jacques Barzun is 102. Actor Efram Zimbalist Jr. is 91. Actor Robert Guillaume is 82. TV personality and producer Dick Clark is 80. Radio talk show host G. Gordon Liddy is 79. Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 72. Movie director Ridley Scott is 72. Singer Rob Grill (The Grassroots) is 66. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 66.

Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 64. Playwright David Mamet is 62. Actress Margaret Whitton is 59. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 57. Musician Shuggie Otis is 56. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 55. Singer Billy Idol is 54. Historian Michael Beschloss is 54. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 52. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 52. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 47. Rapper Jilil (Whodini) is 46. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 44. Rock musician Mike Stone is 40. Actress Sandra Oh is 39. Country singer Mindy McCready is 34. Singer Clay Aiken is 31. Actress Elisha Cuthbert is 27.

Answer to previous puzzle

Crossword grid with letters.

Newsday Crossword

DOLLAR STRETCHERS by Gail Grabowski

Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Crossword grid with clues for Across and Down.