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Hawk that was left behind
 See Page 6

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BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY
 DECEMBER 1, 2009



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HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

After several decades of collecting donations in the lobby area of the Big Spring Post Office, officials with the government agency said Monday the Salvation Army will have to move its kettle — being manned in this photo by long-time volunteer Doloris Albert — off federal property due to a law that forbids soliciting. The move came after the post office received complaints from a local resident who claims his children were “heckled” by a Salvation Army bell ringer.

SA charity bell silenced in post office

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

Bell ringers for the Salvation Army’s annual holiday kettle program will have to brave the elements this year at the Big Spring Post Office, as federal law — spurred by a local resident’s complaints — will force the local charity to move its kettle from the lobby to the sidewalk outside.

According to Postmaster Andy Lopez, federal law prohibits any type of solicitation on government property.

“The law is pretty long and drawn out, but it basically says you can’t ask for funds anywhere on government property,” said Lopez. “It’s the same way at the Big Spring VA Hospital, or any other government office, not just at the post office.”

Local resident Alan Conroy said he first complained about the kettle site — located on the south end of the build-

ing’s lobby, near the post office boxes — last week, claiming the post office staff failed to take action on the matter.

“I explained that it was against the law to the staff at the post office, but when I came back a few days later they were still there,” said Conroy. “I also told the bell ringer they weren’t allowed to be there, and she said they had permission from the post office.”

“On the last visit Monday (Nov. 23), when we came out of the post office the same bell ringer was there, and she started heckling me and my children. She said, ‘It didn’t work, did it? You can’t get me out of here.’ I asked her not to speak to my children and she informed me she had a constitutional right to speak to whoever she wanted to, but those are my children.”

Conroy said he and his chil-

“I went back yesterday and the bell ringer had a CD player set up and was playing Christian-based Christmas music. Not everyone is a Christian, and not everyone believes in God. Honestly, I believe this has gotten ridiculous.”

—Alan Conroy, local citizen

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24 SHOPPING DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

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Afghan buildup to involve 30,000 troops

JENNIFER LOVEN
 AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama plans to send 30,000 more troops to be deployed over six months, a senior administration official told The Associated Press Tuesday, escalating the 8-year-old war.

In his prime-time speech to the

nation Tuesday night, Obama also will lay out a rough timeframe, including some dates, for when the main U.S. military mission will end.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the details had not yet been announced.

The 30,000 new troops will bring the total in Afghanistan to more than 100,000 U.S. forces. The main

mission of the new troops will be to reverse Taliban gains and secure population centers in the volatile south and east parts of the country.

And the primary path for the disengagement that Obama will outline in the speech at West Point will be the stepped-up training of

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Officials: Progress made on virtual fence

JACQUES BILLEAUD
 Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Government officials overseeing the construction of a “virtual fence” along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border hope to turn over the first segment to the Border Patrol in January, while beginning construction on a second stretch in coming weeks.

Although the government has plans to extend the network of cameras, ground sensors and radars along most

of the border, officials said they’ll draw on lessons from the first two segments in southern Arizona as they contemplate if and where to build more sections and how fast to complete them.

The government estimated it would cost \$6.7 billion to cover most of the Mexican border by 2014.

“We do want some time to look at whether or not that really does make the most sense,” said Mark Borkowski, the government’s director of the

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AP photo

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Obituaries

Stella 'Nanny' Hull Lee

Stella "Nanny" Hull Lee, 100, of Big Spring, died Saturday, Nov. 28, 2009, at her residence. Graveside funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009, at Mt. Olive Memorial Park chapel with the Rev. Steve King, pastor of Birdwell Lane Baptist Church, officiating.

She was born March 17, 1909, in Louisiana. She came to the Salem Community in Howard County from Louisiana in 1920. She married Joe M. Hull Oct. 2, 1926, and he preceded her in death Aug. 11, 1979, after 53 years of marriage. She then married Clarence Lee on Aug. 21, 1987, and he preceded her in death Jan. 15, 1993. She was a member of Birdwell Lane Baptist Church and a homemaker.

Survivors include one daughter, Twila Myrick of Big Spring; four granddaughters; nine great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson.

She was also preceded in death by her parents, Mack and Emma Minchew Rainey; two daughters, Alfreda Hull and Gertrude Firkins; three brothers and two sisters.

The family suggests memorials to the Susan G. Komen For The Cure, P.O. Box 650309, Dallas 75265-0309.

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

Mary Strain

Mary Strain, 84, of Big Spring, died Monday, Nov. 30, 2009, at her residence. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Doylene Baugh

Doylene Baugh, 91, formerly of Stanton, died Monday, Nov. 30, 2009, in a Baytown hospital. Her services are pending with Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton.

Joe Rivera

Joe Rivera, 55, of Big Spring died Monday, Nov. 30, 2009, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Support Groups

TODAY

• Grief share, sponsored by Home Hospice and the First Presbyterian Church, Seventh and Rannels (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.

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

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

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Non-smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

FRIDAY

• AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

SATURDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m.

Police blotter

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

Note: According to BSPD officials, no arrests were made during the corresponding time period.

- THEFT was reported in the 300 block of Owens.
- ASSAULT CLASS C/FAMILY VIOLENCE was reported in the 2600 block of Gregg Street.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 75 inmates at the time of this report.

- RENE STURGEON MORALES, 47, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of theft — more than \$50, less than \$500.

Fire/EMS

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

- TRAUMA was reported in the 1500 block of Tustun. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1300 block of Mulberry. One person was transported to SMMC.

Take Note

- T&P Federal Credit Union has set up an account for Arthur Hernandez Jr. for medical expenses. Arthur has had numerous medical problems the past couple of years. He has had several surgeries on his stomach, the last one a few weeks ago. After the surgery he developed a staph infection. He is still in the hospital. The out-of-pocket expenses, the travel and expenses for his wife and many other numerous expenses are mounting up. Please help Arthur and his wife Melinda in this difficult time and make a much-needed donation.

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

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

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

- HATS (Hope After The Sadness), an American Cancer Society Resource Room is available at First Methodist Church. This center provides information and valuable resources for those affected by cancer. This HATS ministry, established in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Shane Brue, maintains a room with free hats, wigs and head coverings available for check-out by those dealing with hair loss due to cancer treatment. Other services and resources are also available. Contact the "Hat Lady," Marci Lykken at 267-2915.

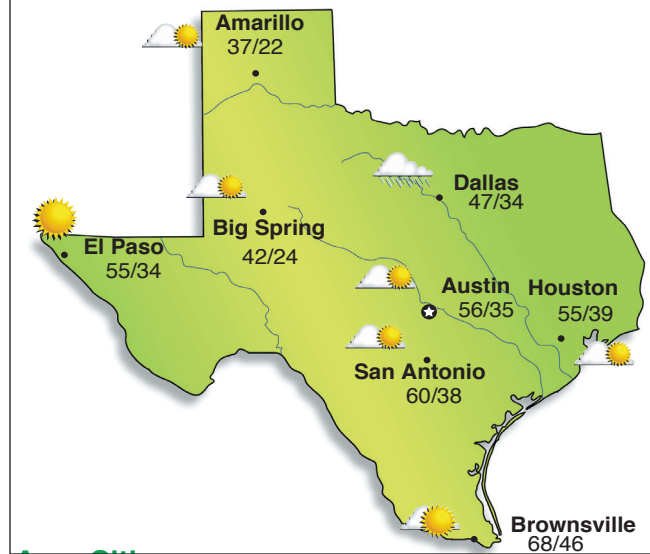
Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast

Wed 12/2	Thu 12/3	Fri 12/4
42/24 Partly cloudy skies. Cold. High 42F. Winds N at 10 to 20 mph.	37/25 Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 30s and lows in the mid 20s.	45/24 Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the mid 20s.
Sunrise: 7:30 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM	Sunrise: 7:31 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM	Sunrise: 7:32 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM

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Lottery

The winning numbers in Monday evening's drawing of the Texas Lottery's "Two Step" game were: 10-16-21-31, Bonus: 3.

The winning numbers in Monday evening's drawing of the Texas Lottery's "Daily 4Night" game were: 2-1-7-6.

The winning numbers in Monday evening's drawing of the Texas Lottery's "Cash 5" game were: 02-08-12-15-31.

The winning numbers in Monday evening's drawing of the Texas Lottery's "Pick 3 Night" game were: 2-2-8.

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The Big Spring Herald is a member of the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, Texas Press Association, West Texas Press Association, Texas Daily Newspaper Association, The Associated Press.

Published afternoons Mon. thru Fri. and Sunday mornings, except Christmas Day. All materials copyrighted.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, TX 79721. Periodicals postage paid at Big Spring, Texas.

USPS 1431-48 USPS 0055-940 ISSN 0746-6811

BY THE MONTH HOME DELIVERY: \$8.85 monthly; \$95.58 yearly (includes 10% discount). MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$14.58 monthly Howard; \$18.33 elsewhere.

News in brief

Tareq Salahi denies he and wife Michaelae crashed White House dinner for visiting Indian PM

WASHINGTON (AP) — The couple that got into the White House state dinner for the visiting Indian prime minister without invitations denied Tuesday that they were gatecrashers.

Appearing on a nationally broadcast morning news show with his wife, Tareq Salahi said the furor surrounding his and his wife Michaelae's attendance at the dinner a week ago has been a "most devastating" experience. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs described President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama as angered by the incident.

Salahi told NBC's "Today" show Tuesday there's more to their side of the story — an explanation that would exonerate them from allegations of misconduct in the breach of White House security. Appearing on the same program, Gibbs insisted the Salahis had not been invited.

"This wasn't a misunderstanding," Gibbs said. "You don't show up at the White House as a misunderstanding."

For his part, Salahi said he and his wife were co-

operating with the Secret Service in its investigation of the incident a week ago. And he said they both have "great respect" for President Barack Obama.

Lone Seattle police officer shoots, kills suspect in coffee-shop slaying of four officers

SEATTLE (AP) — Authorities say a man who gunned down four police officers was shot and killed by a lone officer who found the suspect in a stolen vehicle on a Seattle street.

Assistant Police Chief Jim Pugel says 37-year-old Maurice Clemmons was killed about 2:45 a.m. Tuesday. Pugel says the officer found the car, which had been recently stolen, recognized Clemmons and ordered him to show his hands and stop. Pugel says Clemmons wouldn't stop, and the officer fired several rounds.

A couple dozen police officers milled around at the scene, shaking hands and patting each other on the back later Tuesday morning.

Authorities say Clemmons singled out the Lake-wood officers and spared others at a coffee shop Sunday morning in Parkland, about 35 miles south

of Seattle.

Partisan sparring sets the stage for lengthy Senate health care debate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats called it a historic opportunity. Republicans called it a sham.

Long-awaited debate over President Barack Obama's health care overhaul kicked off in the Senate with lawmakers trading bitter partisan words over the measure to remake one-sixth of the U.S. economy.

The legislative struggle is expected to last for weeks in a test that pits GOP senators determined not to give ground against Senate Democrats determined to deliver on Obama's signature issue.

The 10-year, nearly \$1 trillion legislation includes a first-time requirement for most Americans to carry insurance, greatly expands the Medicaid federal-state insurance program for the poor, and would require insurers to cover any paying customer regardless of their medical history or condition.

On Monday each side offered the first of what are likely to be dozens of amendments, with the measures seemingly designed as much to court a skeptical public as to reshape Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's 2,074-page bill.

BELLS

Continued from Page 1

children — ages 7, 9 and 11 years — were then told to leave post office property by a post office supervisor.

"I guess someone alerted the post office supervisor that we were arguing with the bell ringer, and they came running out of the office and made us leave," said Conroy. "We were thrown out of the post office because they apparently wanted to protect this woman. However, she was the one heckling my children, and that's just not right."

Since making his complaints last week, Conroy said he returned to the post office Monday to find an even more offensive set up.

"I went back yesterday and the bell ringer had a CD player set up and was playing Christian-based Christmas music," said Conroy. "Not everyone is a Christian, and not everyone believes in God. Honestly, I believe this has gotten ridiculous."

Lopez said Monday he would ask the local charity to move its kettle out of the postal building, possibly to the sidewalk outside the facility.

"I don't want to be a stick-in-the-mud, but I really don't have any choice on this matter," said Lopez. "We'll ask them to leave the building. It's possible they could set their kettle up on the sidewalk in front of the main entrance, because that's city property."

Conroy contends setting up a kettle on a city sidewalk is just as illegal as setting one up on government property.

"If they want to do that, that's fine, but I will complain to the city because that goes against city ordinance," said Conroy. "You can't erect anything on a city sidewalk that will impede traffic. It's just as illegal on the sidewalk outside the post office as it is inside the post office."

Big Spring Code Enforcement Director Kenny Davis doesn't agree with Conroy's interpretation of the city ordinance, however.

"All they need to move the kettle to the sidewalk is permission from the Big Spring Police Department," said Davis. "I've talked with Police Chief Lonnie Smith about the situation, and he said his office doesn't have a problem with them setting up on the sidewalk outside the post office. So, no, they would not be in violation of city ordinance

if they set up there."

Ed Cheshire, a captain with the local Salvation Army, said the charity will abide by the post master's wishes.

"I received a message from the post master yesterday asking us to move the kettle to the sidewalk. We will respect his wishes," said Cheshire. "It's certainly an unfortunate situation, but the last thing we want to do is cause trouble for anyone."

The move isn't expected to cause problems with any other bell ringer locations, according to Cheshire, although freezing rain early this morning will most certainly have an impact on kettles located outdoors.

This isn't the first time a Salvation Army bell ringer has been shooed from a post office, as a similar situation in mid-December 2008 at the

post office in Brea, Calif., yielded similar results.

Bell ringers with the Orange County Salvation Army were forced to move their post office bell ringer to a location near a department store in the California city, where the kettle is believed to have drawn fewer donations than in past years.

The local Salvation Army provides a number of community services, including the annual Angel Tree Christmas program that provides gifts to area children and seniors that might not otherwise receive a holiday gift, as well as free Thanksgiving meals and back-to-school supplies.

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

TROOPS

Continued from Page 1

Afghan police and security forces.

The new infusion of troops had been envisioned to take place over a year, or even more, because force deployments in Iraq and elsewhere make it logistically difficult, if not impossible, to go faster.

But Obama directed his military planners to make the changes necessary to speed up the Afghanistan additions, the official said.

Obama also insisted that a specific withdrawal scenario

be built into the process of adding new forces.

The official would not disclose either the specific withdrawal date that Obama has in mind nor the changes the military will be required

to make to get the troop deployments on the president's timeline.

All of the new troops are expected to be deployed by next summer.

FENCE

Continued from Page 1

virtual fence project. "Is it really sensible to spend all that money? Or are there other more measured approaches? Maybe there are some places along the border that make sense, but maybe not the entire border."

As it now stands, once both southern Arizona sections are in operation along 53 miles of the border, the next step would be to authorize construction through the majority of the 375-mile border in Arizona, the nation's busiest gateway for immigrant smuggling and a major thoroughfare for marijuana smuggling.

By using cameras, ground sensors and radar mounted on a series of towers, the system allows a small number of dispatchers to track illegal border-crossers on a computer monitor. They'll be able to zoom in with cameras to see whether it's a person or animal moving, and decide whether the movement requires sending Border Patrol agents to

the scene.

The virtual fence, developed as part of then-President George W. Bush's border security plan, is designed to add another layer of protection at the border, along with thousands of Border Patrol agents and 650 miles of real fences.

The government and the contractor building the virtual fence said they were making solid progress after a series of setbacks earlier in the project.

While a prototype virtual fence in southern Arizona has been in use for nearly two years, the first permanent 23-mile stretch along the Mexican border near Sasabe, Ariz., would be handed over to the Border Patrol in January for testing, if everything goes as planned. The government hopes to begin construction on a second 30-mile section south of Ajo, Ariz., once environmental clearances are finalized.

The project was criticized because of delays and the government's finding in 2008 that the 28-mile prototype fence didn't work properly. That prompted the government to withhold

some payments to its contractor, Boeing Co. The prototype will be replaced by the first permanent segment.

As virtual fence construction continues, the Border Patrol continues to use older technology that has limitations.

Borkowski, who took over as the project's top leader months after the prototype came under criticism, said it would be easy to blame Boeing for the project's early failures, but much of the fault rests with the government.

The government left it up to Boeing to figure out what the government needed, and the Border Patrol — the end user — wasn't asked to be very involved at the beginning, Borkowski said.

"Unfortunately, what we communicated was, 'We are going to put up a system, everybody is going to love it and when we turn it on, it will work right out of the box and the Border

Patrol will be delighted.' And that's not what happened," Borkowski said.

Borkowski said he wasn't entirely satisfied with Boeing's work on the project, but that the company has shown improvements in recent months.

Tim Peters, a vice president for Boeing, said large, complex project experience fits and starts and that his company has made good progress in figuring how to tie together the project's off-the-shelf components.

"It's like sitting down at Christmas, and your kid or your nephew just got a box of Lincoln Logs, Legos and Tinker toys and now you have to figure out how to put those pieces together," Peters said. "And Legos don't necessarily play well with Tinker Toys, and Tinker Toys certainly don't play well with Lincoln Logs."

Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for the Fed-

eration for American Immigration Reform, which favors tougher immigration enforcement, said he wasn't confident that the virtual fence will end up being built along the whole length of the border and that the delays on the project show that the government wasn't serious about securing the border.

"The confidence will come when they actually have something out there that actually works and helps stop people from coming across the border," Me-

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Joe Rivera, 55, died Monday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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Annie's Mailbox®

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been married 14 years and have four children. My mother-in-law always pitted his two sisters against each other to try to make them jealous and garner more attention for herself.

My husband wasn't part of that, but there was always tension. Our son was born with multiple disabilities and passed away last year at the age of 10. My husband's parents were not caring, loving or supportive. His mother refused to ride in the family car at the funeral because we didn't also have space for her daughters. She said they needed her.

She has been so cold over the years and narcissistic as a parent that it has been heartbreaking. My father-in-law just stands by.

Due to her actions at our son's funeral, my husband decided to cut off all contact. I wrote her a letter regarding our feelings and how hurt we were. We said they could have a relationship with our other children, but they have chosen not to. They are, however, quite close to their daughters' children.

Our adopted daughter is now 4 and has never met her paternal grandparents. My mother, the only grandparent she knew, passed away eight months ago. When my daughter is older, how do I tell her about my husband's parents? I grew up without an involved father and felt abandoned and unloved. I don't want her to feel the same way. -- Hurt and Ashamed in Indiana

Dear Indiana: Many children grow up perfectly fine without grandparents, and some, like yours, might even be better off.

If your daughter asks, tell her you aren't in touch with Daddy's parents. When she is older, she may want more detail, and you can say that some grandparents aren't able to be as close as you might like and it's

simply the way they are. If you don't turn it into a tragedy, neither will she. Meanwhile, we hope you will find some grandparent substitutes for your children -- perhaps a great-aunt or uncle, a neighbor or a friend's parents.

Dear Annie: I recently retired after 32 years and now realize how different my husband is from me.

He seems controlling and obnoxious, and nothing I do is ever good enough. We have started bickering about petty things. He goes around cussing at me and makes remarks like, "Nobody can be as stupid as you and still be alive."

I am sick and tired of walking on eggshells, and he refuses to have a conversation with me. I feel alienated and lonely and am contemplating leaving. He does all the work around the house, pays all the bills and hates his job. I have sufficient income, but won't have any insurance to take care of my medical problems. What should I do? -- Tired and Lonely

Dear Tired: Retirement can bring out the problems in a marriage that a full-time job often obscures.

Your husband sounds miserable, and he's taking it out on you. Since retiring, you have nowhere to escape. It might help to get involved in organizations that keep you active and busy, especially in the evening. Counseling can also help you get a handle on the situation and work on your decisions.

Dear Annie: This is for "Grateful but Worried Dad," the divorced father whose young daughter becomes upset upon his departure.



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

As a stepmother, I saw this situation occur many times with my husband. A simple idea occurred to me: Ask Mom to pick up the child, rather than having Dad drop the child off after visits. This puts the child's focus on greeting the arriving parent, rather than a protracted farewell with the departing one.

If the child's feelings are truly at heart, it would seem to me that "pick ups" by the "receiving" parent would be more standard. -- Reflective Stepmom

Dear Stepmom: That's a sensible and caring solution when possible, although there often are times when picking up a child can be too inconvenient or complicated. But we hope divorced parents will keep this in mind.

Dear Annie: I am an addict in recovery. I moved out of state three years ago when I was seeking treatment and completed my program 15 months ago. I have successfully maintained employment for more than a year now.

My three children are still living back home with their grandparents, five states away. I lost custody because of my addiction. I tried returning home, but couldn't find a job there. I am divorced, and their father is still active in his addiction, which leaves all responsibility for supporting the family on me.

I have allowed this situation to intimidate me to the point where I have stopped trying to regain custody. I justify this by saying as long as I am contributing financially, I'm doing all I can. But the reality is, I am

becoming emotionally detached from my children and no longer desire to be the mother they deserve. The last time I became emotional, it set me back a few months.

I feel so helpless at this point. I have been actively pursuing another job closer to them, but have been unsuccessful.

Annie, what would you recommend in a situation like this? I don't want to lose all I have worked so hard for. I spent two years in an in-patient treatment center to make sure I got my recovery right, and I feel as though I am losing it all anyway. -- Guilty in Washington

Dear Guilty: It is overwhelming to deal with sobriety and custody at the same time. Take little steps. First reconnect with your children in whatever small way you can -- visits, phone calls, pictures, e-mails and letters. You must relearn how to be part of their daily lives. Don't expect the moon. This takes time. Continue to look for employment closer to them, but as long as the grandparents are willing to raise the kids, allow them to do so until you are more comfortable with the responsibility. But please don't give up on being a major presence in their lives, even from a distance.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to annies-mailbox@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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Dear Margo: Backing up and coming clean

Dear Margo: In my senior year of college, I had an affair with my much older professor. It took a while to get over, but now I'm in grad school and he's still my adviser and friend. A few friends and my current boyfriend of 11 months know that there was some kind of attachment (I never said who), but as far as anyone is concerned, I've been single between my high school boyfriend and this one.

Recently, my bf asked me (though it sounded more like a statement) whether I'd had another partner. I was caught off guard, but shook my head 'no' and referred to the period in between as 'mind games.' He seemed to believe me.



MARGO
HOWARD

We're doing the long-distance thing, and he was leaving the next morning. My conscience is killing me. I can't live with having lied to his face. I'm afraid that if I tell him, I'll lose him, but if he finds out himself, I'll lose him for sure. On top of everything, I've somehow misplaced the notebook where I'd written a letter after the breakup. I'm seeing my boyfriend in a month. What do I do? Can I come clean without full disclosure? How can I handle this without losing the guy I love so dearly? -- Can't Live with a Lie.

Dear Can't: Because there's a chance your current bf could find out, and because your conscience is killing you, I would tell him the involvement was something you so regretted that you lied when caught off guard. Also tell him you believe there should be total honesty

between two people who are committed to each other, which is why you are 'fessing up. If it's a deal breaker, then you will know that this man does not have the forgiveness gene. Plus, you were not cheating on him, so it shouldn't be fatal to your romance. I would not reveal the professor's identity, if that's what you mean by "full disclosure." Good luck. -- Margo, straightforwardly

Dear Margo: I find myself in a rather sticky situation. I have been in a long-distance relationship for two years. We got engaged. The ring that was given to me was his mother's. He recently ended the relationship because, in short, his priorities were not in order. It has been six weeks since our breakup. His mother attempted to contact me for the first three weeks and text messaged me today ask-

ing me to call her so we could talk. I am assuming it is about the ring. I received an e-mail a week ago from him saying that apparently I've "hijacked" (yes, he really said "hijacked") her ring, as I haven't returned it yet. He also proceeded to tell me he was sorry and apologized profusely. He then implied that since our breakup, I have been drinking and partying and having random sex -- none of which I have been doing and, of course, find insulting.

I have mixed feelings about returning the ring, because I am still hurt and angry about the breakup and his e-mail. It bothers me that this ring was apparently never really mine, that it is hers, was always hers and needs to be returned to her. My bitter side tells me to keep it, but I do not want to be the girl that kept the family heir-

loom. -- Trying To Be Decent, Though Scorned

Dear Try: According to etiquette, as well as legal precedent, if the man breaks the engagement, the ring is the woman's to keep. (The reverse is that if the woman breaks the engagement, she returns the ring.) The choice for you is whether to be a lady or to stick it to him and his mother. I will say that the ex-fiancee doesn't seem to be playing his cards very well. Think about it until you have a better idea of how you feel. -- Margo, thoughtfully

Dear Margo is written by Margo Howard, Ann Landers' daughter. All letters must be sent via e-mail to dearmargo@creators.com. Due to a high volume of e-mail, not all letters will be answered.

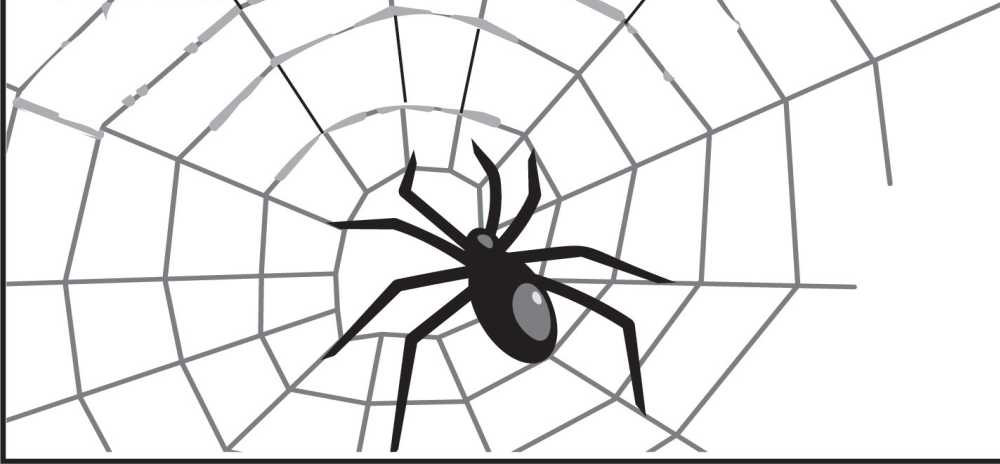
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The Spider

During Mark Twain's days as a newspaperman, he was the editor of a small Missouri paper.

One day, he received a letter from a subscriber stating that he had found a spider in his paper and asked if this was an omen of good or bad luck.

Twain replied, "Finding a spider in your paper is neither good nor bad luck. The spider was merely looking over our paper to see which merchant was not advertising so that he could go to that store, spin his web across the door and lead a life of undisturbed peace ever after."



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HOW MANY CARS WOULD IT TAKE TO EQUAL THE WEIGHT OF ONE LOADED SNOW PLOW?

ANSWER: 17 TO EQUAL 50,000 POUNDS

Winter Word Find

Just in time for the winter season, see how many related words you can find and circle in the puzzle.

COAT	HAT	SNOW
COLD	ICE	TEMPERATURE
FLURRY	INDOORS	WIND
GLOVES	SCARF	WINTER

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

Cold-Weather Scramble

Unscramble the words to complete the sentences.

1. Check your **T A I H G E N** before winter.
2. **S R T E I** can slip on ice and snow.
3. You should **N B E U L D** up in the winter.
4. Stay **S D N O R O I** when it is very cold.

Answers: 1. heating 2. tires 3. bundle 4. indoors

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- 1917: THE UNITED STATES DECLARED WAR ON AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.
- 1941: THE JAPANESE ATTACKED U.S. SHIPS AT PEARL HARBOR.
- 1999: THE RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA FILES A LAWSUIT AGAINST NAPSTER.



FROST

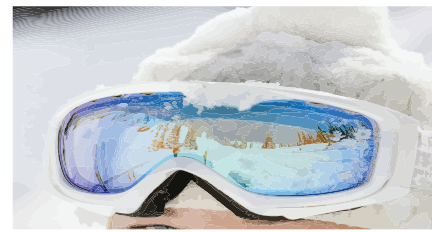
deposit of small ice crystals

How they SAY that in...

- ENGLISH:** Blizzard
- SPANISH:** Ventisca
- ITALIAN:** Bufera di neve
- FRENCH:** Tempête de neige
- GERMAN:** Blizzard



THE FIRST SNOWBOARD WAS DEVELOPED IN 1964 BY ATTACHING TWO SKIS TOGETHER.



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: SKI GOGGLES

BSHS seniors take a bow at special rally

The intensity was growing, along with the tears, as Big Spring High School seniors suddenly realized the end of their final year in high school rapidly is approaching. Balloons and streamers were covering the Class of 2010 at the end of the senior pep rally, which annually honors the graduating class.

Athletic Director Phillip Ritchey came to center court and pulled out all of the senior football players from the varsity team. From these players he made special comments about Matt Ritchey, Tyler Tannehill, Jake Hernandez and Ben Mereworth.

Story and photos by Hannah Weber

Coach Ritchey spoke of their ability to rise above the typical jock persona and to come together as a team and lead the Steers to a successful season this year.

The senior Big Spring Steers pulled together for the football games because they never knew if it would be their last, Ritchey said. Many senior students became emotional when they realized this was one of their last pep rallies.

The Class of 2010 knows that it can reach all of its goals as long as the students put forth as much effort as they possibly can, but as the rally ended, many realized they would miss their high school days.



Bird Poop: The hawk that was left behind

Walking beyond the end of her street and into the open land beyond, the woman and her dog once again explored the dried grasses for hidden wonders. As the Chihuahua sniffed anew the trail it had worn, its owner stooped to pry loose a colorful, half-buried rock. After tucking it safely away in the pocket of her coat, she decided they both were cold enough from the raw December afternoon.



BEBE
MCCASLAND

Retracing their wandering path, the dog ran ahead after what its owner thought must be another imaginary rabbit. Occasionally, there actually was one. When what little hair it had rose sharply on the dog's back, the woman sensed there was another kind of critter hidden in the dense and thorny scrubs underneath the mesquites and towering elms at the end of the pavement.

Trying to hush the dog's shrill announcement of a stranger, she bundled her pet into the remaining pocket of her oversized jacket. As the dog continued verbally to protect her, the woman tried to discover what had caused such a furor.

To see through the spent leaves of summer's foliage that covered the straggly growth was impossible. Whatever was hidden by nature's camouflage was well protected.

Quieting the dog with a caressing hand, the

woman noticed something move deep inside the snarled branches. As long as she and the dog remained still, the creature continued toward the opposite side.

Trying not to break a twig, the woman could not help but create noise as the crisp, dry leaves crunched underfoot. The shadowy creature stopped.

After what seemed like forever, the tall dark object moved again. Now the woman knew why the dog was so excited.

Having seen hawks in spring claim the large, spreading limbs near the tops of the elms, the woman thought that maybe one had been left behind. In June, she had found one of the fledglings on the ground and had called a "bird lady" who came to get it. Throughout the summer, she had enjoyed watching parent birds feed their young. Often, they were assisted by the previous year's offspring.

Carefully backing out of the area, she quickly turned and walked to her home. After putting the dog inside, she returned with an old blanket. With its head hanging down, the dark brown bird of prey appeared to be asleep. Following the well-beaten rabbit trail that led into the thicket on the other side, the woman placed the material over the hawk.

With its last bit of energy, the bird tried feebly to resist. Determined, the woman held its wings to its side as she pulled it out of the briars. Once home, she kept its head covered while she felt of its breast. "Thin as a bone," she thought.

To hear Kathy's voice again meant another bird in her bathroom.



With rufous-colored wings and leggings, dark brown body and head and blackish tail accented with a white band and tip, the medium-sized Harris's hawk hunts mice, small birds, lizards, cottontail rabbits, rats and snakes. Fall migration may take it anywhere from Mexico, to Central America, Argentina and Brazil.

"What have you been feeding it?" I asked. "Chicken liver, gizards, breast, and some mice I trapped." After four days, she now felt the hawk was able to travel.

Since she had no car, and could only call through an assistance program, her means were limited. With Kathy, improvising and accomplishing the unexpected were routine.

As Art and I opened her bathroom door, we were elated to see a Harris's hawk atop the rod for the shower curtain. Its coloration was an opportunity to see the transition from an immature to adult plumage.

No longer were its under parts streaked with brown; its chest

was darkening. The hawk's reddish-brown shoulders and flanks were deepening in intensity. Having been brownish with narrow blackish bars, its white-tipped tail was becoming deep brown or blackish. Whether in a juvenile or adult phase, its tail would sport a broad white band at the base.

Extending its wings defensively, the hawk displayed its darkening wing linings and flight feathers. From below or above, it would often be described in the future as a "red hawk." Rufous and chestnut would readily be used to describe its characteristic appearance.

Jumping from the rod, the raptor used its wings to slow

its landing on the floor. Quickly it tried to reach the top of the commode, then decided the tub was to its liking. A small net stopped its next attempt at escape.

During the drive home, our passenger reminded us of another social gathering of hawks similar to what Kathy had experienced in her neighborhood. Upriver from Presidio, a two-lane road led to Ruidoso and Candelaria.

Over what seemed like endless sections of land, mesquite, creosote, yuccas and cactus dominated the flats and arroyos between the Chinati Mountains and the Rio Grande. Catching thermals, then diving toward the desert floor,

adult and juvenile Harris's hawks frolicked as if at a family reunion.

Their social inclusion of all ages in the aerial display was time worn. Family groupings, whether during nesting season or migration, were an integral part of their tradition.

Whether this raptor had been a member of the Monahans' neighborhood flock would never be known. After time at a wildlife center regaining its weight, muscle tone and flight abilities, the raptor could resume its familial relationship within its own specie.

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

Hurricane season ends with barely a whimper

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — The Atlantic hurricane season ended Monday with barely a whimper: Not a single hurricane came ashore in the United States.

Since June, when the season began, just nine named storms developed. Only three of them became hurricanes, and those stayed out at sea or weakened before passing over land.

Two tropical storms made landfall in the U.S., causing little more than rain and some beach erosion.

"We had a great, great year," said Chris Vecsey, a salesman at Top Gun Tackle in Orange Beach, Ala., near where Tropical Storm Ida slogged ashore in November. "Last year we had Gustav and Ike and a couple of other storms that didn't even

hit here. And with all the hype, it ruined us. It just didn't happen this year."

The 2009 season was on target with the lower end of forecasters' predictions. Before the season began June 1, the National Hurricane Center had anticipated nine to 14 storms, with four to seven hurricanes — a prediction that the Miami-based center scaled back slightly in August before the arrival of the season's first storm, Tropical Storm Ana.

James Franklin, the center's chief hurricane specialist, credited much of the quiet season to El Nino, the periodic warming of the central Pacific Ocean. El Nino, he said, produced strong winds in the Atlantic that cut down storms before

they could develop into hurricanes.

Franklin said forecasters also noticed drier conditions in the atmosphere, which limited the potential for storms. "Lately we've had busy seasons," Franklin said. "To get a year this quiet, it's a little bit unusual."

The 2009 hurricane season was the quietest since 2006, which also had nine total storms and five hurricanes, none of which made landfall in the U.S.

To find a season with fewer storms, you have to look back to 1997. That year, there were just seven storms, including three hurricanes. One of them, Hurricane Danny, killed at least nine people as it stalled over the Alabama coast and flooded parts of the Carolinas.

The 2009 season was not all mild. Tropical Storm Claudette poured up to 4.5 inches of rain when it made landfall at Fort Walton Beach on the Florida Panhandle in August, then quickly fizzled. Also in August, Hurricane Bill, a large Category 4 storm, was blamed for the deaths of two swimmers in Florida and Maine.

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News in brief

Charities check immigration status for toy drives

HOUSTON (AP) — Happy holidays — now where's that immigration paperwork?
Some Houston charities are making sure children are in the U.S. legally before handing out donated toys.
The Salvation Army and a charity affiliated with the Houston Fire Department are asking for children's birth certificates or Social Security cards.
Lorugene Young's Outreach Program Inc. is one of several groups that distribute toys collected by firefighters. Young says the point is not to punish the children, but to ensure that their parents are either citizens, legal immigrants or working to become legal residents.

Cesar Espinoza, executive director of the advocacy group America for All, says it's disturbing that Christmas could be tainted for kids who did nothing wrong.

San Angelo boy, 10, located

SAN ANGELO (AP) — The search for a 10-year-old San Angelo boy who was reported missing after taking out the trash ended when he showed up for school.

A statement from San Angelo police says Tomas Salazar was located Tuesday at school after apparently spending the night with a friend.

Lt. Curtis Milbourn earlier said foul play was not suspected in the disappearance of the boy, who was last seen around 6:30 p.m. Monday by his family.

A Texas Department of Public Safety helicopter

assisted with the overnight search for the boy during cold, rainy conditions.

2 expelled from DRT Alamo group

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The group that cares for the Alamo has expelled two members in a months-old dispute over the best way to run the 18th-century mission.

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, in a news release, say the action ends a "distracting and negative event."

Erin Bowman and Dianne MacDiarmid of San Antonio declined comment Monday. Bowman told the San Antonio Express-News that they are "trying to decide where we're going from here."

Bowman, who formerly led a \$60 million capital campaign for the Daughters, earlier this year created the Alamo Endowment to raise money for preservation and educational programs.

Bowman claimed the Daughters do not have the financial savvy to ensure the stability of the historic mission.

Pizza delivery leads to pot bust

BROWNSVILLE (AP) — Two parents face charges after a delivery driver in Brownsville allegedly saw smoke and smelled marijuana as children paid for some pizza.

Twenty-nine-year-old Baltazar De La Garza and 25-year-old Desiree Izaguirre were jailed Tuesday on six counts of child endangerment and one count of possession of marijuana. Bail was \$330,000

apiece. Electronic records at the Cameron County jail did not list an attorney for either.

KRGV-TV reports the couple's six youngsters who were at the home are staying with relatives as Child Protective Services investigates.

Police late Saturday received a call from the concerned pizza delivery man. Officers recovered about 400 pounds of bundled marijuana from the residence.

Police spokesman Jimmy Manrique says maybe if the driver just smelled the marijuana and did not see the children he might not have contacted authorities.

Search continues for prison escapee

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A convicted sex offender in Texas remained on the run after pulling a gun on two guards during a prison transfer.

Department of Corrections spokeswoman Michelle Lyons said Arcade Joseph Comeaux (KOH'-moh) Jr. was still at large Tuesday.

Lyons, in an e-mail to The Associated Press, said authorities were "still searching" for the 49-year-old inmate, who held two guards hostage Monday before fleeing in one's uniform.

The guards were transferring Comeaux from a prison in Huntsville to one in Beaumont when he pulled out a gun.

Both guards were released unharmed after being forced to drive to the Baytown area.

Comeaux was serving a life term after being convicted in 1998 of aggravated sexual assault out of Brazos County.

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Anderson, Ritchey highlight all-district Steers

Herald Staff Report

After Hereford and Big Spring were eliminated from playoff contention Saturday, 17 Steers find themselves on the all-district list.

Monte Anderson and Matt Ritchey earned offensive and defensive MVPs, respectively, highlighting six players, five of them seniors, which earned first team honors. The list is formulated by votes from the district's coaches.

"I was a little bit offy on whether we would get either one of (the MVPs), but to get both of them is a real tribute to those kids and our team," head coach

Phillip Ritchey said.

Anderson, who went over 2,000 yards rushing on the season, was named first-team running back. Ritchey was a first-team linebacker and fullback, senior Steven Henry made the list as a defensive lineman, senior Pavel Plakhotny as an outside linebacker, senior Thaddeus Straughter at wide receiver and junior Jonathon Molina at guard.

"I didn't really know going in how it was going to turn out," Ritchey said. "I knew we definitely had some good candidates ... after it was over, overall I was pleased. I thought we did well."

On the second team, junior tackle Tanner Henry made the list, Plakhotny was named at tight end and Ritchey, last year's all-district punter, made the list again as a second-teamer at that spot. On defense, Micheal Menefield was named at safety and Tyler Tannehill earned second team kicker honors.

Honorable mention players were junior Jackson Watkins, offensive line; junior Jacob Wylie, offensive line; senior Martiz Yanez, receiver and cornerback; senior Tevian Parnell, receiver and cornerback; senior Tannehill,

See **STEERS**, Page 14



HERALD File Photo/Tony Claxton
Monte Anderson was named all-district Offensive MVP.



AP Photo/Bill Feig

Saints quarterback Drew Brees celebrates his team's 38-17 win over the Patriots with the Superdome crowd Monday in New Orleans. The Saints are 11-0 for the first time in franchise history.

Saints stay unbeaten with MNF win

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Now Drew Brees and the unbeaten Saints can stop talking about imitating Tom Brady and the Patriots.

The way Brees carved up Bill Belichick's defense in the most lopsided loss New England endured all year, New Orleans can rest assured of its elite status in the NFL, while the Patriots must figure out what went wrong.

"There's obviously a big gap between us," Brady said. "It wasn't nearly as competitive as we all were expecting."

Brees threw for a season-high 371 yards and five touchdowns, and the Saints improved to 11-0 for the first time in franchise history with their 38-17 win over New England on Monday night.

Indianapolis is unbeaten, too, making it the first time in NFL

history that two teams won their first 11 games in the same season.

Brees stressed that one regular-season win guarantees nothing for a Saints Super Bowl.

Yet Brees and head coach Sean Payton have talked about following the Patriots' model for success ever since joining the Saints together in 2006, and the quarterback could not deny that routing them power could give New Orleans a psychological edge it did not have before.

"It only counts for one win on the stat sheet, but emotionally, those types of wins can mean a little more," Brees said. "Anytime you can win, and win that way, it builds confidence for you."

While New England's 2007 team is the only one to run the table in a 16-game regular season, the 2009 Patriots (7-4) have

had their chances to stop the Colts and Saints from trying to do the same.

Only three weeks earlier, New England had the Colts on the ropes, only to lose by a point in the final seconds. That loss will be remembered for Belichick's attempt to keep Peyton Manning off the field by going for a first down, rather than punt, on fourth down deep in Patriots territory late in the fourth quarter.

Against the Saints, the Patriots were so worried about their inability to keep pace with Brees they went for it on fourth and four from the New Orleans 10 in the third quarter. Brady's pass for Randy Moss along the sideline was broken up by Mike McKenzie.

"We needed more than a field goal the way that game was going," Belichick said.

See **SAINTS**, Page 14

Cowboys relying on big D in December

Associated Press

IRVING — Two games into the season, the Dallas Cowboys defense had allowed nearly 900 yards and 54 points while creating plenty of concern. They were the only team in the league without a sack or a forced turnover.

Cowboys linebacker Bradie James was already talking about an "adverse situation" and what a shame it would be to "just fall apart."

Well, take a look at them now.

The NFC East-leading Cowboys (8-3) have become one of the NFL's top defenses, and their play will be important heading into the crucial December stretch that begins Sunday in New York against a Giants team that was one of the two that torched them in September.

"We're just a better defensive unit right now. We're all on one string playing together, everything's flowing together, everybody's buying into the system and everybody's just having fun," safety Gerald Sensabaugh said Monday, when Dallas returned to practice after it extended weekend after beating Oakland on

Thanksgiving. "Guys are out there playing with a lot of passion and there's a lot of excitement out there."

Back in Week 2, the Giants spoiled the first game in new Cowboys Stadium, scoring on all three of their offensive possessions in the fourth quarter, piling up 427 yards and winning 33-31 after a field goal on the final play of the game.

Since then, Dallas has given up only 303 yards per game, with no team getting more than 337 and four held under 300. The Cowboys have allowed only 128 points since Week 2, the lowest total in the NFL over that span.

"The defense is great. They have been playing some outstanding football," quarterback Tony Romo said. "I expect that to continue. We're coming into a tough stretch of games and we are going to need to rely on them in different situations. I'm excited about them."

Only three teams have more than the 28 sacks the Cowboys have the past nine games. They have had at least three sacks in all but one of those games.

"Right now, we're just playing as a unit," nose

See **BOYS**, Page 14

Buffaloes represented well on all-district 7-1A teams

Herald Staff Report

All-district 7-1A teams were released this week, and a herd of Buffaloes from Stanton and Forsan made the list.

Stanton, which finished 6-6 and advanced to the regional round of the 1A playoffs, placed 13 players on the all-district list. Forsan, which finished 2-8 on the year, placed six players on the list, four of whom are underclassmen.

For Stanton, five players made the first-team defense. Seniors Miguel Juarez and Marshall Cox were unanimous first-team defensive line selec-

tions. Junior Grayson Gray was a first-team linebacker, junior Thomas Ramos was a first-team cornerback and senior Caleb Ramsey was a first-team safety.

On offense, Juarez and Gray were both first-teamers on the offensive line, Gray a unanimous decision, and Ramos was a unanimous first-team wide receiver and kicker. Fullback Spencer Cortez was a unanimous first-team selection.

Forsan's Ryan Flores, Kolten Self and Ty Johnson were all first-team players in the backfield. Flores, a senior, was a unanimous first-team

fullback and second-team linebacker. Self, a junior, was a unanimous first-team wide receiver and Johnson, a sophomore, made unanimous first-team running back.

Second teamers for Stanton were: junior Jorge Reyna, defensive end; senior Blaize Perkins, linebacker; junior Adam Montez, cornerback and running back; junior Tyler Fulton, safety; senior Joe Cazares, tight end; and senior Brandon Almanza, offensive line.

Forsan players Zach Gilliam and Michael Mims made the offensive and defensive line teams, respectively.



Special to the Herald/Bob Fishback

Sophomore Ty Johnson was a first-team running back selection.

Sports in brief

Steers, Lady Steers hoops to play first home games tonight

Big Spring basketball is in full swing as the boys and girls teams will host their first games of the season tonight at Steer Gym.

The girls team will play Greenwood tonight at 6 p.m. It is looking to rebound off a loss to Merkel last Tuesday.

The boys team, which played two overtime games in a row before the holiday break, will take on San Angelo Central at 7:30 p.m. Jerrell Williams scored 38 in the team's last game in Greenwood.

Coahoama hoops to host Seagraves tonight

The Bulldogs and Bulldogettes will host Seagraves tonight in Coahoma.

Girls junior varsity will tipoff at 4 p.m. Boys junior varsity will tipoff at 5:15 p.m.

Girls varsity will follow the boys' junior varsity game at 6:30 p.m., and the varsity boys will tipoff at 8 p.m.

The Bulldogs are coming off their best performance of the season, a win over Kermit last Tuesday.

Forsan basketball to host Sterling City

The Forsan Buffaloes will host Sterling City tonight in Forsan.

Junior varsity girls will tipoff at 4 p.m., and junior varsity boys will tipoff at 5 p.m.

The varsity girls team will start at 6:30 p.m., followed by the boys varsity at 8 p.m.

The Buffs and Lady Buffs are both coming off wins over Water Valley last Monday on the road. They will play again in the Garden City tournament on Thursday.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

It's an eventful time in the heavens. The full moon in Gemini brings a release. Communication and daily proceedings that were on hold will now progress. Uranus, the rebel of the zodiac, decides to stop all the retrograde madness and start transiting forward. In what aspect of your life would you like to do the same? Bust a move!



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The pressure is on, but that's where you shine brightest. With the clock ticking, everyone watching and the whole team counting on you -- that's just how you like it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your gift for prediction is uncanny. You seem to know where things are headed -- relationships and jobs particularly -- long before everyone else does. This kind of knowledge reflects a deeply intuitive and very helpful gift.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). While some around you will be fascinated with vapid, transitory things, for you the important stuff is what doesn't change: who you love and your spirituality for starters. Today you'll tend toward seeing the long term in everything.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You will rein in some of the extreme behavior of your youth. The deep plummets aren't worth the breathtaking heights. The trade-off for stability is more than worth it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

There's nothing wrong with going against the flow, as you well know. You won't feel like being a follower today. You'll prefer to make your own fun in your own time rather than have your pleasure dictated to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You are the first to be called on by a friend in need. There are two reasons for this: One is your loyalty and genuine desire to help, and the other is your extraordinary resourcefulness. You come up with quick answers that work.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You remember a time when big projects seemed like insurmountable mountains, but through determination and experience, you now see them as highly rewarding opportunities. This is a sign of your maturity and tenaciousness.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Never satisfied with "good enough," you put everything you have into a project and aim for the best. It's not really something you choose to do. It's just that the pursuit of perfection is basic to your personality.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You are yearning for something new. Just what, you can't say, but a fuzzy outline is beginning to take shape in your mind. Don't strain yourself to see it more clearly; it will come of its own accord.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's not quite time to break out the champagne, but you can start polishing the glassware. You've worked long and hard for this, and the moment of celebration is at hand.

highly favorable reviews. You're not putting on a show or doing anything calculated, you're just being yourself. Being your natural self is a harder thing to do than most people think -- thus the good press.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You are often sensitive to other people's feelings, even to the point of reading their moods in a gesture. Today your intuition is even more keen than usual, especially in regards to a Cancer person.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 1). You will be looking and feeling fantastic. With steady progress through the next two months, your habits support your image of who you want to be. This month you'll meet someone who understands you and can help you develop your talents. The end of January brings romance. February's business idea is a winner. Aries and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 33, 4, 17 and 40.

HOW TO GET THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WITH GRACE: As the sign of relationships, balance and harmony, LIBRA tends to have natural grace in even the most chaotic scenarios. So the prospect of the high-pressure holidays doesn't seem as daunting to Libra as it might to other signs. When various mishaps occur, from family feuds to leaden fruitcakes or gifts that quickly join the re-gift pile, Libra simply takes it in stride. One of the ways Libra maintains a positive outlook is by simplifying holiday proceedings. There is typically much to

choose from during the holidays -- where to go, who to see, what to bring, send, craft, cook, buy. And since decision-making isn't really a strong suit for the sign of the scales, simplifying the options is a must. Libra does well to adhere to some personal rules for guidance. For instance: Only say "yes" to the events you really, really, really want to attend. And: Allot a certain budget for gift buying, and stay in the limits. Once a few rules are established, Libra can

relax and let the natural charm and grace he or she was born with shine through.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: This provocative fire sign is adept at igniting rumors, causing a commotion and living in the center of the circus. Britney Spears is a Sagittarius with Mercury, Uranus and Neptune all in that exciting realm of the zodiac, as well. Venus in Capricorn balances out all that fire sign energy with a keen business sense and a deep love of

work. Spears considers it her job not to be boring, and she delivers.

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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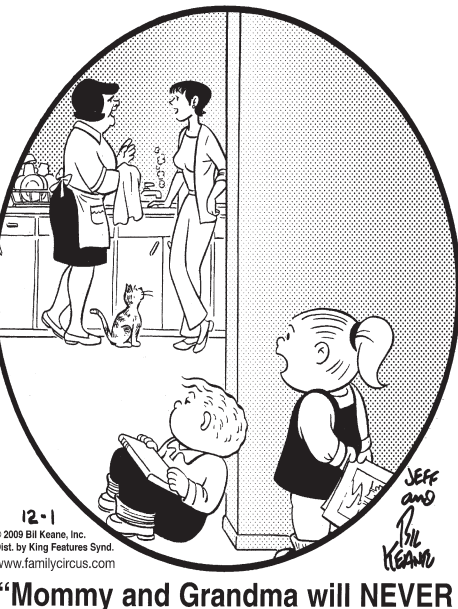
	WFAA (2) Dallas	KMID (3) Midland	UNI (4) Spanish	KPEJ (5) Odessa	KOSA (7) Odessa	KTLE (8) Telemundo	KWES (9) Midland	WTBS (11) Atlanta	KMLM (12) Odessa	KPBT (13) Odessa	DISC (20) Discovery	AMC (21) Classics	SPIKE (22) Spike TV	TNT (23) Atlanta	BET (26) Black Ent.	DISN (27) Disney	ESPN2 (28) Sports	ESPN (29) Sports
5:PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura	Lopez	News CBS	Noticias	News NBC	Seinfeld	Scrivner	BBC	Cash Cab	Stripes, Warren Oates	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Suite Life	Horn Interrupt	SportsCenter
6:PM	News ABC	Jeopardy!	Gancho	Lopez	News CBS	12 Cora-zones	News NBC	Name	Dr. Young	News-Lehrer	Cash Cab	Stripes, Warren Oates	UFC Un-leashed	Bones		Wizards of Waverly Place	NFL Live	College Basketball
7:PM	Christmas Elves	Christmas Elves	Nomb-Amor	So You Think You Can Dance	NCIS	Más Sabe el Diabolo	The Biggest Loser	Office	Upd	Nova (DVS)	Dirty Jobs	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	Ult. Knock-outs	Bones	Game	Movie: Happy Feet, Brittany Murphy	College Basketball: Maryland at Indiana.	College Basketball
8:PM	Scrubs	Scrubs	Sortilegio		NCIS: Los Angeles	Pobres		Office	Light of the Southwest	American Masters	Dirty Jobs	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	Super	Law & Order	Game	College Basketball: Virginia Tech at Iowa.		College Basketball
9:PM	the forgotten	the forgotten	Aquí y Ahora	Simpsons Friends	Fashion Show	Victorinos	The Jay Leno Show	Office	Office	Parks	Ghost Lab	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	Super	Law & Order	Monica	Phineas Montana		SportsCenter
10:PM	News Nightline	News Nightline	Impacto	Raymond	News TMZ	Noticias	News Tonight Show	Lopez Tonight	Upd Cortes	Charlie Rose	Dirty Jobs	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	UFC Un-leashed	CSI: NY	The Mo'Nique	Wizards So Raven	NBA	
11:PM	Insider Jimmy Kimmel Live	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Escuelita VIP	Law & Order: SVU	Late Late	Decisiones	Late Night-Jim	My Boys	Ministerio-Vida	BBC	Dirty Jobs	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	CSI: Crime Scn	CSI: NY	W. Williams	Life De Cory	SportsNation	NFL Live
12:AM	News	Paid	Torrente, un Torbel	King-Hill	Insider	Pagado	News	Sex & Church	Upd	Church	Ghost Lab	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	CSI: Crime Scn	NUMB3RS	Game	Replace Kim	World Series	SportsCenter
1:AM	Paid	Paid	Mujer... Cero	RENO 911	Insider	Pagado	News	Lopez Tonight	Light of the Southwest	Cash Cab	Cash Cab	Star Trek: Voyager	Star Trek: Voyager	Cold Case	Game	Emperor Dragon	World Series	SportsCenter

DENNIS THE MENACE



"It's not who you know that counts, Joey, it's who knows you and tells your mom."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

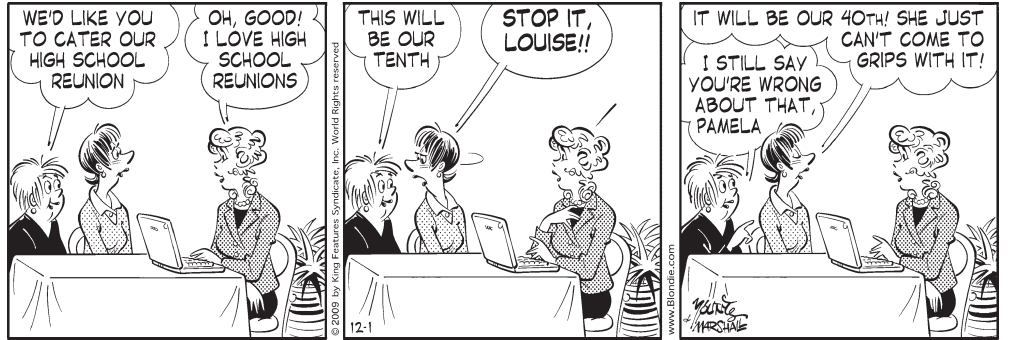


"Mommy and Grandma will NEVER get those dishes done, 'cause all they do is talk."

HAGAR



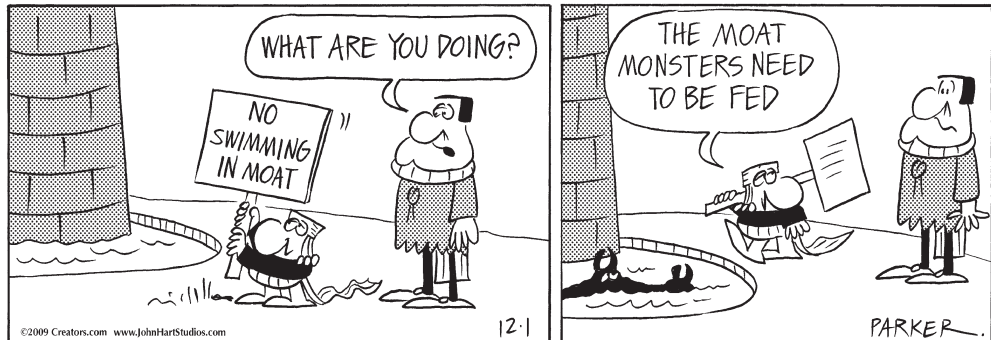
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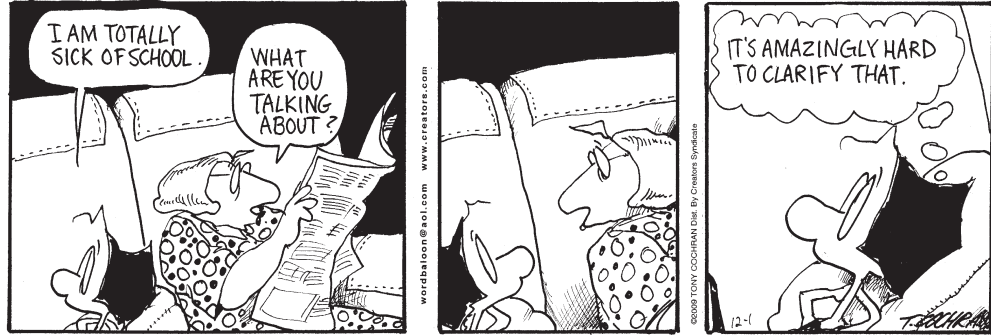
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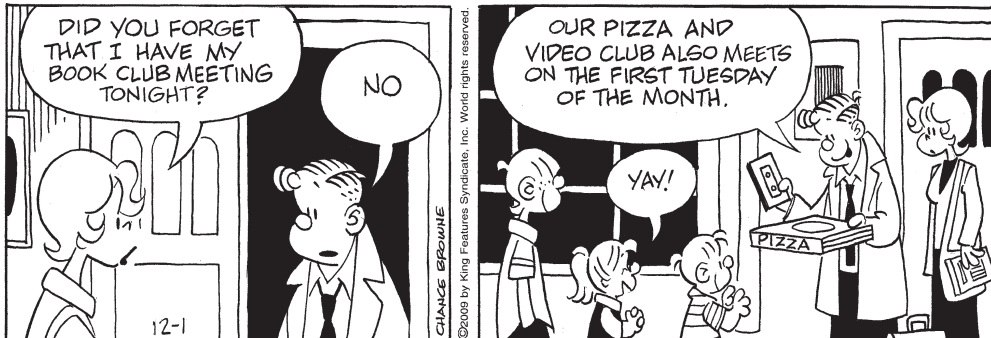
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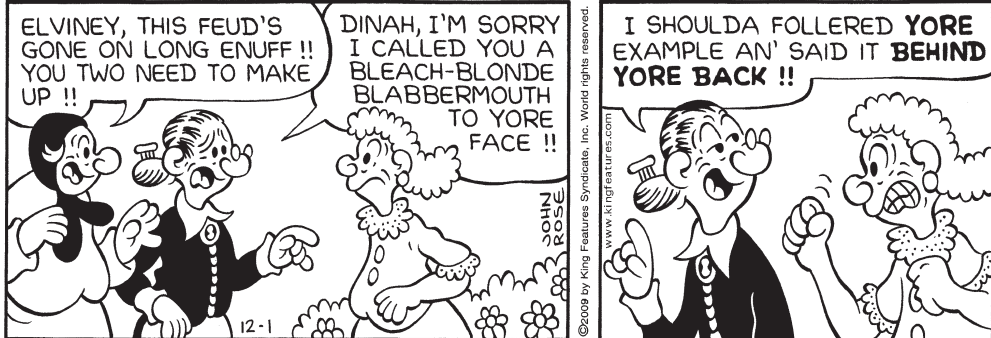
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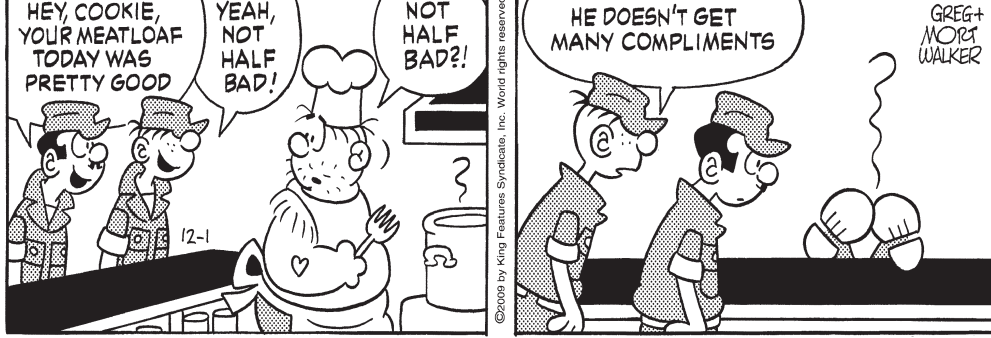
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 1, the 335th day of 2009. There are 30 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a black seamstress, refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Ala., city bus. Mrs. Parks was arrested, sparking a yearlong boycott of the buses by blacks.

On this date: In 1824, the presidential election was turned over to the U.S. House of Representatives when a deadlock developed between John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. (Adams ended up the winner.)

In 1909, the first kibbutz was founded in the Jordan Valley by a group of Jewish pioneers; the collective settlement became known as Degania Alef.

In 1913, the first drive-in automobile service station, built by Gulf Refining Co.,

opened in Pittsburgh.

In 1921, the Navy flew the first nonrigid dirigible to use helium; the C-7 traveled from Hampton Roads, Va., to Washington, D.C.

In 1934, Soviet communist official Sergei M. Kirov, an associate of Josef Stalin, was assassinated in Leningrad, resulting in a massive purge.

In 1944, Bela Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky.

In 1959, representatives of 12 countries, including the United States, signed a treaty in Washington setting aside Antarctica as a scientific preserve, free from military activity.

In 1969, the U.S. government held its first draft lottery since World War II.

In 1989, in an extraordinary encounter, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev met with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. East Germany's Parliament abolished the Communist Party's constitutional guarantee of supremacy.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Paul Picerni is 87. Former CIA

director Stansfield Turner is 86. Singer Billy Paul is 75. Actor-director Woody Allen is 74. Golfer Lee Trevino is 70. Singer Dianne Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 70. Country musician Casey Van Beek (The Tractors) is 67. TV producer David Salzman is 66. Rock singer-musician Eric Bloom (Blue Oyster Cult) is 65. Rock musician John Densmore (The Doors) is 65. Actress-singer Bette Midler is 64. Singer Gilbert O'Sullivan is 63. Actor Treat Williams is 58. Country singer Kim Richey is 53. Actress Charlene Tilton is 51. Actress-model Carol Alt is 49. Actor Jeremy Northam is 48. Producer-director Andrew Adamson is 43.

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Answer to previous puzzle

ACED	MIFF	STRAP
DARE	IDLE	THINS
LIRA	SOOT	RENTS
IRON	FLEAM	MARKET
BONSAI	EWI	
STORIES	SHE	
CHILI	WONT	HEAT
BARGAIN	BASEMENT	
ERIE	REIN	LODGE
RDS	BADNEWS	
NUT	REPAIR	
GARAGE	SALE	RISE
INOIL	ARIA	ISEE
STOVE	WEPT	CLAD
TIMER	SASH	EELS

Newsday Crossword

WHAT A FUSS by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS	DOWN	
1 Dentist's recommendation	1 "Saturated" food components	8 Done with response
6 Sailor's greeting	2 King of beasts	9 "Who, me?"
10 Faucet	3 Norway's capital	10 Chore-list heading
13 Path to the altar	4 Whole bunch	11 Partner of video
14 Cover with blacktop	5 Fixed charge	12 Chick's chirps
15 Colors	6 Highest grade	16 Pageant accessory
17 Vacant apartment sign	7 Like a werewolf	21 Comes to earth
18 Isn't truthful		25 Pts. of a day
19 Brainstorm		26 High-five, for example
20 Bit of winter weather		27 Mystical glow
22 Puppy bites		28 River barriers
23 Like child's play		29 Bed trimming
24 "Goodness gracious!"		30 Mile fractions
26 Make unhappy		33 Points at the target
30 Expensive coats		34 Go for it
31 Hawaiian feast		36 Denny's competitor
32 Go out with		
35 Mixes up		
39 Equips for combat		
40 Fathers		
42 Cleveland's state		
43 Sticky stuff		
45 Ancient legend		
46 Blockhead		
47 Lambs' papas		
49 Get back in business		
51 Last a long time		
54 Motown music genre		
56 Housetop		
57 "Never mind"		
63 "You wish!"		
64 Blind as		

UT defense staggering into Big 12 title game

JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer
 AUSTIN — The Texas swagger has been staggered — at least on defense.

For 11 games, the Texas defense played like a dominant unit, and ranked among the best in the country. Opponents couldn't run, few could pass.

Then Texas A&M pushed them all over the field on Thanksgiving night, right up until the Longhorns pulled out a 49-39 victory to keep their unbeaten season intact.

Now No. 3 Texas (12-0) has to hope its defense isn't facing a crisis of confidence heading into Saturday's Big 12 championship game against Nebraska (9-3).

Longhorns coach Mack Brown predicts

just the opposite.

"They will play their tails off," Brown said Monday. "They were mad. They are prideful kids. They were happy we won but they know it was not good."

The Longhorns could hardly do anything right against A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson, who picked them apart for 342 yards passing and four touchdowns and 97 yards rushing.

Only Texas Tech's Taylor Potts passed for more yards against Texas this season. Johnson's rushing total was the most by any player against the Longhorns this season and more than nine teams had against Texas.

Johnson put Texas on its heels with a 70-yard touchdown pass to Jeff Fuller on the third play

of the game.

"It was the worst thing we could do. It gave them some belief early in the game," defensive coordinator Will Muschamp said.

Muschamp ticked off a list of reasons the Longhorns were bad against the Aggies.

"We had some missed communication, assignments, alignments, 13 missed tackles ... critical errors on third down," Muschamp said. "It makes for a long night. It falls on my shoulders."

Muschamp said he changed some coverage calls before the game that led to the broken coverage on the long touchdown pass at the start of the game.

But Texas also looked befuddled trying to stop a mobile quarterback

who could throw and run. Nebraska may not have a similar player, but if Texas beats the Cornhuskers to reach the national championship game, the Longhorns may face Florida — and quarterback Tim Tebow.

The defense did come up with a couple of critical big plays against the Aggies. A fumble recovery set up a third-quarter touchdown and Earl Thomas' school-record eighth interception of the season killed a potential A&M touchdown drive in Texas territory.

Brown said the Longhorns are taking the approach that the defense had to rescue Texas in a 16-13 win over Oklahoma, so this time it was the offense's turn to provide the big plays.

Notre Dame fires Weis after dismal season

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Charlie Weis seemed like the perfect fit for Notre Dame.

An alumnus, a friend to Joe Montana, a mentor to New England quarterback Tom Brady and the owner of three Super Bowl rings from his days with the Patriots, Weis promised five years ago to outscheme other coaches while putting a "nasty" team on the field.

In the end, though, the man who as a student called the university president to complain about the play of the football team couldn't lift the Irish out of mediocrity. Athletic director Jack Swarbrick said Monday that Weis had been fired and the search had begun for someone who can end the longest title drought ever for Notre Dame's acclaimed football program.

"I believe our ability to take the next step and return to a level of prominence is all about bringing the right individual in here," Swarbrick said.

But who? Bob Davie, Tyrone Willingham and Weis, the last three to lead the Irish, all are among the worst coaches at Notre Dame.

Swarbrick, who took over as AD before the 2008 season, wouldn't be specific about criteria in seeking Weis' replacement other than to say he believes leadership is key and it is important the next coach has succeeded in building and sustaining a Division I program.

Swarbrick said he would consult with people in college and pro football to get their assessments on possible replacements as well as consulting with people at Notre Dame about characteristics the new coach should possess.

Receiver Golden Tate knew who he'd be looking for.

"To be honest, another guy like coach Weis, with great character and knows the game. Hopefully we can find someone who fits that criteria," said Tate, who plans to talk with Weis on Friday about whether he should enter the NFL draft.



Weis

Florida's Dunlap jailed for DUI, status for SEC title game unclear

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Top-ranked Florida could be without one of its best pass rushers against No. 2 Alabama in the Southeastern Conference championship game.

Defensive end Carlos Dunlap was arrested early Tuesday and charged with driving under the influence, just days before the biggest game of the season.

"We are aware of the incident and are currently gathering more information," coach Urban Meyer

said in a statement released by the school.

Meyer was expected to address the situation in more detail after practice Tuesday. He could suspend Dunlap for Saturday's game in Atlanta.

Dunlap, a 20-year-old junior from North Charleston, S.C., was arrested at 3:25 a.m. He was released on his own recognizance about six hours later during his initial appearance at the Alachua County Jail. Judge Mary

Day Coker admonished Dunlap for underage drinking, and said he cannot possess alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription drugs that are not prescribed for him.

He was told not to drive a motor vehicle without a license, and if caught driving without a license, he would violate the terms of his release. The judge released Dunlap without bond because he has no prior adjudications and no failures to appear in court.

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYOFF PAIRINGS

The Associated Press
CLASS 5A
State Quarterfinals
DIVISION I

Eules Trinity (11-2) vs. Arlington (11-2), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Bedford's Pennington Field
 Cypress Woods (11-2) vs. Round Rock Stony Point (12-1), 6 p.m. Saturday, Cypress' Berry Center

Katy Cinco Ranch (12-1) vs. Brazoswood (10-3), 1 p.m. Saturday, Houston's Rice Stadium

Austin Westlake (11-2) vs. SA Clark (13-0), 2 p.m. Saturday, San Antonio's Heroes Stadium

DIVISION II
State Quarterfinals

Abilene (12-0) vs. Arlington Bowie (11-2), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Arlington's Maverick Stadium
 Tyler John Tyler (12-1) vs. Klein (10-3), 2 p.m. Saturday, Waco ISD Stadium

Katy (12-1) vs. League City Clear Springs (11-2), 1 p.m. Saturday, Houston's Tully Stadium
 New Braunfels (10-3) vs. SA Brandeis (12-1), 2 p.m. Saturday, San Marcos' Bobcat Stadium

CLASS 4A
DIVISION I
State Quarterfinals

Denton Ryan (12-1) vs. Denton Guyer (12-1), 2 p.m. Saturday, Denton's Collins Complex

Longview (12-1) vs. Waxahachie (13-0), 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dallas' Kincaide Stadium
 Pearland Dawson (11-2) vs. Friendswood (10-3), 2 p.m. Saturday, Galena Park ISD Stadium

Lake Travis (13-0) vs. SA Alamo Heights (10-3), 7:30 p.m. Friday, San Mar-

cos' Bobcat Stadium

DIVISION II
State Quarterfinals

Everman (11-2) vs. Aledo (12-1), 2 p.m. Saturday, Burleson

Denison (12-1) vs. Sulphur Springs (10-3), 2 p.m. Saturday, SMU's Ford Stadium

Dayton (10-2) vs. Brenham (11-2), 6 p.m. Saturday, Katy's Rhodes Stadium

Kerrville Tivy (8-4) vs. Port Lavaca Calhoun (10-3), 7:30 p.m. Friday, San Antonio's Heroes Stadium

CLASS 3A
DIVISION I
State Semifinals

Abilene Wylie (11-1) vs. Lucas Lovejoy (12-1), 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Waco ISD Stadium

Gilmer (13-0) vs. Cuero (13-0), 6 p.m. Saturday, Huntsville's Bowers Stadium

DIVISION II
State Quarterfinals

Graham (12-1) vs. Wimberley (9-4), 7 p.m. Friday, Waco ISD Stadium
 Texarkana Pleasant Grove (9-3) vs. Pittsburg (11-1), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Longview

Lorena (10-3) vs. Carthage (13-0), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Corsicana
 Sinton (12-1) vs. La Grange (11-2), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Converse

CLASS 2A
DIVISION I
State Semifinals

Brady (13-0) vs. Pilot Point (13-0), 2 p.m. Saturday, Stephenville

Kirbyville (11-2) vs. Comfort (8-5), 6 p.m. Saturday, Waco's Floyd Casey Stadium

DIVISION II
State Quarterfinals

Bushland (13-0) vs. Crane (12-1), 7 p.m. Friday, Wolfforth
 Gainesville Callisburg (11-2) vs. McGregor (13-0), 6 p.m. Saturday, Midlothian

Daingerfield (12-1) vs. Newton (12-1), 2 p.m. Saturday, Nacogdoches' Homer Bryce Stadium

Blanco (12-1) vs. Refugio (13-0), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Victoria

CLASS 1A
DIVISION I
State Semifinals

Canadian (11-1) vs. Haskell (9-4), 2 p.m. Saturday, Canyon's Kim-

brough Stadium
 Joaquin (11-2) vs. Goldthwaite (13-0), 5 p.m. Saturday, Ennis

DIVISION II
State Quarterfinals

Stratford (10-2) vs. New Deal (13-0), 7 p.m. Friday, Amarillo's Bivins Stadium

Lindsay (12-1) vs. Albany (13-0), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aledo

Cayuga (11-1) vs. Mart (9-4), 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Corsicana

Falls City (13-0) vs. Ganado (8-4), 6 p.m. Saturday, New Braunfels Canyon HS

SIX-MAN
DIVISION I
State Semifinals

Follett (11-1) vs. Garden City (12-1), 6 p.m. Saturday, Plainview

Strawn (12-1) vs. Calvert (12-0), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Glen Rose

DIVISION II
State Semifinals

Motley County (10-3) vs. Borden County (13-0), 6 p.m. Saturday, Lubbock's Lowrey Field
 Roscoe Highland (12-0) vs. Walnut Springs (12-0), 7:30 p.m. Friday, Early

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.

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



By Steve Becker

Safeguarding the Contract

South dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
 ♠ J 5 3
 ♥ 8 7 4 3
 ♦ A J 9 6 4
 ♣ 6

WEST
 ♠ Q 9 4
 ♥ J 6
 ♦ Q 10 8 7
 ♣ Q J 10 8

EAST
 ♠ K 8 7 2
 ♥ Q 10 9 2
 ♦ 2
 ♣ 9 5 3 2

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 NT	Pass

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

Safety plays come in many different forms. In one variety, declarer can assure himself of no losers in a particular suit if he handles the card combination correctly.

Another kind might see declarer intentionally lose a trick in a suit — perhaps unnecessarily — in order to ensure not losing two.

Still another type might concern the hand as a whole. In this variation, declarer adopts an irregular approach to a particular card combination because of special circumstances presented by the deal.

Consider this case where South is

in three notrump and West leads the queen of clubs. Declarer wins with the king and can count seven sure tricks — a spade, two hearts, two diamonds and two clubs. The diamond suit clearly offers the best chance to pick up two additional tricks, so declarer cashes the diamond king and leads another diamond, on which West follows low.

Under normal circumstances, South's proper play would be to finesse the jack. But two factors militate against that play here. First, he needs only two additional tricks from the suit, not three. Second, there are no entries to dummy outside of the diamond suit itself.

South therefore plays the nine instead of the jack. He doesn't really expect the nine to win the trick, but this doesn't concern him. If the nine loses to the ten or queen, he is sure to score four diamond tricks and so make the contract.

More importantly, if West happens to have started with the Q-10-x-x of diamonds, finessing the nine allows declarer to pick up the entire suit. If South finesses the jack instead, he can't score more than three diamond tricks and ends up down one.

It is true that with this diamond combination, finessing the jack will prove the most lucrative play in the long run. But in this deal, the safety play is correct because it guarantees the contract.

Tomorrow: Precision defense.
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SAINTS

Continued from page 8

McKenzie's performance was an example of how things are going right this season for a franchise long beset by bad luck or plain bad play. The 12th-year cornerback broke his right kneecap a year ago, finished the season on injured reserve and then was cut. Because of recent injuries in their new defensive backfield, the Saints brought McKenzie back last week. In the first half, he intercepted Brady when the Patriots had a 7-3 lead and in Saints territory, threatening to tack on more.

"This group is very special," McKenzie said. "I feel honored just to have the opportunity to go out there and play with these guys."

Brees was not intercepted and his TD passes went to five different players — 18 yards to Pierre Thomas,

75 yards to Devery Henderson, 38 yards to Robert Meachem, 2 yards Darnell Dinkins and 20 yards to Marques Colston. In doing so, the Pro Bowl quarterback kept New Orleans on pace to narrowly eclipse the single-season scoring record of 589 points New England set in 2007.

He also became the first quarterback to throw for five TDs in a game against the Patriots since Belichick, a defensive guru for decades in the NFL, took over as head coach in 2000.

Brady was making his first appearance in the Louisiana Superdome since leading the Patriots to their first Super Bowl title in February 2002. This time he became the Patriots' career passing leader, eclipsing Drew Bledsoe's mark of 29,657 yards in the third quarter, but will have few other fond memories of his latest visit. He

was intercepted twice, sacked once, hit as he threw several times and pulled from the game in the fourth quarter after Darren Sharper's interception.

The Saints were leading by three TDs by then, en route to their ninth double-digit win of the season.

"They were better than we were in every phase," Belichick said. "I don't know how to put it any other way. ... They were obviously the better team."

NOTES: The Saints have 22 interceptions this season, which leads the NFL. Sharper has eight. ... New England lost a regular-season game in New Orleans for the first time after winning its previous four. ... Saints CB Chris McAlister, signed two weeks ago, played for the first time since having surgery on his right knee a year ago. ... Cornerback Randall Gay had a leg injury but it was not specified.

'BOYS

Continued from page 8

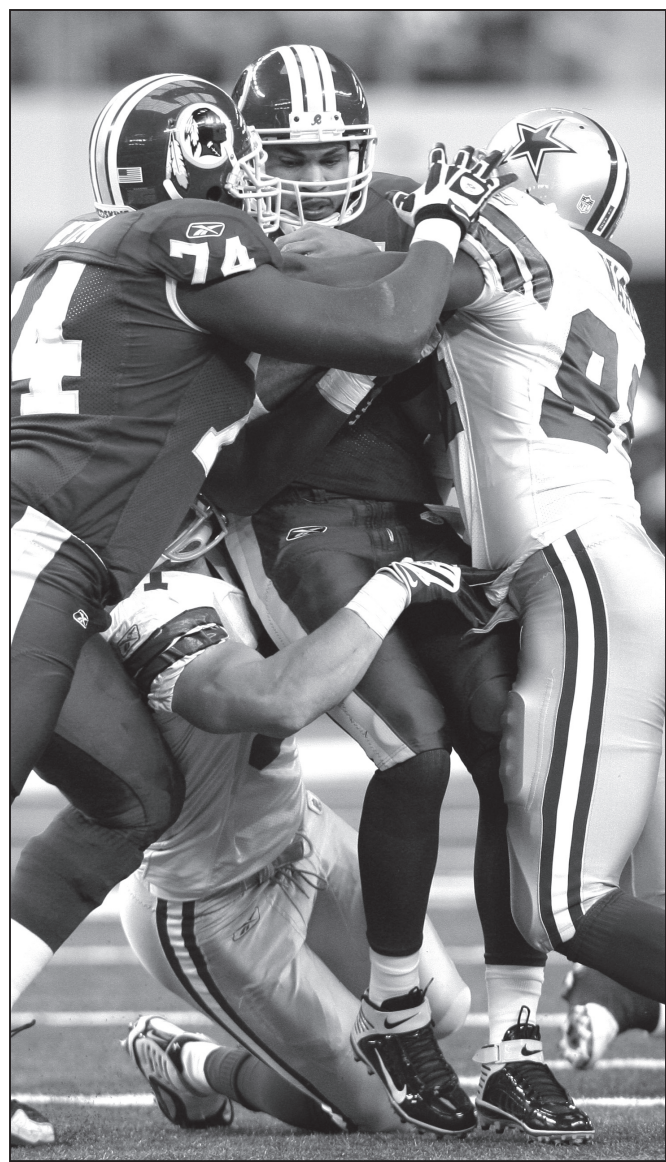
nose tackle Jay Ratliff said. "We're playing together, we all understand each other, trust each other and we're all buying into the system."

There were changes in the starting lineup after the offseason departures of linebackers Greg Ellis and Zach Thomas, safety Roy Williams, cornerback Anthony Henry and defensive end Chris Canty. Plus, head coach Wade Phillips fully took on the additional role as defensive coordinator after firing Brian Stewart.

"We've just been more consistent, went back to basics," Phillips said, explaining the improvement since the early problems. "Just melding the defense together. No excuses, but we did have new guys. Those guys playing together, it's a little bit different. ... (we) found a niche to what we can play defensively and what we can't play, what our strengths and weaknesses are."

Dallas has won six of its last seven games, the lone loss being 17-7 at Green Bay. The Cowboys were 2-2 before that, including a 17-10 loss at then-undefeated Denver, which had a three-play, 73-yard game-winning drive for a TD with 1:01 left.

"The first few weeks of the season, we would play really good football for 3½ quarters and it seemed like for a half a quarter, all hell would break loose. We're a lot more consistent in



AP Photo/LM Otero
The Cowboys' Keith Brooking and DeMarcus Ware sack Redskins quarterback Jason Campbell in Dallas on Nov. 22 in Arlington. The Cowboys will rely on a stingy defense in December to get into the playoffs, where they haven't won in more than a decade.

our play," linebacker Keith Brooking said. "We want to be the best. We're not there yet, we're not even close to being there yet. ... We can't take any steps back at this point. We've got to keep moving forward."

After the Giants, Dallas plays consecutive high-scoring division leaders, San Diego and then New Orleans. The Cowboys close the regular season against NFC East foes Washington and

Philadelphia. "Everything in the beginning is a filling-out process, and I think everybody now is totally understanding how our defense works, and we're just playing with so much confidence," defensive tackle Stephen Bowen said. "We all know we have the ability to stop somebody, just stifle a team whenever we want to."

The team will face a test against elite quarterbacks in Drew Brees and Phillip Rivers.



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STEERS

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quarterback; senior Xavian Parnell, outside linebacker; senior Derrick Anderson, defensive end; junior Dennis Merworth, safety; and senior Kyler McGee, defensive tackle.

All-district team 2009
1st team Offense
Center- Matt Freeman, Abilene Cooper; Guards- Kenneth Reel, Lake View; Jonathon Molina, Big Spring; Tackles- Anthony Evans, Abilene Cooper; David Damian, Abilene Cooper; Jordan Nichols, Frenship; Tight End- Reese Williams, Abilene Cooper; Receivers- Tommy Bowman, Abilene Cooper; Jonathan Davis, Hereford; Thaddeus Straughter, Big Spring; J.D. Smith, Lake View; Running backs- Monte Anderson, Big Spring; Davon Riddick, Abilene Cooper; Fullback- Matt Ritchey, Big Spring; Quarterbacks- Ryan Heslep, Abilene Cooper; Punter- Parker Bridwell, Hereford; Jason Miller, Plainview; Offensive newcomer- Riddick, Abilene Cooper; Offensive MVP- Anderson, Big Spring

1st team defense
Cornerbacks- T.C. Robinsosn, Abilene Cooper; Daniel Paschel, Hereford; Safeties- Ryan Martinez, Hereford; Josh Bowman, Abilene Cooper; Inside linebackers- Matt Ritchey, Big Spring; Josh Robinson, Abilene Cooper; Outside linebackers- Ty Robinson, Abilene Cooper; Chance Aven, Plainview; Pavel Plakhotny, Big Spring; Defensive ends- Jacob Hinojos, Plainview; Quincy Moore, Abilene Cooper; Defensive line- Steven Henry, Big Spring; Joe Dillard, Abilene Cooper; Kickers- Xavier Vasquez, Frenship; Parker Bridwell, Hereford; Defensive newcomer- Josh Bowman, Abilene Cooper; Defensive MVP- Ritchey, Big Spring; Utility Player- Chance Aven, Plainview;

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