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Garden City on magical run

Page 1B

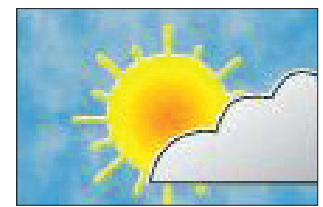


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BIG SPRING HERALD

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 3, 2009



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HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Heritage Museum Director Nancy Raney adjusts a teddy bear on one of the many trees that will be on display when the museum unveils its third annual Christmas Tree Forest Saturday. The exhibit will run through Jan. 5.

Intruder report stirs lockdown at junior high

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

A pair of unidentified intruders caused officials to lock down classrooms at Big Spring Junior High School Wednesday afternoon, but classes resumed without incident soon after.



Saldivar

Big Spring Independent School District Superintendent Steven Saldivar said the lock down order occurred shortly before 1 p.m. when a

teacher spotted two unidentified males in one of the school's corridors.

"When we order a lockdown, wherever the kids are, that's where they stay, whether it's in the classroom of the library or wherever," Saldivar said. "And those rooms are not unlocked until the principal gives the 'all clear' signal."

The two males were subsequently spotted on security cameras but apparently had left the building before police arrived on the scene. After a

See **BSJH**, Page 3A

Living Tree ready to greet holidays

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

A Big Spring holiday tradition will celebrate its 31st incarnation when First United Methodist Church hosts the Living Christmas Tree Saturday and Sunday.

Performances open to the public include a dress

What: Living Christmas Tree.

Where: First United Methodist Church, Scurry and Fourth streets.

When: Dress rehearsal, 2 p.m. Saturday; Performances, 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

See **TREE**, Page 3A

Fire officials cautiously optimistic

Expect threat of incidents to grow, however

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Officials with the Big Spring Fire Department are knocking on wood, and with good

reason. The seasonal upswing in the number of house fires the city of Big Spring and outlying areas normally experience has yet to arrive, according to Fire Marshal Carl Condray, but the good luck doesn't nor-



Condray

mally last. "Normally, when the weather turns cold we see a big increase in the number of structure fires, caused mainly by people looking for ways to stay warm," said Condray. "However, we haven't seen that increase yet, and here we are going into December. It's a surprise, and certainly a good surprise, but I'd say

the chances of it lasting are pretty slim, especially with temperatures really beginning to bottom out."

Condray said there was a small rash of fires reported two weeks ago, but most came from the same source.

"We responded to some fires a couple of weeks ago in the area behind Wal-Mart where a lot of the transients

are found," said Condray. "However, those were from campfires they were using to keep warm. We've been really fortunate that's all we've seen so far this year."

However, with Crossroads residents expected to get in the holiday spirit with traditional decorations — many

See **FIRE**, Page 3A

State hospital patients in need of winter coats

Special to the Herald

Big Spring State Hospital patients are braving the cooler weather without warm jackets needed to fight the winter chill.

"Many of the patients arrive at the hospital with only one set of clothing and depend largely upon donations from

the public to get through the winter", said Debby Cook, Big Spring State Hospital interim director of Activity Therapies Department.

"But this year's economic conditions have left many patients without coats that usually come in at this time of

See **COATS**, Page 3A

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Inside the Big Spring Mall

Merry Christmas

Garden City on magical run in state semifinal

Herald Staff Report

GARDEN CITY — Garden City head coach Vance Jones has been a popular man around town this week.

As he went to the girls basketball game Tuesday, he said he could hardly watch the game without someone wanting to talk with him about the Bearkats' thrilling comeback victory over then No. 1-ranked Throckmorton last week.

Now, the Bearkats are No. 1 and in the state semifinals for the first time in school history with an eye at the ultimate prize — a state champion-

ship.

But first, the team will have to get by Follett in Sundown at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, which after beating Meadow 52-30 is 12-1 and the No. 2 ranked team in the state. Its only loss was to Throckmorton on Oct. 2.

"They're not huge, but they have pretty good size, and they look good on film," Jones said by telephone Wednesday. "We've got to do our best to stop them and score as much as we can when we get the ball."

Scoring wasn't a problem in the first half last week for Garden City. The team matched Throckmorton's

Michael Everett score for score with a balanced run and pass attack from running back Josh Colunga and quarterback Blayne Batla.

Batla threw for better than 250 yards and five touchdowns, and Colunga ran for 163 yards and threw for 79 more, accounting for five Bearkat touchdowns of his own. That included the game-winner, a 21-yard toss on fourth down to Aaron Long with less than two minutes to play that gave Garden City an 84-80 lead.

The team earned its second U.S. Army Strong Team of the Week honor of the season with the win.



HERALD Photo/Joe Zigtema

Garden City's Josh Colunga powers past Throckmorton's Michael Everett in Merkel last week.

CRUISE CONTROL



HERALD File Photo/Joe Zigtema

Howard College's Jackie Bartelson puts up a shot over a Wayland Baptist defender Nov. 2 at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. Bartelson is averaging 10 points per game, third best on the team.

Young Hawks breeze to 12-0 record

By JOE ZIGTEMA
Sports Editor

Coming into this season, the Howard College women's basketball team had a lot of question marks.

The team returned no players — zero — from one that made its first visit to the national tournament in 14 years last year.

But so far, the 13 new Hawks have answered every question asked of them on the way to a 12-0 record.

"I'm really pleased with this team and how it's progressed, especially bringing in a whole new team," Diddle said. "But we've got a long way to go."

The team does have a long

way to go — its opponents thus far have a combined 19-35 record heading into Friday's home game against Dyess Air Force Base, and that's not counting the four games they've played against junior varsity opponents. But Diddle doesn't worry about the record.

"It's more important how we play," he said. "There have probably been 15 minutes in the 12 games that I've been disappointed in how we played. Even with some of the lopsided scores that we've had, we've still got a lot out of it, and I think the kids feel that they've got a lot out of it."

The Hawks have won their games by an average of 25

points this season and are allowing less than 50 points a game — a stat that ranks fourth in the country.

"We have a pretty distinct style of play offensively and defensively," Diddle said, "but I think overall they've done a really good job in their team development. That's the big thing."

That style of play is tough, pressure defense — the Hawks have forced an average of 11 steals per game — and a fast-paced offense built around perimeter shooters such as per game scoring leaders Tasha Tubbs and Twyla Ards, averaging 14 and 11 per game, respectively. Ards missed two

See **HAWKS**, Page 2B

SEC title game grand stage for Heisman

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Who needs Heisman Trophy champagne? Florida's Tim Tebow and Alabama's Mark Ingram have a potentially much more effective outlet to demonstrate their Heisman worthiness than highlight-packed DVDs, life-sized posters or glossy bios.

A No. 1 versus No. 2 showcase that is practically must-see TV for on-the-fence Heisman voters and college football fanatics. If one of these players has a huge Southeastern Conference championship game Saturday and sends his team on to play for the national title, it could be like a three-hour — OK, maybe four — commercial any political candidate would envy.

"This is a very big stage," said Ivan Maisel, a Heisman voter who covers college football for ESPN and is considering Ingram and Tebow for his ballot. "And I think for both of these guys, and moreso for Ingram, it could be to their advantage."

This big stage could be the biggest edge Tebow, the top-ranked Gators' larger-than-life quarterback, and No. 2 Crimson Tide tailback Ingram have over other contenders.

Colt McCoy and No. 3 Texas face 21st-ranked Nebraska for

the Big 12 championship. C.J. Spiller leads No. 25 Clemson against No. 12 Georgia Tech in the Atlantic Coast Conference title game, while Stanford's Toby Gerhart will have to settle for a huge game against limping Notre Dame as his end-of-season Heisman.

Then there's the SEC's two candidates, both of whom have downplayed the personal significance of their game this week. It's hard to ignore for everyone, though.

Tebow said the Heisman, which he won in 2007, is "kind of totally out of my mind frame."

"It's something that I'm not thinking about or worried about because our goal is to win the SEC championship and that's our focus," he said. "Winning a Heisman Trophy would be special and was special, and it does mean a lot. But not compared to winning an SEC title. They're two different things in my eyes, and the SEC is really my focus."

Ingram seconds that.

"It's a team sport," he said. "I've never seen a football game where one person has just done everything to win the game. I'm sure if he wants to win, his team is going to have to help him out and they're going to have a major

See **HEISMAN**, Page 2B

Nebraska hopes to make mess of Texas, BCS in Big 12 title game

Associated Press

ARLINGTON — Nebraska can make a mess of the BCS.

The 21st-ranked Cornhuskers play No. 3 Texas in the Big 12 championship game Saturday at Dallas Cowboys Stadium. If the Longhorns win — they're 14-point favorites — then the Bowl Championship Series lineup gently falls into place.

Texas will play the winner of the Southeastern Conference champi-

onship game showdown between No. 1 Florida and No. 2 Alabama in the national title game on Jan. 7 in Pasadena, Calif.

A Longhorns' victory also likely clears the way for Boise State to receive an at-large bid, as long as the Broncos finish lowly New Mexico State at home on Saturday.

It won't quite be a gripe-free selection Sunday for the BCS — not with as many as three other teams sporting undefeated records and no chance of

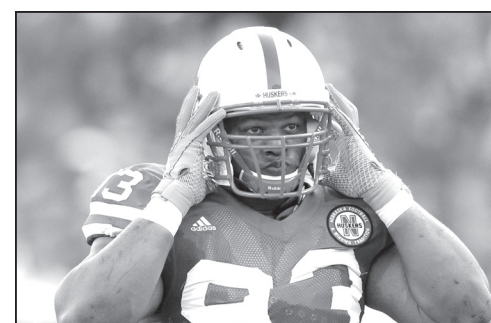
winning a national title — but relatively speaking, angst will be low.

Now if the Huskers pull the upset, things get murky.

Does No. 4 TCU, idle after completing its perfect season last week, slide into the spot Texas has reserved in the national title game?

Could No. 5 and unbeaten Cincinnati, which plays at Pittsburgh for the Big East championship, leapfrog the

See **BCS**, Page 2B



AP Photo/Dave Weaver

Ndamukong Suh hopes to give Texas fits Saturday in Arlington.

Sports in brief

Tournament action starts tonight for area high schools

See tomorrow's Herald for results Andrews Tournament

Big Spring boys vs. Lamesa, 10:30 a.m.
Big Spring girls vs. Abernathy, 3 p.m.

Coahoma Invitational

Stanton vs. Midland High JV, 11 a.m.
Stanton girls vs. Borden County, 3:30 p.m.
Big Spring JV vs. Sweetwater, 5 p.m.
Coahoma girls vs. Sands, 6:30 p.m.
Coahoma boys vs. Sands, 10:30 a.m.

Garden City Bearkat Klassic

Grady girls vs. McCamey 8 a.m.
Grady boys vs. McCamey, 9:30 a.m.
Forsan boys vs. Christoval, 2 p.m., EP JC 8 p.m.
Forsan girls vs. Christoval, 3:30 p.m.
Garden City girls vs. EP Jesus Chapel, 6:30 p.m.

Big Spring volleyball team finishes season 12-0

Big Spring's fourth, fifth and sixth grade volleyball team completed its season in November undefeated 12-0.

The team, the Spiker Habaneros, was coached by

Liz Viasana and K. Maumau. The Habaneros won their league with their undefeated record.

Team members were Gabby Viasana, Rainbow Maumau, Mia Oliva, Mariah Sarmiento, Alexis Garcia, Gabriella Rubio, Ashley Gonzalez and Isabel Solis.

Howard College Hawk Buddies Program scheduled this weekend

The Howard College Hawks are hosting a clinic Saturday for girls kindergarten through eighth grade. Cost is \$20 for the event. Call Earl Diddle at 264-5043 for more information or to register.

Obituaries

Teresa Barber

Teresa Barber, 54, of Big Spring, died Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009 at her residence. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Shirley Callinson

Shirley Callinson, 73, of Big Spring, died Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009 in a local nursing home. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Carol Jean Lightfoot

Carol Jean Lightfoot, 57, of Stanton, formerly of Arlington died Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009, at Stanton Nursing and Rehabilitation. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Sheriff

following activity (officials reported 86 prisoners in the county jail):

- MICHAEL NEAL BIRMELIN, 29, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a probation revocation warrant.
- NICHOLAS BOLLETER, 18, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of theft.
- ERNEST LEE CHANCE, 53, was arrested by deputies on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.
- BARNEY ALAN DODD, 39, was arrested by deputies on a charge of credit card abuse.
- NINFA GARCIA, 53, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.
- JOHNNY LARA, 20, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on three contempt warrants.
- ANTHONY MALDONADO, 18, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of theft.
- ABILENE RENE MOJICA, 27, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on charges of possession of marijuana and resisting arrest.
- BRANDON ANTHONY MORAN, 19, was arrested by deputies on a charge of possession of marijuana.
- SHETOYA NICOLE NEWTON, 20, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on charges of terroristic threat and possession of drug paraphernalia.
- AMADOR RIOS, 28, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of violating a protective order.
- JOHNNY RAY VIERA, 24, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- KEVIN WAYNE WARD, 39, was arrested by deputies on a charge of manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance.
- LEROY ZUBIATE, 25, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana.

The Big Spring Fire Department/Emergency

Lottery

Results of the Lotto Texas drawing Wednesday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 4-7-22-25-39-43.
Number matching six of six: 0.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Wednesday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 26-28-30-32-33.
Number matching five of five: 0.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 8-0-8-1. Sum It Up: 17.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Wednesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 7-6-8. Sum It Up: 21

www.bigspringherald.com

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

- LEROY ZUBIATE, 25, 301 N.E. Fourth, was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana.
- ALBERTO JOSE GALLEGOS, 20, 301 N.E. Fourth, was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana.
- ABILENE RENEE MOJICA, 27, 1207 Sycamore, was arrested on charges of possession of marijuana and resisting arrest.
- MICHAEL NEAL BIRMELIN, 29, 502 Young, was arrested on a Howard County warrant.
- AMADOR RIOS JR., 28, 700 Douglas, was arrested on a charge of violation of a protective order.
- AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON was reported in the 1500 block of Sycamore.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported in the 1900 block of Highway 87.
- BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE was reported in the 1000 block of Birdwell.
- DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED/INVALID was reported in the 1900 block of Martin Luther King.
- POSSESSION OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA was reported in the 1000 block of Birdwell.
- POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA was reported in the 400 block of Fourth.
- TERRORISTIC THREAT was reported in the 1000 block of Birdwell.
- THEFT was reported in the 500 block of Lamesa and the 1000 block of Birdwell.
- VIOLATION OF A PROTECTIVE ORDER was reported in the 400 block of Lancaster.

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the

Fire/EMS

Medical Service reported the following activity:

- MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of Anna. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1000 block of N. Main. Service was refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2500 block of Ann. 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. For more information, contact Beverly Grant at 268-4952.

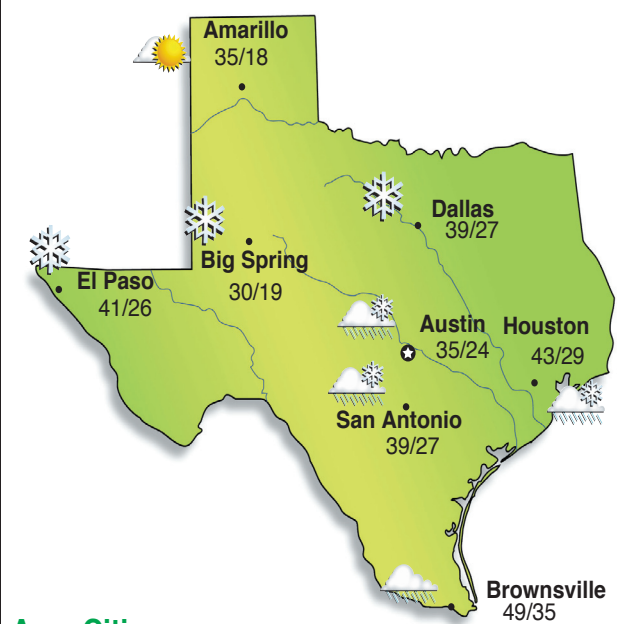
Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast

Fri 12/4	Sat 12/5	Sun 12/6
 30/19 Snow during the morning will give way to partly cloudy conditions during the afternoon. Cold. High near 30F.	 47/30 Considerable cloudiness. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the low 30s.	 57/30 More sun than clouds. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise: 7:32 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM	Sunrise: 7:33 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM	Sunrise: 7:33 AM Sunset: 5:41 PM

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Texas At A Glance



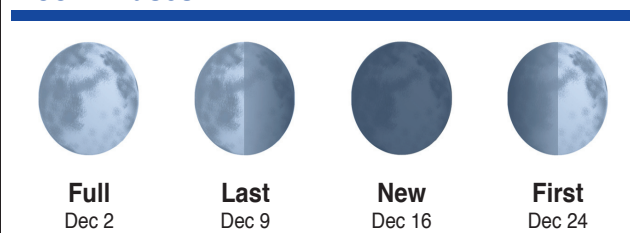
Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	38	26	sn shower	Kingsville	44	31	rain
Amarillo	35	18	mst sunny	Livingston	41	24	mixed
Austin	35	24	sn shower	Longview	38	26	sn shower
Beaumont	44	31	mixed	Lubbock	34	16	sn shower
Brownsville	49	35	rain	Lufkin	40	25	mixed
Brownwood	37	25	sn shower	Midland	35	20	snow
Corpus Christi	45	32	rain	Raymondville	45	32	rain
Corsicana	37	26	sn shower	Rosenberg	43	29	mixed
Dallas	39	27	flurries	San Antonio	39	27	mixed
Del Rio	41	26	mixed	San Marcos	36	24	mixed
El Paso	41	26	flurries	Sulphur Springs	43	27	cloudy
Fort Stockton	32	21	snow	Sweetwater	33	22	sn shower
Gainesville	43	24	pt sunny	Tyler	37	25	sn shower
Greenville	42	23	cloudy	Weatherford	41	24	flurries
Houston	43	29	mixed	Wichita Falls	46	25	pt sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	51	38	cloudy	Minneapolis	26	19	flurries
Boston	50	34	sunny	New York	52	38	mst sunny
Chicago	31	23	cloudy	Phoenix	60	38	sunny
Dallas	39	27	flurries	San Francisco	61	41	pt sunny
Denver	31	16	sunny	Seattle	45	34	mst sunny
Houston	43	29	mixed	St. Louis	37	26	mst sunny
Los Angeles	71	45	windy	Washington, DC	50	36	cloudy
Miami	82	73	t-storm				

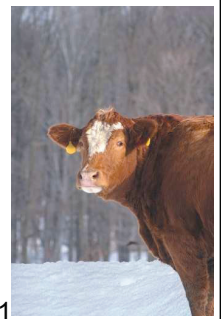
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HAWKS

Continued from 1B

games with a concussion suffered in a Garden City, Kan., tournament, but has bounced back nicely, Diddle said.

"She's just got tremendous quickness, she really knows the game, she's a very smart player, a tremendous athlete and really is a problem for most defenses," he said, "especially when she's in the open court or she can attack someone one-on-one."

The team also has an inside presence in Jackie Bartelson, a six-foot-3-inch post who is averaging 10 points a game and is the team's leading rebounder. Diddle said he would like to see his team work on its inside game.

"Any coach, if you're going to play well in March, you have to



Herald File Photo/Joe Zigtema

Tasha Tubbs shoots a free throw at Dorothy Garrett Coliseum Nov. 2.

have a consistent inside game," he said. "So that's always a concern, being able to get the ball inside and being able to score inside. We've done that when we've had to, and I think we need to do it a little more."

Does this team have what it takes to make it back to the national tournament? Diddle said though it's going to take improvement, these women might.

"I think this team at the end, if it continues to progress, could be a more effective team than last year," he said.

"We're a little more athletic, we're a little better shooters, we're a little better rebounders, we're a little better defensively and we're just a little better. So if this team progresses the way I hope it will, we could be a little bit better."

BCS

Continued from 1B

crack at its conference rival at the Rose Bowl?

So what happens if Nebraska beats Texas?

"It's impossible to say for sure," says BCS analyst Jerry Palm. "I think the computers will like Cincinnati and not TCU. I think the SEC runner-up is part of the equation, and it depends on how that game goes, how close they are."

The BCS standings have three components. The Harris poll, the coaches' poll and a compilation of six computer rankings. Each component counts for a third of a teams BCS average, and its points received in the polls, not placement, that is factored in.

"If voters feel strongly about a particular team, that team will win it," Palm said. "If it's a close

vote, the more say the computers have. The more easily the computers can overturn the rankings."

While TCU enjoys its week off, kicking back to pull for the Huskers, the Horned Frogs should also take some time to root for Pitt against the Bearcats.

"TCU is sitting there on the couch watching everybody else play and eating pizza," Palm said. "That's a bad place to be while Cincinnati is on the road playing a top-15 team, able to impress the voters."

Palm said it is so difficult to predict what will happen if Nebraska wins because the teams involved are unlike any that have played in a BCS title game since the formula was changed to give poll voters the majority of the power in setting the championship matchup.

If Texas loses,

Cincinnati wins and the SEC game is a down-to-the-wire classic, the choices will be:

— A team from a non-automatic qualifying conference (TCU).

— A team that did not win its conference (SEC runner-up).

— A Big East team with no past history of playing at a high level.

"You can't assume traditional voting patterns would hold," Palm said.

And what about Boise State? Well, if Nebraska wins the Big 12's automatic BCS bid, Texas is a lock to be an at-large pick and the Broncos are looking at another perfect regular-season that lands them in a second-tier bowl game.

That should go over well among those who believe the BCS hates underdogs.

So if you like mystery, outrage and muddle, Nebraska is the team for you.



Pigskin Picks

Thursday, December 3, 2009 will conclude the Pigskin Picks

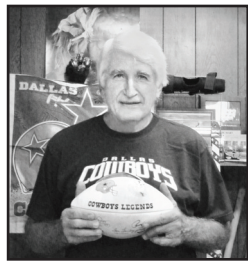
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7. Carolina
8. New Orleans
9. New England

1. Garden City
2. Houston Texas
3. Dallas
4. Philadelphia Eagles
5. Denver Broncos
6. Chicago
7. Carolina
8. New Orleans
9. New England

1. Follett
2. Houston Texas
3. Dallas
4. Philadelphia Eagles
5. Denver Broncos
6. Chicago
7. Carolina
8. New Orleans
9. New England

1. Garden City
2. Houston Texas
3. Dallas
4. Philadelphia Eagles
5. Denver Broncos
6. Chicago
7. Carolina
8. New Orleans
9. New England

1. Garden City
2. Jacksonville
3. Dallas
4. Atlanta
5. Denver Broncos
6. Chicago
7. Carolina
8. New Orleans
9. New England

Enter To Win \$50 At These Participating Merchants

Rules: Find this week's games in the merchants' ads on this page. Choose the teams you think will win. Clip and fill in the official entry blank on this page with your team choice. The entry with the most correct picks will win \$50. You must be 18 to enter. Only official entry forms accepted. In the event of a tie, the tie breaker will determine the winner. Guess the winner and the combined scores for the total points. Decisions of the judges are final. Employees and families of employees of The Big Spring Herald are ineligible. All entries must be received at one of the participating merchants by 1 p.m. Friday of the week played. Winners will be announced in the Big Spring Herald the Wednesday following the games.

Pigskin Picks Entry Form

<p>Team</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p> <p>6. _____</p> <p>7. _____</p> <p>8. _____</p> <p>9. _____</p> <p>10. _____</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Phone Number: _____</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Tie Breaker - Circle the winner and note total points scored</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Indianapolis Colts Vs. Tennessee</p> <p>Total Points _____</p>
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State briefs

West Texas tot, 2, shoots 16-year-old cousin

MIDLAND (AP) — A 16-year-old boy is hospitalized in the West Texas city of Midland after his 2-year-old cousin shot him in the chest.

Midland police Sgt. David Garcia says the teen was visiting his cousin and his wife at a Midland apartment complex about 8:30 p.m. Tuesday when the couple's toddler son picked up a loaded handgun and fired.

Garcia says detectives are trying to establish to whom the gun belongs and why it was within the tot's reach. But the spokesman says a toy gun was sitting beneath a Christmas tree and that the toddler "had obviously been playing with the toy gun that looks like a real gun." He added, "It's tough for a 2-year-old to distinguish the difference."

Garcia says the teen underwent surgery and is out of danger. No names are being disclosed.

Convicted sex offender Comeaux still loose

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — Rewards totaling \$30,000 are offered for information leading to Texas prison escapee Arcade Joseph Comeaux (KOH'-moh) Jr.

Department of Corrections spokeswoman Michelle Lyons said Thursday that the convicted sex offender was still on the run.

Comeaux was in a wheelchair Monday when he pulled a gun on two guards during a transfer from a unit in Huntsville to one in Beaumont. Both guards were released after being forced to drive to the Baytown area, where Comeaux ran away.

Comeaux was serving life in prison for aggravated sexual assault out of Brazos County.

The U.S. Marshal's Service is offering a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the capture of Comeaux. Crime Stoppers will pay up to an additional \$5,000 for tips leading to his arrest.

Egg with cross indentation found by Texas couple

BURLESON (AP) — A Fort Worth-area couple

says one of their hens laid an egg with a cross on the end of it.

Pam and Tracy Norrell of Burleson, who displayed the odd-shaped egg, say they believe it's a sign of encouragement during the holiday season.

Tracy Norrell says he was gathering eggs Monday night when one he picked up seemed to be unusual, not smooth like other eggs. The misshapen egg has an indentation on one end with what appears to be a cross on it.

The Norrells say eating the egg is not an option. Burleson is about 10 miles south of Fort Worth.

5 University of North Texas frat members accused of hazing

DENTON (AP) — The alleged striking of fraternity pledges with a wooden paddle has led to hazing charges against five University of North Texas students.

UNT deputy police Chief Ed Reynolds says the October case involving 12 pledges has been forwarded to the district attorney's office.

The school in Denton has suspended the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity pending results of the investigation. An affidavit says the hazing happened on or around Oct. 10, in which at least one victim had welts and bruising on his chest, buttocks and back.

The Denton Record-Chronicle reports two students originally were charged last month with hazing, causing severe bodily injury, then three more students were charged.

University spokeswoman Deborah Leliaert says the matter will also be reviewed by the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Denton woman reports fake massage student

DENTON (AP) — Denton police are looking for an assault suspect who posed as a massage student to touch a woman and then ask her out.

A police report said the 21-year-old Denton woman answered a knock at her door by someone who claimed he was doing field work for a massage

class.

She let the man into her apartment and allowed him to massage her, but became suspicious when he asked her to keep taking off more clothes Monday.

Police say the woman finally got the man to leave, but not before he asked her to go on a date.

She declined.

She called the massage school and was told the man was not enrolled. She then called police.

A detective did not immediately return a message Wednesday from The Associated Press.

Astronaut hangout sold

HOUSTON (AP) — The mission is nearly over for the Outpost Tavern near Johnson Space Center.

The hangout in the Houston area has been sold and is closing after nearly 30 years serving the NASA crowd. Tourists also stopped by to admire the autographed astronaut photos and space suits adorning the walls and ceiling.

Owner Stephanie Foster says the bar will shut down next month.

Foster received confirmation last week that the property has been sold. She expects a gas station or shopping center will be the next tenant.

Foster says she wants to make sure she has enough time to plan a proper send-off for the NASA staff.

Rocket scientists used to sketch ideas on napkins. Astronauts were known to stop by the Outpost Tavern after returning from missions.

BSJH

Continued from Page 1A

search by police yielded no suspects, junior high administrators lifted the lockdown around 1:30 p.m., Saldivar said.

No arrests have been made, but photos of the two men have been given to police, Saldivar said.

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

FIRE

Continued from Page 1A

of which use incandescent bulbs and other electrical devices — Condray said the lull is expected to be short-lived.

"There are a lot of ways things can go wrong when you're decorating for the holiday, but there are steps you can take to reduce the risk to yourself and your loved ones," said Condray. "One of the best we've seen so far this year is the use of the newer LED Christmas lights. They are cool burning

and only use a fraction of the electricity.

"In fact, you could decorate your whole house in LED lights, and the amount of electricity you'll use this holiday season will still be less than with just one string of regular incandescent bulbs."

Regardless of what type of holiday lights you choose, Condray said there are some hard and fast rules residents should go by when they get ready to put them up.

"Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors. And always look for the Underwriters Laborato-

ry (UL) label," Condray advised. "Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections. You should check them by setting them on a non-flammable surface and leaving them plugged in for 10 to 15 minutes to make sure they don't melt or smoke. Turn off all the lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

"When you're hanging the lights, be sure to keep them away from flammable materials such as curtains, and make sure the cords aren't near any sources of water. Never connect

more than three sets of light to an extension cord, and to prevent overheating, pinching and fraying cords, avoid running lights under rugs or behind furniture."

Condray said another decoration many families will want to pay close attention to is their Christmas tree, as the holiday centerpiece can quickly turn into an instrument of woe if not handled properly.

"Try to select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the

branches," said Condray. "On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.

"Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly. Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways. If you use an artificial tree, choose one that tested and labeled as

fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should also have the UL label."

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

TREE

Continued from Page 1A

rehearsal at 2 p.m. Saturday and a pair of 8 p.m. concerts Saturday and Sunday.

The event is free to the public, but organizers ask those wishing to attend to obtain tickets from the church's main office

at Fourth and Scurry streets. No tickets are required for the Saturday dress rehearsal.

The Living Christmas Tree, for the uninitiated, is exactly that — a multi-story 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.

The theme for this year's concert is "This is Christmas." Aside from the adult choir, an orchestra, children's chorus and bell choir are scheduled to perform both religious and popular Christmas standards.

Linda Lindell, a part-time

music instructor with Big Spring Independent School District, will direct this year's program.

For more information, contact the church at 267-6394.

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

COATS

Continued from Page 1A

year," Cook said.

"We have already sent out one plea to the public and that usually gets us enough to last all win-

ter," she said. "But this year, we have not been able to get enough jackets, coats and sweaters, especially larger sizes. We have a great need for extra large, double-XL and above sizes.

"We are asking everyone to search their

closets when they get out this year's jackets and set aside coats and jackets they no longer wear."

Hospital employees ask that the clothing be clean and in good condition. Items can be dropped off at Commu-

nity Relations/Volunteer Services, Building 536 on the Big Spring State Hospital campus.

Big Spring State Hospital is a 200-bed hospital for people with mental illness in West Texas and the Texas Panhandle.

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD



By Eddy Pitchford

Cancer is not abstract; it has real names and faces. Cancer has the name of my uncle, who died. It has the face of my aunt, who is in her final days. It claimed the six year-old grandson of my wife's aunt Saturday night. Cancer was responsible for the funeral I attended last Wednesday.

With all due respect to my friend, David, who is actively involved in cancer research, I wonder, "Is it possible that one of the aborted millions of babies was potentially the scientist, who would have discovered the cure for cancer?"

Such a possibility adds to the moral concern about abortion. Of course, the immorality of denying birth to a child seems obvious. Over the next few weeks, you will hear about an unmarried woman with an inconvenient pregnancy. Had she aborted Jesus, my family members would have died with no hope.

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Nets lose record 18th straight to Mavericks

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — All those losses in what's now the worst start in NBA history had already beaten down the New Jersey Nets.

So when the Dallas Mavericks hit them with a 49-point second quarter, the Nets simply had no fight left.

New Jersey was pounded into NBA infamy Wednesday night, falling 117-101 for its 18th straight loss to start the season.

"I think what happens is you know it wears on you," interim coach Tom Barrise said. "It's not a two-game losing streak. We play four games a week in this league and it's every day and every other day, and you know you hear it and you start to feel it a little bit."

The Mavericks made 17 of 19 shots and opened a 27-point lead in a nearly flawless second period, burying the Nets early in former New Jersey captain Jason Kidd's second trip back to his old home.

The Nets passed the 1988-89 Miami Heat and 1999 Los Angeles Clippers, who both dropped their first 17 games. New Jersey's next chance to end the streak comes Friday at home against Charlotte.

If the Nets defend the way they did Wednesday, the skid could last a while longer.

Dallas shot 81 percent in the first half, the first NBA team to make 80 percent of its shots in a half since the Denver Nuggets hit 82 percent against the Clippers on April 4, 2006, according to STATS, LLC.

"At this point, I feel the streak has definitely gotten the best of us. It's really not

starting to get to us now," guard Chris Douglas-Roberts said. "So when a team goes on a run, we kind of, it's almost like we give up, which is really unfortunate but that's what it looks like to me. We kind of give up and just lay down instead of trying to fight."

Dirk Nowitzki scored 24 points and Kidd had 16 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the Mavericks, who led by 31 points in the third quarter. Erick Dampier added 18 points and 11 boards, and Jason Terry also scored 18 points.

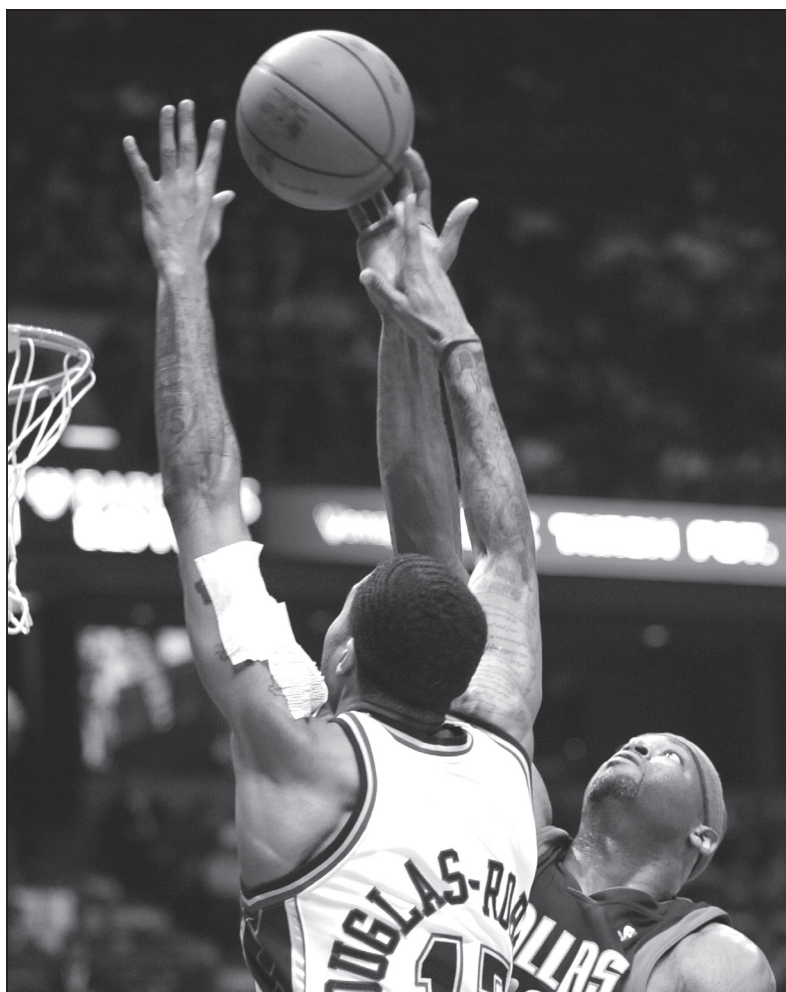
The Nets, the NBA's worst team in scoring and shooting, could only blame their defense this time, which gives new coach Kiki Vandeweghe something to address when he runs his first practice Thursday.

Vandeweghe, the Nets' general manager, replaced the fired Lawrence Frank and will coach the team the rest of the season — but not quite yet. Though his hiring was announced Tuesday, Vandeweghe won't coach his first game until Friday, leaving Barrise in charge one more time.

Vandeweghe handled the pregame coach's meeting with reporters, then sat in a seat above center court with Del Harris, the former Dallas assistant who will join him on the bench.

"Nobody likes to lose. Period. And obviously we made it clear and you all know this is a developmental year, but nobody expected to be 0-17," Vandeweghe said before the game. "That's just obviously not acceptable and I think that it's not acceptable to anybody and especially the players."

The longtime losers had



AP Photo/ Bill Kostroun

The Mavs Erick Dampier blocks Chris Douglas-Roberts on Wednesday in East Rutherford, N.J.

their chances to avoid history. They led Minnesota by 19 in the third quarter on opening night before losing 95-93 on Damien Wilkins' putback at the buzzer, and lost 81-80 on Nov. 14 at Miami when Dwyane Wade made a 3-pointer with 0.1 seconds left.

New Jersey hung around for a quarter in this one. The Mavs shot 71 percent in the first period, but the Nets turned six Dallas turnovers into 11 points and fought their way to a 28-all tie.

It was over a few minutes later. Dallas shot 89.5 percent in the second, hitting its final nine shots and making all 10 free throws while

building a 77-50 lead.

"We came out with great energy, great defensive effort in the first quarter and then we have two steps back in the second quarter, giving up 49 points and them shooting 81 percent in the first half," point guard Devin Harris said. "The second half was good, but that's too tall of a mountain to climb obviously from a team that has been struggling."

There were only a few boos, but then again there weren't many fans. The Nets have been plagued by poor crowds for years, and a chance to see history or Kidd wasn't enough to change that, as attendance was announced

at just 11,689.

Some fans left early — a few heckling Vandeweghe and Harris on their way out — while two sitting court-side wearing Santa Claus hat-covered paper bags that read "0-18" over their heads were still there in the fourth quarter.

Eyeing the summer of 2010 free-agent class and still planning a long-delayed move to Brooklyn, the Nets have made a series of cost-cutting moves in recent seasons, trading Kidd and other players who helped them become a perennial playoff team and two-time NBA finalist this decade.

"It's unfortunate. There's nobody on that team that was a part of the run we had here," Kidd said. "They're going in a different direction. Personnel-wise, they're young. They got some young talent. The future is bright for them if they can stay together and stay healthy."

But they were woefully unprepared to deal with the injuries that have hit them this season, especially against a Dallas team that was fortified this summer after owner Mark Cuban signed off on the re-signing of Kidd and a trade for Shawn Marion.

Dallas coach Rick Carlisle, an assistant for five years in New Jersey, compared the Nets' situation to when he coached an Indiana team wrecked by suspensions after the brawl with Detroit Pistons fans five years ago.

"I've been through it. It's tough. It's not easy," Carlisle said. "Kiki will do a great job with these guys because he's a great teacher and they're going to get healthier. Everything is going up. It's at the bottom now."

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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OTHER VIEWS

Collections multi-billion dollar industry

Thanks to a stubbornly persistent recession, millions of Americans find themselves saddled with debt that they can't repay or can repay only with such difficulty it discourages them from even trying.

Trying to collect these debts has become a big and fast-growing business with debts being packaged and sold, often for pennies on the dollar, in financial instruments with a disturbing resemblance to the way sub-prime mortgages were packaged and sold off. The whole point of buying deeply discounted debt is that the buyers keep every dollar they collect. So-called secondary debt is now a \$60 billion industry.

Aggressive attempts to collect the debts threaten to overwhelm the courts and have resulted in a record number of complaints to the Federal Trade Commission. Those collection tactics may get even more aggressive if the industry can persuade Congress to allow it to make automated calls to cell phones.

Abusive collection tactics such as deception and harassment were outlawed by the 1977 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act but a Scripps Howard News Service investigation published over the weekend shows that the law is only spottily enforced and could benefit from tightening and more uniform enforcement. In particular there is a great need for improved documentation of debt that has repeatedly been resold to prove that the debt is lawfully owed. ...

Ample and easily available consumer credit is essential to a capitalist economy and U.S. economic growth. And for that system to function properly, it is also essential to have an effective and fair system to make sure those debts are repaid. Debt collectors working on behalf of lenders return \$40 billion a year, money that is then recycled as fresh credit.

—THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL, MEMPHIS, TENN.

They voted for Democracy!

Unlike the case with any other presidential election I can remember, in Sunday's election in Honduras, voter turnout was more important than the actual winner.

If the turnout had been low, the winner would have been a man who was not even in the race. Deposed President Manuel Zelaya, who had been asking his followers to abstain from voting, would have claimed victory from the Brazilian Embassy in Honduras, where he has taken refuge from the criminal charges that still are pending against him.

Zelaya's call for an election boycott upstaged the race between leading candidates Porfirio Lobo, of the conservative National Party, and Elvin Santos, of the Liberal Party. The election was scheduled all along, but because it was conducted under the interim government that replaced the Zelaya administration for the past five months, the legitimacy of the contest was questioned by those who still argue that Zelaya was removed from office by a coup d'etat.

For the world to recognize the legitimacy of the election and the government it would establish, a high voter turnout was extremely important; it became clear that Honduras' future depended more on how many people would vote than on which candidate they actually voted for.

So before we get to who won, please note that Hondurans flocked to the polls in impressive numbers, resoundingly rejecting not only Zelaya but also all the world leaders pressuring the interim Honduran government to reinstate Zelaya as president.

Zelaya keeps whining about how he has the support of the people — even claiming that the abstention rate was up to 65 percent — but the much more credible Supreme Electoral Tribunal has quite different numbers. Officials reported that the turnout exceeded 60 percent of the 4.6 million registered voters in Honduras. Instead of the expected boycott-driven decrease in voter turnout, this was an impressive hike from the 55 percent turnout in the election that gave Zelaya the presidency, in 2005.

By voting in greater numbers than before, the Honduran people were not only telling Zelaya to stop whining about his ouster but also crying out for

the international community to recognize their right to choose their leader democratically.

Although Zelaya was improperly exiled by the Honduran military five months ago, most Hondurans believe he was lawfully removed from office for trying to prolong his reign as president beyond the expiration of his term. They know Zelaya was following the model of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and the increasingly totalitarian Latin American left, and they resoundingly rejected going in that direction.

They know that Zelaya's removal from office was mishandled and that the world community has reasons to question what has happened in Honduras, but they also want the world to know that they have fought the good fight for freedom and democracy and that they have turned the page on Zelaya. He is history. Sunday's election — and its huge turnout — was a statement about Honduras' future.

Ironically, the candidate defeated by Zelaya in 2005 was the same conservative Porfirio Lobo who won Sunday's election by a significant margin. Lobo received 56 percent of the vote; Santos received 38 percent. And not surprisingly, even though Lobo graciously accepted his very narrow defeat in 2005 and Santos conceded his loss Sunday, sore loser Zelaya is unwilling to accept his overwhelming rejection.

The Honduran Congress will vote this week on whether to ratify an agreement that would allow Zelaya to return to the presidency until his term expires, on Jan. 27. But because Zelaya wanted to be back in the presidency before Sunday's election, he already has announced that he would reject any offer to return to the presidency now. In other words, all he wants to do now is make trouble.

Even before Lobo was elected, Zelaya vowed that regardless of which candidate was chosen, he would consider the new government to be illegitimate. And now, true to form, he insists on placing himself as the wedge that not only continues to polarize the Honduran people but also creates conflict between the United States and many countries in Latin America.

Why? Because the Obama administration has found the wisdom of standing up for democracy. At first, the U.S. government joined the chorus of leftist Latin American countries that have been calling on the interim government to return Zelaya to power as a precondition for recognizing the election.

But later, U.S. officials stopped demanding Zelaya's restitution as a condition for supporting the election. And after voters went to the polls Sunday, a State Department spokesman issued a statement, noting that it was "a necessary and important step forward."

The U.S. position — shared by honorable, democratic governments in Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica and Peru — is at odds with that of Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Paraguay, all of which have indicated that — just as they refused to recognize the interim Honduran government — they will not recognize Lobo as the legitimate president-elect. Like Zelaya, they say the election is invalid because — although it was scheduled even before Zelaya's ouster — it was backed by the "coup leaders" in the interim government.

When the majority of the Venezuelan people keep voting for Hugo Chavez, many of us wonder how they could be so insane, but we still respect their decision to be ruled by a totalitarian clown. We may not like him, but we still recognize Chavez as the president of Venezuela.

When people vote for totalitarian leaders who could end up taking away even their right to vote, we have to wonder whether they really believe in democracy, but we still respect the democratic process.

Yet when the legitimate expression of the will of the people is a complete rejection of Chavez's so-called "socialism of the 21st century," as was the case in Honduras Sunday, the leftist sore losers are standing in line to cry foul. They call themselves democrats, yet they want to deny the Honduran people their right to freely elect their new president. Of course, the first in line was Chavez, who immediately declared that Honduras had run an "electoral farce" Sunday. Some people have no shame.

However, those who examine the Honduran crisis objectively would surely come to the conclusion that the people of Honduras have taught the world a lesson on how to vote. Defying international pressure, they voted for democracy, and they deserve our respect and support.

To find out more about Miguel Perez and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Working on apps, not abs

This is a nation of goose-necked children hunched over their electronics in front of a TV.

They will turn into goose-necked adults with vitamin D deficiencies, the result of spending their sunny hours downloading songs in darkened rooms. Obesity will plague many of them.

Clearly, America would do better health-wise (and health-care-spending-wise) if people went outdoors once in a while and moved themselves. But how does one do so in a society that has engineered exercise out of even opening a garage door?

Some grown-ups do have the gumption to maintain formal exercise programs, but not many. The health-club business assumes that a third or more of those who join in a burst of enthusiasm will be gone in a year.

Home fitness equipment gets converted into racks for extra shirts or folded towels. Shiny machines rapidly become drab. The owner thinks, "I really should jump on the treadmill, but ooh, my apps need updating."

When exercise becomes a byproduct of doing something else — getting to work, mowing a lawn or picking up a quart of milk — that's when it becomes a reliable fitness tool. Those who commute by bus know that whatever little else they do

that day, they will get in that walk to the stop.

Play is supposed to be the daily work of children. That used to mean getting thrown out of the house and being told to be back by dinner. But parents don't push their kids into the neighborhood as they once did. One reason is fear, much exaggerated, of strangers harming their little ones.

A more serious problem is the utterly car-oriented design of many, especially newer, neighborhoods. Children would have to cross wide streets and often in front of harassed drivers who regard pedestrians as a wrench in their busy schedule.

But real or imagined, these concerns are not all that's keeping children indoors and glued to video. After all, a drive through most suburban neighborhoods will reveal fenced backyards with swing sets and no children on them. A sports reporter friend notes the many empty baseball fields he passes on perfect afternoons. If adults don't organize the sports, the kids don't play them.

The plain truth is that free-form play out in nature is no longer part of many children's lives — or their parents'. And children do love their electronics, in part, because they want to be like Mom and Dad. That's why laptops, cell phones and digital cameras are among the top-selling toys, even for preschoolers.

Walking or biking to school used to be part of an American childhood. But par-

ents now drive their kids to even close-by schools. Forty years ago, 90 percent of children living within a mile of school biked or walked there. Now less than half do.

Many communities ruined the prospect of students' getting to school on their own power by building mega-schools far from the more densely settled areas. Six-lane roads often cut the schools off from all but vehicle traffic.

What to do? There's a TV ad for an indoor bike attached to a video game. By pedaling, the child activates the game. The faster he or she goes, the more exciting the game gets. The appeal to parents is obvious. Here's a way for kids to get exercise *and* play a video game.

This is healthier, one supposes, than lying in front of a bowl of Doritos and playing "Assassin's Creed II." But one imagines that bicycle-powered video game going the way of Mom's Thigh Master as the kids realize that they, like their parents, can amuse themselves while curled up on a couch. Perhaps someone will invent an exercise pill.

To find out more about Froma Harrop, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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FROMA HARROP



MIGUEL PEREZ

ADDRESSES

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
• **BARACK OBAMA**
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

• **KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON**
U.S. Senator
703 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-5922

• **JOHN CORNYN**
U.S. Senator
517 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-2934

• **RANDY NEUGEBAUER**
U.S. Representative
19th Cong. District
1510 Scurry
Big Spring
Phone: (432) 264-0722

STATE GOVERNMENT
• **RICK PERRY**
Governor
State Capitol, Room 2S.1
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, 78711
Phone: (512) 463-2000

• **JOE HEFLIN**
State Representative
Texas 85th District
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, 78768
Phone: (432) 213-2897 or (512) 463-0604

• **KEL SELIGER**
State Senator
Texas 31st District
401 Austin, Suite 101
Big Spring, 79720

HEISMAN

Continued from 1B

contribution to what they do. And if we're going to win, my teammates are going to have a major contribution as well."

That's what happened last week in a 26-21 victory over Auburn, when Ingram was swarmed by defenders just about every time he touched the ball. He managed just 16 carries, 30 yards and one hip pointer. Auburn came in with the nation's 88th-best run defense; Florida is eighth.

It was a rare performance for a back averaging nearly 129 yards a game against SEC defenses.

"He was the clear leader, and it's fascinating to me how the last few years the Heisman race can turn in the space of one weekend, much moreso than it ever used to," said Maisel, who added that Ingram and Gerhart had played more consistently than McCoy or Tebow.

"The performance last week, I'm sure people are talking that it hurt me," Ingram said. "But to me, all I care about is helping this team win. That's all that matters ultimately."

He did have an impact on the game. With Auburn focusing so much on stopping the run, quarterback Greg McElroy passed for 218 yards and two

touchdowns.

Tebow, meanwhile, comes into the game on a high note. He passed for 221 yards and ran for 90 more against Florida State while accounting for five touchdowns. He has also broken the SEC career records for most total offensive yards and rushing touchdowns.

Tebow has led the Gators to 22 straight wins, while Ingram's Tide have won 24 consecutive regular-season games.

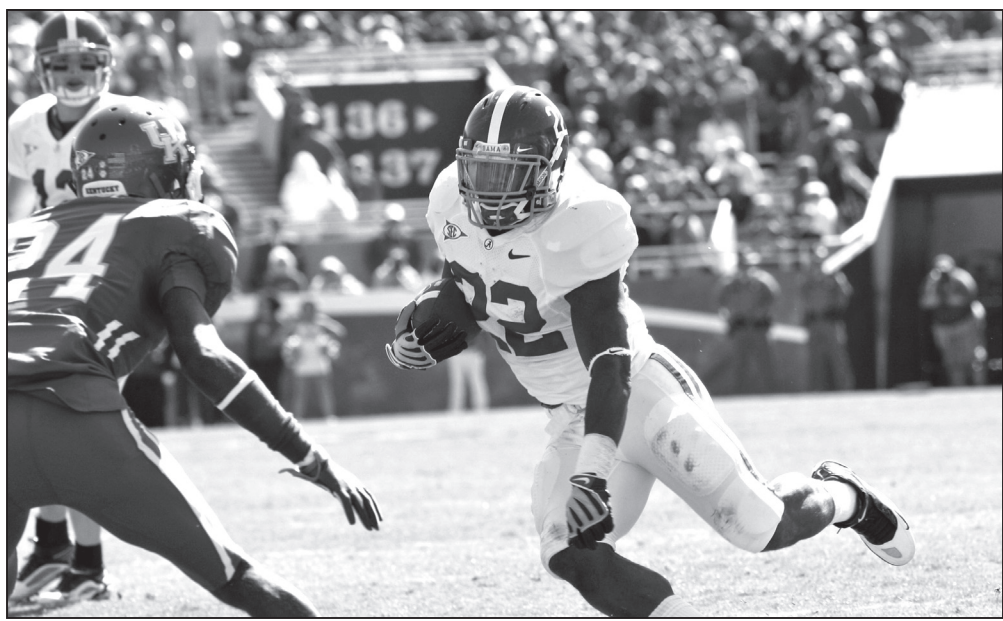
Tebow might just need a repeat of last season's SEC championship performance to boost his Heisman hopes. He led the Gators to two fourth-quarter touchdowns in the 31-20 victory.

"Having a quarterback that's been there and guided that team down for two fourth-quarter scores, that's a plus," Florida coach Urban Meyer said. "But when the foot hits the ball on Saturday, that's all kind of out the window. You've got to play."

Still, Tebow's ability to fire up the Gators has left an impression on Alabama players.

"I saw him a couple of times when the defense was going on the field, going and saying something to them, and then they go and get a three-and-out or a big sack," Tide linebacker Rolando McClain said.

Meyer said Tebow has been throwing the ball much better late in the season. He has had a pass efficiency rating of



AP File Photo/ Ed Reinke

Alabama's Mark Ingram could make his case for the Heisman trophy with a big game against Florida in the SEC Championship on Saturday.

at least 166 in five of the last six games. For context, his season rating of 160.7 is good enough for fifth nationally.

"I think protection's better, too," Meyer said. "It's all tied together. Whenever you throw a ball, you've got several different components. It all starts with protection, then you've got timing between the quarterback and receivers. It's just better and everybody's healthy."

Like Ingram, Tebow faces a huge challenge against a Tide team that

leads the nation in pass defense efficiency. Alabama has racked up 19 interceptions and allowed only eight touchdown passes.

It should be hard for either to put up huge numbers.

Tebow has already lined up one vote, if only of confidence.

"That's our leader, that's our quarterback," Gators defensive tackle Omar Hunter said. "He should win the Heisman. He's the best player in college football."

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Parent's Corner: Interesting things people have said

I love to recall and place into modern context the interesting things that people have said over the years.

During the past year I have collected a few of these wonderful quotes that I would like to share with you. Volumes could be written on each one but the quote alone is fully understood.

As you read each one, think about how it affects your life. You'll enjoy the insight.

The grass may look greener on the other side, but it still has to be mowed.

Things that matter the most must not be at the mercy of things that matter the least.

Great love and great achievement involve great risks.



DARRELL RYAN

When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

Follow the three R's: respect for self, respect for others and responsibility for your actions.

If at first you don't succeed, try reading the instructions.

Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.

Don't let a little dispute injure a great relationship.

When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate action to correct it.

Spend some time alone each day.

Open your arms to change but don't give up your values.

Silence is sometimes the best answer.

Live a good, honorable life, then when you get older you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.

A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.

When disagreements arise with love ones, deal only with the current situation, and don't bring up the past.

Share knowledge, it's the way to achieve immortality.

Be gentle with the earth.

Every year go somewhere you have never been.

The best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.

Judge your success by what you had to give up in the process of achieving it.

Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

The mighty oak was once a little nut that stood its ground.

The best way to forget your own problems is to help someone solve his.

The secret of contentment is the realization that life is a gift not a right. Humor is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles.

ers are to automobiles.

Treat the earth well: We do not inherit it from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

Life is like a coin; you can spend it any way you wish, but you can only spend it once.

Do more than exist, live. Do more than touch, feel. Do more than look, observe. Do more than read, absorb.

Do more than hear, listen. Do more than think, ponder. Do more than talk, say something.

A bend in the road is not the end of the road, unless you fail to make the turn.

And to close, let me throw a humorous one at you that I am still trying to understand: I feel more like I do today than I did yesterday!

Darrell Ryan is director of federal programs for the Big Spring Independent School District.

Merry Christmas? Bah, humbug!

We are a Christian nation regardless of what Obama thinks. Our government has gone South. Someone has flushed the toilet and we are

circling the drain. As we have seen over the past year our government has done a dismal job. We need to begin a grass roots effort to contact our friends, relatives, relative friends and all of us contact our Congress people and don't forget those out of state. I think our Congress people for our area are doing the best they can but those in other states have not and we need to have the folks there contact their Congressmen.

This recent go around at our local Post Office is a real shame. I take offense to his taking offense of Christmas in general. You don't have to stop Christmas. I understand it's a federal law and the postmaster had no choice but to comply. That's why we all need to change that law back to where it was. If you don't like Christmas then don't participate. I don't participate in a lot of other religions because it's my choice as a Christian not to participate.

This individual gets his mail at the Post Office as I do. I would not care if it were some other religion playing their music. I could opt out of having my mail delivered at the Post Office and take it at home so I would not be offended. I could go through a different door so as to not hear the music or see the person. Or better yet just shrug it off.

All this politically correct stuff is ridiculous. What? You aren't going to Wal-Mart or H.E.B. because they have (close your eyes and ears) Christmas trees! How silly. What about Christmas decorations? All the stores have them.

This is our Christian heritage. And I for one enjoy Christmas in spite of all the commercialization. I don't like the commercialization but I don't complain, I just go on. Yeah, I know there is no law against it and it's what is being said now. That's why we as American citizens need to stand up. And fight for what is right.

It wasn't but a short while ago when the people

of Germany were complacent and elected a new leader for "change." As a result their freedoms were lost, their rights were lost, and their lives were lost. It equaled to the millions of lives because of that change.

Let's change the law! Someone told me today they were so tired of fighting, and sometimes gets discouraged, after all what can "one" person do? We can't let Satan win this battle. We can and will do it. Individually and as a collective. Join the fight. Speak out. Write letters. Make your one vote count.

In the meantime, I hope we all have a Merry

Christmas!

Burr Lea Settles is a former Big Spring fire marshal and occasional columnist.



BURR LEA SETTLES

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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. Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

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

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Silence Is Not Always Golden

East dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 10 9 6
♥ J 6 4 3
♦ 10 6 2
♣ K J 6

WEST
♠ A K 7
♥ 10 7 2
♦ A J 9 3
♣ 10 7 2

EAST
♠ Q J 8 4 3
♥ K 9
♦ 8 4
♣ A 9 8 4

SOUTH
♠ 5 2
♥ A Q 8 5
♦ K Q 7 5
♣ Q 5 3

The bidding:

East Pass 1♥ South Pass West Pass North Pass 2♥

Opening lead — king of spades.

If misdeeds and malefactions could be divided into errors of omission and errors of commission, there is no doubt as to which would be more noticeable. Failing to do something you should have done is not nearly as obtrusive as doing something you should not have done. This doesn't alter the fact, though, that errors of omission can prove very costly.

Consider this deal from a team match where, at the first table, South became declarer at two hearts and finished with eight tricks for a score of 110 points.

The bidding and play at this table

seemed altogether normal, but not when viewed in the light of what happened at the other table, where the bidding went:

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
2♠	3♦	Pass	3♥

Here, when the bidding died at two hearts, West doubled. He realized that his partner was bound to have some high cards as well as a singleton or doubleton heart, given South's heart bid and North's raise. This in turn increased the likelihood that East would hold a five-card suit.

South led the diamond king against three spades. Declarer took the ace, played the A-Q of trumps and returned a diamond. South won with the queen, but there was now no way to defeat the contract. Making three spades was worth 140 points, which, added to the result at the other table, yielded a 250-point gain.

The villain of the piece was the West player at the first table, who was guilty of the sin of omission. He adopted too conservative an attitude when he allowed North-South to play the hand unchallenged at two hearts. He should have competed — i.e., "balanced" — with a takeout double, as his counterpart did. Although there was an element of risk in acting at this point, it was far more risky to pass.

Tomorrow: Test your play.
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Big Spring Herald 2009 Parade Route

Saturday • December 5, 2009 • 5:30 pm

	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Herald	8th			9th			10th			11th			12TH								

Thank you for taking part in the 2009. Big Spring Herald Christmas Parade. The parade route will start at 8th & Scurry heading north on Scurry to 4th, turning right on 4th St., and proceeding East on 4th to Benton, turning left for 1 block then left on 3rd, proceeding West on 3rd ending at Scurry & Main Street. Please Do not Block driveways, and please **DO NOT LITTER**. All entries must be ready to go by 4:50 pm at which time we will tighten up the procession. If you are late or not ready at this time, you will be asked to move to the side and re-enter at the end of the parade. Judges have a list of the order or the floats so please be on time and ready so that we have no confusion.

BIG SPRING HERALD

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263-7331

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Announcements

BELLYDANCE CHRISTMAS party 12/5, 4:00pm till Late at Victoria Whitecotton's house. LADIES ONLY!! Bring a dish to share. Contact Victoria (432)230-5456 for directions.

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2 SPACES at Trinity Memorial Park "Garden of Lebanon", Lot 51 & 52, \$1750.00 each. Call (806)799-3988.

ONE CEMETERY lot for \$1100 Trinity Memorial Park Garden of Sharon. Present Value \$1840. Call (940)433-3144 or email vmewlw2@embarqmail.com

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GARAGE/MOVING SALE: 219 South 5th (Coahoma), Saturday 8-Noon. Toys, clothes, furniture and lots of misc.

INSIDE SALE: Saturday 10-2 30yrs. Accumulation. Lots of Nice Stuff. 3705 Old Colorado City Hwy. Take Hwy 350- 1-1/2 mile past blinking light. No Early Birds. Rain or Shine.

MOVING SALE: Entertainment center, lots of cosmetic jewelry, and lots of other new stuff. 600 Baylor, Saturday 8-?

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COASTAL TRANSPORT We are now hiring drivers to deliver petroleum products in and around surrounding areas of the Permian Basin. Qualifications: *Class A CDL drivers w/hazmat and tanker endorsements *23 years of age or older *1 year verifiable tractor/trailer experience *Clean driving record Please contact our office M-F 8am/5pm for more information 1-888-527-7221.

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Items for Sale

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FREE PUPPY about 1 year old, he is very playful and loving. Call if you want him cell (432)352-1993 or home (432)517-4175.

Pets

FREE to good home Catahoula Cur and German Shepherd mixed (male) about 6 month old. Beautiful color. Very sweet. Call (432)816-5692.

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News in brief

Obama war plan appears to accomplish what Bush couldn't: bipartisan support

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama appears to have secured what President George W. Bush couldn't: bipartisan support for an unpopular and faltering war.

Despite expressing an uneasiness about the details, lawmakers are poised to back Obama's plan to send 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan after getting assurances that some soldiers and Marines will begin withdrawing in July 2011.

The strategy marks the largest expansion of the war since it began eight years ago. Critics conceded that Obama will have little trouble early next year getting Congress to provide an added \$30 billion or \$40 billion to carry it out.

The president's chief military and diplomatic advisers faced more questioning from lawmakers Thursday after encountering only tepid criticism Wednesday from members of the Senate Armed Services and House Foreign Affairs committees.

Anti-war Democrats, who rose to power because of voter opposition to Bush's strategy in Iraq, said they are skeptical that the troop buildup is necessary or will work. But at the same time, party leaders — who were among Obama's biggest supporters in his campaign for president — said it was unlikely that they would try to block the deployments or the money he wants.

Obama talking jobs with business leaders

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under pressure from Republicans and an impatient public to fix the sputtering economic recovery, President Barack Obama is refocusing on this politically potent issue by talking job creation with business and labor leaders at the White House.

The White House has lacked a unified economic message in recent weeks, with its attention focused instead on health care and Obama's three-month review of the Afghanistan war. With unemployment in double digits for the first time in decades, Democratic lawmakers are suggesting a second

economic stimulus aimed directly at job creation may be needed.

Administration officials are hoping Thursday's jobs forum, an Obama trip to Pennsylvania on Friday and a major economic speech on Tuesday will help counter Republican critics who contend the administration's economic recovery efforts have failed and its oversight of the \$787 billion stimulus package has been inadequate.

At the jobs forum, Obama planned to defend his administration's handling of the economy and argue that it would be in far worse shape had Congress not passed the huge stimulus bill earlier this year.

Under intense GOP attacks, public support for the stimulus effort has faded.

"I certainly hope it's more than a photo op," said the No. 2 House Republican, Rep. Eric Cantor of Virginia. "All of us want to do anything we can to get Americans back to work. Past history has been, with this White House, that there's been a lot of pomp and ceremony with very little follow-through in terms of delivering results."

Tiger Woods apologizes to supporters in latest turn of his off-course saga

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Tiger Woods disclosed his "personal failings" in a 317-word statement on his Web site that did not delve into details, except to say that he "let my family down" and regrets it "with all of my heart."

Still to be determined is whether this closes a shocking saga involving one of the biggest names in sport.

In the last week, Woods has faced intense media scrutiny after a car accident outside his home in the middle of the night and sordid allegations of affairs. Finally, on Wednesday, Woods acknowledged he had "not been true to my values and the behavior my family deserves."

The statement followed an Us Weekly cover story of a Los Angeles waitress claiming she had a 31-month affair with the world's No. 1 golfer. Woods' words were posted three hours after the magazine released a voice mail — provided by the wait-

ress, Jaimee Grubbs — that Woods left on her phone three days before he rammed his Cadillac Escalade into a fire hydrant and tree outside his Florida home.

"I have let my family down and I regret those transgressions with all of my heart," Woods said on his Web site.

"I will strive to be a better person and the husband and father that my family deserves."

Congress opens hearing on state dinner debacle

WASHINGTON (AP) — This time they're invited, but they don't want to come.

Congress wants to talk to the husband and wife who slipped through security into last week's state dinner at the White House.

But on the eve of Thursday's hearing by the House Homeland Security Committee about how they did it, Tareq and Michaela Salahi declined to show up for questions.

Their decision brought an immediate threat from a lawmaker to force their appearance under a subpoena.

"The Salahis' testimony is important to explain how a couple circumvented layers of security at the White House on the evening of a state dinner without causing alarm," Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson, the committee chairman, said in a late-evening statement. "If the Salahis are absent from tomorrow's hearing, the committee is prepared to move forward with subpoenas to compel their appearance."

The statement swiftly followed one by the couple's publicist, Mahogany Jones, who said the Salahis had already provided information to Thompson and the committee's top Republican, as well as to the Secret Service.

3 Somali Cabinet ministers killed in explosion at graduation; 9 killed overall

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — An explosion ripped through an upscale hotel in Somalia's capital Thursday during a university graduation ceremony, killing three government Cabinet ministers and six others, officials said. Two journalists were among the dead.

More than three dozen medical, computer science and engineering students had gathered to receive their diplomas at the ceremony at the Shamow Hotel, which sits in the small patch of Mogadishu that is held by Somalia's weak central government.

The ministers for education, higher education and health were killed in the blast, said Somali Information Minister Dahir Mohamud Gelle.

The ministers for sports and tourism were wounded.

Two reporters were killed in the blast and two other journalists were seriously wounded, said Bashir Khalif, a reporter for the Somali government's radio service.

In total, nine people were killed, said Col. Abdilahi Hassan Barise, a police spokesman.

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Annie's Mailbox®

Dear Annie: I get together once or twice a year with a group of girlfriends I've known since high school. We are at our wits' end with one I will call Miss Motor Mouth.

We are in our 60s, with families. Miss Motor Mouth has never been married or even been in a relationship.

She is very self-centered and talks incessantly about her former job (she's been retired for three years) and the people she worked with, whom we've never met.

She loves to flaunt the obscene amounts she spends on purses, clothing and wine, and how many millions her brother is worth. It is impossible to discuss anything with the others without her interrupting.

One of the girls has terminal breast cancer. Miss Motor Mouth has absolutely no empathy

for this friend because she chose to treat her cancer holistically. We are at the point where, after 43 years, we are thinking of not inviting her to the next gathering because we can no longer tolerate her incessant blather.

Would it be better to tell her how annoying she is? She seems oblivious to our feelings. What else can we do? — *Singed Ears*

Dear Singed: If you are prepared to cut her out of these gatherings, you may as well tell her why. Don't gang up on her.

One of you should meet her for coffee and explain that she seems to be monopolizing the conversations, and that you are upset by her apparent lack of respect for the woman with breast cancer.

Say that you are sure she isn't intentionally

alienating her friends, and ask if she could try to be more sensitive. If she cannot or will not, you don't have to keep inviting her.

Dear Annie: I want to ask my parents and in-laws to give smaller Christmas gifts to our two boys (ages 2 and 5 months) and instead make a contribution to their college funds.

My husband does not feel this is appropriate. While we do not need the contribution, it would certainly be appreciated.

We are already overloaded with toys and know that both sets of



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

grandparents will go overboard on gifts by several hundred dollars. I know my in-laws will be insulted if we donate any of their toys to charity, so I can't comfortably go

that route. Is it a bad idea to ask them to buy fewer gifts? Can I ask them to limit their spending?

Can I ask my parents to donate to the college fund, even though they have already contributed? Or do I just suck it up like usual? — *Louisville Lass*

Dear Louisville: By all means, ask the grand-

parents to limit the gifts. If they ask what the children want, it's fine to suggest they contribute to their college funds.

But in the end, you cannot control how they choose to indulge the grandchildren.

We still think donating them is a good idea, and you also can put some gifts away and allow the kids to unwrap them individually at later dates.

Dear Annie: I was pleased by your response to "Ditched in Montreal," whose friend kept canceling plans at the last minute.

You suggested she might suffer from an anxiety disorder. Unless you've experienced a panic attack, it's difficult to understand how debilitating it is.

I would describe it as an uncontrollable surge of adrenaline that makes

you feel as though you'll die if you don't get somewhere safe.

As someone who has had this condition for eight years, I can attest to how hard it can be to attend public gatherings.

The only place that felt safe was my home. It took medication and regular contact with my doctor to get my anxiety under control.

It also helped immensely to have understanding friends and family.

Montreal's friend likely accepts invitations because she would like to go, but becomes more and more anxious as the event grows closer. I hope Montreal makes the effort to help. — *Better Now*

Dear Better: We do, too. Thanks for the backup.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

Mars is not exactly opposed to Neptune, only nearly so. And that's just how you may feel about



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MATHIS

your dreams right now — that they haven't escaped you entirely but are putting up a good fight. Back off of your wanting and long-

ing and yearning. Focus on what you have, and remember what it took for you to get where you are now.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Little birds flit and dart; big birds fly slow and long. The point is not how you move, but that you do. Use what you were given to fly in whatever style suits you best.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You've never

had a problem with craving more attention than people were willing to give you. On the contrary: Finding time for yourself is your biggest challenge. Thankfully, you have a place you can always go to escape.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Someone who doesn't know you well will be bemused by your response to things. You don't easily fall into categories like a lot of people. Your complicated nature is what makes you so interesting.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You don't know it, but you are making quite an impression right now. Something about you is causing your peers to lean into each other in hushed marvel.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If possible, leave your television and computer off today. The information superhighway is excellent for staying in

touch, but the insight that comes from your heart will be even more valuable.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). In the handful of mini-crises you face today, don't forget that underneath the parade of e-mails and phone calls and obligations, things are in capable, steady hands. Yours.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You won't really understand what you aspire to until you try it on. You'll get the chance to test drive the object of your desire. Pretend like this is the real thing. Act as if you own the place and perhaps someday you will.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You know true freedom, and this is it: You give your love, and you enjoy when it comes back to you. However, that it does come back to you isn't mandatory for your enjoyment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov.

22-Dec. 21). It won't be enough for you to stand on the sidelines of life and watch the action. You have to feel it for yourself: the mud, the blood, the sweat. Full-spectrum living is reserved for only the boldest, like you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your self-esteem could use a boost. Write down your recent accomplishments. The daily triumphs count — like getting your kids off to school on time every day. This list will be like a super-vitamin pack for your attitude.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). A lull in the action is not a cosmic punishment. It's a gift. Accept the peace and quiet, and let them heal you. Don't worry about what's next. What's next will happen on its own. For as long as you can, stay present in empty space.

PISCES (Feb.

19-March 20). You'll get a hot financial tip. The get-rich-quick scheme may be more like a get-some-money-slowly plan, which is better than getting none at all. Still, old-fashioned hard work in exchange for cash is your best bet.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 3). Your positive and conscientious approach to life will be celebrated. You'll be promoted to a leadership role. The next three months feature a quest. Your interests lead you to places you've never been. You'll fall in love in January — or more deeply in love than you already are. Push yourself to personal victory in May. Gemini and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 34, 15, 49, 22 and 17.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Amanda Seyfried got her career start as a child model

and was soon working in soap operas. Next came prime-time television roles and movie parts such as Meryl Streep's onscreen daughter, "Sophie," in the star-studded movie musical "Mamma Mia!" Seyfried has five luminaries in the fiery station of Sagittarius, and an entertainment-oriented Leo moon fuels that burning passion to succeed.

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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Service sector activity, retail sales down

NEW YORK (AP) — A private measure of U.S. service sector activity unexpectedly shrank in November and retailers posted a surprise drop in sales, as constrained consumer spending and rising unemployment hinder a broad recovery.

While new jobless claims dropped for a fifth straight week, productivity gains in the third quarter show that companies are finding ways to reap profits with fewer workers, another ominous sign for the nearly 16 million unemployed Americans.

The Institute for Supply Management's service index dropped to 48.7 from 50.6 in October. Analysts polled by Thomson Reuters had expect-

ed a level of 51.1.

Any reading below 50 signals contraction. The service sector grew in September for the first time in 13 months.

The ISM measure tracks more than 80 percent of the country's economic activity, including such diverse industries as health care, retail, financial services and transportation.

The trade group said employment shrank for the 22nd time in the last 23 months, albeit at a slightly slower pace, and business activity shrank again after growing for the past three months. New orders, a sign of future growth, continued expanding, however.

But the nation's retailers

suffered last month as a modestly positive start to the holiday shopping season couldn't offset weak spending the rest of the month.

After posting two straight sales gains after more than a year of declines, merchants posted an unexpected 0.3 percent decrease for November, compared with a year ago when business plummeted to historic lows as spooked shoppers clamped down after the financial meltdown.

Meanwhile, the Labor Department said newly laid-off workers seeking unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell for the fifth straight week. First-time claims for unemployment insurance dropped by 5,000 to a season-

ally adjusted 457,000, the lowest total since the week of Sept. 6, 2008.

The four-week average of claims, which smooths out fluctuations, dropped for the 13th straight week to 481,250, about 180,000 below the peak for this recession reached this spring.

That's still above the level that signals new jobs to economists. Many analysts say claims need to fall to about 425,000 for at least a month to signal that employers are adding jobs. The nation's economy has lost jobs for 22 straight months.

The continued job cuts amid slowly growing business means employers must squeeze more out of the work-

ers they have. The government also reported that productivity surged in the third quarter by the largest amount in six years.

The Labor Department revised its estimate of growth in output per hour of work to an annual rate of 8.1 percent in July-September period, the biggest jump since 2003, from an initial estimate of 9.5 percent. Unit labor costs fell at a 2.5 percent rate, less than the 5.2 percent plunge first reported.

While that indicates inflation is remaining under control, it also signals that workers' wages are getting squeezed, raising doubts about the durability of the economic recovery.

New jobless claims fall unexpectedly to 457,000

WASHINGTON (AP) — The tally of newly laid-off workers seeking unemployment benefits fell unexpectedly for the fifth straight week, a hopeful sign that the job market is slowly improving.

Still, claims remain above the levels that most analysts say would be consistent with an economy that is adding jobs. The unemployment rate is at 10.2 percent and expected to keep climbing into next

year.

First-time claims for unemployment insurance dropped by 5,000 to a seasonally adjusted 457,000, the lowest total since the week of Sept. 6, 2008, the Labor Department said Thursday. Wall Street economists expected an increase, according to a survey by Thomson Reuters.

The ongoing decline in claims signals that employers could start adding jobs by as early

as January or February, economists said. The nation's economy has shed jobs for 22 straight months.

"The surprise further drop in jobless claims ... is a very encouraging sign that the U.S. economy may be closer to the point of net job creation than we had thought," John Ryding, an economist at RDQ Economics, wrote in a research note.

Many economists say that claims need to fall

to about 425,000 for at least a month to indicate that employers are hiring more people than they are firing.

The department's employment report for November, to be released Friday, is expected to show that employers shed another 130,000 jobs after cutting 190,000 in October. Economists forecast the unemployment rate will remain at 10.2 percent.

A Labor Department analyst said the closing of state unemployment offices for last week's Thanksgiving holiday was responsible for some of the decline.

Economists closely watch initial claims, which are considered a gauge of layoffs and a sign of whether companies are willing to hire.

The four-week average of claims, which

smooths out fluctuations, dropped for the 13th straight week to 481,250, about 180,000 below the peak.

But the Federal Reserve said in a report Wednesday that employers in most regions are reluctant to hire new workers, even as the economy stages a modest recovery.

Meanwhile, the number of people claiming unemployment benefits for more than a week rose by 28,000 to 5.5 million, the department said. Analysts had expected a decline.

That total doesn't include millions of unemployed Americans that are receiving benefits under extended programs paid for by the federal government.

About 4.5 million people were receiving extended benefits in

the week ended Nov. 14, the latest data available. That's an increase of about 300,000 from the previous week. The jump is a result of Congress adding another 14 to 20 weeks of extra benefits last month, the fourth extension since the recession began and the longest total extension on record.

Layoffs continued this week. Gannett Co. said it was cutting 26 newsroom jobs at its flagship USA Today newspaper and eliminating 11 positions at USA Weekend magazine. Another media company, the Greenspun Media Group, which publishes the Las Vegas Sun, announced it was reorganizing its operations in a cost-cutting move and would lay off an unspecified number of workers.



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Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Eastside Baptist Church
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TIME: 5:00PM TILL CLOSE

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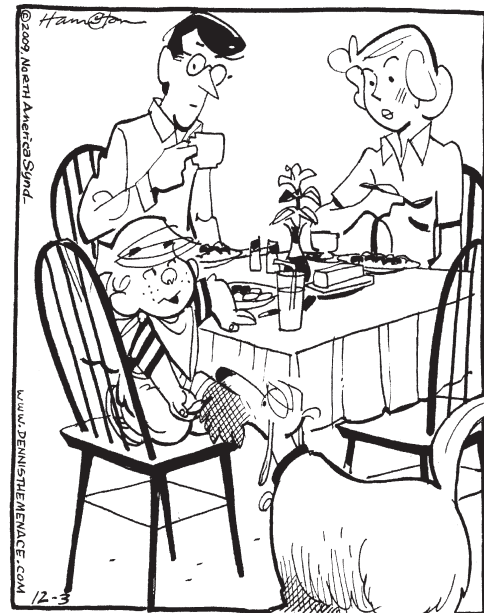
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5:PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura	Lopez	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Seinfeld Office	Granger Brad	BBC Business	Cash Cab	Ghost-busters, Harold Ramis	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas	Horn	SportsCenter
6:PM	News ABC	Jeopardy!	Gancho	Lopez	News CBS	Two Men	News NBC	Name	Brad Sanchez	News-Lehrer	Cash Cab	Destroyed	The Ultimate Fighter	Bones	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Wizards of Waverly Hills	College Basketball	College Basketball
7:PM	FlashForward	FlashForward	Nombre-Amor	Bones	Survivor: Samoa	Más Sabe el Diablo	Commun Porks	Fam. Guy	Upd Sprna	Texas	Destroyed	National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	NBA Basketball: Celtics at Spurs	Movie: Hoodlum, Vanessa Williams	Movie: Ice Princess	Phineas	College Basketball: USC at Texas.	College Football: Oregon State at Oregon.
8:PM	Private Practice	Private Practice	Sorilegio	Fringe	CSI: Crime Scn	Pobres	Office 30 Rock	Movie: Rush Hour 2, John Lone	Light of the Southwest	To Be Announced	Mob Kill JFK?	JFK Ruby Con.	TNA Wrestling	NBA Basketball: Miami Heat at Denver Nuggets.	Movie: The Rookies, Jay Hernandez	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Wizards of Waverly Hills	Baseball
9:PM	Private Practice	Private Practice	Rosa	Simpsons Friends	The Mentalist	Victorinos	The Jay Leno Show	Funny	Bill Cloud	BBC	Mob Kill JFK?	(15) Movie: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	Ways Die	Ways Die	W. Williams	Life De	NFL Live	SportsCenter
10:PM	Nightline	Nightline	Impacto	Raymond	News	Noticias	News	Lopez Tonight	Upd Van Impe	Charlie Rose	Destroyed	Ways Die	Ways Die	W. Williams	Life De	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
11:PM	Insider	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Escuelita VIP	Law & Order: SVU	Late Show	Decisiones	Late Night-Jim	Seinfeld Sex & World	Swallow	T. Smiley	(Off Air)	Ways Die	Ways Die	W. Williams	Life De	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
12:AM	News	News	Torrente, un Torbel	King-Hill	Insider	Pagado	News	Sex & World	World	JFK Ruby Con.	Cash Cab	Movie: The Rookies, Jay Hernandez	Ways Die	Ways Die	W. Williams	Life De	NFL Live	SportsCenter
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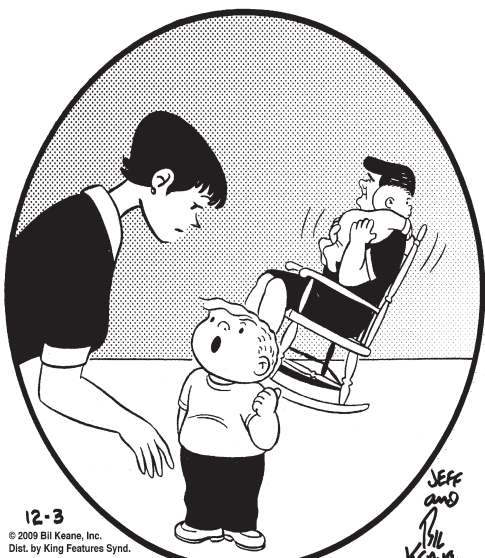
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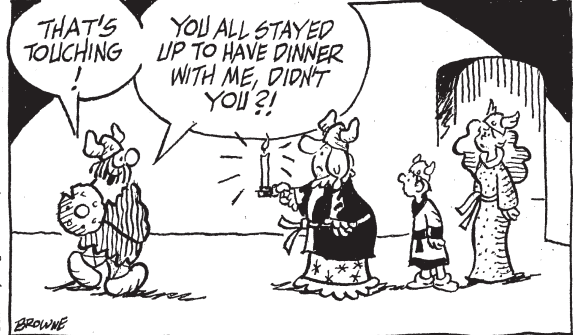
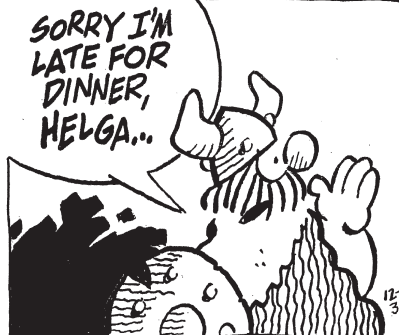
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"SURE I LIKE GREEN BEANS, MOM. I JUST WANTED TO SEE IF RUFF LIKES 'EM, TOO."



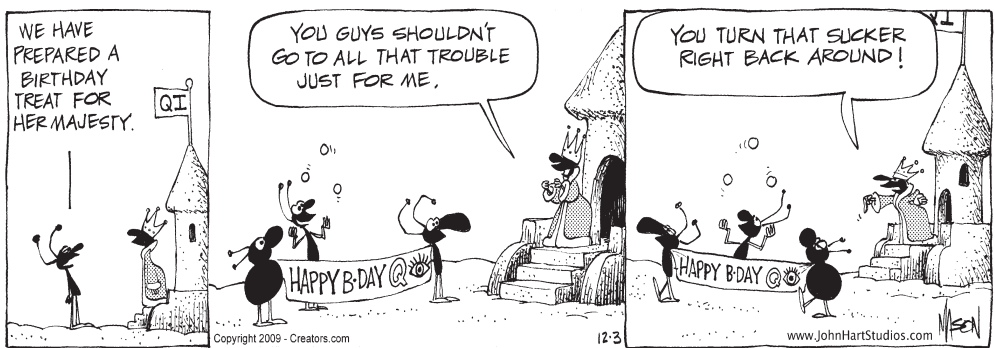
"GRANDMA SAYS THAT'S HOW SHE USED TO ROCK YOU, BUT HOW COULD SHE EVEN LIFT YOU?"



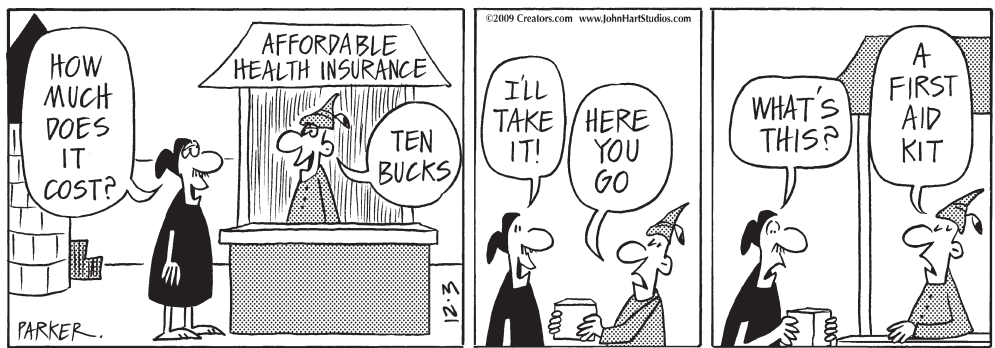
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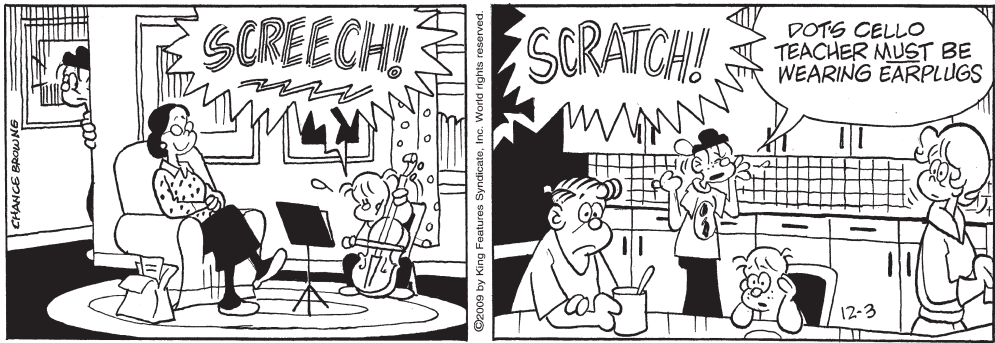
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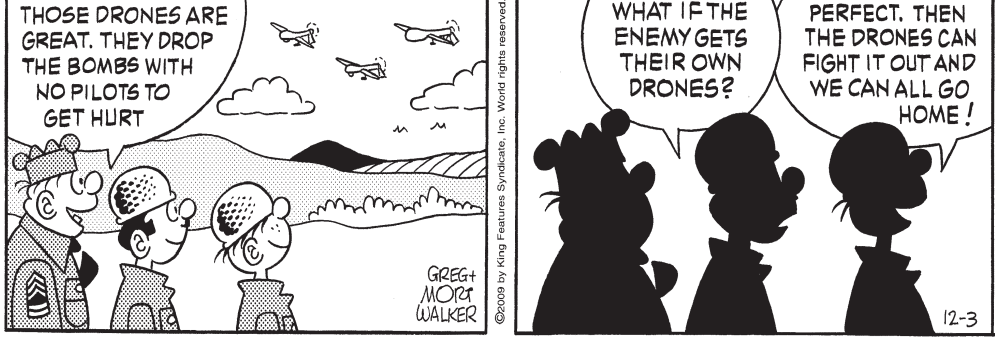
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 3, the 337th day of 2009. There are 28 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 3, 1984, thousands of people died after a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a pesticide plant operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal, India.

On this date: In 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state.

In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States by the Electoral College.

In 1833, Oberlin College in Ohio — the first truly coeducational school of higher learning in the United States — began holding classes.

In 1925, Concerto in F by George Gershwin had its world premiere at New York's Carnegie Hall, with Gershwin himself at the piano.

In 1947, the Tennessee Williams play "A Streetcar Named Desire" opened on Broadway.

In 1967, surgeons in Cape Town, South Africa led by Dr. Christiaan Barnard performed the first human heart transplant on Louis Washkansky, who lived 18 days with the new heart. The 20th Century Limited, the famed luxury train, completed its final run from New York to Chicago.

In 1979, 11 people were killed in a crush of fans at Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium, where The Who were performing.

In 1992, the Greek tanker Aegean Sea spilled 21.5 million gallons of crude oil when it ran aground off northwestern Spain.

One year ago: Theological conservatives upset by liberal views of U.S. Episcopalians and Canadian Anglicans formed a rival North American province.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Ferlin Husky is 84. Singer Andy Williams is 82. Movie director Jean-Luc Godard is 79. Singer Jaye P. Morgan is 78. Actor Nicolas Coster is 76. Actress Mary Alice is 68. Rock singer Ozzy Osbourne is 61. Country musician Paul Gregg (Restless Heart) is 55. Actor Steven Culp

is 54. Actress Daryl Hannah is 49. Actress Julianne Moore is 49. Olympic gold medal figure skater Katarina Witt is 41. Actor Brendan Fraser is 44. Singer Montell Jordan is 41. Actress Holly Marie Combs is 36. Actress Lauren Roman is 34. Actress Anna Chlumsky is 29. Actor Brian Bonsall is 28. Actress Amanda Seyfried is 22. Actor Michael Angarano is 24. Actor Jake T. Austin is 15.

Thought for Today: "It is right noble to fight with wickedness and wrong; the mistake is in supposing that spiritual evil can be overcome by physical means." — Lydia Maria Child, American author (1802-1880).

Answer to previous puzzle

BIAS	OTHER	IBIS
ONCE	ARENA	NOSE
SNAG	HARTS	DOSE
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PEAS	PARIS	REFS
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Newsday Crossword

FINE FORECAST by Doug Peterson
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ACROSS | 67 Hemingway nickname | 10 Cruise film of '86 | 35 On ice |
| 1 Italian motor scooter | 68 Startle | 11 Neighborhood eateries | 40 To boot |
| 6 Flying high | 69 "Annabel Lee" poet | 12 Hand-cream additive | 41 "Pretty please?" |
| 11 Drivel | 70 Put through a sieve | 13 Walk heavily | 44 Totally absorbed |
| 14 Not of this earth | 71 Mouse manipulators | 18 Author Silverstein | 47 Breakfast-tray items |
| 15 Actress Thomas | | 23 Copycat | 49 He may be over your head |
| 16 Out of sorts | | 25 Tick off | 50 Construction beam |
| 17 Scrambled alternative | | 26 Syndicate | 53 River craft |
| 19 Class-trip destination | | 27 "Tell me ___ haven't heard!" | 54 Passion |
| 20 Unspoiled spot | | 29 Repudiation | 55 Things to do |
| 21 "What's the big idea?" | | 30 City on Biscayne Bay | 56 Slightly wet |
| 22 Looked steadily | | 31 Ticklish Muppet | 57 As far as |
| 24 Cracker-seed source | | 32 Willy Wonka portrayer | 58 Hors d'oeuvre cheese |
| 26 Two-door car | | 33 Closing Bell channel | 59 Mellowed |
| 28 Unlikely to rock the boat | | 34 Schlep | 63 Entourage agent Gold |
| 33 Most important | | | 64 Business mag |
| 36 Joyce's land | | | 65 Sch. in Columbus |
| 37 Agitate | | | |
| 38 Bert Bobbsey's twin | | | |
| 39 Zealot | | | |
| 42 Hi-fi component | | | |
| 43 Perry Mason star | | | |
| 45 Cocktail garnish | | | |
| 46 Man of morals | | | |
| 48 Unimpeded progress | | | |
| 51 Film holder | | | |
| 52 Lion or leopard | | | |
| 56 On account of | | | |
| 58 Meadow call | | | |
| 60 Fame singer Irene | | | |
| 61 30-day mo. | | | |
| 62 Carnival setting, often | | | |
| 66 Network since '81 | | | |

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