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# Bebe goes loony

See Page 5

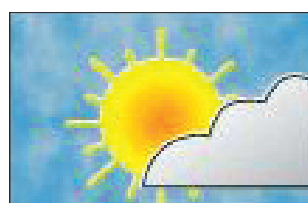


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# HIGH BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY

DECEMBER 8, 2009



VOLUME 105, NUMBER 2

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## County seeks bids for roofs

At courthouse and library

By **THOMAS JENKINS**  
 Staff Writer

Howard County commissioners spent much of their special meeting Monday looking upward, as the court gave the go-ahead to begin accepting bids for new roofs for the county courthouse and library facilities.

According to County Judge Mark Barr, the need for a new roof became apparent during the recent snowfall in the Crossroads area.

"As you know, we renovated the old district courtroom on the third floor to serve as the new commissioner's courtroom," said Barr. "We had a rain shortly after the renovations were completed and didn't have any problems. However, the recent snow

we experienced caused several leaks on the third floor to show up. After putting all of that work into the new courtroom, we didn't want it to be ruined by a leaking roof, so we decided to call a special meeting this morning to address the issue."

Barr said the court agreed to send out bid packets to replace the roofs on both the county courthouse and library.

"We've had problems with the roof on the library for quite some time now, so it seemed like a good idea to go ahead and get both of these problems fixed at the same time," said Barr.

"We'll accept sealed bid packages over the next two

See **COUNTY**, Page 3

KEEP YOUR EYES TOWARD THE SKY  
 IN DOWNTOWN BIG SPRING FOR A  
 HOLIDAY SURPRISE.

## APS Giving Trees at Western National benefit area's elderly

By **STEVE REAGAN**  
 Staff Writer

Officials with Adult Protective Services and Western National Bank are asking area residents to lend a hand to the community's elderly and disabled this holiday season.

WNB and APS are joining forces in sponsoring the Giving Tree/Be A Star project, designed to provide gifts for APS clients.

Trees at the bank's offices in Big Spring and Coahoma will contain paper ornaments with the names of elderly and disabled residents. Each ornament contains a wish list with items such as an electric blanket, bath robe, slippers or a baseball cap.

"These items are all afford-

able and can make the difference between having Christmas or not for an elderly or disabled person," an APS press release stated. "These people are neighbors and citizens of our community. Each is special and unique. They had meaningful lives and experiences and each deserve a moment of our time to make the holidays special."

More than 80 percent of all cases reported to APS involve neglect, according to information from the organization. Because of illness or diminished mental capacity, an elderly person may no longer be able to provide adequately for his or her own safety,

See **APS**, Page 3



Khandin White, right, ponders whether to add more decorations to his gingerbread cookie during the Breakfast With Santa event held Saturday at Heritage Museum.

## No surprise, Neugebauer running for another term

By **THOMAS JENKINS**  
 Staff Writer

Congressman Randy Neugebauer (R-Lubbock) recently announced he will run for re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives during what he describes as a "critical time" in this nation's history.



"It has been my distinct honor to serve you in Congress and I ask the voters of West Texas and the Big Country for the opportunity to continue to be their representative in Washington," said Neugebauer. "I was elected to represent the ideals of our district and my conservative voting record is strong — I have one of the most conservative voting records in the United States House of Representatives."

"This is a critical time in our nation's history. More than ever, you deserve and expect principled representation and leaders who are willing not just to talk, but to stand up and fight. As we face wars abroad and many challenges at home with a dif-

ficult economy, unemployment and out-of-control government spending, my desire to fight for you and our shared values has never been greater. I am resolved to continue to fight for the protection of life, preservation of our freedoms, defending our constitution, protection of our free enterprise and the second amendment, as well as continuing to push back against increased taxation and

See **FILED**, Page 3

17 SHOPPING DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS



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# Obituaries

## Flora Wells

Flora Wells, 53, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, in a local hospital. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2009, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Ed Williamson officiating.

Flora was born March 23, 1956, in Cleburne and moved to Big Spring in 1991.

Survivors include Shelley Smith, her legal guardian and family, and all of her family at West Texas Centers for MHMR.

Memorials may be made to West Texas Centers, Mental Retardation Division, 409 Runnels, Big Spring 79720.

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

## Raymond 'Mundito' Villa

Raymond "Mundito" Villa, 51, of Stanton died Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, in Midland. Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2009, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Stanton with Father James Plagens officiating and Deacon Clemente Villa assisting. Interment will follow at St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery.

A rosary will be held at 7 p.m. tonight at Gilbreath Funeral Home.

He was born June 18, 1958, in Big Spring to Manuel and Mary Villa. Raymond was a lifetime resident of Stanton and was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

Survivors include one son, Josh Mendoza of Midland; one daughter and son-in-law, Anita and Auden DeLaRosa of Midland; two grandchildren; two brothers, Sammy Villa and Freddie Villa, both of Stanton; and several aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two infant sisters.

Arrangements under the direction of Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton. Online condolences can be made at: www.npwelch.com

# 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.

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

# Police blotter

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

- JESSICA MICHELLE CHAVERA, 28, of 1510 Sycamore, was arrested Monday on two local warrants.
- THEFT was reported in the 1700 block of FM 700.
- FORGERY was reported in the 200 block of FM 700.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 200 block of Circle.
- ASSAULT BY CONTACT was reported: in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87.
- in the 1200 block of Birdwell Lane.

# Sheriff

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

- Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 71 inmates at the time of this report.
- JESSICA MICHELLE CHAVERA, 28, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a failure to appear warrant for driving while license invalid and a charge of failure to appear.

# Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Tucson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 100 block of Denton. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1500 block of Sunset. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Fourth Street and Tulane. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the 196 mile marker of Interstate Highway 20. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the 174 mile marker of Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Wildfire Road and S. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

# Support groups

**TODAY**  
• Grief share, sponsored by Home Hospice and the First Presbyterian Church, Seventh and Runnels (north end door), meets at 6 p.m.. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, contact Sherry Hodnett at 264-7599.

• The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St.




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

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

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

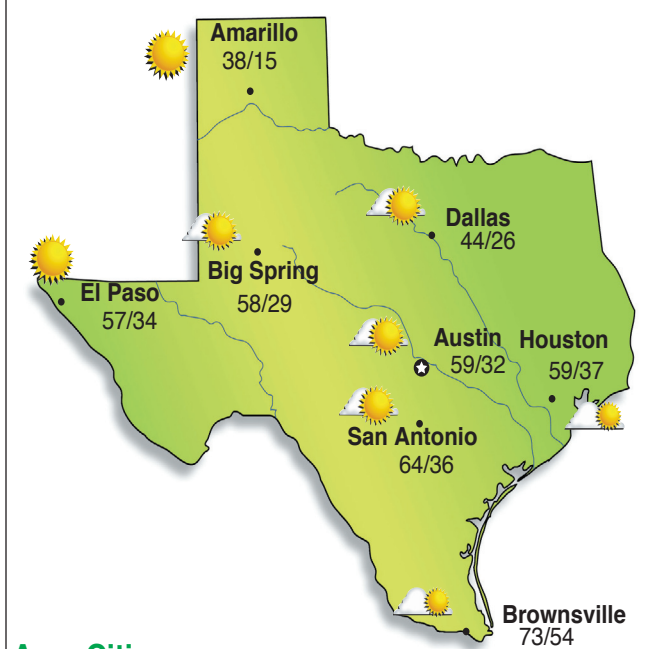
# Today's Weather

## Local 3-Day Forecast

Wed 12/9	Thu 12/10	Fri 12/11
 <b>58/29</b> Sunny, along with a few afternoon clouds. High 58F. Winds ENE at 5 to 10 mph.	 <b>61/35</b> More sun than clouds. High in the low 60s and lows in the mid 30s.	 <b>64/38</b> Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s and lows in the upper 30s.
<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:36 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:36 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:42 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:37 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:42 PM

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## Texas At A Glance



### Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	47	28	sunny	Kingsville	70	45	pt sunny
Amarillo	38	15	sunny	Livingston	55	30	mst sunny
Austin	59	32	mst sunny	Longview	48	27	mst sunny
Beaumont	61	37	mst sunny	Lubbock	48	25	pt sunny
Brownsville	73	54	pt sunny	Lufkin	53	30	sunny
Brownwood	50	28	sunny	Midland	60	34	pt sunny
Corpus Christi	65	45	pt sunny	Raymondville	73	50	pt sunny
Corsicana	45	26	mst sunny	Rosenberg	60	37	mst sunny
Dallas	44	26	mst sunny	San Antonio	64	36	mst sunny
Del Rio	70	41	mst sunny	San Marcos	59	31	mst sunny
El Paso	57	34	sunny	Sulphur Springs	45	26	mst sunny
Fort Stockton	66	40	pt sunny	Sweetwater	51	28	mst sunny
Gainesville	41	20	sunny	Tyler	46	26	mst sunny
Greenville	42	22	mst sunny	Weatherford	43	22	sunny
Houston	59	37	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	42	18	sunny

### National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	64	32	rain	Minneapolis	13	-3	sn shower
Boston	46	35	mixed	New York	47	35	rain
Chicago	34	7	sn shower	Phoenix	56	41	pt sunny
Dallas	44	26	mst sunny	San Francisco	51	35	mst sunny
Denver	22	8	pt sunny	Seattle	35	23	sunny
Houston	59	37	pt sunny	St. Louis	34	16	sn shower
Los Angeles	58	42	pt sunny	Washington, DC	51	36	rain
Miami	85	72	pt sunny				

# Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night: Winning numbers drawn: 3-19-22-35-37. Number matching five of five: 0.

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night: Winning numbers drawn: 3-15-18-20. Bonus Ball: 26. Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: 0.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Monday afternoon by the Texas Lottery, in order: 6-4-0-0. Sum It Up: 10

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 5-3-1. Sum It Up: 9.



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# News in brief

## Wave of coordinated attacks strike government sites in Baghdad, killing at least 94

BAGHDAD (AP) — A series of coordinated attacks struck Baghdad Tuesday, including three car bombs that blew up near government sites. At least 94 were killed and 120 wounded in the worst wave of violence in the capital in more than a month, authorities said.

A total of four attacks, which also included a suicide car bomb on a police patrol, showed the ability of insurgents to strike high-profile targets in the heart of Baghdad. It was another embarrassment to Iraqi forces in their expanding role as front-line security as U.S. forces plan their withdrawal.

The blasts came as Iraqi officials prepared to announce the date for next year's parliamentary elections — a move the security forces worry could bring an escalation in attacks seeking to discredit the pro-Western government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

The core of the attacks hit central Baghdad with three bomb-rigged cars exploding in the span of a few minutes.

The targets were the latest assaults directed at Iraqi authorities: the Labor Ministry building, a court complex near the Iraqi-protected Green Zone and the new site of the Finance Ministry after its previous building was destroyed in major attacks in August.

## Afghan leader: Afghanistan will need international military aid for at least 15 years

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Tuesday it will be at least 15 years before his government can bankroll a security force strong enough to protect the country from the threat of insurgency.

Speaking at a news conference with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Karzai repeated his claim that Afghan security forces would take the lead in securing the nation within five years, but he said his nation would need financial help to pay the salaries and equip the growing army and police force.

Afghanistan wants to pay for its forces with its own resources, but "that will not be for another 15 years," Karzai said, adding that Afghanistan would look to the U.S. to help provide the financial backing for a growing Afghan defense force.

"For a number of years, maybe for another 15 to 20 years, Afghanistan will not be able to sustain a force of that nature and capability with its own resources," Karzai said.

Gates is the first member of President Barack Obama's Cabinet to visit since Obama announced last week that he is sending 30,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan, but intends to pare down the U.S. role in July 2011. The defense secretary and other administration officials have described the 2011 date as just the beginning, with the process likely take at least two or three years to complete.

## U.N. weather agency says decade 'very likely' warmest on record

COPENHAGEN (AP) — This decade has very likely been the warmest in the historical record, and 2009 will probably end up as one of the warmest years, the U.N. weather agency announced Tuesday at the second day of the 192-nation climate conference in Copenhagen.

In some areas — parts of Africa, central Asia — this will probably be the warmest year, but overall 2009 "is likely to be about the fifth-warmest year on record," said Michel Jarraud, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization.

The decade 2000-2009 "is very likely to be the warmest on record, warmer than the 1990s, than the 1980s and so on," Jarraud said.

The data were released as negotiators at the two-week talks worked to craft a global deal to step up efforts to stem climate change. On Tuesday, delegates were digging into the dense technicalities of "metrics" and "gas inventories," as governments jockeyed for position leading up to the finale late next week, when more than 100 national leaders, including President Barack Obama, will converge on Copenhagen for the final days of bargaining.

In Britain, Prime Minister Gordon Brown urged fellow Europeans to raise their bid on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to pressure the U.S. and others to offer more in the Copenhagen negotiations.

## Militants attack intelligence office in central Pakistan, 12 killed

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP) — A team of militants launched a gun, rocket and suicide attack on an intelligence office in central Pakistan on Tuesday, killing 12 people in a strike that showed the insurgents can hit deep in the heart of the country.

The raid in Multan signaled the relentless determination of militants, despite being pressured by a major army offensive in one of their Afghan border havens. It came a day after twin bombings at a market in the eastern city of Lahore killed 49.

Tuesday's blast ripped the facades off of several buildings in a part of the town largely reserved for government and security agencies. Also damaged was the apparent target of the blast, a building housing an office of Pakistan's most powerful spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence.

Senior police officer Agha Yusuf said at least three militants in a car carried out the attack. One of them first fired a rocket and an automatic weapon at a police checkpoint. Then the men drove the car to the intelligence agency and detonated it.

He said security force members were among the 12 dead.

## Condemned Ohio killer who scattered woman's remains awaits 1st U.S. single-drug lethal injection

LUCASVILLE, Ohio (AP) — Witnesses to the scheduled execution of a killer who scattered a woman's remains across two states could have an even more somber experience than those who watched previously when Ohio put nearly three dozen other inmates to death.

Inmate Kenneth Biros, if executed as planned Tuesday morning, would become the first person in the U.S. to die by lethal injection with a single drug, a process most death penalty experts agree will take longer than the old method. Biros' procedure would be the first lethal injection since the state's switch from using a three-drug combination.

If that method fails, a backup plan allows executioners to inject drugs directly into muscles instead of veins.

Ohio overhauled its procedure after the failed attempt at rapist Romell Broom's execution, which was halted by Gov. Ted Strickland in September.

Executioners tried for two hours to find a usable vein for injection, hitting bone and muscle in as many as 18 needle sticks that Broom said were very painful.

Broom, 53, was sentenced to die for the rape and stabbing death of a 14-year-old girl. He has appealed the state's attempt to try to execute him again.

## Obama's envoy begins rare trip to North Korea for highest-level talks with Pyongyang in year

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — President Barack Obama's envoy began a rare trip to North Korea Tuesday for the highest-level talks with the communist nation in more than a year as a senior U.S. official warned of strong sanctions against Pyongyang unless it rejoins international nuclear talks.

Envoy Stephen Bosworth's mission is to find out whether North Korea will return to the stalled international talks on ending its nuclear programs after carrying out an atomic test blast in May and quitting the six-nation negotiations.

Bosworth's delegation flew to Pyongyang from a U.S. military base near Seoul, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul said. North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency later said in a one-sentence dispatch that the delegation arrived in Pyongyang.

Footage from broadcaster APTN in Pyongyang showed Bosworth and Washington's lead nuclear negotiator, Sung Kim, arriving at an airport in Pyongyang, shaking hands with North Korean officials and posing for photos.

## COUNTY

Continued from Page 1

weeks. We're making arrangements now to make sure everything is published as required by law, and we'll be sending out the specs to businesses. If everything goes well, I expect we'll unseal the bids prior to the Dec. 28 meeting and take action on the item during the regularly scheduled meeting."

Barr said it's unclear how much the roof replacements will cost until his office receives the bids.

"It's really hard to say," he said. "But we'll try our best to get the bid packets out to everyone. I don't know that there are many local businesses that do commercial roofs, but if there are, we'll certainly get word out to them."

Commissioners also held an executive session during the special meeting, but no action was taken as a result of

it. "I had some real estate information I needed to bring to the court," said Barr. "The court decided not to take action on it."

### MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

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Patsy Ophelia Horn, 60, died Friday.. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Burial will be at Trinity Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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## APS

Continued from Page 1

officials said.

The paper ornaments will be on the trees in Big Spring and Coahoma until Friday. Gifts may be

returned unwrapped to any of the bank locations. The Christmas ornament will need to be returned with any items, so gifts may be matched to the correct individual.

For more information, contact the local APS office at 263-9654 or

Western National Bank offices in Big Spring (466-0000) or Coahoma (394-4256).

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

## FILED

Continued from Page 1

over-reaching, big-government policies."

According to records filed with the Texas Secretary of State and the Republican and Democratic parties, Neugebauer has not yet drawn an opponent for the March primary races.

The congressman said he feels it is time for the nation to return to the ideals of its founding fathers.

"There is a new awakening in our country that is being lead by the conservative patriots," he said. "It is time to return to the heritage and morals of our founding fathers. The constitution is the framework of our democracy and should be treated as such."

I believe that politicians who have made a career of disregarding these basic tenants

will see an end to their service this political season. I am honored to represent the Christian ideals and moral values that are a part of the foundation of our country. I am proud to hold these values and ask for the opportunity to con-

tinue my fight in Washington."

Congressman Neugebauer was first elected in a special election in 2003 and has served in the House of Representative since that time.

Contact Staff Writer

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

## BIG SPRING HERALD

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# EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

**Ron Midkiff**  
Publisher

**John A. Moseley**  
Managing Editor

**Bill McClellan**  
News Editor

## OUR VIEW

# Remember, it's the season to give to others

It is the season. That's right, we've all begun to turn our thoughts to Christmas. And that means it's time to begin remembering the various charitable drives that take place every year here in Big Spring.

While there's about a month of shopping days each year between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there's less time to help out charities.

Now is really the time to take a few minutes and remember those less fortunate than ourselves. And to remember the spirit of giving far outweighs that of getting. It's a message we preach to our children at an early age during the Christmas season.

And this Christmas, as is always the case, there are a number of agencies that need our help.

The Salvation Army's Angel Trees have the Christmas wishes of many needy children and elderly citizens on them as well this season.

The Angel Trees are within easy reach, located at the Howard County Library, Bealls Department Store, Maurice's, Higginbotham-Bartlett, the Heritage Museum and Wal-Mart. In addition, the tree for seniors located here at the Herald.

There's also still time to help out the Giving Trees project in Big Spring.

Child Protective Services annually sponsors a Giving Tree in the lobby of Wells Fargo Bank. The tree is trimmed with paper ornaments, each bearing the name of a child who has three wishes for the holidays. People purchase the gifts indicated on those ornaments and return them, unwrapped to the tree. Each ornament is marked with the child's shoe and clothing size.

Adult Protective Services' annual "Be a Star" program is also under way and is another opportunity to help needy elderly and disabled adults.

So, if you can, take a few minutes to drop by Wells Fargo Bank and pick an ornament off the Giving Tree and make this a special Christmas for a special child; or go by any of the Western National Bank locations in Big Spring and Coahoma and take pick up a star off the "Be a Star" trees.

Additionally, we would also again ask our readers to remember that for children, Christmas just isn't Christmas without a new toy.

The Herald and the Salvation Army want to make sure no child in Big Spring has to experience that feeling this Christmas season, and that's why we'll again be partnering a joint toy drive.

So, if you can, please heed the call. We'll have the doors open here at the Herald offices every Monday through Friday morning at 8 a.m. and will be here until 5 p.m. on those days for those wishing to donate to the drive.

The toys will be taken to the Salvation Army and distributed just before Christmas. Help us make sure they can give every child in need at least one new toy this Christmas.

Let's all be able to say we did our best to make it a joyous holiday season throughout Big Spring and Howard County.

Remember, the feeling you will receive from helping others is truly what is meant by the Christmas spirit.

## LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

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

## A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

With You, Lord, we can achieve our objectives and reach our goals.

Amen

# Botched investigations lead to...

When the United States abolishes the death penalty, some of its most ardent proponents ironically may be remembered for having made the most effective case for its demise. Texas Gov. Rick Perry's obvious attempt to suppress the truth in the supposed arson case against Cameron Todd Willingham, executed in 2004 for a crime that probably didn't occur, reveals the heinousness of capital punishment. That an innocent individual can be executed is disturbing. That the death penalty — which has claimed about 50 lives in the United States so far this year — is used for political purposes, while doing nothing to deter violent crime, is abhorrent.

Less than two hours before Willingham's execution, Perry received a report challenging the central evidence against him for the supposed arson that killed his three young daughters. But Perry permitted the execution anyway.

Five years after Willingham's execution, the state Forensic Science Commission was on the verge of reviewing new findings that made a compelling case for his innocence.

But recently, just two days before the commission's review, Perry began replacing all four governor-appointed members on the commission. He called his move purely routine.

Maybe so. One week before Thanksgiving, Texas executed Robert Lee Thompson after Perry rejected a rare recommendation from the state clemency board for the prisoner's life to be

spared. In that case, the person who actually shot the victim is serving a life sentence.

Why is this routine in Texas? Facing a Republican primary in March, Perry's actions have struck most observers as purely political.

After all, the death penalty does more to help politicians get elected than keep us safe. Most criminologists believe that it doesn't deter murder. A recent Death Penalty Information Center study shows that police chiefs around the country rank the death penalty last among measures that help fight crime. Nevertheless, few politicians publicly oppose it. Additionally, the election of district attorneys and judges creates a strong political motive to secure harsh sentences that investigations and prosecutions can be sullied by manipulating evidence.

Securing testimony from dubious sources to justify a theory of someone's guilt is too easy. For example, the government relied on a jailhouse snitch (the most dubious of all such sources) in Willingham's case and in numerous other cases where strong innocence claims have later emerged. That's a factor in the Georgia case of Troy Davis, who has spent two decades on death row and now will have a court hear his claim of innocence, following a ruling from the Supreme Court.

The death penalty gives government godlike power that, given human fallibility, is incredibly dangerous. In Willingham's case, arson investigators used techniques that have since been debunked as "junk science." While witnesses initially reported seeing Willingham attempting to help his children out of his burning house, they seemed to change their story and remember less sympathetic things about him once investiga-

tors started to say they saw clear signs of arson.

Texas and other states should improve their use of fire science and the best technical tools available. But bias and ambition can always corrupt perceptions and conclusions. Justifiable outrage over senseless killings can color emotions in the search for truth. Even the most honorable and well-intentioned prosecutors and judges can succumb to intense political pressure. The results, predictably, are wrongful convictions or, as in the Willingham case, a wrongful execution.

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said in 2006 that he didn't believe the United States had executed anyone who was innocent. If that had happened, Scalia said, "we would not have to hunt for it; the innocent's name would be shouted from the rooftops."

Willingham's name isn't being shouted from rooftops, though it should be, along with the names of other innocent men who were executed like Carlos de Luna, Ruben Cantu and Larry Griffin. Have we become so numb that the killing of innocent people is acceptable?

Had Willingham been sentenced to life in prison, he could be a free man today.

Instead we are left to ask, as former Texas Gov. Mark White recently did: Why do we impose the death penalty, given the possibility that an innocent person will be executed?

*Larry Cox is executive director of Amnesty International USA. Amnesty International is dedicated to freeing prisoners of conscience, gaining fair trials for political prisoners, ending torture, political killings and "disappearances" and abolishing the death penalty throughout the world.*



LARRY COX



# The balloon man as media critic

What if Richard Heene, the guy who claimed his son was accidentally launched in an experimental balloon, were a media critic instead of a pathetic publicity hound?

What if he wanted to make the point that the news media, especially TV news, is overdosing us on mayhem and fluff? Here's what Heene could have done: put a puppy in his experimental balloon, instead of pretending his kid Falcon was in it.



JASON SALZMAN

The puppy ride would undoubtedly have made national and international news, with images of the tail-wagging dog all over the place. TV stations would have dispatched helicopters to chase Heene's balloon. The media drama would have stretched on for days or longer.

Heene could have said he was fixing his balloon, and his annoying puppy was biting his shoes and knocking over his tools. We all know how pups can do that. So he put his unruly dog in the balloon basket to keep it contained, and the balloon accidentally floated away from him. (Or, the doggy just jumped in the basket of his own accord, like Toto in The Wizard of Oz.) Heene could have pulled off

the entire stunt without telling anyone but the mute puppy.

And then, sitting there on the Today Show, with millions of morning viewers looking on, media-critic Heene could have come clean and skewered the journalists for paying so much attention to his balloon-riding puppy, while so much real horror and tragedy in the world go by unnoticed.

Of course, there's the risk that the balloon could have crashed and the puppy died, and then Heene may have faced animal-abuse charges. And even if the puppy survived, Heene may still have been held responsible for the emergency-response costs and other damages.

Here's another option.

In his bizarre book, How You Can Manipulate the Media, David Alexander describes how an activist sent out a news release threatening to "pour gasoline on a puppy and set it afire" to protest U.S. involvement in violence in Central America during the Reagan administration.

You can imagine the response. Local TV coverage. Letters to the editor. Protests by animal rights groups.

People called the police, but no one had any recourse because, as Alexander writes, it's not against the law to threaten to harm an animal.

The protester scheduled the puppy burning to coincide with the 5 p.m. news. Several stations were broadcasting live when he

emerged from his house with the puppy in hand, according to Alexander.

Then the protester turned into a media critic on live television. He denounced journalists for ignoring the problems in Central America and for caring more about pets than people. He announced that he would not burn his puppy after all. In fact, he loved dogs. Media hoax over.

If Heene had been a media critic, all he would have had to do was threaten to send a puppy up in his balloon, and you can bet he'd have gotten a ton of media attention.

The puppy-in-a-balloon threat, or possibly an actual canine balloon ride, would have been the perfect platform to denounce TV news' fixation on mayhem and fluff, especially involving animals. Heene probably wouldn't have gotten in any trouble at all for doing it. (Last week, he pleaded guilty to felony charges.)

And, as far as I'm concerned, Heene would have been a hero for trying to get reporters and media consumers alike to wake up and demand quality journalism, instead of settling for the increasingly pervasive American news diet of infotainment.

*Jason Salzman, author of Making the News: A Guide for Activists and Nonprofits, is chairman of the board of Rocky Mountain Media Watch and a former media critic for the shuttered newspaper Rocky Mountain News.*



**Bird Poop:**

# Common loon finds highway poor runway

Anticipating the soft buoyancy of the water below, the bird quickly made its approach toward the sheen reflected during the late afternoon. With its small wings unable to slow its momentum, the bird was accustomed to hitting surfaces with its breast after a rapid descent. Once its heavy body had created a huge spray on either side, it would settle into the watery domain to feed and rest.



BEBE McCASLAND

Smacking the asphalt surface of Interstate 20, the bird tumbled from the right lane toward the shoulder. As dust and feathers slowly settled around it, an approaching motorist noticed the large gray bird lying on the pavement.

Afraid a truck might hit it if it ventured into the roadway, the man parked his car and hurried toward it. Seeing his approach, the bird struggled to rise and escape.

Helpless on land, it could only push itself forward with large webbed feet while trying to keep its balance. As the man pressed his hands against its wings and heavy body, the bird nipped at his arms with

its long, sharp bill. Delivering it to his veterinarian in Mitchell County, the man then called the game warden. "The vet thinks it's a loon. I brought it to him to see if it's injured," he added. Telling the caller he'd pick it up, the officer knew he'd probably be making a delivery of another bird to Big Spring.

The familiar voice said the vet had found no obvious injuries. "Just wanted you to make sure it's OK. I'd appreciate your releasing it. See you in about an hour."

While the game warden held open the carrier gate, I quickly reached inside. Holding on to the protesting common loon was like handling a squirming, wriggling 9-pound football.

Tapered at both ends with the largest heft in the middle, the sleek bird was the epitome of aquatic and aerodynamic planning. Whether in the water or air, by stretching its long bill and neck and extending its legs and feet, it could pierce watery depths or air with ease.

"If the legs work, then it's a matter of a proper release site," we assured the game warden. Adding they would be well tested, we planned to let it paddle in our bathtub filled with water.

Turning the bird so the game warden could see the legs were

See **LOON**, Page 7



Courtesy photo

Hard frosts in northern climes prompt the common loon to migrate southward. With its powerful wings, the bird can reach 60-62 mph. This specie has been rescued in Dawson, Howard, Midland and Mitchell counties.

## Ford Year End Sales Event 2009 F150 And Superduty Closeout

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## Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

### The Long-Term View

East dealer.  
Both sides vulnerable.  
**NORTH**  
♠ J 2  
♥ A K 10 3  
♦ A 9 5  
♣ J 6 4 3  
**WEST**  
♠ 7  
♥ 9 8 5 2  
♦ Q J 10 6 3  
♣ A Q 9  
**EAST**  
♠ 8 6 5 3  
♥ Q J 6  
♦ K 8 4 2  
♣ K 10  
**SOUTH**  
♠ A K Q 10 9 4  
♥ 7 4  
♦ 7  
♣ 8 7 5 2

The bidding:  
East South West North  
Pass 2♠ Pass 4♠  
Opening lead — queen of diamonds.  
The question of when to draw trumps arises in the play of every suit contract. The general rule is that declarer draws trumps at once unless there is a good reason not to do so, but finding that reason naturally might require a bit of foresight.  
For example, consider this deal where South wins the diamond lead with the ace and is faced with the question of whether to draw trumps. Let's see what happens if he does.

Since the trumps are divided 4-1, he has to play four rounds of them, and then must set about establishing a club trick. East wins the first club and returns a diamond, which declarer ruffs. Another club lead produces another diamond return, forcing declarer to use his last trump. After South ruffs, he is fresh out of trumps. He can now do no better than cash the A-K of hearts and finish down one.

Now let's go back to trick two and have South lead a club instead of drawing trumps. East wins the club and returns a diamond. South ruffs and plays another club. The defense wins the club and again returns a diamond. Declarer ruffs and leads the third round of clubs, taken by West.

The wisdom of delaying the extraction of trumps now becomes apparent. Another diamond lead from West would be ineffective, since declarer can ruff in dummy, draw trumps and claim the balance, while any other return from West would prove equally ineffective.

The advantage of playing clubs at trick two is that it guards against a 4-1 trump division while costing virtually nothing if the trumps are divided 3-2.

Tomorrow: It pays to plan the play.  
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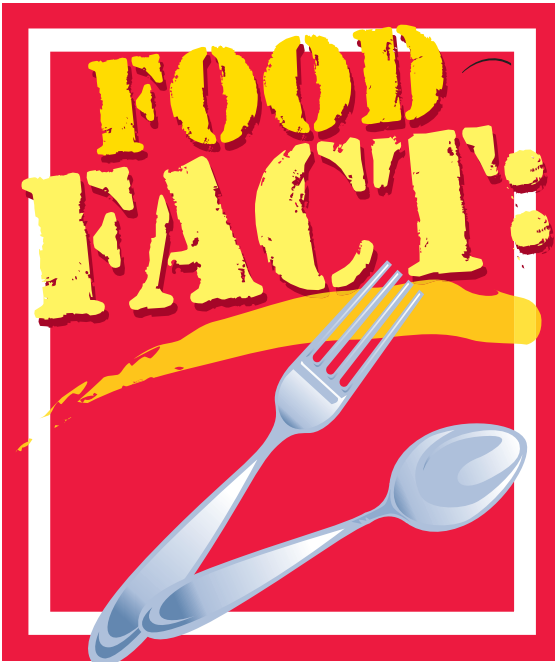


**THIS DAY IN...**



**HISTORY**

- 1787: NEW JERSEY BECAME THE THIRD STATE TO RATIFY THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.
- 1865: SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED IN AMERICA.
- 1956: JAPAN WAS ADMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS.



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ANSWER: EGNOG



**RECIPE**

instructions for making a certain dish

*How they SAY that in...*

**ENGLISH:** Food

**SPANISH:** Comida

**ITALIAN:** Cibo

**FRENCH:** Nourriture

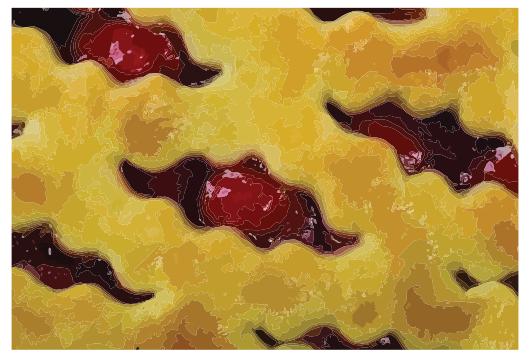
**GERMAN:** Nahrung

**Did you know?**

MANY PEOPLE GIVE FOOD-RELATED GIFTS AROUND THE HOLIDAYS.



**GET THE PICTURE!**



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: CHERRY PIE

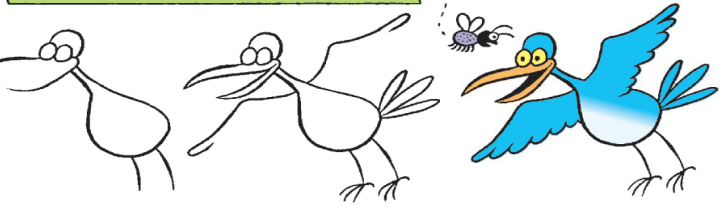
**SLYLOCK FOX and COMICS FOR KIDS**

**BY BOB WEBER JR.**

A supermarket manager says Randy Rat shoplifted a bottle of soda. The manager claims she chased the running rat back to his house. Randy says she is lying. He insists the bottle has been in his kitchen pantry since yesterday. Slylock Fox asked the rat to open the bottle. Is Slylock trying to solve the case or is he merely thirsty?



**HOW TO DRAW a bird in flight**



**YOUR DRAWING**  
Today's terrific artist is Allison Mann, age 14, of Concord, ME



What does popcorn contain that causes it to pop when heated?  
a) oil b) water c) gas  
Answer -- (b)

**Find six differences between these panels.**



The fourth Find the six differences collection is here. Send \$4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to Six Differences No. 4, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



# U.S. plan for horse roundup faces opposition

SPARKS, Nev. (AP) — A government plan to round up and relocate thousands of wild horses in the West faces opposition from advocates who say the proposal is inhumane and unnecessary.

At a hearing near Reno, two dozen advocates pressed the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's National Horse and Burro Advisory Board Monday for a moratorium on roundups until an independent audit of mustang numbers can be conducted.

The government wants to carry out Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's plan to relocate as many as 25,000 wild horses from Western rangelands to pastures in the Midwest and East out of fear that the mustangs' fast-multiplying numbers will lead to mass starvation.

While the panel adjourned late Monday without taking

any formal action, at least two members, Gary Zakotnik and Vern Dooley, said afterward they support Salazar's proposal.

"It's the best and most cost-effective alternative I've seen to deal with the horse problem in my 10 years on the board," Zakotnik said.

"Considering the reality of exploding horse numbers, it's a reasonable solution," Dooley said.

Board Chairwoman Robin Lohse said she expects the panel to make a recommendation sometime next year after it learns more about the plan.

If the government moves forward with its plan, it would carry out what is believed to be the biggest wild horse round-up on federal land.

Among those opposed to the round-up are celebrities Sheryl Crow, Bill Maher and

Lily Tomlin, who contend the situation is not as dire as the government describes, and the roundups are inhumane and unnecessary.

At the hearing, advocates urged the government to remove cattle to free up public land for one of the most stirring symbols of the American West — mustangs thundering freely across the range. They noted non-native cows far outnumber mustangs on the range.

"Why are cows staying and horses have to go?" asked Carla Bowers of Volcano, Calif.

"This is insanity. This is not right."

Demar Dahl, a rancher and commissioner in Nevada's Elko County, was one of only two people who supported Salazar's plan at the hearing. Two dozen others expressed opposition.

"I've learned as a rancher that they have to be managed for their own good and for the good of other resources on the range," Dahl said. "You have to control them or damage to the range is incredible."

Ginger Kathrens, executive director of the horse advocacy group Cloud Foundation based in Colorado Springs, Colo., called for the firing of BLM officials who oversee the wild horse program.

Terri Farley, author of the popular "Phantom Stallion" series of children's books, presented the board with more than 200 letters from children who oppose Salazar's plan, which she says could cause horses to become extinct in the wild.

"Children will grow up to believe wild horses were like unicorns, existing in only stories," Farley said. "We want to protect the American wild

horse and ensure a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren."

Jeremy Drew of the northern Nevada chapter of Safari Club International said his hunting group supports Salazar's plan because mustangs adversely affect wildlife.

The government argues that the mustang population in 10 Western states is growing so rapidly that the horses are quickly running out of food and damaging the range, in part because of drought ravaging the region.

The BLM says the number of wild horses and burros on public lands in the West stands at nearly 37,000, about half of them in Nevada. An additional 34,000 wild horses already live away from the range in federal-run corrals and pastures, and those are nearly full.

## LOON

Continued from Page 5

located near the back of the body, we added that they enable a loon to be an excellent diver and swimmer. As for walking, the appendages were useless.

Telling him loons need a large, long body of water, we stressed the importance of their heading into the wind for lift. With wings flapping, they may run on the surface for up to a quarter of a mile before becoming airborne. The depth of a lake is also important, since loons dive for fish, aquatic insects and vegetation.

Passing the most essential test, the bird was taken to a body of water known to have minnows, perch, crappie and bass. As we hiked down a rocky path toward the lake, I could appreciate the ash to brownish

gray color nature had given the bird for fall and winter. Below, its cheeks, throat, neck, breast and belly were white. Except for white around the eyes and its silvery bill, the loon with its drabness would attract little attention as it floated low in the water.

With the touch of moisture, its feet began to paddle. Eager to put some distance between us, the loon gracefully dove beneath the mirror-like surface. Waiting for a ripple to announce its presence again, we sensed it was feasting on the hidden treasures of the lake.

Helping the loon have another chance to complete its migration to the coast, we knew that in spring its plumage would change. To accent a glossy black head and neck, vertical black and white streaks would adorn its throat. Its black back would be checkered with white

squares, while white dots decorated its black wings, sides and flanks. Even its bill would be black. In breeding coloration it would fly northward to remote

lakes hidden in forests. At some distance, it bobbed out of the water and glanced at its new environment. Several more dives took it even farther away. Soon, we

could see it no more. Remnants of a cold front the day before began pelting the surface and us. In the stillness of the approaching evening, sleet hitting

the water, rocks and growth played a symphony of its own.

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

## LETTERS TO SANTA

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Sunday, December 20, 2009

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Letters To Santa Claus

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

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# Cowboys already facing December doldrums

Associated Press

IRVING — The Dallas Cowboys already have the December doldrums again, no matter how much coach Wade Phillips wants to avoid that kind of discussion.

“Well, the facts are that we’re 8-4,” Phillips said Monday, trying to fire a preventive strike for the questions he knew were coming. “It’s crushing when you lose a ball game, but you’ve got to bounce back from those things. It’s a 16-game season, the results from the 16 games determine where you are.”

Yes, the Cowboys have won two-

thirds of their games so far. But on the first Sunday in December, after winning seven of their eight previous games, they couldn’t win despite career-best days from Tony Romo and Jason Witten, another 100-yard game from Miles Austin and even two touchdowns from Roy Williams.

With a 10-0 lead and a chance to bury the struggling Giants in the NFC East, the Cowboys lost 31-24 on Sunday in New York.

That allowed the Giants to move within one game of the division lead instead of falling three games back with four to play. And the Cowboys now share the NFC East lead with

Philadelphia, the team that kept them from making the playoffs last season.

The Cowboys’ failures in December have been well-documented, and stretch the past 12 seasons — all that have passed since they last won a playoff game in the 1996 season.

Last year, they were 1-3 in December to miss the playoffs by one game after a 44-6 loss at Philadelphia in the season finale. They were 13-3 in Phillips’ debut the season before that, then lost twice in December before getting beat in their first play-

See **DALLAS**, Page 14



AP PHOTO/Bill Kostroun  
**Matt McBriar and Nick Folk hope the Cowboys improve in December.**



AP FILE PHOTO/ Harry Cabluck  
**Texas quarterback Colt McCoy was one of five Heisman finalists announced Monday. He leads the NCAA with 45 career wins as a quarterback, and would become Texas’ third Heisman winner.**

## QB McCoy a winner like no other

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Simply put, Colt McCoy has won like no other quarterback in the history of college football.

His NCAA-best 45th career victory won the Big 12 and now has No. 2 Texas playing for the national championship — even if it was a game in which he was 1 second away from college football infamy.

The skinny quarterback has set Texas passing records by the dozen and for the second year in a row, he’s a top contender for the Heisman Trophy as college football’s best player. If he wins, he would join Texas running backs Earl Campbell (1977) and Ricky Williams (1998) as Texas’ only Heisman winners.

McCoy joined running backs Mark Ingram and Toby Gerhart, quarterback Tim Tebow and

defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh as Heisman finalists announced Monday.

“I’ve never seen a college quarterback better than Colt McCoy,” said McCoy’s friend and mentor, Roger Staubach, himself a Heisman winner and Hall of Fame quarterback with the Dallas Cowboys.

Texas fans never saw it coming.

Not from the skinny country kid who took over for Vince Young after the 2005 national championship season. Not from the kid who seemed to be a second-rate recruit after the Longhorns missed out on Ryan Perrilloux, the player everyone wanted and LSU got.

McCoy seemed like such a baby compared to Young, so much so that his coaches worried he’d get intimidated by the seniors in his own huddle.

But McCoy’s fierce determination to be the job — Jevan Snead transferred to Mississippi — made him the Longhorns’ starter as a redshirt freshman and Texas kept winning.

Coach Mack Brown had figured he might be latching on to something special when he recruited McCoy out of the tiny town of Tuscola.

“He’s a guy who was a winner in high school in basketball and golf and football and everything he ever touches,” Brown said.

McCoy won 10 games as a freshman, then 10 more as a sophomore. When Texas went 12-1 in 2008, McCoy was runner-up for the Heisman to rival Sam Bradford of Oklahoma.

The challenge this season was for McCoy to live up to the expectations of a Heisman front-run-

See **MCCOY**, Page 13

## Texas Tech moves to No. 23 in hoops poll

Associated Press

Kansas, Texas and Villanova held the top three spots in The Associated Press college basketball poll for the second straight week. For the third consecutive week at least three teams moved into the Top 25.

The Jayhawks (7-0), who beat Alcorn State and UCLA last week, were again a runaway choice at No. 1, receiving all but three first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel.

Texas (6-0), which beat Southern California in its only game last week, and Villanova (8-0), which beat Drexel and Maryland, both received one first-place vote.

Kentucky (8-0), which beat then-No. 10 North Carolina on Saturday, was fourth, switching places with Purdue (7-0). The Boilermakers beat Wake Forest and Buffalo last week.

West Virginia, Syracuse, which got the other No. 1 vote, Duke, Tennessee and Florida rounded out the top 10.

Wisconsin, which moved in at No. 20, and No. 23 Texas Tech, No. 24 Georgia Tech and No. 25 Mississippi moved into the rankings this week. They replaced Clemson, Louisville, Florida State and Portland.

Last week a record-tying seven teams moved into the poll and Florida State and Portland were the only ones to drop out.

North Carolina fell one spot to 11th and was followed by Michigan State, Ohio State, Connecticut, Georgetown, Texas A&M, Washington, UNLV, Cincinnati and Wisconsin.

Gonzaga was No. 21 and Butler was No. 22.

Wisconsin (6-1) were ranked for the first three polls of 2008-09. The Badgers, whose only loss was to Gonzaga

See **AP POLL**, Page 14

### AP Top 25

1. Kansas
2. Texas
3. Villanova
4. Kentucky
5. Purdue
6. West Virginia
7. Syracuse
8. Duke
9. Tennessee
10. Florida
11. North Carolina
12. Michigan State
13. Ohio State
14. Connecticut
15. Georgetown
16. Texas A&M
17. Washington
18. UNLV
19. Cincinnati
20. Wisconsin
21. Gonzaga
22. Butler
23. Texas Tech
24. Georgia tech
25. Mississippi

## Grad rates between black, white athletes widening, study shows

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — The disparity between graduation rates for white and black college football players at schools headed to bowl games grew slightly this year, according to a study released Monday.

The annual report by the University of Central Florida’s Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport also showed overall academic progress. But there were 21 schools that graduated fewer than 50 percent of their black football players, the study found. That’s up from 19 last year.

Richard Lapchick, the director of

the institute, said the widening gap between whites and blacks was surprising because those numbers had closed in recent years.

“That could be a temporary blip, but it certainly caught me by surprise,” he said. “I think part of it is the urban education system where a lot of the African-American students come from is so depleted. Too many student-athletes recruited from those areas are so far behind when they come to college, it’s difficult to catch up.”

The study was based on NCAA statistics collected from member institutions. The analysis is of the 67 schools

that have accepted bowl invitations by Monday.

“There is still room for improvement, but the trend is generally moving in the right direction,” NCAA spokesman Erik Christianson said in a statement.

The study showed 57 schools had graduation success rates of 66 percent or higher for white football players, which was more than 2.8 times the number of schools with equivalent graduation success rates for black football players. That’s up from 56 schools last year.

Four schools had graduation success rates for black football players that exceeded rates for white players

— Connecticut (5 percent higher), Troy (7 percent higher), Southern Mississippi (8 percent higher) and Rutgers (4 percent higher). That was down from five schools in last year’s study.

Lapchick said getting more minorities in administrative positions — like head coaches and athletic directors — could help curb the numbers. He also said he will be looking closer at financial issues to see how much, if at all, the economic downturn is affecting the numbers.

While the disparity between whites

See **STUDY**, Page 14

## Sports in brief

### Area basketball teams in action tonight

Check tomorrow’s Herald for results:

- Big Spring girls at Pecos, 7:30 p.m.
- Coahoma boys/girls at Miles, 6:30/8 p.m.
- Forsan boys/girls at Borden County, 6:30/8 p.m.
- Garden City girls at Bronte, 6:30 p.m.
- Grape Creek at Stanton girls/boys, 6:30/8 p.m.
- Grady girls/boys at Loraine, 6:30/8 p.m.
- Big Spring boys at Abilene Wylie, 7:30 p.m. Wed.

### Seven Bulldogs, Bulldogettes make all-tournament teams

Coahoma Invitational All-Tournament team Girls

- Taylor Ritchey - Borden Co.
- Ashli Stockton - Sands
- April Williams - Permian
- Cheyenne Swoopes - Permian
- Jami Hale - Stanton
- Rachel Fleckenstein - Stanton
- Joanna Gonzales - Coahoma

Kalea Neff - Coahoma  
K’Leigh Fowler - Coahoma  
Boyle Gee - Coahoma

- Boys
- Johnny Rogers - Sands
- Tyler Fulton - Stanton
- Jason Vause - Sweetwater
- Albert Carrasco - Kermit
- Kyle Conaway - Wall
- Brandon Willman - Wall
- Caneron Schooley - Wall
- Lane Douglass - Coahoma
- Martin Leija - Coahoma



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**Annie's Mailbox**

**Dear Annie:** Four years ago, my mother moved to Florida to be closer to my two sisters and their families. Now they are planning a party for her 90th birthday, and my sister has set the date for Christmas Eve.

The relatives who still live here have said they cannot attend at that time and asked that they please wait until after the first of the year. Everyone would rather be home for Christmas with their children, grandchildren and friends.

A few of us drive down in the summer and stay for the weekend. Whenever Mom isn't well, I fly down.

I spent time with her just a few months ago. I want to be home for the holidays, but my sisters will be unforgiving if I don't come to the party.

I am older than they are and retired. I don't

feel up to traveling, and these trips are getting expensive. What should I do? — *Don't Want To Go*

**Dear Don't:** It would have been nice had your sisters been more considerate and planned the party with the other relatives in mind, but it doesn't seem as if they are going to change their plans.

You are fortunate to have a mother who is going to be 90. How many more birthdays will you be able to spend with her? Please go. And take as many family members with you as possible.

They all should see Mom before they spend every Christmas without her.

We know it's an imposition and a burden, but we urge you to do this while you can. You won't regret it.

**Dear Annie:** I need some advice on handling gossips.

There is a woman in my building who goes around gossiping all day. Needless to say, half of what she tells people is untrue.

Everyone knows her and what she is like, but I recently had an encounter with her that ended in a shouting match. Now I am her main topic of conversation.

So far, I've been ignoring her, hoping her fascination with my life will wear off. Is there any way to get her to stop? — *No Gossip For*



KATHY MITCHELL  
 MARCY SUGAR

*Me*

**Dear No:** Since everyone knows this woman is a gossip and a fabricator, ignoring her is the best way to deal with it.

If she gets a rise out of you, it garners her some attention.

It is important, however, that you do this in a very offhanded manner. Don't be upset or brusque.

Pretend it doesn't bother you in the least. And when others are present, be friendly and charm their socks off. It will drive her batty.

**Dear Annie:** I was amused by "Cover Up and Learn's" reluctance

to tell her students to "button up." I also teach at a post-secondary institution, and we have seen many young women who are busting out all over, including some wearing pants that are extremely tight and low enough to show a long streak of naked behind.

Our staff decided to approach the issue with firmness and humor. At the beginning of the year, we pointed out that their education is a steppingstone to getting a job, and that part of being in the work environment is learning to dress in a manner that does not distract others.

We requested that students dress in a manner that is respectful, including putting sweaters over crude T-shirts.

To remind them throughout the year, a few of us have signs in our rooms saying "No

cleavage, front or back."

Frankly, some of our students had never considered the concept before.

They were quite respectful when we pointed out the other side of the issue. The students comply with this request, and we seldom have an issue with inappropriate clothing in our workplace.

All they needed was the knowledge that their clothing was distracting or disturbing. And isn't that part of our job? — *S.K. in Canada*

**Dear S.K.:** Explaining instead of criticizing is always useful, and sometimes humor gets the point across where other attempts fail. Thanks for saying so.

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**Tomorrow's Horoscope**

If there is a neat freak in you at all, it will make an appearance during the Virgo moon. Clutter becomes annoying, if not unbearable. Plus, a busy rush is about to hit, and it's important to get organized and ready. Do some careful sorting and you'll catch something that would have otherwise slipped through the cracks and caused disharmony.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). Making difficult decisions is hard, but you have a way of seeing into the heart of a matter, which makes you an invaluable contributor to the decision-making process. Anyone who seeks out your wisdom will be well reward-

ed. **TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). If you are dissatisfied with your current job, know that it is only a steppingstone to your future destiny. This is not the end of the story — it's not even halfway through the beginning!

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Making excuses for other people is a signal of spurious virtue, which is why you don't do it. You believe we are all accountable for our own actions. Today, this kind of integrity will take you a long way.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). Plato said, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." You will live this Platonic advice, giving people the benefit of the doubt whether they be co-workers, family or strangers.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). If you were a 60-watt bulb, you'd figure out a

way to burn at 65 watts without breaking glass. It's basic to your personality to push yourself to the limit, which is why you will glow brighter than the rest.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The wisest thinkers are seldom the best speakers. And a powerful orator might not always have much to say. You, however, will display talent for both thinking and speaking and make a maximum impact today.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your ideas about who you are will be challenged. You will be reminded that you are more than the role you play to others. There is a beautiful versatility that emerges in you this afternoon.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There is no need for you to be envious of all the attention a friend is getting. Instead, be a student of the situation. Take

notes so you know what to do when it's your turn — that's coming next.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Whatever you are supposed to be doing, just show up. You may feel that you're not equipped for the job or that you're out of your league, but go anyway. It's amazing what you can accomplish just because you're willing.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You've opened your mind to new possibilities on a variety of topics, from what's for dinner to with whom you'll spend the rest of your life. From this standpoint, the future is a glorious mystery.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be among strangers, and intimidating ones to boot. Think about being expansive instead of contracting into yourself. Remind yourself that you're fantastic and your body language will

reflect that confidence.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). You have something important to impart, and yet it won't be received as such unless you make the extra effort to ensure that you are heard. Get the full attention of your audience before you begin.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (Dec. 8). You go into this fresh era with a bold, energetic spirit. You'll enjoy the new respect others pay you in January. You'll put together a fantastic presentation in February and win a job or heart in the process. March is your chance to brush up on skills and gain the knowledge you need to enter a new career arena. Leo and Scorpio people adore you. Lucky numbers are: 44, 28, 31, 16 and 18.

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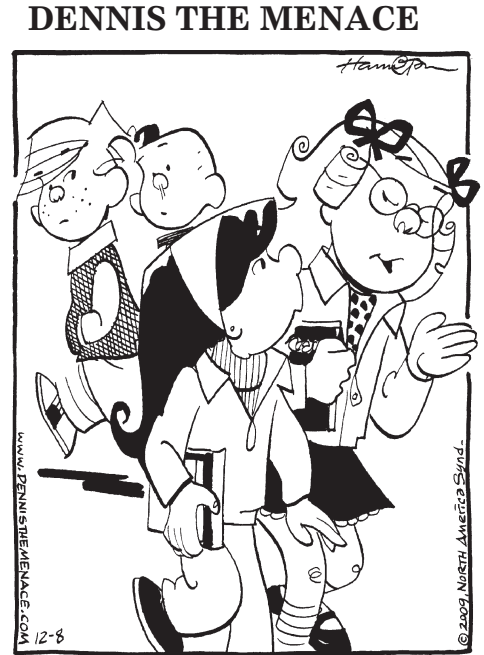
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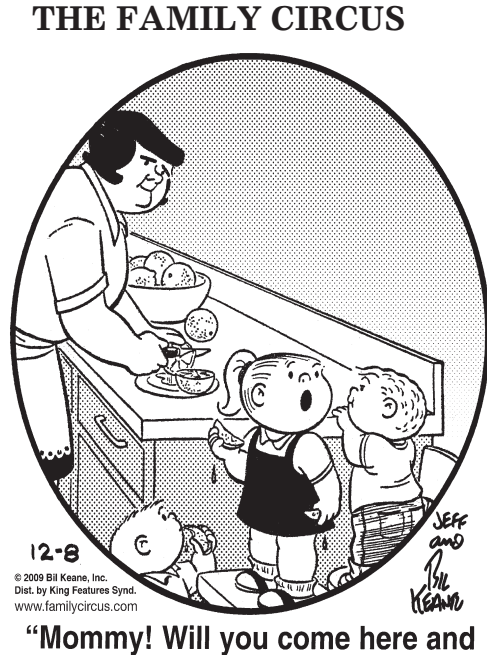
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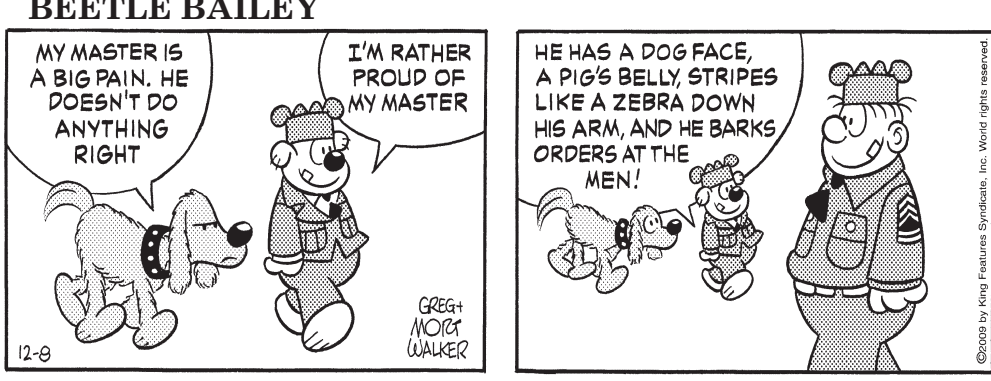
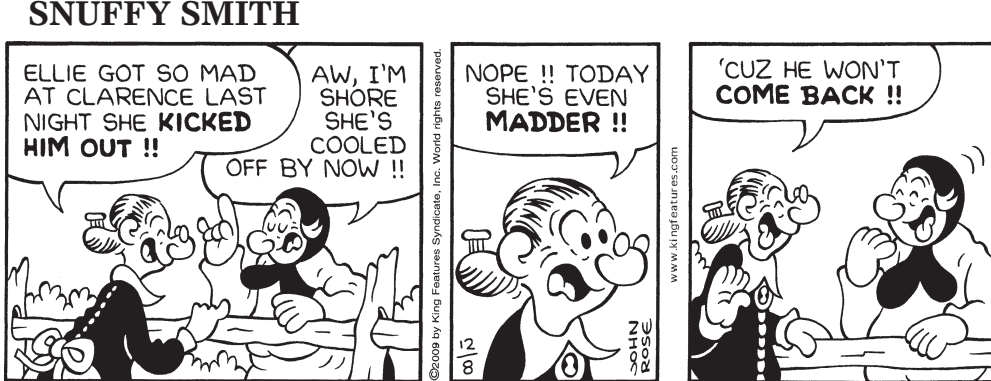
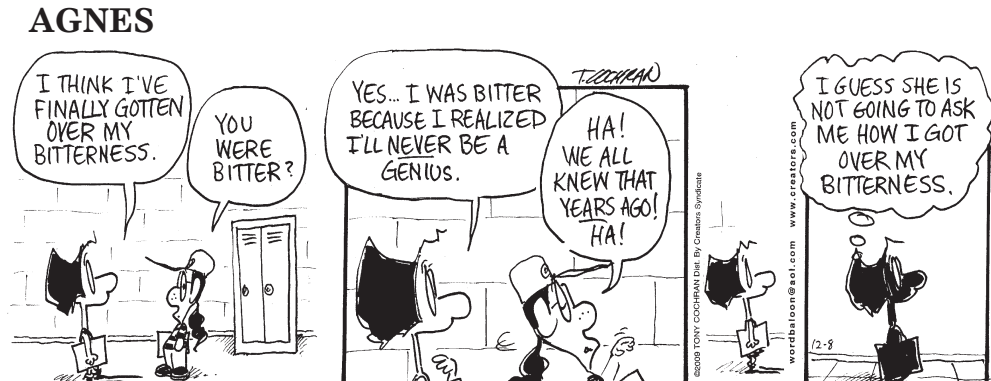
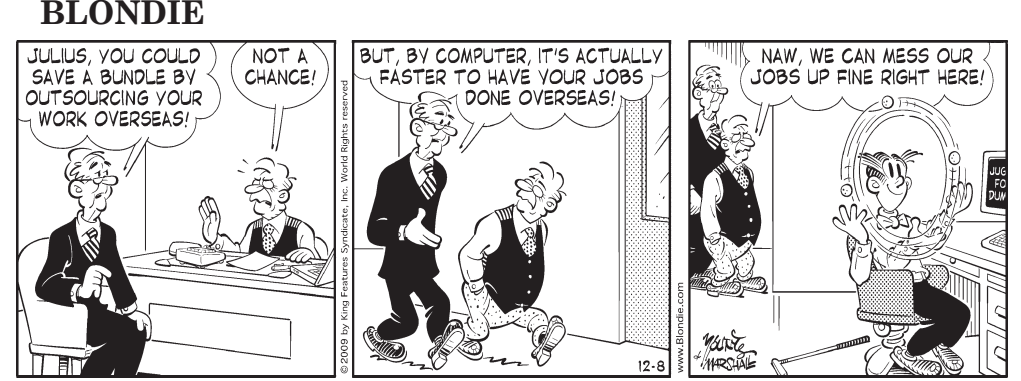
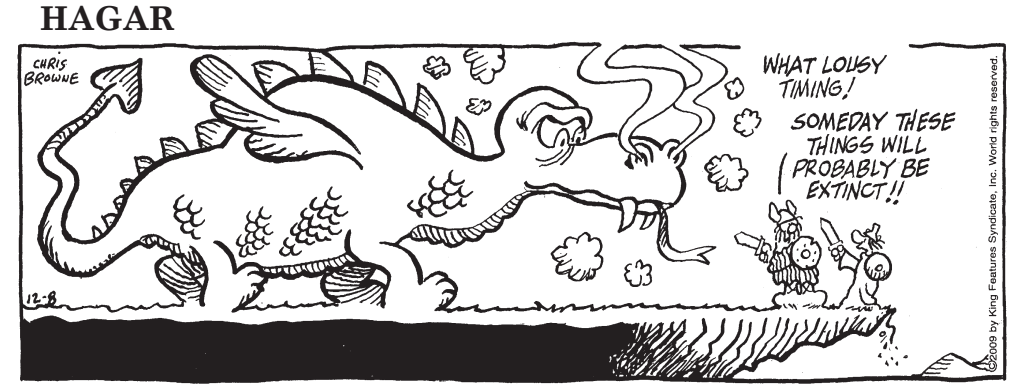
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5:PM	News ABC	News ABC	Locura	Lopez	News CBS	Noticias NBC	News NBC	Seinfeld Office	Scrivner Uri Harel	BBC Business	Cash Cab Dirty Jobs	Movie: All I Want for Christmas	CSI: Crime Scn	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Suite Life	Around Interrupt	SportsCenter
6:PM	News ABC	Jeopardy!	Gancho	Lopez	News CBS	Noticias NBC	News NBC	Office Name	Dr. Young Harris	PBS News-Hour	Cash Cab Dirty Jobs	Movie: Grease, Stockard Channing	UFC Un-leashed	Bones	Movie: Higher Learning, Michael Rapaport	Phineas Wizards	College Basketball: Jimmy V Classic	
7:PM	GMT Special	Fortune	Nombre-Amor	Two Men	Entertain	Más Sabe el Diabolo	The Biggest Loser	Office Upd	Office Victory	Nova	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Grease, Stockard Channing	UFC Un-leashed	Bones	Movie: Higher Learning, Michael Rapaport	Phineas Adventures of Sharkboy	NFL Live	Basketball: Jimmy V Classic
8:PM	Scrubs	Scrubs	Sortilegio	So You Think You Can Dance	NCIS: Los Angeles	Pobres	The Jay Leno Show	Office Upd	Office Victory	Nova	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Grease, Stockard Channing	UFC Un-leashed	Bones	Movie: Higher Learning, Michael Rapaport	Phineas	NFL Live	Basketball: Jimmy V Classic
9:PM	the forgotten	the forgotten	Aquí y Ahora	Simpsons Friends	The Good Wife	Victorinos	The Jay Leno Show	Certain Age	Independent Lens	Ghost Lab	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Ghost, Whoopi Goldberg	UFC 107 Countdown	CSI: NY	The Mo'Nique	Phineas	Rodeo: Wrangler National Finals - Sixth Round.	SportsCenter
10:PM	News ABC	News ABC	Impacto	Raymond	News TMZ	Noticias	Lopez Tonight Show	Upd Cortes	Charlie Rose	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Ghost, Whoopi Goldberg	UFC 107 Countdown	CSI: NY	The Mo'Nique	Phineas	Rodeo: Wrangler National Finals - Sixth Round.	SportsCenter	
11:PM	Insider	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Escuelita VIP	Law & Order: SVU	Late Late	Decisiones	Late Night-Jim	Seinfeld Sex & Upd	BBC Smiley (Off Air)	Ghost Lab	Movie: Ghost, Whoopi Goldberg	UFC 107 Countdown	CSI: NY	The Mo'Nique	Phineas	Rodeo: Wrangler National Finals - Sixth Round.	SportsCenter	
12:AM	News ABC	News ABC	Torrente, un Torbel	King-Hill	Insider	Pagado	News	Sex & Church	Light of the Southwest	Light of the Southwest	Movie: Star Trek: Voyager	UFC 107 Countdown	CSI: NY	NUMB3RS	Movie: Higher Learning, Michael Rapaport	Phineas	Rodeo: Wrangler National Finals - Sixth Round.	SportsCenter
1:AM	Fast Cash	Fast Cash	Mujer...	King-Hill	Insider	Pagado	News	Sex & Church	Light of the Southwest	Light of the Southwest	Movie: Star Trek: Voyager	UFC 107 Countdown	CSI: NY	NUMB3RS	Movie: Higher Learning, Michael Rapaport	Phineas	Rodeo: Wrangler National Finals - Sixth Round.	SportsCenter



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"Mommy! Will you come here and show Grandma how to cut our oranges?"



### This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 8, the 342nd day of 2009. There are 23 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 8, 1941, the United States entered World War II as Congress declared war against Japan, a day after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

On this date:

In 1776, during the Revolutionary War, Gen. George Washington's retreating army crossed the Delaware River from New Jersey into Pennsylvania.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which holds that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was free of original sin from the moment of her own conception.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln announced his plan for the reconstruction of the South.

In 1886, the American Federation of Labor was founded in Columbus, Ohio.

In 1949, the Chinese Nationalist government moved from the Chinese mainland to Formosa as the Communists pressed their attacks.

In 1978, former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir died in Jerusalem at age 80.

In 1980, rock star John Lennon was shot to death outside his New York City apartment building by Mark David Chapman, an apparently deranged fan.

In 1982, a man demanding an end to nuclear weapons held the Washington Monument hostage, threatening to blow it up with explosives he claimed were inside a van. (After a 10-hour standoff, Norman D. Mayer was shot dead by police; it turned out there were no explosives.)

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed a treaty at the White House calling for destruction of intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed into U.S. law the North American Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect at the start of 1994.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-

### Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Droop
  - 4 Maxim to live by
  - 9 Farm yield
  - 13 Untainted
  - 15 Cupid's weapon
  - 16 Change the decor of
  - 17 Just slightly
  - 18 Pizza piece
  - 19 Blunted sword
  - 20 Author of medical fiction
  - 22 Brag
  - 23 Bugs Bunny and friends
  - 24 Sandwich shop
  - 25 Classify
  - 28 Gobi and Sahara
  - 31 Violent weather
  - 32 Write with block letters
  - 34 "Quiet!"
  - 35 Animal pouches
  - 36 Dracula's title
  - 37 Chasing-away word
  - 38 Inventor Whitney
  - 39 Get out of the way of
  - 40 Selected
  - 41 China-shop purchases
  - 43 Long curtains
  - 44 Meadowlands
  - 45 Christmas song
  - 47 Engaged in battle
  - 49 Fess up
  - 53 "No \_\_\_!" ("Piece of cake!")
- DOWN**
- 1 Practice boxing
  - 2 Sedan or coupe
  - 3 Seize suddenly
  - 4 Team's good-luck animal
  - 5 Synthetic fiber
  - 6 Threesomes
  - 7 Thick\_\_
  - 8 Be in debt
  - 9 New Orleans cuisine
  - 10 Fix-it facility
  - 11 Tributes in verse
  - 12 Writer of 11 Down
  - 14 Magazine managers
  - 21 Social standard
  - 22 Top of the line
  - 24 Fender-bender result
  - 25 Balance-sheet listing
  - 26 No longer fresh
  - 27 Helping-others profession
  - 28 Have an evening meal
  - 29 The ones there
  - 30 Wingtips and loafers
  - 32 Pea holders
  - 33 Floor covering
  - 36 Army beds
  - 37 Onion relative
  - 39 Beloved
  - 40 Gator kin
  - 42 Navy builder
  - 43 Like formal clothing
  - 45 Marshmallow-topped beverage
  - 46 Modify, as a law
  - 47 Datebook entry: Abbr.
  - 48 Cafeteria carrier
  - 49 Show concern
  - 50 Old-time oath
  - 51 Upper limbs
  - 52 Bird's abode
  - 54 Evergreen tree

Answer to previous puzzle

ZAGS	SLIM	ALAMO
ISEE	EATA	DAVID
NINA	CRAM	SCORE
CATBURGLAR	EWES	
EPEE	EMT	
PALEST	COVERAGE	
EDU	LIRA	NICER
DOGDAY	SOF	SUMMER
ARIES	LOST	ESE
LENGTHEN	RAISED	
ROE	TALC	
CAGE	RABBIT	TEARS
ARRAY	IRON	APOP
LEASE	MINE	GEAR
FADES	SEER	EDDY

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**MCCOY**

Continued from Page 8

ner. It wasn't easy. Texas kept winning, but McCoy struggled early. He got the flu and looked out of sync. The annual rivalry with Oklahoma raised more questions than it answered about the Heisman when McCoy looked bad with 127 yards passing. Even he admitted his best play of their day was a touchdown-saving tackle after he threw a fourth-quarter interception. But in a season in which no one seemed to seize Heisman momentum, McCoy had plenty of time to generate his own. A conversation with Staubach helped McCoy relax. Staubach told him to have fun. "I basically started the season over after that point ... tried to be the leader out there, a guy that your teammates can trust and follow," McCoy said. McCoy was at his best

over the next five weeks as Texas plowed over Missouri, Oklahoma State, Central Florida, Baylor and Kansas.

His 470 passing yards against Central Florida just missed a school record. Two weeks later, he set the NCAA career record for victories by a starting quarterbacks in a 51-20 win over Kansas.

He passed for 396 yards and four touchdowns in front of a national television audience. Texas fans chanted "Colt For Heisman!" as he took a victory lap around his home field for the last time.

A week later, McCoy's 304 yards passing and 165 yards rushing in a wild 49-39 win over Texas A&M. A 65-yard touchdown run when he pulled away from three defenders chasing him conjured memories of Young's best plays for the Longhorns.

"If anyone has a better Heisman moment than that, I'd like to see it," Brown said.

It was a Heisman

moment followed by near disaster.

Texas trailed Nebraska 12-10 in the final seconds of the Big 12 championship game. The Longhorns drove within field goal range but McCoy seemed unaware as the final seconds ticked down. Instead of calling timeout or spiking the ball, McCoy rolled to his right before lofting a lazy pass into the stands to stop the clock.

At first it looked like a blunder for the ages. The clock went all the way down to 0:00. Nebraska players stormed the field, thinking they had won and knocked McCoy and the Longhorns out of the title chase.

It wasn't until an official review put 1 second back on the clock, allowing Texas' Hunter Lawrence to kick the winning field goal. Ever confident, McCoy said in the post-game interview he knew exactly how much time was left and that everything was under control.

For McCoy, it was his 12th career second-half comeback, eighth in the fourth quarter.

He had won again. And the Longhorns march on to California to play No. 1 Alabama for the national championship.

"He always finds a way to get the job done," wide receiver Jordan Shipley said. "He always finds a way to win."



AP PHOTO/Amy Gutierrez  
Colt McCoy's performance against Nebraska may have hurt his Heisman chances.

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**DALLAS**

Continued from Page 8

off game.  
Dallas plays its only December home game Sunday against AFC

West-leading San Diego (9-3). The Cowboys then go to undefeated NFC South leader New Orleans and Washington before ending the season at home Jan. 3 against the Eagles.

And they face that difficult stretch already with talk of another December jinx.

"We can't allow that to creep up on us. We can't let that happen," Witten said after 14

catches for a career-high 156 yards against the Giants. "We're too talented for that, too good for that. We've got to step up now and do something about it. We're at a critical

point. We can't let this thing turn."

Romo was 41-of-55 passing for a career-best 392 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions in New York. Austin had 10 catches for 104 yards and a touchdown, and Williams had his first two-TD game since coming to Dallas midway through last season.

The locker room was virtually empty when open to reporters Monday, which as usual, was before players were required to be at the facility.

"Until we win, I know we're going to hear about (December)," linebacker Bradie James said after the game. "No matter how bad it can be, we've got to figure out a way to win. We've got to fix the mistakes, and we had a couple of them. We still have four games and guys will respond.

We just have to stay together."

Phillips said Monday that he is confident his team will bounce back from losses like it has before.

Despite repeated questions about late-season failures of the past, and the loss to start this December, Phillips said what will happen the rest of this season can't be determined yet. He kept referring to a 16-game schedule and the team's current record and standing as co-leaders in the NFC East with a head-to-head tiebreaker against the Eagles.

"I think we have a winning team," Phillips said. "If you have a bunch of winners, I think you're going to bounce back from losses. I think also they do take it one game at a time and that's what we need to continue to do."

**STUDY**

Continued from Page 8

and blacks increased, overall progress grew.

About 90 percent of the teams surveyed this year received a score of more than 925 on the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR) compared with 88 percent last season, according to the report. Sixty-one of the 67 schools had at least a 50 percent graduation rate for their football teams, the same as a year ago.

Dave Czesniuk, director of operations for Northeastern University's Sport in Society, said analysts will have to monitor those figures next year to see if it's the beginning of a trend.

"It's enough to get this conversation started," Czesniuk said. "But to actually create change, you'll have to dig deep-

er."

Lapchick said overall academic progress has had steady growth because the NCAA could reduce scholarships for schools that can't meet the minimum requirements.

"Schools almost never take a very risky student any more because they just can't afford the penalty," he said.

Lapchick noted that "if there were a national championship based on graduation success rates among bowl teams, Navy and Northwestern would have played for the national championship." He said both teams graduated at least 92 percent of football players and at least 83 percent of black players.

The study found Stanford and Air Force were the best based on APR, with scores of 984 and 983.

**AP POLL**

Continued from Page 8

in the Maui Invitational, moved in following a 73-69 victory over Duke in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

This is Texas Tech's first appearance in the poll since the final Top 25 of 2004-05. The Red Raiders (8-0) beat Washington 99-92 in overtime last week.

Georgia Tech (6-1) returns after a two-week absence. The Yellow Jackets have won five straight since a 63-59 loss to Dayton in the Puerto Rico Tip-Off.

Mississippi has won three straight since los-

ing 79-67 to Villanova in the championship game of the Puerto Rico Tip-Off. The Rebels (7-1) were ranked for six weeks during the 2007-08 season.

Clemson, which blew a 23-point second-half lead in a 76-74 home loss to Illinois last week, was the highest-ranked of the teams to fall out of the poll, dropping from 18th. The Tigers (7-2) had been ranked in the last 14 polls.

Louisville (5-2) dropped out from 20th after an 87-65 loss to Charlotte, the worst home loss for the Cardinals since Rick Pitino became their coach in 2001. Louisville, which played without three injured guards, had been ranked in 29 consecutive polls since Feb. 12, 2008.

Florida State (7-2) moved in last week at No. 21 then lost 77-64 at Ohio State.

Portland cracked the poll last week for the first time since February 1959. The celebration of the five-decade wait was short-lived as the Pilots (5-3) lost 86-82 to Portland State and 68-48 to Idaho.

There are five games between ranked teams this week and four are at neutral sites.

Butler plays Georgetown in the Jimmy V Classic on Tuesday and Kentucky and Connecticut meet in the Big East/SEC Invitational the next night on the same Madison Square Garden court.

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