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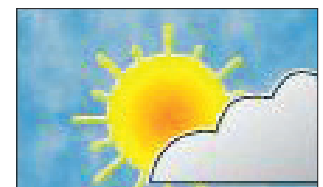
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WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 23, 2009



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H BIG SPRING HERALD

VOLUME 105, NUMBER 13

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Senate pushes toward passage of health bill

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON — Jubilant Democrats are ready to push President Barack Obama's health care overhaul past one last 60-vote hurdle to final Christmas Eve passage, and Republicans concede they're powerless to stop it.
"It looks obvious that that's

going to happen," conceded Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, after Democrats triumphed on the second of three 60-vote procedural tallies over unanimous GOP opposition.
At the White House, press secretary Robert Gibbs declared, "Health care reform is not a matter of if, health care reform now is a matter

of when."
Obama himself said the Senate legislation accomplishes 95 percent of what he wanted. "Every single criteria for reform I put forward is in this bill," the president told The Washington Post.
The third procedural vote comes Wednesday afternoon, when Democrats will have to put up 60 votes for the last

time to cut off debate on the legislation. Democrats are also expected to turn back points of order raised against the bill by Republicans, including one questioning the constitutionality of requiring most every American to buy health insurance. Final passage on the sweeping bill, which will extend health coverage to 30 million uninsured

Americans, is set for 8 a.m. Thursday, Christmas Eve. That's 11 hours earlier than originally scheduled, thanks to a deal struck Tuesday between Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. Republicans had been threatening to use all
See **HEALTH**, Page 3A

Vols wrap up holidays for patients

Christmas for 200 is lots of work, but extremely rewarding

By VALERIE AVERY
Special to the Herald
Jann Forrest Caffey and Shelley Parker were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of items they needed to purchase for each of the 200 patients at Big Spring State Hospital this Christmas.

They also felt the pressure knowing that for many of the patients, what they put in their shopping cart would be the only present in which he or she would receive Christmas morning.
Even though there were so many patients, so many needs and so many gifts for each one, would they do it again?
"As long as I have as much help as I did this year," Parker said.
The two are no strangers to Christmas at Big Spring State Hospital.
Parker worked in accounting at the hospital for 13 years and Caffey's mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, mother-in-law, two



"It's a huge time commitment for everyone involved but just seeing how it brightens their Christmas morning makes it all worthwhile."

—Billie Christie



HERALD photo/Steve Reagan
Jean Money of the Scenic Mountain Quilter's Guild, left, hands a comfort quilt to Big Spring Fire Chief Brian Jensen Tuesday afternoon at Heritage Museum. The guild donated 31 quilts which will be distributed by the Emergency Medical Service personnel to family members of children who have to be transported to the hospital.

Quilter's Guild hopes gift will comfort injured children

By STEVE REAGAN
Staff Writer
The women of the Signal Mountain Quilting Guild believe that something as simple as a quilt can bring comfort to children in distress.
Going on that belief, members of the guild donated 31 "comfort quilts" to the Big Spring Fire Department Tuesday afternoon.
The quilts will be carried in BSFD ambulances and distributed to children who need to be transported for emergency medical reasons.
The quilts — some of which took up to six months to make — were part of the guild's recent exhibit at Heritage Museum.
"Once the exhibit is over, we usually have an abundance of comfort quilts," said Jean Money of the guild. "One year, we donated them to CASA and this year they're going to the fire department."

Guild members, who have been meeting since the early 1990s, have been donating the quilts ever since a newspaper article caught Money's eye several years ago.
"It was a story about a boy who had lost his mother and was left alone," Money said. "The teachers at his school came together and made him a comfort quilt to help him remember his mother ... and we sort of stole the idea."
Most of the quilts take between one and six months to complete, although a completely hand-quilted item can take up to a year, Money said.
Big Spring Fire Department Chief Brian Jensen said the donations are greatly appreciated.
"I think it's incredible that there are groups like this in town

which are willing to give so much time and effort to help us out and support people in need," Jensen said. "One of the worst time in a parent's life is seeing their child transported away in an ambulance. Believe me, something like this makes a difference."
Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com

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Hall, Cougars breeze past Oregon St. 44-20

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Max Hall was getting so familiar to Las Vegas, a television commentator joked this week that he should have a showroom alongside entertainers Siegfried & Roy or Penn & Teller.

In Hall's final act for No. 15 BYU on Tuesday night, he threw three touchdown passes for his best performance yet in Sin City, leading the Cougars to a 44-20 victory over No. 16 Oregon State in the Las Vegas Bowl.

"It means a lot — it's a special time for me," Hall said after playing in the Las Vegas Bowl for the third straight

year. "It's something I'll remember for a long time."

Hall gave the Cougars their third win in five straight Las Vegas Bowl appearances and ended the Beavers' run of five consecutive bowl wins.

He completed passes to eight different receivers, and threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to Luke Ashworth, a 17-yard scoring strike to Dennis Pitta and a 15-yard TD pass to Manase Tonga. He had 139 yards passing in the first half.

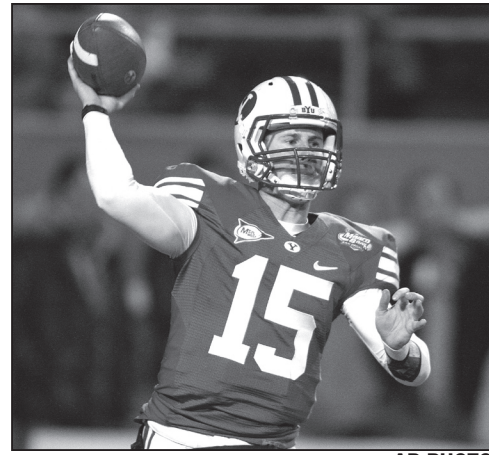
Tonga had an 18-yard rushing touchdown, and Harvey Unga finished with 76 yards rushing and a TD for BYU (11-2).

"We wanted to end it well," Hall said. "We want to keep getting better. We want BYU to continue to improve."

Hall, a senior, transferred to BYU from Arizona State in 2006 and sat out the season, leading the scout team. In the three years since, he amassed 11,365 yards and 94 touchdowns, second only to Ty Detmer (15,031 yards, 121 TDs in four seasons) in team history.

"If Max has to be judged by one game, it should be this one," BYU coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "My hope is that if there are comments (on

See **BYU**, Page 2B



BYU quarterback Max Hall led the Cougars to a win in windy weather.

Texas takes down Michigan State

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Texas coach Rick Barnes told his team last weekend that a victory over one Top 10 team didn't convince everyone that the second-ranked Longhorns are for real.

Maybe beating two in four days will sway the holdouts.

Damion James had 23 points and 13 rebounds and Texas pulled away from No. 9 Michigan State in a 79-68 victory Tuesday night, giving the Longhorn consecutive wins over Top 10 teams after beating No. 10 North Carolina on Saturday.

James, who followed 25 points and 15 rebounds against the Tar Heels with another monster outing, proclaimed himself the "heart and soul" of the Longhorns (11-0) afterward and warned whoever else might still be doubting Texas.

"Like we didn't prove anything against North Carolina," James said. "We took that to our workout, and let's go prove how good we can be."

The Longhorns hadn't played a ranked opponent before last weekend but now have impressive wins over two of the nation's best. And like the lesser teams to face Texas



Texas forward Gary Johnson rejects Raymar Morgan Tuesday night in Austin. The Longhorns beat Michigan State 79-68.

before them, both the Tar Heels and Spartans couldn't hang within single digits by the final buzzer.

Chris Allen had 12 points for the Spartans (9-3), who couldn't beat Texas for a fourth straight year.

Michigan State coach Tom Izzo lamented his team's 22 turnovers and the Spartans lacking concentration and size on defense.

"We looked a little fatigued and not hungry enough," Izzo said. "I didn't feel very good."

For anxious Longhorns fans awaiting the BCS champi-

onship game, this big Texas win may tide them over until Jan. 7. Texas football coach Mack Brown looked on as the Longhorns trailed 37-34 at halftime, and quickly started chipping away at the deficit.

J'Covan Brown hit a corner 3-pointer with 12:58 left to tie the game at 52. James gave the Longhorns the lead back seconds later, hitting a floater in the lane to put Texas ahead for the first time since the first half.

From there, the Longhorns slowly pulled away — then

abruptly put the game out of reach. Gary Johnson stripped the ball from Spartans point guard Korie Lucious at halfcourt on consecutive possessions with under 4 minutes left, both leading to fastbreak dunks and a commanding Texas lead.

It was a record-breaking night for James, who became the school's all-time leading rebounder, surpassing James Thomas. James, who was 10 of 18 from the field, has 1,087 rebounds.

See **TEXAS**, Page 2B

Tech scores its way past Stanford 100-87

Associated Press

LUBBOCK — Mike Singletary wanted to make up for not playing much in the first half Tuesday night.

So he played all 20 minutes in the second half and scored 24 of his season-high 28 points to lift No. 23 Texas Tech past Stanford 100-87, keeping the Red Raiders unbeaten at home.

"He just competes," coach Pat Knight said of the team's second-leading scorer.

The entire team struggled the first half, Knight said.

"They weren't happy at halftime," he said. "I didn't think we played with good energy. We kind of played lethargic in the first half with no emotion and we didn't play athletic."

Singletary, who got into foul trouble early and played just 7 minutes in the first half, didn't attempt a free throw before halftime, then hit 7 of 11. He was 9 of 12 from the field.

Singletary said sitting for much of the first half was "rough."

"It was good to come back in the second half and just lead my team in every category really and to not have any turnovers, that's always a good game especially after a seven-turnover game," he said, referring to the loss to

Wichita State on Saturday. "That was a game I wanted to forget really quickly."

The Red Raiders (10-1) took their biggest lead at 85-67 when D'wain Roberts hit a 3-pointer with 4:30 remaining.

The Cardinal (5-6) cut the lead to 95-87 when Elliott Bullock stole the ball from Darko Cohadarevic and Gabriel Harris hit a 3-pointer with 1:01 left. That was as close as Stanford got.

Landry Fields scored 27 points and Jeremy Green added 24 for the Cardinal.

"I thought that my kids played with a lot of heart," Cardinal coach Johnny Dawkins said. "And they played hard for 40 minutes. And so did Texas Tech. I think Pat Knight is doing a very good job with his team. They're getting better."

Brad Reese did a good job guarding Fields, Stanford's leading scorer who was 8 of 20 from the field, Knight said. Fields was 11 of 13 from the free throw line.

"You're just not going to stop a kid like Fields but you want to make it hard for him, you want to make him uncomfortable and make him work for everything," Knight said.

Tech had five players score in double figures.

See **TECH**, Page 2B

Kansas' late charge holds off California for 43rd straight home win

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Occasionally out of control and his confidence wavering with each passing game, Tyshawn Taylor found himself on the bench behind a freshman.

Sure, it hurt. It also served as motivation and Taylor has become better for it.

Taylor played his fourth straight solid game since being benched and Sherron Collins keyed a late surge to finish with 17 points, helping No. 1 Kansas overcome a rare quiet game from its bench to beat California 84-69 on Tuesday night.

"He looked confident today," Kansas coach Bill Self said of Taylor.

It wasn't that way just a few weeks ago.

A starter for 33 games as a freshman last season, Taylor was the Jayhawks' No. 1 point guard for the first seven games this season. Then he had a seven-turnover game against Memphis, followed by a few erratic performances.

Wanting to get a spark and give Taylor time to gather himself, Self replaced him in the starting lineup with freshman Elijah Johnson for the next two games.

Taylor accepted the benching and used it as a chance to get better. He had two strong games coming off the bench to regain his starting spot and had 13 points, seven assists and one

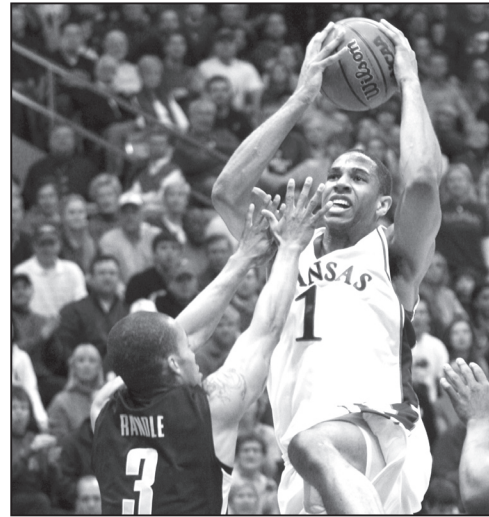
turnover against Cal. The past four games, Taylor has 24 assists and two turnovers.

"I think I'm just playing a little bit smarter," Taylor said. "I'm not forcing up as much stuff and trying to be aggressive while playing slow at the same time."

One of the deepest teams in the country, Kansas (11-0) for once relied heavily on its starters. Marcus Morris had 14 points, Xavier Henry 12 and Cole Aldrich fought through foul trouble to score 10 with his 10 rebounds and five blocked shots.

The bench, which had been averaging 29.3 points per game, combined

See **KANSAS**, Page 2B



Kansas freshman Xavier Henry is leading the Jayhawks in scoring.

Sports in brief

Howard College Hawks getting ready to resume play

After almost an entire month break, the Howard College men and women are preparing to hit the hardwood again.

The men's team won't play in December, but it opens the 2010 campaign in a Kansas City, Mo., tournament. The Hawks are 11-1 on the season.

The women will travel to Phoenix on Monday to take on Southern Idaho in the Phoenix College Classic. They are a perfect 12-0 this season.

Big Spring softball clinic to be held Jan. 16

Big Spring softball coach John Sparks will hold a winter skills softball clinic coming up.

The clinic will teach basic softball skills and will be held Jan. 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Girls in grades three through eight are welcome. The cost is \$25.

Contact John Sparks for more information or to sign up at 432-270-2711.

Big Spring Alumni forming football team

Former Big Spring football players have a chance to put on pads again in the West Texas Alumni Football Games sponsored by Alumni Football USA.

Cost to play is \$75, including equipment. The games will be played in February or March against an opponent to be determined. For more information, call Arthur Barrera at 816-6418.

Obituaries

John W. Edwards



John W. Edwards, born Jan. 1, 1955, of San Angelo went to be with the Lord Dec. 19, 2009. Services will be at Johnson's Funeral Home Chapel at 2 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2009. Interment will follow at Lawnhaven Cemetery. Visitation will be held tonight from 6:30 to 8 at Johnsons Funeral Home.

John was a rancher who loved animals and the outdoors and was especially gifted at raising sheep.

Much of his time was devoted to his son who needed his special care and time. He had many lifelong friends. As a younger man, John loved sports and excelled at them. He was raised at Wall and graduated from high school in 1973. He attended Angelo State University for a short time. Outside of school he loved to golf and loved sports in general. He will be dearly missed by his family and friends.

He is survived by his wife, Kaye Holland Edwards; a son, John Taylor Edwards; parents, Horace "Took" and Dorothy Edwards; two sisters, Margo Dierschke and husband Glenn, of San Angelo and Kim Krieg and husband Earl, of Lake Whitney; one brother, Steve Edwards and wife Marilyn, of Odessa; nieces and nephews, Drew Dierschke of San Angelo, Meagan Dierschke of Austin, Kaycee Wysaski and husband Jeff, of Los Angeles, Calif., Krystal Leedy and husband John, of Austin, and Courtney Edwards and Allison Edwards of Dallas.

Paid obituary

Esther McNutt



Esther McNutt, 101, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009, in a local nursing home. Graveside funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009, at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park with Ron Westbook officiating.

Mrs. McNutt was born Sept. 12, 1908, in Mitchell County and married James Theo McNutt on Aug. 18, 1935, in Corpus Christi. He preceded her in death on Dec. 12, 1966.

Mrs. McNutt moved with her family from Mitchell County to Corpus Christi, then to Robstown. They later came back to Glasscock County and then to Martin County. After her husband passed away, she moved to Big Spring. In 1969 she moved to Oklahoma and later to Dayton.

She was a Baptist.

Survivors include one son, James McNutt of Dayton; four grandchildren; nine great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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

Alfredo Paredez Jr.

Alfredo Paredez Jr., 46, of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, at Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Hilbert William Treharn

Hilbert William Treharn, 77, of Big Spring, died Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, at the VA Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

- AMANDA MARIE HEFFINGTON, 30, 206 Circle, was arrested on a local warrant.
- ERNEST WILLIAM CLARK, 69, no address given, was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.
- ABEL HERNANDEZ HINOJOS, 37, 100 N.W. Third, was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated/second offense.
- DENNIS DEAN BOLT, 56, 417 Edwards, was arrested on a parole violation warrant.
- SHAWN CARL ANDERSON, 38, 307 Union, was arrested on a charge of forgery.
- JOHNNY FRANCO JR., 26, 706 Lorilla, was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.
- JOHNNY GONZALES JR., 19, 810 E. Fourth, was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 2900 block of Cherokee.
- CRIMINAL TRESPASS WARNING was reported in the 400 block of Edwards and the 500 block of Birdwell.
- DELIVERY OF MARIJUANA was reported in the 400 block of Fourth.
- DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED was reported in the 500 block of San Jacinto.
- FAILURE TO MAINTAIN FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY was reported in the 1700 block of Birdwell.
- FORGERY OF A FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT was reported in the 500 block of Lamesa Highway.
- MANUFACTURE/DELIVERY OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE was reported in the 400 block of Fourth.
- THEFT was reported in the 200 block of FM 700.
- THEFT OF FIREARM was reported in the 400 block of Fourth.
- UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE was reported in the 1600 block of Kentucky Way and the 700 block of Creighton.

Sheriff

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity (note: officials reported 60 prisoners in the Howard County Jail):

- SHAWN ANDERSON, 38, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of forgery.
- DEENNIS DEAN BOLT, 56, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a parole violation warrant.
- JOHNNY FRANCO, 26, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of public intoxication.
- JOHNNY GONZALES, 19, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
- AMANDA HEFFINGTON, 30, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of speeding.
- ABEL HERNANDEZ HINOJOS, 37, was transferred from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated/second offense.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service reported the following activity:

- MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of N.W. Seventh. Service was refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 4200 block of Theo. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 200 block of Rickabuagh. One person was transported to SMMC.
- GRASS FIRE was reported at FM 700 and Goliad.
- TRASH FIRE was reported in the 1700 block of E. Third.

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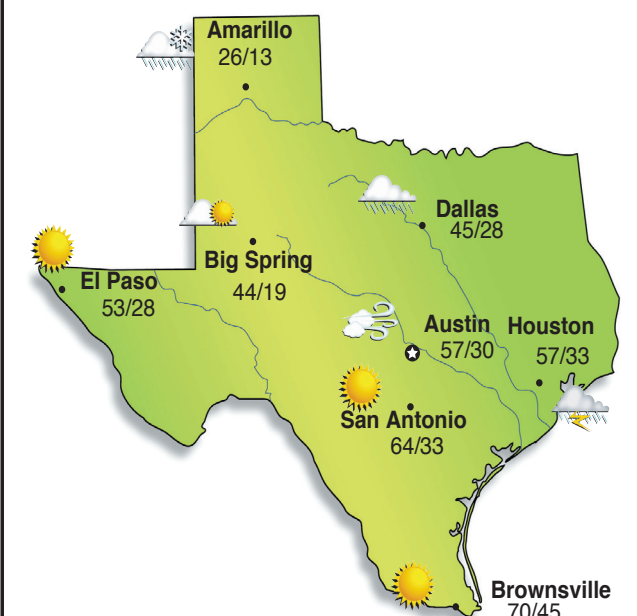
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Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast		
Thu 12/24	Fri 12/25	Sat 12/26
44/19 Intervals of clouds and sunshine. High 44F. Winds NNW at 20 to 30 mph.	49/21 Abundant sunshine. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the low 20s.	49/25 Sunshine. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the mid 20s.
Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM

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Texas At A Glance



Area Cities		Area Cities	
City	Hi Lo Cond.	City	Hi Lo Cond.
Abilene	43 24 windy	Kingsville	67 38 sunny
Amarillo	26 13 sn shower	Livingston	54 28 t-storm
Austin	57 30 windy	Longview	51 29 t-storm
Beaumont	59 34 t-storm	Lubbock	36 16 pt sunny
Brownsville	70 45 sunny	Lufkin	54 29 t-storm
Brownwood	48 27 windy	Midland	46 23 pt sunny
Corpus Christi	64 38 sunny	Raymondville	71 42 sunny
Corsicana	45 27 t-storm	Rosenberg	57 33 t-storm
Dallas	45 28 rain	San Antonio	64 33 sunny
Del Rio	61 35 windy	San Marcos	58 30 windy
El Paso	53 28 sunny	Sulphur Springs	47 27 t-storm
Fort Stockton	48 26 mst sunny	Sweetwater	42 21 windy
Gainesville	40 23 rain	Tyler	49 27 t-storm
Greenville	43 24 t-storm	Weatherford	43 23 rain
Houston	57 33 t-storm	Wichita Falls	38 22 mixed

Take Note

• Don't forget the Howard County Humane Society Christmas dog and cat food drive. Drop dry or canned dog or cat food off at the Herald from 8 a.m. to noon Wednesday to participate.

• Birdwell Lane Baptist Church is selling cookbooks to raise funds for the church. The cookbooks can be purchased by calling Pat Steen at (432) 263-3035.

• 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.

Lottery

The winning numbers in Tuesday evening's drawing of the "Mega Millions" game were: 03-33-35-39-45, Mega Ball: 13

The winning Cash Five numbers drawn Tuesday by the Texas Lottery: 17-32-9-11-14.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 0-6-7-3. Sum It Up: 16.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 9-6-6. Sum It Up: 21.

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TEXAS

Continued from 1B

The 6-foot-7 senior forward, who said he was "50/50" after last season about deciding whether to leave for the NBA, said he hasn't peaked yet.

"I'm not even playing my best basketball right now," James said. "And that's what's scary."

Jordan Hamilton had 14 points, including four 3-pointers, for the Longhorns, who now have a week off before a last stretch against

Gardner-Webb, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Arkansas takes the Longhorns into their Big 12 schedule.

Before beating North Carolina, the Longhorns feasted on lesser foes. Texas beat the Tar Heels in the vast enormity of Cowboys Stadium, in the first basketball ever played at the home of the Final Four in 2014.

Back home at a raucous Erwin Center, a small cluster of Michigan State backers briefly stole the show: officials stopped the game for several min-

utes so police could confiscate an airhorn from a Spartans fan who tried shirking away from her seat but was allowed to stay.

But as the second half wore on, the Spartans had less and less to cheer about.

Playing consecutive games against Top 10 opponents for the first time in a decade, the Longhorns hit 7 of 16 from behind the 3-point arc and shot 59 percent from the field in the second half.

Barnes tried tempering the excitement of beating two Top 10 teams.

"I told them it's great. It's December," Barnes said. "I said if this is as good as we're gonna be, we're in trouble. We've got a lot of room for growth."

KANSAS

Continued from 1B

for 18 points, with five of those coming in the closing minutes after the game was out of reach.

No matter. Kansas made 19 of 26 shots in the second half, shot 55 percent overall and used a 15-3 run to blow open a tight game and extend the nation's longest home winning streak to 49 games.

"They have a lot of people and you'd hard pressed to say who is there star," Cal coach Mike Montgomery said. "Who is their best player? Gee, they have about eight of them."

The Bears kept it close — at least for a little while.

Well-rested after near-

ly two weeks off, Cal (6-4) relied on its perimeter shooting to give Kansas its toughest home game of the season. Patrick Christopher hit an array of step-back shots to finish with 21 points, Jamal Boykin banged his way to 15 points and 15 rebounds, and Jerome Randle added 16 points.

The Bears just didn't have an answer when Kansas made its run, dropping to 2-24 all-time against No. 1 teams.

"We reacted well to their first big run," Boykin said. "We came out aggressive and with the right frame of mind, but when they made their surge, (it was) our reaction that hurt us."

After a series of blow-outs, Kansas had its first real home test of the season on Saturday,

pulling out an uneven 11-point win over Michigan.

Keeping up with Cal's athletic shooters was even tougher.

Coming off solid wins over Iowa State and Pacific, the Bears had a 12-day break that allowed them to heal after an early season filled with injuries and illnesses. Ready instead of rusty, Cal gave the nation's No. 1 team all it could handle, the quick-shooting trio of Theo Robertson, Christopher and Randle knocking down jumpers every time the Jayhawks tried to pull away.

"This definitely was a game for us to come out and make a statement," Taylor said. "This is why we're No. 1 — we can play the best and beat them."

In Sunday's Big Spring Herald



Blind inspiration

Begun just 4 years ago with 13 members, the Ohio State School for the Blind Marching Band is now 31 strong and the only marching band of its kind in the country. It will be one of 22 bands marching in the upcoming Tournament of Roses Parade. Plus, a wheeler dealer and black-eyed peas.



TECH

Continued from 1B

David Tairu scored 17 points and John Roberson added 14 — including going 3 of 4 from beyond the arc. Brad Reese had 13 and Chohadarevic added 10. Nick Okorie separated his shoulder when he hit the base of the basketball standard in the first half. He will have a MRI on Wednesday, Knight said.

Texas Tech was coming off the 85-83 loss at

Wichita State, the second of a two games on the road, which dropped them from No. 16 to 23rd nationally this week.

The Red Raiders promoted the game to fans by offering \$3 tickets. About 13,000 took the offer and Knight made a point to thank them after the game.

"It's the best Christmas present you could give this team," he told the crowd.

Knight told reporters later he used the turnout to help stir up his team.

"If you want any of

these people coming back you better pick it up because I wouldn't want to come back," he said. "It really helped give us something else to motivate our kids with."

Tech went up 57-43 after Roberson hit a 3-pointer to cap a 15-5 run to open the second half. The Red Raiders got four baskets, including Roberson's 3, within a 1:19 span.

The Cardinal used a 9-2 run, including two layups by Fields and a 3-pointer by Drew

Shiller, to pull within 61-52 with 11:33 remaining.

Singletary, the team's second-leading scorer, picked up two fouls about 3 minutes into the game. He left for the rest of the half when he fouled Stanford's Andrew Zimmermann for his third with 5:31 remaining.

Tech started the game 1 of 7 from the field but finished the half hitting 15 of 27. The Red Raiders hit 9 of their last 10 shots over the final 8 minutes of the half.

BYU

Continued from 1B

Hall's performance) it ought to be on the basis of this game."

The Cougars misdirected the Oregon State defense with draws and short plays while Hall refused to be discour-

aged by 50 mph winds and 30-degree temperatures.

After taking a sack in the fourth quarter, Hall said he did his best to pop back up and not show any signs of weakness.

"I thought I was going to throw up," he said.

Oregon State (8-5) looked queasy from its regular season finale against Oregon, when the Beavers lost their chance at the high-profile Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

Oregon State scored on its second possession, but not again until the fourth quarter, when the game was already out of reach. Sean Canfield and Jacquizz Rodgers each found the end zone with 1-yard runs, and Damola Adeniji caught a 31-yard TD from backup

quarterback Ryan Katz. Adeniji led all receivers with seven receptions for 102 yards.

"Emotionally we were ready for this game. We came in here and expected to win. It didn't work out that way," Oregon State guard Gregg Peat said. "That's a credit to BYU, they came ready to play. There are no excuses for the loss."

Oregon State also appeared flustered by the elements, with wind gusts so strong that an untouched Beavers punt flew sideways into the stands after traveling only six yards.

"We kind of pride ourselves in playing in different conditions, but there is nothing like the wind and I thought they handled it better than we did," Oregon State coach Mike Riley said.

Canfield completed only four passes in the first half as the Beavers struggled to sustain drives. He finished 20 for 41 for 173 yards and an interception.

"We hate leaving that opportunity out there," Riley said. "They controlled the ball, converted third downs and scored when they were going into that gale force, and that was very good by them."

The normally dependable Rodgers fumbled for the first time in his college career in the first quarter, on his 621st touch, and Matt Bauman returned it 34 yards for the go-ahead score. Officials used replay to see whether Canfield's toss to Rodgers was a lateral or a forward pass, and upheld the touch-down.

Oregon State finished with three turnovers, including a fumble by Rodgers' brother James.

"It took all 11 players to do what we had to do to contain those two," Mendenhall said. "If they aren't able to move the ball, they can't score enough points."

The Beavers converted once on fourth down in five tries, and was 5 for 16 on third-down conversions.

Oregon State struck first on Canfield's touch-down. The score was set up by consecutive big plays from the Rodgers brothers — an 18-yard rush by Jacquizz on the first play of the drive and a 17-yard run by James.

BYU responded with a touchdown on its next possession, marching 84 yards on 14 plays in just under six minutes and scoring on Unga's 1-yard run.

Oregon State then looked as if it would bounce back from Jacquizz Rodgers' fumble when it seemingly recovered a muffed punt near the goal line. But a holding call forced Oregon State to punt it again, and BYU drove 69 yards and kicked a 28-yard field goal.

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

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News Editor

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Managing Editor

OUR VIEW

Remember, don't miss Big Spring's Festival of Lights

Most Christmases are anything but boring but if you find yourself looking for an extra special treat one evening this weekend, then head over to Comanche Trail Park and the Festival of Lights. What a way to top off Christmas, huh?

In fact, the Festival of Lights will be on display through Thursday of next week, and yes, that includes Christmas Eve, Christmas and New Year's Eve. Brave volunteers will be there to greet you from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. each evening. Donations are accepted, but there is no charge to view the individual displays that include almost a million lights.

The best way to enter the park is at the Whiskey Drive entrance off Highway 87. Just look for the gateway of poinsettias. From there, follow the scenes and giant postcards through the park and the circle drive at the spring, then exit near Kids Zone. Along the way you'll see dozens of traditional and not-so-traditional Christmas scenes.

"We're changing things up some this year," said Pat Simmons of the festival committee. "Once you go past the last archway and make your way toward Cotton Mize Field, there will be a western theme diorama."

And remember, you can park near the Dora Roberts Community Center and walk through the park, crossing over lighted bridges and getting a unique view of the displays.

What's more, there's now a very unique gift shop available for festival visitors.

Already, the Festival of Lights has drawn many out of town visitors. Past "festivals" — this is the event's ninth year — have attracted visitors from most of the 50 states and dozens of countries. Festival organizers are expecting to top the 20,000-mark in attendance before turning out the lights shortly after 10 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

So make plans this weekend to pile the family in the car and head out to the Festival of Lights. It's well worth the trip and just one more reason Big Spring is a great place to be during the holidays.

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail Managing Editor John A. Moseley at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

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- 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 have optimism and a positive attitude to keep us on the high road.
Amen

Don't forget to make the time!

Our gathering almost didn't happen. Full agendas and busy schedules were dictating the days ahead. The Christmas season can be that way. Countless parties, invitations and things to get accomplished leave little room for adding anything else to our calendar.

How many times have you said, "We've got to get together sometime?" But that time never happens. And we have good reasons, too. There are just not enough days in the month of December to do everything we wish we could.

It was at the glowing insistence of a little child that we moms compared calendars and schedules to see if we could find a day that would work for our little get together. We found one day that was more-or-less "open" for both our families, and it was in fact the very next evening. So we said, "Let's do it!" And after some quick planning for an easy meal, our evening soon arrived.

We decided we would share a favorite story, poem or passage in addition to singing holiday favorites.

I selected a book I'd bought some years ago and had not read in a long time. It was titled, "A memory of Christmas tea" written by Tom Hegg. It's a sweet story with a lesson I needed to hear.

We learn in the story that the heroine had received a great aunt's Christmas china, and each year the niece displayed the china along with her other Christmas décor. But the china was given with a condition — that the niece share a cup of Christmas tea with someone else in the same way her great aunt had shared with her for many years.

This was a promise she had not kept with anyone. She had many reasons — excuses — that leapt to her mind. "Not enough time" pretty much sums up her list!

The niece recounts what sharing a cup of Christmas tea with her great aunt was like. Apparently, when this aunt sat down at tea, the niece had her undivided and complete attention. She listened to and lovingly encouraged her niece. And the niece felt the love and high expectations her great aunt had for her. Time seemed to magically stand still when the two of them shared a cup of Christmas tea.

Needless to say, the story has a happy conclusion. One evening while the niece is alone in her house with a stack of work

brought home from the office, someone knocks at her door. And soon she fulfills her Christmas promise to her great aunt and shares a cup of Christmas tea with a guest. Forgetting about all she had to do, she soon gave her guest her full attention and said, "All I knew of time was that the time was ours to share."

After reading the story, I was grateful for the reminder to slow down and focus on what is most important in our lives.

We didn't share tea with our friends, but we did have eggnog. And time did magically stand still while we enjoyed every minute of our evening together — with no thought of anything else. And all we knew of time was that the time was ours to share with some very dear friends.

Time spent with family and friends is truly the best gift we can give and receive.

The blessings and benefits last a lifetime. So make the time, my friends. Nothing is as important, precious and memorable as moments shared with those we hold dear.

And there is no better time to be together than the present.

Annette Bridges is a freelance writer who lives in North Texas. Her columns are published weekly by numerous websites and newspapers. E-mail her at annettebridges@gmail.com



ANNETTE BRIDGES



Don't let Scrooge ruin holiday

Texans do everything big and Christmas is no different. But the economy remains sluggish. State unemployment rates have not shown signs of improvement. Social Security recipients won't receive a cost of living increase in 2010. So what's a Christmas-loving yet strapped-for-cash Texan to do?

Recently AARP Texas had the opportunity to talk to Preston White, a Killeen retiree, who wanted to get his daughter money for her family fast. Less than an hour after walking into a payday/auto title loan store, he was able to secure \$4,000 using his truck as collateral.

White soon realized what the payday/auto title loan staff hadn't made clear: At the end of 30 days, he could either pay off the entire loan (which amounted to more than \$5,000 after fees and interest) or pay \$1,300 to save his truck from being repossessed for 30 more days.

This \$1,300 fee would be charged every 30 days until the entire loan, its interest and all fees were paid in full.

White, like many others before him, had inadvertently stumbled into the world of predatory payday and auto-title loans, which trap consumers into cycle of debt. Unable to pay the full amount back by the due date, borrowers often renew their

loans several times before fully paying them off, incurring exorbitantly high fees each time.

Payday loans are cash advances due by the borrower's next payday. Auto title loans are similar but are secured with car titles. Borrowers of these two types of loans can incur fees from both their lenders and their banks and lose their vehicles, even if they've paid hundreds or thousands of dollars in interest and fees.

A loophole in Texas law allows lenders to charge Texans an annual percentage rate (APR) of more than 500 percent. By operating as "credit services organizations," these lenders escape regulatory oversight that apply to other lenders. They do billions of dollars in business around the state each year.

Luring borrowers with assertions that "it does take money to make the holiday more special," these lending outfits offer what seems to be a quick financial fix to ensure a happy holiday season. These dangerous loans hand out thousands of dollars with as little documentation as a bank statement, a pay stub or a car title. They tout "no credit restrictions" and no background check.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Read the fine print.

What to do then? Try alternatives to payday lending. Take advantage of layaway options, now offered by many stores. Find ways to make extra money, or consider alternative gifts. Personal finance experts suggest homemade gifts or "giving

experiences" rather than physical gifts. By organizing a special meal or planning a field trip, you can spend time with loved ones without breaking the bank.

Convinced you need a loan? Consider going to a credit union. Or check out new peer-to-peer lending groups online. Just be sure to thoroughly check them out before committing. You might also see if your credit card offers cash advances, or ask your employer for one.

In the meantime, AARP Texas supports local and statewide efforts to reign in abusive lending in Texas. Local governments can restrict these lenders within their boundaries. Several Texas cities have already applied zoning laws to regulate how many of and where these lenders can operate. San Antonio must now approve new storefronts. And Brownsville is considering a six-month moratorium on certain lenders.

Fixing the loophole in state law to hold payday and auto title lenders accountable won't be an easy fight. According to the Texas Tribune, these companies have donated more than \$1.4 million to Texas candidates' political campaigns in the past nine years.

Want to help fight predatory loans? Tell us your story about these lenders, or help us find others who have been affected. Contact us, toll-free, at 866-227-7443.

Tim Morstad is associate state director for AARP Texas. He can be reached by e-mail at tmorstad@aarp.org



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News in brief

American Airlines flight from Miami overshoots runway in Kingston, Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — An American Airlines flight from Miami with more than 150 aboard overshoot a runway while landing during a heavy rainstorm in Kingston on Tuesday night, injuring more than 40 people, officials said.

Flight 331 skidded across a road at Norman Manley International Airport and halted at the edge of the Caribbean Sea, apparently prevented from going into the water only by the upward slope of the sand. The nose of the jet was less than 10 feet (3 meters) from the water.

Some 44 passengers were taken to nearby hospitals with broken bones and back pains, Information Minister Daryl Vaz told The Associated Press. Four people were seriously injured, said Paul Hall, senior vice president of airport operations.

The plane's fuselage was cracked, its right engine broke off from the impact and the left main landing gear collapsed, said Tim Smith, an American Airlines spokesman at the company's headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas. Most of the injuries were cuts and bruises and none were life threatening, though he had no further details, he said.

Some passengers leaving the plane were seen with cuts on their faces or bloody lips. Some looked visibly shaken as they bustled out of the terminal wrapped in red blankets, while others ducked under umbrellas to escape the heavy downpour.

New home sales expected to have grown 2.3 percent in November

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sales of new homes are expected to have increased in November for the third month in a row, a sign that the housing market is finally on solid ground.

The Commerce Department's report on November's new home sales is forecast to show a 2.3 percent increase to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 440,000, from 430,000 in October, according to economists polled by Thomson Reuters.

The report will be released Wednesday at 10 a.m. EST. It counts signed contracts to buy homes, rather than completed sales, so it will capture consumer reaction to Congress' decision last month to extend and expand a homebuyer tax credit.

First-time buyers will still be able to save up to \$8,000, and now homeowners who have lived in their current properties for at least five years can claim a tax credit of up to \$6,500 if they relocate. To qualify, buyers must ink a deal by the end of April.

Still, some analysts don't think the new deadline will have an immediate impact on sales, because many buyers won't act until the 11th hour approaches.

Teresa Heinz slams federal mammography recommendations

BOSTON (AP) — Teresa Heinz says she is being treated for breast cancer discovered through mammography and argues that younger women should continue undergoing the tests despite a federal panel's recent recommendation to reduce their frequency.

The 71-year-old wife of the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee, Sen. John Kerry, of Massachusetts, told The Associated Press that the cost of mammography is far lower than the physical and personal tolls women ages 40 to 60 face if their cancer goes undetected early and they later have to be treated with aggressive chemotherapy.

"Chemotherapy is serious. It also costs a lot of money. It's very painful. And it's very destructive of people's — most people's — lives for a while, anyway. So why put people through that instead

of just having a test that's done, and it's done?" Heinz told the AP during an interview this week. "So that's why I was so upset about that decision of this panel."

She recalled nurses in a hospital where she was receiving a magnetic resonance imaging procedure, or MRI, being "so livid" when they heard the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommend last month that women start receiving mammograms at age 50, rather than the long-standing practice of 40.

"They said, 'We've taken all these years to teach women to do preventive mammograms, and now look at this,'" Heinz said.

Taxes and fees will kick in first, most benefits later under Dems' health care bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — The costs of health care reform being pushed through Congress by Democrats will be felt long before the benefits.

Proposed taxes and fees on upper-income earners, insurers, even tanning parlors, take effect quickly. So would Medicare cuts.

Benefits, such as subsidies for lower middle-income households, consumer protections for all, and eliminating the prescription coverage gap for seniors, come gradually.

"There's going to be an expectations gap, no question about that," said Drew Altman, president of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "People are going to see their premiums and out-of-pocket costs go up before the tangible benefits kick in."

Most of the 30 million uninsured helped by the bill won't get coverage until 2013 at the earliest, well after the next presidential election.

Brazil's chief justice rules for U.S. dad in court fight to gain custody of boy

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — A U.S. man involved in a five-year battle for his son is closer than ever to being reunited with the boy, and waits now to see if Brazilian relatives will comply with an order from Brazil's chief justice to give up custody.

The justice ruled Tuesday that the 9-year-old be turned over to David Goldman in a decision that appeared to bring the case in line with international custody accords.

The boy, Sean, was taken by Goldman's now-deceased ex-wife to her native Brazil in 2004, where he has remained.

Goldman, of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, has been fighting to get the child back from the boy's stepfather.

Both the U.S. and Brazilian governments have said the matter clearly fell under the Hague Convention, which seeks to ensure that custody decisions are made by the courts in the country where a child originally lived — in this case, the United States.

Goldman's New Jersey-based lawyer, Patricia Apy, said Tuesday that she believed the order by Supreme Court Chief Justice Gilmar Mendes required Sean to be handed over immediately, but she said Goldman's attorneys had not heard from lawyers for the Brazilian family.

Investigator wants Balloon Boy parents barred from making money off spectacle

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — The parents who pulled off the balloon boy hoax are already facing the prospect of jail time and paying tens of thousands of dollars in restitution over their stunt. An investigator also wants to forbid the couple from making any money off their newfound fame.

Richard and Mayumi Heene are scheduled to

be sentenced Wednesday after pleading guilty to charges that they carried out the stunt in October to promote a reality TV show.

The husband faces up to 90 days and jail, and the wife faces up to 60 days.

An investigator thinks the judge shouldn't stop at jail time.

Bob Heffernan, a lead investigator in the case for the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, said there should be limits on how the Heenes might profit from the Oct. 15 hoax, such as through book or TV deals.

Police feared terrorist attack after arrest of Jackson for child molestation

NEW YORK (AP) — Police concerns that media-hungry terrorists would attack Michael Jackson's trial as a "soft target" led to a request for federal help, according to FBI files kept on the late pop star. The documents also show that the FBI helped facilitate interviews in the Philippines by California authorities investigating Jackson over allegations that he had sexually abused boys.

The FBI monitored Jackson for more than a decade, but the files contain no major revelations about his private life and the bureau apparently never developed any solid evidence against him, sources said.

In 2004, the Santa Maria Police Department in California asked for FBI "involvement" after Jackson was arrested for child molestation. Police, according to the FBI, said they believed the court case would be a "soft target" for terrorism because of the "worldwide media coverage" the trial would attract.



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Proving the existence of Santa in a Brooklyn bar

SAMANTHA GROSS — Associated Press Writer
NEW YORK — Jamie Hook wants all those Santa doubters out there to know he was once one of them.

It wasn't long ago that a friend's son demanded the truth, and Hook and the father looked in the boy's solemn face and said Santa was a lie.

It was only in the weeks afterward, watching the despondent 7-year-old drag his bookbag on the floor behind him as he shuffled off to school, that it occurred to Hook: How could he know what in this wide, unlikely world was truly true?

Ever since, Hook has been a little obsessed with Santa. And now he's arranged a public lecture in the back of a Brooklyn bar, hoping to convince a group of adult New York skeptics that magic, mystery and even Santa Claus are very much alive.

Billing his lecture as

a philosophical proof of the existence of Santa, Hook flicks through the evidence in a computer slideshow, wearing a dark blue turtleneck, cardigan and glasses that lend him a professorial air. He runs through history and evidence — largely from children — but notes there are some things even he can't explain.

"We don't know the truth at all," Hook said earlier. "There's mysteries that bubble up within us that we can't explain and we can't understand. And those are humbling mysteries."

Attendees like Jenna Barvitski weren't so ready to be swayed.

The 23-year-old — formerly from what she calls a "naive suburb" in Ohio, now very much a jaded New Yorker — doesn't exactly like the jolly, red-cheeked gift-bearer.

"It's something that American culture has manufactured to sup-



AP Photo/Saurabh Das

Santa Claus from Rovaniemi in Finland interacts with Indian children in New Delhi, India. Sweden, Greenland, Alaska and Norway also make claims to being the home of Santa Claus, but Rovaniemi has been especially convincing, with hundreds of thousands of tourists visiting annually.

port capitalism," she says. Santa is "pretty silly."

Hook has come to believe that the value of Santa extends far beyond anything the figure has offered to advertising executives, or Christmas shoppers, or department store holiday displays.

The man we know as

Santa Claus has been around for centuries under one name or another, Hook tells his audience.

At one time, children were told if they misbehaved that Santa's sidekick would come and drag them off to Hell. Later, he was sometimes imagined as an odd-looking elf. It wasn't un-

til the 1930s that Coca-Cola advertising helped turn him into the jolly, white-haired man now embedded in our collective imagination.

In his lecture, Hook turns to the real experts: showing videos of his interviews with children about Santa Claus, and even interviewing audience members live about their memories and the moment they became non-believers.

One woman in the audience remembers the arrangements her father made so they could go to the coast with a two-way radio and talk to Santa as he flew overhead. It was an experience filled with wonder.

Another audience member, 26-year-old David Connelly, says Santa is "part of the world be-

ing magical as a child." "I still have a warm, not completely describable feeling around Christmas that I wouldn't have if I hadn't believed as a kid," he says.

Even adult believers are not as rare as you might think. On Facebook, the "I Believe in Santa Claus" group has passed the 230,000-member mark. Eileen Migliacci-Smith, one of the group's officers, says even when she sees Santa in the Thanksgiving Day Parade or in the mall, she gets teared up.

"It used to be said that it's for kids, but I don't think it is," she says. "Santa Claus represents giving and being with family to me."

For Hook, confronted at the Brooklyn bar with a room of skeptics who have been promised a demonstration of the truth of Santa Claus, the ultimate proof is one of faith. Because, in the end, it can only be faith: in the spirit of giving, and in the unknown.

"When you watch these kids, you realize that there is such a thing as belief. ... We here in this room are in a world that lacks belief, profoundly."

Even Barvitski, so disdainful of St. Nick at the start of the evening, by the end says she'd consider telling her own kids about Santa Claus — to help them grow up in a world with a sense of magic, and a belief in possibility.

The lights go dark, as if in a blackout. Hook lights some candles, and yells out to ask what's wrong. Then, a booming "Ho, Ho, Ho ..." can be heard throughout the room. It is the voice of Santa Claus, speaking to these adults who have long since stopped leaving cookies by the fireplace.

A moment later, the barkeep walks in with proof of his own: "Santa left a whole bunch of free beers on the bar!"

Quiz:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Look at you or act in ways that scare you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Act like the abuse is no big deal, it's your fault, or even deny doing it? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go? | <input type="checkbox"/> Destroy your property or threaten to kill your pets? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stop you from seeing or talking to friends or family? | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate you with guns, knives, or other weapons? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take your money or Social Security, make you ask for money, or refuse to give you money? | <input type="checkbox"/> Shove you, slap you, choke you or hit you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make all the decisions? | <input type="checkbox"/> Force you to have sex? |
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Major winter storm plods through West

DENVER (AP) — A major winter storm is promising to bring a white Christmas to parts of the West and Midwest, but not without threatening to cause long delays and tough driving conditions for countless holiday travelers.

The storm was expected to dump more than a foot of snow on parts of Colorado and southern Utah by midday Wednesday, and blow east into the Plains states through Christmas Day. Blizzard warnings were likely on Christmas Eve in Kansas.

"Pretty much the entire central and southern Rockies are going to get snow, and then it's going east and will drop more snow," said Stan Rose, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Pueblo, Colo. South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds declared a state of emergency Tuesday. The National Weather Service in Sioux Falls warned of treacherous travel conditions from Wednesday through Friday night, calling the storm "life threatening."

The Nebraska State Patrol urged drivers to use extreme caution Wednesday morning when venturing out on

the roads across the central third of the state because the roads are slick as freezing rain and snow had started to fall.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported numerous crashes in the western part of the state, including a double fatality collision in Thomas County near Colby. The patrol said an eastbound car on icy Interstate 70 spun out of control Tuesday night, crossed the median and was struck by a westbound tractor-trailer, killing both people in the car.

A Colorado woman was killed Tuesday when her SUV apparently hit black ice and slid across a median in western Nebraska.

In Nevada, multiple wrecks were reported in and around Reno as snow blanketed the area Tuesday evening. No serious injuries were reported, the Reno Gazette-Journal newspaper reported.

Blustery weather had already snarled traffic in Arizona, with blizzard-like conditions shutting down roads and causing a pileup involving 20 vehicles Tuesday. South of Phoenix, a dust storm set off a series of collisions that killed at least three people.



AP Photo/David Zalubowski

Passengers inch through long security lines at Denver International Airport as they try to leave the Mile High City before a holiday storm roars into the intermountain West Tuesday.

A tropical jet stream pumping in moisture from the storm's south was likely to cause plenty of snow as the storm headed into the Plains states.

A winter storm watch was in effect for most of southeast Colorado, the panhandle of Oklahoma and north Texas through Thursday.

By Tuesday afternoon, light snow was falling in Salt Lake City. No major airport delays were reported there or in Denver, but holiday travelers across the region were warned to

check with their airlines before arriving for flights.

Elsewhere, holiday travelers scrambled to adjust their plans before the snow storm hit.

Sarah McAnarney and her husband, Jeff,

planned to leave Denver on Wednesday to visit family in Ozark, Mo., with their springer spaniel, Olive. But forecasts prompted them to skip a day of skiing in the Rockies and start driving a day early.

McAnarney said she was caught in a blizzard two weeks ago in the Rockies and needed four hours to drive 100 miles from Vail to Denver. She said she didn't want to repeat the experience.

"I was driving through a whiteout," she said Tuesday at a truck stop east of Topeka, Kan. "You couldn't see over your headlights."

Craig Rueschhoff, 35, and his girlfriend, Brenna Larson, in Des Moines, Iowa said they had planned to drive 210-miles to Columbus, Neb., to visit his parents, then on to visit Larson's family in western Iowa, but were thinking of canceling the annual trip.

"We've had both my mom and her mom encourage us not to come if the weather is too bad," he said.

"They wouldn't feel bad if we didn't come. We've gotten their blessing."

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