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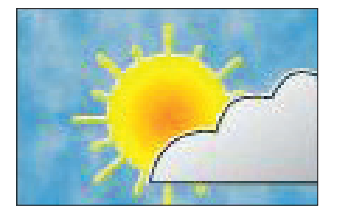
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BIG SPRING HERALD

THURSDAY
DECEMBER 24, 2009



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The Christmas Story

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.



And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger;

because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke 2: 1-20



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MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Troopers on the prowl this holiday season

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas troopers will be out in force over the long Christmas and New Year's weekends to help keep travelers safe. The Department of Public Safety on Tuesday said troopers will concentrate on drivers who may be intoxicated, speeders and people not wearing seat belts. All available troopers will be on patrol from Thursday through Sunday and again on Thursday, Dec. 31 through Sunday, Jan. 3.

Merry Christmas To You And Yours from your friends at **Blum's JEWELERS** One beautiful place.

Mayweather camp insists on testing for fight

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The proposed megafight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. was thrown into jeopardy Tuesday with a demand by Mayweather's camp that both fighters be subjected to Olympic-type drug testing in the weeks leading up to the bout.

Mayweather's manager said the fight would not go on if Pacquiao didn't agree to blood testing under standards followed by the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

"There is no fight without Olympic-style random drug testing," Leonard

Ellerbe said.

Mayweather's camp claims it was told Pacquiao would not agree to have his blood tested within 30 days of the fight because of personal superstitions. But Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, said he could live with some testing, as long as it wasn't too close to the fight and wasn't overly intrusive.

"I will not let my fighter take a blood test the day before a fight," Roach said. "If they give me a five-day window or something like that I have no problem with it."

Roach said he hoped the issue wasn't brought up as a way to get Mayweather out of the fight.

"He's looking for a back door out," Roach said. "We're eager to fight."

The fight, which promises to be the richest ever, had widely been expected to be formalized this week, with an official announcement Jan. 6. It was expected to be held at the MGM Grand hotel, with the biggest live gate ever.

But neither fighter has signed formal contracts and there have been disputes between representatives of the two fighters ever since Mayweather's promoter pulled out at the last minute of a trip to Texas, where Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones was to make a pro-



AP PHOTO
Manny Pacquiao, above, will not agree to Olympic-type drug testing.

See **FIGHT**, Page 3B



AP PHOTO
Shaun Suisham, left, is back with the Cowboys after being released from the Redskins earlier this year. The Cowboys released Nick Folk, who has missed an NFL-most 10 kicks this season.

Suisham glad to be back in Dallas

Associated Press

IRVING — The first time Shaun Suisham kicked for the Dallas Cowboys, he missed his only kick longer than 30 yards.

The second time Suisham kicked for the Cowboys, he missed one of two attempts longer than 30 yards.

Three years later, Dallas is giving Suisham another try.

The Cowboys signed the veteran kicker off the NFL's scrap heap to replace Nick Folk after the club finally ran out of patience waiting for the young, former Pro

Bowler to break out of his slump.

So, Shaun, what changed while you were away?

"I'm married and have a baby," he said Tuesday, smiling.

From a football perspective, Suisham brings a lot more experience, having made 73 of 92 kicks for the Washington Redskins over the past three seasons, a respectable 79 percent. He also was having his best full season, making 18 of 21.

He became available only because those few misses cost Washington two victories in a sea-

son that's been short on success. His slumps from 39 and 50 yards really hurt in a 7-6 loss to the Cowboys, then he missed a 23-yarder that would've sealed a victory over New Orleans. The Redskins lost in overtime and Suisham was cut a few days later, on Dec. 8.

Suisham was upset, but understood it comes with the territory. He didn't see the need for any soul searching; there were no sessions with a kicking guru to troubleshoot his mechanics or visits to a sports psychologist in search of a mental

cure.

He just went to a high school near his home in Virginia and kept kicking in case a team came calling. Sure enough, Dallas invited him in for a tryout Monday, and he beat four others for the job.

"I'm not trying to start over," Suisham said, standing in front of a locker that only had his name written in tape, his old nameplate apparently no longer handy.

"It's not like I'm rebuilding or anything like that.

See **DALLAS**, Page 2B

A&M's Roland suffers broken leg in loss

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Texas A&M senior Derrick Roland suffered a gruesome leg injury in the 19th-ranked Aggies' 73-64 loss at No. 22 Washington Tuesday night and was in surgery at a Seattle hospital early Wednesday morning.

Coach Mark Turgeon said Roland broke his tibia and fibula bones in his lower right leg.

"He's in surgery now," Turgeon said immediately after the game.

Turgeon then rushed out of the arena to the hospital across town. He referred all other questions to top assistant Scott Spinelli.

"We expect him to make a full recovery," Spinelli said, though he conceded Roland's college career may be over — barring some unexpected turn of events such as a medical red-shirt for another season.

That will likely be difficult to obtain. NCAA rules include guidance that a medical hardship waiver may be granted for a fifth year of eligibility for a player injured before he has played in 20 percent of his team's games in a season. Roland has played in all 11 of Texas A&M's 29 regular-season games so far.

"God willing, you don't

know," Spinelli said.

Aggies team spokesman Colin Killian, who was traveling with the team, said Turgeon, staff members and some players were at the hospital early Wednesday waiting for word from the surgery. The team was due to board its bus about 5 a.m. PST to begin its flight home.

Turgeon considered leaving the game to join his player at the hospital before staying. The scene recalled the similar injury former Washington Redskins quarterback Joe Theismann sustained live on national television during a Monday night NFL game in 1985.

The Aggies gathered at their bench for a tearful prayer for Roland during a 10-minute delay to get him onto a stretcher and into an ambulance. Immediately after the game resumed, Washington (8-2) went on a decisive 15-4 run.

Roland, one of the leading defenders in the Big 12 Conference and the Aggies' second-leading scorer, crashed hard to the court with 17:30 left in the game after jumping under the basket.

Turgeon ran on the court while play continued at the other end.

Roland's teammates were distraught.

See **A&M**, Page 3B

USC's McKnight likely out of Emerald Bowl amid SUV investigation

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Southern California coach Pete Carroll is preparing for Saturday's Emerald Bowl with the thought that leading rusher Joe McKnight won't be able to play.

McKnight is in Los Angeles dealing with paperwork following an investigation into whether he improperly used an SUV registered to a local businessman.

"There have been some raised issues that the compliance office is taking very seriously," Carroll said Tuesday at a news conference for the bowl game against Boston College.

"They have to thoroughly go through the information to make sure

that we know what we're doing. We felt like it was best to keep Joe there until we know the facts. They're hoping to find out in the next day what the situation is and hopefully we'll get it resolved. Whether they do or not I don't know. We'll have to wait it out."

Carroll said the holiday week was making it difficult to resolve any issues with McKnight because some of the investigators and the people the school needs to talk to are traveling.

McKnight led USC in rushing this season with 1,014 yards. He also scored eight touchdowns and averaged 6.2 yards per carry. If McKnight can't go, Allen Bradford will likely

get the starting nod. Bradford had 98 carries for 596 yards and eight scores this season.

C.J. Gable, who had only 21 carries for 93 yards this season, will also get more of a chance.

"Our running backs that are here in this program are dying for this opportunity," Carroll said. "This is what they wait for. They want to be in the spotlight. They want to do something special with their opportunity. Don't think they aren't fired up about it. Those guys are ready to crank and fill the void. That's always been the way we've dealt with it."

While USC is preparing to be with-

See **USC**, Page 3B



AP PHOTO
Joe McKnight is facing allegations that he improperly used an SUV.

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

Pete Reaves

Pete Reaves, 90, of Odessa, died Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2009, at Hospice House. Graveside services will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009, at Mt. Olive Cemetery in Big Spring. Survivors include his wife, Myrl Reaves of Odessa; daughters Patricia Reaves of Odessa and Dana Bloom of Pilot Point; sons Jimmie Reaves of Hunnington Beach, Calif., and Herbert Reaves of Plano; brother Roy Reaves of San Antonio; sister Patsy Anderson of Big Spring; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. Services are under the direction of Frank W. Wilson Funeral Directors of Odessa.

Nancy Campbell

Nancy Florence Campbell of San Antonio died Dec. 23, 2009. A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009, at Oxford United Methodist Church in San Antonio. She is survived by her daughter, Laura Chapman and husband Covan; son, Water Campbell and wife Retta Duda; daughter-in-law, Dolores Campbell Jamison and husband Ervin; brother-in-law, Lawrence Heflin; a cousin; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. She was preceded in death by husband, Don Campbell and son, Keith Campbell. You may sign the on-line guestbook at www.missionparks.com under the obituary section.



Alfredo Paredez Jr.

Alfredo Paredez Jr., 46, of Big Spring, died Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, at Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock. The family will receive friends at 611 N. W. Ninth St. Vigil services will be at 7 p.m. Friday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral mass will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church with the Rev. Ariel Lagunilla officiating. Burial will follow at Mount Olive Memorial Park. He was born Dec. 29, 1962 in Big Spring to Linda and Alfredo Paredez Sr. He was a lifetime resident of Howard County. He worked at Big Spring State Hospital and MHMR and then at Union and Pacific Railway. He was currently self-employed and was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Survivors include his wife, Esperanza Paredez of Big Spring; two sons, Michael Garza and Paul Flores, Jr., both of Big Spring; one daughter, Jennifer Garza and her husband, David Canales, of Big Spring; mother, Linda Paredez of Big Spring; three brothers, Benito Paredez, Jerry Paredez and his wife Marlina, and Joey Herrera, all of Big Spring; two sisters, Lisa Valencia and her husband Ray of Big Spring, and Susan Paredez of San Angelo; three grandchildren; and 10 nieces and nephews. In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by one brother, John Paredez; one sister, Bernadette Herrera; and his grandparents, Flora and Jesus Loya and Antolina and Benito Paredez. Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

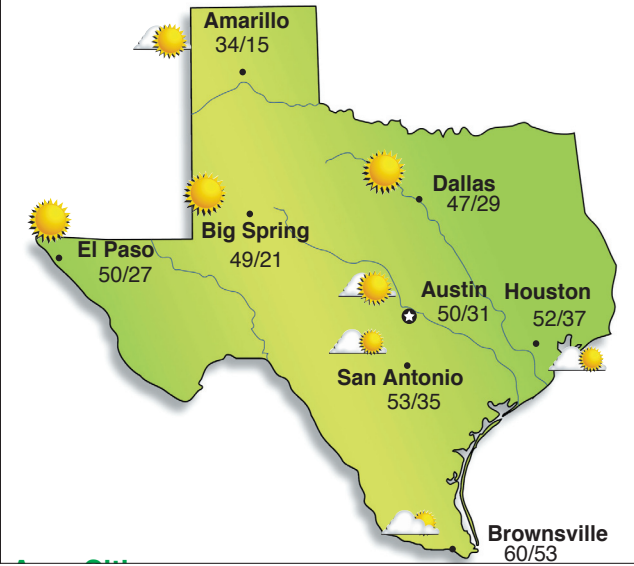


Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast				
Fri 12/25	Sat 12/26	Sun 12/27	Mon 12/28	Tue 12/29
49/21 Sunshine. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the low 20s.	49/25 Sunshine. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the low 20s.	51/31 Mostly sunny. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	50/27 Mostly cloudy. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	44/19 Showers possible. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the mid 20s.
Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:49 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:50 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:50 PM

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Texas At A Glance



Support Groups

- MONDAY**
- Encourager's Support Group for all widows and widowers meets the first and third Monday of the month. For more information, call Nancy Hale at 398-5239.
 - Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets at 5 p.m. at the First Christian Church at 10th and Goliad for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Call 213-1342 or 263-6819.
- TUESDAY**
- Grief share, sponsored by Home Hospice and the First Presbyterian Church, Seventh and Runnels (north end door), meets at 6 p.m.. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information, contact Sherry Hodnett at 264-7599.
 - The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St.

Take Note

- Birdwell Lane Baptist Church is selling cookbooks to raise funds for the church. The cook books 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.
- The mission of CASA of West Texas is to promote and support quality volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court in an effort to find each child a safe, nurturing and permanent home. CASA currently has 10 active volunteers to serve the 55 plus children of Howard County in foster care. A class is forming in Howard County and 20 volunteers are needed. For more information on becoming a CASA volunteer, please contact Robyn LaForge at (432) 683-1114.
- The Permian Basin Foundation has awarded West Texas Opportunities Inc. \$130,000 through the

Texas Resources for Iraq Afghanistan Deployment fund. WTO will assist current and former military personnel serving in Iraq or Afghanistan and their families. Funding will serve Howard, Martin, Andrews, Borden, Dawson, Ector, Fisher, Gaines, Glasscock, Midland, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry and Upton counties. For more information, contact Diana Martinez or Debbie Wilson at 110 Johnson in Big Spring or call (432) 267-9536.

• Scenic Mountain Medical Center's Relay for Life team is selling cookbooks to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. For more information, contact Beverly Grant at 268-4952.

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

• Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call (877) 277-1618.

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sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

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

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Clandestine Operation

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ K 6
 ♥ Q J 8 5
 ♦ A Q 9
 ♣ J 6 5 2

EAST
 ♠ Q 8 7 4 2
 ♥ 4
 ♦ J 8 5 2
 ♣ K 10 4

SOUTH
 ♠ A 5
 ♥ A K 10 6 2
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ A 8 7 3

The bidding:
South West North East
1♥ Pass 3♥ Pass

Opening lead — jack of spades.

Occasionally declarer sees that his best hope is to develop an end position that will force the opponents to yield a critical trick to him. In many of these situations, declarer should lay the groundwork early, long before the enemy realizes what is going on.

Consider this deal from a team match where at each table South got to six hearts and West led a spade, taken with the king. Both declarers saw immediately that the outcome depended on avoiding two club losers.

Tomorrow: Double-dummy problem.
©2009 King Features Syndicate Inc.

At the first table, South led a club to the ace at trick two and then drew three rounds of trumps. Next he cashed the K-A-Q of diamonds (discarding a club), led a spade to the ace and exited with the club.

This sequence of plays created an insoluble predicament for the defense. If West's club queen held the trick, his forced diamond or spade return would allow South to discard his last club while ruffing in dummy. And if East overtook West's queen with the king instead, dummy's jack would become a trick. Either way, South could not be stopped from making the slam.

At the second table, declarer adopted essentially the same method of play as his counterpart, but with one highly significant difference: He first drew trumps, then cashed three diamonds and the spade ace before playing the ace of clubs. By this time, West knew a great deal about South's hand and could see the handwriting on the wall. But he also saw a way out. Accordingly, when declarer cashed the club ace at trick nine, West dropped his queen on it!

This left East with the K-10 of clubs over dummy's jack, and South went down one. In the process, the second declarer learned that if you're planning a surprise ending, it's best to conceal your intentions while developing the plot.

Kelly: Things to be 'fixed' at ND

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Coach Brian Kelly inherits a Notre Dame program that has finished the past two regular seasons at 6-6, is losing its two best players and only has one scholarship quarterback — he's recovering from knee surgery — on the roster.

Not exactly the recipe for quickly turning around a program that's been mired in mediocrity for more than a decade. Still, Kelly feels good about what he sees in the Fighting Irish.

"This program is not broke, but some things need to get fixed," he told a small group of reporters he met with Tuesday, less than two weeks after being hired from Cincinnati. "The things that I need to fix are some of the things that I believe held this program back from winning. That's what they brought me here for is to help this program win."

That'll be harder with quarterback Jimmy Clausen and star receiver Golden Tate both leaving for the NFL draft.

Kelly didn't want to get into too many specifics, saying he still has to meet all the players. But he said the turnaround has to start with what the team does Sundays through Fridays.

"I would say if I'm going to give you one

heading, its going to be attention to detail," he said.

One way he plans get his new players' attention to detail is by holding what he affectionately calls "Camp Kelly," just as he did as his previous coaching stops at Cincinnati and Central Michigan. That's where during the offseason Kelly has the players report about 5 a.m. on Saturdays for grueling workouts that include players flipping tractor tires, going against each other in tug-of-war and other physical challenges.

Kelly said the camp forces players to gauge their commitment.

"I can tell you this, it has no football applicability relative to skill development. So you go into it knowing you're not going to leave here a better receiver. But you're going to leave here a more committed receiver. That's Camp Kelly," he said.

How many sessions of camp players must endure depends on how long it takes players to show their commitment, he said. Kelly is looking for players to show they have physical and mental toughness.

"It's a tough game for tough guys," he said.

Kelly touched on a lot of topics during the 42-minute interview. He said he's been surprised

by how many people on campus have greeted him by saying they hadn't seen a football coach in their offices in a long time.

"I think it's important that the football coach is not bunkered down in the Gug (the football offices). It's important to be part of this community because there's so much passion for football here," Kelly said. "I think it's important that they can reach out and touch you a little bit."

The only assistant on staff so far is running backs coach Tony Alford, a holdover from Charlie Weis' staff. Kelly hopes to have a few more coaches in place by Jan. 4, when coaches can again begin contacting high school recruits.

Some of Kelly's staff from Cincinnati is expected to join him in South Bend, but he doesn't want to disrupt the Bearcats' preparations for their game against Florida in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1. Offensive coordinator Jeff Quinn had been expected to join Kelly at Notre Dame, but he accepted the head coaching job at Buffalo.

He also said freshman linebacker Manti Te'o is expected to decide soon whether he will be back at school next fall or whether he will take

time off for a Mormon mission.

Kelly said there's nothing he can do about having just one quarterback, Dayne Crist, left on the roster.

High school senior Tommy Rees is expected to enroll in the school next week and another high school senior QB who committed to Weis is considering his options. The Irish also could move receiver John Goodman, who played quarterback in high school.

The Irish might not have gotten Kelly as their new coach if Texas quarterback Colt McCoy had held the ball a second longer against Nebraska in the Big 12 title game.

If the Longhorns hadn't had one last second left to kick the winning field goal, Cincinnati probably would have been playing for the national championship instead. Kelly said if that were the case, he would not have left the Bearcats before the national title game and doesn't know if Notre Dame would have waited for him.

"Every job that I've taken is because I want to play for a championship. When you have the opportunity to play for a national championship, I'm going to be on that sideline," he said.

Notre Dame is hoping for just that.

Buffalo's Quinn presently juggling two jobs

AMHERST, N.Y. (AP) — It's first things first for Jeff Quinn after being formally introduced as the University at Buffalo's new head coach on Tuesday.

As much as he dressed for the part, wearing a UB lapel pin and a blue and white Bulls hat, and discussed how exciting the opportunity was to become a first-time head coach, Quinn's mind wasn't far from some unfinished

business back home in Cincinnati.

After all, as interim head coach of the No. 4 Bearcats (12-0), he's got a Sugar Bowl game against Tim Tebow and No. 5 Florida (12-1) to prepare for on Jan. 1.

"I'm just trying to figure out a way to score a touchdown and stop Tebow," Quinn said, shortly after completing his first press conference.

Joking that he now has

four job titles, including Cincinnati's offensive coordinator and line coach, Quinn's overseeing the Bearcats after Brian Kelly left the program to take over at Notre Dame two weeks ago.

"Yeah, it's been quite challenging," he said. "I've had very little sleep but a lot of support."

Looks as if Quinn and the Bearcats will now have a few more supporters in Buffalo.

"Absolutely, go 'Cats," Bulls athletic director Warde Manuel said.

Manuel then couldn't resist the opportunity to sell Buffalo fans on the person he chose to replace Turner Gill, who left Buffalo to take over at Kansas.

"Tune in to the Sugar Bowl," Manuel said. "If you want to see what this offense will be like in the 2010 UB Bulls season, please watch on Jan. 1."

DALLAS

Continued from 1B

I missed three field goals. There isn't anybody out there who's perfect. I feel like I should be. But I cer-

tainly am not hanging my head or lacking in confidence because I missed a few kicks this year."

The Cowboys should be glad to hear that because their next two games are going to present challenges for Suisham that go beyond the team being in a play-off chase.

First up is a trip to Washington. Suisham was mum about any feelings of revenge or other obvious motivations in facing the team that just cut him. He even claimed that he didn't see his replacement on the Redskins miss an extra point Monday night. He was so intent on avoiding controversy that when he was asked how fans will treat him, Suisham said, "I don't know."

"It's no longer about Washington," he said. "It's about being here in Dallas."

Speaking of being here in Dallas, Cowboys Stadium was the site of his only two-miss game this season. He'll be back there a week from Sunday for a finale against Philadelphia that could decide the division title.

"I don't overthink things," he said. "My job is to go out and kick field goals. I'm not concerned with all the variables and things that could happen or might happen. I'm just working today in practice and build up to this game."

Folk missed 10 kicks, including at least one in six straight games. The Cowboys stuck with him for so long because he's only 25 and in his third year, having made the Pro Bowl as a rookie.

They were hoping he would be their kicker for many years to come, but he just couldn't

fix whatever knocked him out of whack. Special teams coach Joe DeCamillis thought things were worked out when Folk made a 44-yarder against New Orleans, but then he missed a 24-yarder in the final few minutes that gave the Saints a chance to rally.

It was almost the same scenario as Suisham's demise in Washington, the difference being that the Dallas defense held on for the victory. Had the Redskins done the same, DeCamillis pointed out, then perhaps they would've given their kicker a second chance.

Instead, the Cowboys are giving him a third chance.

"You've seen plenty of guys at this position who have been with different teams and flourished," DeCamillis said. "Hopefully that's what happens with him."

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Holiday highs and lows

300 coats stolen from Salvation Army

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The Grinch came early in Richmond this year. The Salvation Army says 300 new winter coats were stolen from its distribution center. The coats were to be given to needy children and adults.

Authorities believe the coats were stolen last week while Salvation Army volunteers signed up people to come in and select donated items. The center doesn't have security cameras.

All the coats were donated last year and stored until this holiday season. They were swiped from a cordoned-off area inside the distribution center, located in a mall.

Salvation Army spokesman Jeff Baldwin says the agency doesn't view that the coats were stolen from it, but from children who needed them.

Mystery couple plays Santa at Ohio laundromat

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) — Wash day became payday at an Ohio coin laundry that was visited by a mystery couple playing Santa by handing out \$100 bills.

Employees at the Spin City Laundro-

mat in Dayton say the man and woman walked in Sunday, both dressed conservatively in black. Without saying anything, they gave eight customers and two workers \$100 each, inside Christmas cards that read, "Happy holidays and many happy days to follow. Jesus loves you!"

Spin City employee Holly Dunlap says when some of the recipients realized what had happened, they hugged and thanked their benefactors as they were leaving. The man and woman said, "You're welcome" and "Merry Christmas!"

Dunlap says she and her co-worker didn't recognize the couple and don't know why they picked the laundromat.

Four teens charged with vandalizing decorations

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — Could be lumps of coal in the stockings for four South Carolina teens accused of vandalizing holiday decorations.

Multiple media outlets reported the four 17-year-olds are charged with malicious damage to personal property after some residents in Simpsonville found the decorations damaged

Sunday morning.

Authorities say lighted reindeer, snowmen, decorative trains and a singing Santa ornament were damaged or thrown in the street.

Greenville County sheriff's Lt. Shea Smith says after officers got a report of damage to a six-foot-tall Santa Claus, they saw a vehicle driving erratically and stopped it and arrested the teens.

They were released from jail Monday.

Secret Santa leaves a grand for Salvation Army

You never know when a Secret Santa will perform an amazing deed.

Salvation Army bell ringers were thrilled Saturday night when they discovered a Good Samaritan had placed a check for \$1,000 in the kettle at the Fantasy of Lights display on East 5th Street.

The public had been invited to drive through the display — created by Mt. Carmel youth Travis Thompson — and, while there, make a donation to the Salvation Army Saturday evening. Bell ringer and campaign co-organizer Larry Letson was on hand to accept the contributions.

Travis' father Jeff Thompson told the Register Monday the effort was more than a success. "We raised \$1,458 for the Salvation Army," Jeff said, noting there were both a \$1,000 check, and a \$100 check, among the contributions.

Health officials say no milk and cookies for Santa

CHICAGO (AP) — Health officials say it's time to think outside the toy box when it comes to treating stressed out and overweight Santa.

Instead of traditional whole milk and traditional cookies, try low-fat versions. Or skip the tradition altogether and go with nuts and berries instead.

Dr. Terry Mason with Cook County's Health and Hospitals System says with the new year approaching, it's time for other folks, to shape up, too.

His list includes a gym membership, or gift certificate for a back massage.

Health officials also are advising swine flu shots and hand sanitizers for Santas, and other folks too. It's a reminder that flu season is still active, and will be into the new year.

Rancher sets aside 1,300 acres for ocelot

CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN

Associated Press Writer
RAYMONDVILLE

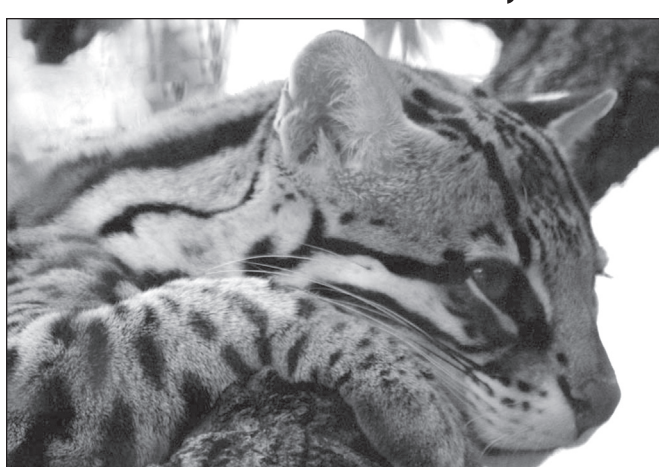
— Few things would venture into the dense thorny scrub favored by the endangered ocelot. But with less than 1 percent of the land in south Texas considered suitable habitat for the remaining 50 or fewer rare cats, the ocelots remain vulnerable.

The Nature Conservancy hopes to give another 1,300 acres of that forbidding thicket of mesquite, huisache and other shrubs to the spotted cats with a conservation easement it bought from south Texas rancher Frank Yturria this week.

Yturria, 86, spent much of his life fighting back such scrub on the thousands of acres of open grasslands where his cattle graze, but decades ago stopped clearing some of those areas when he realized ocelots live there.

This week he and his wife, Mary, went a step further to protect ocelot habitat, selling the easement on their San Francisco Ranch. The swath of land, less than 15 miles inland from the Laguna Madre, straddles Willacy and Kenedy counties. It is adjacent to three easements Yturria already has made for the ocelot, and more than doubles the amount of land he has set aside.

The San Francisco Ranch easements are



AP photo

The ocelot population has decreased drastically over the years.

part of one of only two documented ocelot breeding grounds in the country. The other is at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, about 25 miles to the south.

"I hope that 50 years from now ... those little cats will have a place that is theirs," Yturria said Monday at the ranch. "The worst destructive element this Earth has is man."

Ocelots are about twice the size of a house cat and also are found in Central and South America. The conservancy says on its Web site that it is the rarest cat in America, having been hunted down for its distinctive yellow and black spotted fur. Loss of habitat and collisions with automobiles also have been blamed for the declining population.

A male ocelot, and two or three females traveling with it, ideally

would have about 1,200 acres of habitat, said Sonia Najera, the conservancy's south Texas program manager. But the existing habitat is at capacity, she said.

Much of south Texas has been cleared for farming and ranching over the years. Now some landowners have started dotting their pastures with large wind turbines, but the Yturria land covered by the easement will be preserved in perpetuity.

"I want to be sure when I'm gone my heirs won't consider things like that (wind turbines)," Yturria said, as he bounced across the land in his truck pointing out deer, wild turkeys and exotic species like the nilgai, a horse-sized antelope from India. "It's all about leaving this like it is."

The new easement encompasses sandy hills with live oak and ephemeral wetlands as

well as the thorny scrub for ocelots.

The Nature Conservancy hopes other landowners will consider similar arrangements. Yturria says he sold the easement at a bargain price and will claim the difference between the selling price and the appraised value as a charitable donation. Neither the conservancy nor Yturria would disclose the costs.

Conservationists hope to preserve a corridor connecting the San Francisco Ranch and the other breeding ground at Laguna Atascosa so the two groups of cats can interact and avoid inbreeding.

Study of ocelot DNA in the two locations has found no evidence of interaction, Najera said.

Last winter, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service documented 11 ocelots on the ranch's existing conservation easements.

Most of the easement's cost was paid with a grant from the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, a federal source. Additional money came from the Robert J. Kleberg Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation and the El Paso Corporation.

Fish and Wildlife will manage the land in partnership with the conservancy.

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Hilbert William Treharn, 77, died Monday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Alfredo Paredes Jr., 46, died Monday. Vigil services will be at 7:00 P.M. Friday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Mass will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church with burial at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD
By Eddy Pitchford

Dear Santa,
I am impressed by your desire to make people happy. You have a giving spirit that encourages people all over the world. You set quite an example of hard work, organization and delegation. You have high moral standards that distinguish between naughty and nice. You are to be commented for your annual night of giving but please remember: *Your good works are not good enough. You still need the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ.*
Santa, please understand that God is the ultimate giver and loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die for you. Because Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9), I urge you to call upon the name of Jesus through baptism in order to wash away your sins. (Acts 22:16)

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Winter meetings yield multitude of free agent activity

NEW YORK (AP) — The 43 free agents who have signed, with name, position, former club if different, and contract. The contract information was obtained by The Associated Press from player and management sources. For players with minor league contracts, letter agreements for major league contracts are in parentheses:

AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE (1) — Signed Mike Gonzalez, lhp, Atlanta, to a \$12 million, two-year contract.
BOSTON (3) — Signed Marco Scutaro, ss, Toronto, to a \$12.5 million, two-year contract; signed Mike Cameron, of, Milwaukee, to a \$15.5 million, two-year contract; signed John Lackey, rhp, Los Angeles Angels, to an \$82.5 million, five-year contract.
CHICAGO (3) —

Signed Omar Vizquel, ss, Texas, to a \$1,375,000, one-year contract; signed Andruw Jones, of, Texas, to a \$500,000, one-year contract; signed J.J. Putz, rhp, New York Mets, to a \$3 million, one-year contract.

DETROIT (1) — Re-signed Adam Everett, ss, to a \$1.55 million, one-year contract.

KANSAS CITY (1) — Signed Jason Kendall, c, Milwaukee, to a \$6 million, two-year contract.

LOS ANGELES (1) — Signed Hideki Matsui, of, N.Y. Yankees, to a \$6 million, one-year contract.

MINNESOTA (1) — Announced Carl Pavano, rhp, accepted salary arbitration. Decision pending.

NEW YORK (1) — Re-signed Andy Pettitte, lhp, to an \$11.75 million, one-year contract.

SEATTLE (1) —



AP PHOTO

Seattle signed Chone Figgins to a 4-year deal.

Signed Chone Figgins, 3b, Los Angeles Angels, to a \$36 million, four-year contract.

TAMPA BAY (1) — Signed Rafael Soriano, rhp, to a \$7.25 million, one-year contract after acquiring him from Atlanta.

TEXAS (2) — Signed Rich Harden, rhp, Chicago Cubs, to a \$7.25 million, one-year contract; signed Darren Oliver, lhp, Los Angeles Angels, to a \$3.5 million, one-year contract.

TORONTO (2) — Re-signed John McDonald, ss, to a \$3 million, two-year contract; signed Alex Gonzalez, ss, Boston, to a \$2.75 million, one-year contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
ATLANTA (1) — Signed Billy Wagner, lhp, Boston, to a \$7 million, one-year contract.

CHICAGO (1) — Re-signed John Grabow, lhp, to a \$7.5 million, two-year contract.

COLORADO (1) — Announced Rafael Betancourt, rhp, accepted salary arbitration.

HOUSTON (3) — Signed Pedro Feliz, 3b, Houston, to a \$4.5 million, one-year contract; signed Brandon Lyon, rhp, Detroit, to a \$15 million, three-year contract; re-signed Jason Michaels, of, to an \$800,000, one-year contract.

LOS ANGELES (2) — Re-signed Doug

Mientkiewicz, 1b, to a minor league contract; signed Jamey Carroll, 2b, Cleveland, to a \$3.85 million, two-year contract.

MILWAUKEE (5) — Signed Gregg Zaun, c, Tampa Bay, to a \$2.15 million, one-year contract; signed Randy Wolf, lhp, Los Angeles Dodgers, to a \$29.75 million, three-year contract; re-signed Craig Counsell, inf, to a \$2.1 million, one-year contract; signed LaTroy Hawkins, rhp, Houston, to a \$7.5 million, two-year contract; re-signed Claudio Vargas, rhp, to a \$900,000, one-year contract.

NEW YORK (3) — Re-signed Alex Cora, ss, to a \$2 million, one-year contract; signed Henry Blanco, c, San Diego, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; re-signed Elmer Dessens, rhp, to a minor league contract (\$700,000).

PHILADELPHIA (4) — Signed Brian Schneider, c, N.Y. Mets, to a \$2.75 million, two-year contract; signed Juan Castro, ss, Los Angeles Dodgers, to a \$750,000, one-year contract; signed Placido Polanco, inf, Detroit, to an \$18 million, three-year contract; signed Ross Gload, 1b-of, Florida, to a \$2.6 million, two-year contract.

PITTSBURGH (1) — Signed Bobby Crosby, inf, Oakland, to a \$1 million, one-year contract.

ST. LOUIS (2) — Re-signed Jason LaRue, c, to a \$950,000, one-year contract; signed Brad Penny, rhp, San Francisco, to a \$7.5 million, one-year contract.

WASHINGTON (2) — Signed Ivan Rodriguez, c, Texas, to a \$6 million, two-year contract; signed Jason Marquis, rhp, Colorado, to a \$15 million, two-year contract.

FIGHT

Continued from 1B

make a proposal to host the bout.

But Mayweather's promoter, Richard Schaefer, said all other issues have been agreed upon.

"The good news is we have agreed on all the other points," Schaefer said. "Depending on what Manny Pacquiao decides to do we either have a fight or we don't have a fight."

Schaefer said he is still hopeful of the fight happening, based on the fact Pacquiao himself has not publicly said he would not accept blood testing.

"I am still hopeful because I really believe this decision didn't come from Manny Pacquiao, it came from somebody else," Schaefer said. "It's up to Manny Pacquiao to prove me right or wrong."

Pacquiao has never failed a post-fight urine test in Nevada, including his last fight when he stopped Miguel Cotto. Mayweather also has passed urine tests in the state after his fights.

Fighters, though, are not routinely tested before bouts for performance-enhancing drugs, and there are no blood tests done for those drugs.

Mayweather's father,

Floyd Sr., said after the Cotto fight that he suspected Pacquiao was using performance-enhancing drugs to move up and win titles in so many weight classes. Ellerbe did not make that claim, but said that for a fight of such magnitude fans deserve to be confident neither fighter is cheating.

"If it's good enough for LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Michael Phelps and Lance Armstrong why isn't it good enough for Manny Pacquiao?" Ellerbe asked. "The fans and sports deserve a level playing field."

Travis Tygart, executive director of the USADA, said he had talked to representa-

tives of both fighters about providing testing. Tygart said he welcomed the request as he would for any sport that does not have stringent Olympic-type testing.

"I think every sport that wants to have clean athletes it's a sign of a step forward to have out of competition testing," Tygart said. "It's an essential thing to do if you want to protect the integrity of the sport. Clean athletes want a level playing field."

Tygart noted Olympic athletes are tested often and without notice. He said less than a teaspoon of blood is removed out of an average of 380 teaspoons in the normal human

and that it regenerates within an hour of being withdrawn.

Blood tests, he said, can find things urine tests can't, like the use of human growth hormone, synthetic hemoglobin or blood transfusions, all of which "certainly would aid in an endurance-type event."

couldn't imagine why Pacquiao wouldn't agree, especially considering both fighters would likely make more than \$25 million for the bout.

"Only Manny Pacquiao can answer that question," Ellerbe said. "The ball is in his court."

A&M

Continued from 1B

Leading scorer and fellow senior Donald Sloan, a childhood friend of Roland's from Dallas, cried as he buried his head in his jersey and was helped to the bench.

Four University of

Washington doctors and trainers rushed to Roland, who remained on his back, arms over his eyes.

After about 10 minutes, he was removed on the stretcher wearing an air cast and loaded into an ambulance that took him across town to Harborview Medical Center. Roland, who scored a career-

high 21 points earlier this season at Southern Methodist, was alert inside the ambulance. He was holding his head up as an IV was started in his arm and the ambulance drove away from the back of the arena.

Barry Davis, the Aggies' director of student and athlete development, was at Roland's

side inside the ambulance. Davis was talking on his cell phone as medical personnel treated Roland inside the ambulance.

Some Aggies were still crying after the game.

"We said a prayer as a team," Spinelli said. "Lots of guys were in tears. They're in tough shape right now."

USC

Continued from 1B

out McKnight, the Eagles are practicing this week assuming McKnight will be on the field Saturday night.

"I'd like to play against him," linebacker Mike McLaughlin said. "He's a heck of a running back, one of the best in the country. Unfortunately he's in a tough situation right now. As far as we're concerned, we're game planning like he's playing in the game. If we didn't that would be foolish. He can win a football game for them."

We have to prepare for him."

USC is also without three other key players, who were declared academically ineligible on Monday. Tight end Anthony McCoy and tackle Tyron Smith, both starters, and defensive end Averell Spicer,

a key reserve, will not play against Boston College.

The Trojans (8-4) are coming off their worst season since 2001. USC won seven consecutive Pac-10 championships and played in seven consecutive BCS games before this season.

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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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Managing Editor

OUR VIEW

Yes, Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Is there a Santa Claus?" is the question Virginia, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Phillip F. O'Hanlon, put to the editor of the (New York) Sun in September 1897. Her letter was received by Edward P. Mitchell, who turned it over to his associate, Francis Pharcelius Church, to answer.

With some reluctance Mr. Church undertook the assignment. The product of his fine nature, mellow wisdom and sound craftsmanship was the editorial article "Is there a Santa Claus?" — the most famous editorial article that has ever been written. It first appeared in the New York Sun in 1897 and has since been produced in every conceivable form, in every corner of the globe.

The publication of Virginia's question and Francis Pharcelius Church's response is an annual tradition at the Herald. We hope you enjoy it.

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

*"Dear Editor:
I am 8 years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Clause.
Papa says 'If you see it in the Sun it's so.'
Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon,
115 West 95th Street"*

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you every see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what make the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

With You, Lord, we have a sense of fairness.
Amen

We need a robust estate tax

The federal estate tax is our country's most progressive levy and our only tax on wealth. And it's paid by less than 1 percent of the population — all of whom are multi-millionaires. Right now, Congress is deciding just how strong the tax should be.

In early December, the House of Representatives voted to make the 2009 estate tax law permanent with a \$7 million exemption for married couples (\$3.5 million for individuals) and a 45 percent rate on amounts above the exemption.

For most of the past decade, the House voted to repeal the estate tax.

So, it's worth a smile and a nod to see that the House finally recognizes the need for an estate tax.

The not-so-good-news is that continuing 2009 law would increase the federal deficit by \$234 billion over 10 years — that's quite the generous tax giveaway to the massively wealthy.

But don't we have more pressing needs for that revenue? How about healthcare, clean energy, education, infrastructure, jobs and deficit-reduction?

The estate tax's fate now rests with the Senate.

Senators have to act before year-end, or the estate tax will vanish altogether in 2010, then return at higher levels in 2011. And, in that potential "gimme" year of 2010, multimillion-dollar estates would be subject to capital gains taxes that they

wouldn't otherwise owe.

This legislative oddball is the result of an organized campaign by some of the wealthiest heirs of multimillion-dollar fortunes.

A few super-wealthy families, who control giant corporations like Mars Candy, Gallo Wines and Wal-Mart, fund this anti-estate tax campaign. Their lobbyists teamed up with President George W. Bush to push for the nonsensical law that created the current situation.

Those well-connected opponents are still calling for repeal or reduction of the tax, rallying under the banner of farmers and small business owners.

The fact is that few people, including farmers and small business owners, pay the estate tax. Fewer than 1 in 100 estates will ever owe it.

The Congressional Budget Office has found that very few farmers and small business owners leave behind multimillion-dollar estates.

Nonetheless, past repeal efforts have resulted in five cuts to the estate tax since 2001.

Farmers are tired of being abused as "poster children" for the super-wealthy. In fact, many small business owners and farmers, including the National Farmers Union, actively support the estate tax.

They know a robust estate tax will fund vital public services that rebuild the middle class and create more broadly shared prosperity, providing them with a key component of their businesses: customers.

The Senate is running out of time to have a full debate this year. Some in the Senate want to further reduce the estate tax.

But cutting the estate tax again would give a huge tax break to

the very same corporate executives and Wall Street speculators, who wrecked the economy and then paid themselves multimillion dollar bonuses after taxpayers bailed them out.

Instead of rushing into changes they might later regret, the smart thing would be for the Senate to pass a one-year extension of 2009 law before the end of this year.

Then Congress will have time for a more meaningful debate next year.

In 2011, the exemption on the estate tax will be \$2 million per married couple and the rate will be 55 percent on amounts over the exemption.

With more time, Congress will be able to figure out how to reach a middle ground between the 2009 and 2011 estate tax laws.

The estate tax was established in 1916 as a response to the vast fortunes of railroading robber barons in the 19th century. It has helped to prevent the concentration of wealth that weakens democracy and the establishment of a permanent American aristocracy.

There's a reason many wealthy people, like Warren Buffett and Bill Gates, Sr., support the estate tax: It's because they realize there can be no private wealth without public resources.

Congress needs to do right by hard-working, middle-class Americans and establish a strong estate tax starting in 2010.

Lee Farris is the estate tax policy coordinator for United for a Fair Economy, a national non-profit organization supporting a movement for fair and progressive taxation at the state and federal levels as a means to reduce economic inequality.



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Surge: We've seen this before

It wasn't a bad speech, as far as going-to-war speeches go. It was no "day that will live in infamy" (and I hope you didn't forget Pearl Harbor Day again this year). But it wasn't based on an outright lie like George W. Bush's Iraq speech.

It was instead what we've come to think of as "Obamaspeak" — measured, rational and balanced. It sought to find a middle way between those who would have us commit to an all-out, no-limit war and those who would have us just pick up and leave, without leaving a forwarding address.

He gave the hawks their "surge," but he mitigated it by promising to send only 30,000 troops rather than the 40,000 his generals asked for.

Then he mitigated that some more by saying that they'd only be there for 18 months, at which point we'd begin withdrawal.

But he sweetened that for the other side by beginning the surge earlier than had been envisioned.

And for Mission Impossible fans, he OK'd a plan to give more money to the CIA to increase air-strikes, send more spies to Pakistan, and generally do more of what the CIA does.

The Republican obstructionists — oops! I repeat myself, sorry — the Republicans in Congress didn't much like the plan. (And

if you've been paying attention you'll know that the Republicans don't like anything the president proposes, fails to propose, says or does. They don't even like his dog.)

They were fine with the more troops part (although they would have like to have gotten the whole 40,000) but they couldn't stand the 18-month exit strategy.

It proved once again that if Republicans have come to stand for anything in these troubled times, it's endless war.

There's no military sacrifice too great for them, so long as the full burden of that sacrifice falls on others.

John McCain (to whom we shall always be grateful for giving us Sarah Palin) said he feared the Taliban would simply hide in caves for 18 months until we went away, then come out and take over the country again. The proper exit strategy, he said, is "success."

And you wonder why he wasn't elected president. Such a subtle mind.

The more liberal members of Congress, Democrats all, hated the speech as well. They want out.

The speech didn't fill me with peacenik rage, but I did have the disheartening sense that I'd seen this movie before.

A president comes solemnly before the American people to announce an escalation in a war he hadn't asked for.

Victory remained the responsibility of the people who lived there — he said "We don't intend to do Asian boys' fighting for them" — but it was crucial that

they succeed. Our very freedom depended on it.

Our fear back then wasn't of terrorist camps but dominoes.

If we lost in one place we'd lose in the next, and then the next, until the bad guys ruled the world.

Never mind that our allies on the ground were corrupt and lacked the support of the people. Never mind that the troops we were supposed to be supporting were incompetent and unwilling to fight. Never mind that the airstrikes we were so proud of created more enemies than they killed.

We were the United States of America, and no two-bit Third World country was going to thumb its nose at us. What would the neighbors think?

President Obama took great pains to point out that Afghanistan isn't Vietnam and that conflating them is "a false reading of history."

Perhaps, but the similarities are compelling. And if Afghanistan isn't Vietnam, neither is it Iraq, where the "surge" strategy seemed to work to our advantage.

To me, the best part of the Obama plan is the 18-month sell-by strategy. We tell our Afghan allies, "You've got a year-and-a-half to get your act together, fellas. After that, it's sayonara."

Not the greatest military strategy I've ever heard of, but there are no good strategies in this miserable war.

Minuteman Media columnist Donald Kaul lives in Ann Arbor, Mich.

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Applications are required and available at the District's office, 400 E. 24TH Street, Big Spring, Texas 79720, by calling (432) 267-6341 or crmwd.org.

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Legals

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Sealed proposals addressed to Mr. John Grant, General Manager of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, will be received at the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, P.O. Box 869, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79721, until 3:00 PM, Thursday, January 7th, 2010, for the purchase of **Employee Uniform Rental Service.** At this time and place the proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. Any bid received after closing time will be returned unopened. Specifications are available and may be examined without charge in the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79720 during normal business hours. Inquiries regarding equipment specifications are to be directed to **Cole Walker, P.E., Operations Manager,** telephone (432)267-6341, email: cwalker@crmwd.org. #6363 December 17, 24, and 31, 2009

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Howard County Auditor will accept sealed bids until 10:00 A.M. on January 8, 2010 for the following:
The purchase on one (1) Used Diesel Powered Tandem Drive Motor-grader to be used for maintenance of County Roads. Specifications may be obtained in the Auditor's Office, 300 S. Main, Room 203, Big Spring, TX or by calling (432)264-2210. Bids will be presented to the Commissioners' Court at 10:00 A.M. on January 11, 2010 for their consideration. The Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids. #6368 December 24 & 31, 2009

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Howard County Auditor will accept Food Service Proposals for the Howard County Jail until 10:00 A.M. on January 8, 2010. For information contact Mike Dawson at the County Jail at (432)264-2244. Submit proposals to the Auditors Office at 300 S. Main St., Room 203 or P.O. Box 1949, Big Spring, TX 79721. Bids will be presented to the Commissioners' Court at 10:00 A.M. on January 11, 2010 for their consideration. The Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids. #6369 December 24 & 31, 2009

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Merry, Merry Christmas

It is the most celebrated holiday of the year; the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Amidst all the presents, holiday lights, tasty meals, family and friends, let us not forget the true meaning of Christmas. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulders.



JERRIE STOCKS

And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

This verse contains a reference to one of the great, incomprehensible truths in the Bible; the incarnation — "a Child is born, a Son is given" — God becoming human. The newborn baby was called "Mighty God, and His purpose was to change the world. Thirty-three years later, He would die on an old rugged cross for the sins of mankind.

What an assignment He was given, but He never once complained. Today He sits at the right hand of God. He is fully Son, fully Holy Spirit, and fully God, all three in one. He is in total control and He is just waiting for the Father to tell Him when to come and gather His family home. What an awesome event that will be!

It is amazing how quickly our lives can change from the excitement of Christmas to the mundane routine of every day living. As 2009 comes to an end, most of us will look back and remember many things that have happened since the year began. Situations and circumstances that concerned us last January may be a distant memory today, while blessings, challenges and opportunities that we didn't think possible a few months ago have suddenly appeared to motivate us.

Life is full of change, but we are not to focus on the changes that causes us to feel insecure or discouraged about the future. As we think about the events of this past year, we should be encouraged, as most often it is the ups and downs, the valleys and mountains that God uses to mature us, and He remains absolutely faithful through it all.

God is our stability and security. He promised to never leave us alone to face life with all its problems. He is our unchanging Lord, and will always be there

for us. We should base our confidence fully on Him because He never fails to accomplish His purpose, Joshua 21:45-23:14.

Our God remains consistent and steadfast regardless of how uncertain our lives may appear. Time has no effect on Him, and our circumstances never confuse Him or take Him by surprise. He has always been in control and remains in control of everything that takes place on planet Earth. That knowledge alone should give us an assurance that all is well, as long as we keep Him as our focus.

If you are facing challenging situations and wonder how you will get through them, remember that God is on your side. Put your trust completely in Him and experience His unshakable peace. Be assured that God hears your prayers and He will guide you if you listen for His directions. God knows how to lead you in ways that are absolutely perfect for your situation. When your eyes are on Him and you are walking in the center of His will, you will not be distracted by anything that could get you off track. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."

Once you set your faith to believe God, you must take one step of faith after another until your destiny is reached. We are ordinary people called to affect the world in extraordinary ways. As you recall the events of 2009, consider how faithful your heavenly Father has been. He undoubtedly brought you through many difficult situations and He will walk you through many more. He is not about to leave you now; that is not the heart of God. Remember, He will always be there to lift you up and encourage you because He knows your best days with Him are just ahead. Have a Merry, Merry Christmas. God Bless.

Church News

Chapel of Faith

You are invited to attend Chapel of Faith church, located at the corner of E. 14th Street and Goliad, as we learn more about God's word and His love for each of us.

There will be a Christmas Eve candlelight service with holy communion at 6:30 p.m. The service will include special music and a devotional service. Everyone is invited.

Sunday services are at 10:30 a.m. each week. Pastor Scott Willis' message this Sunday will be "New Life in Christ," based on scripture from Colossians 3:12-17. Pastor Joel Miller will be preaching Jan. 3.

As we celebrate this Christmas season, remember God loves each of us with a love so great He sent His son to die for our sins, that we might live for Him now and with Him eternally. We encourage you to attend the church of your choice. However, if you are looking for a church home, we invite you to visit the Chapel of Faith. You will be warmly welcomed.

First United Methodist

It's Christmas Eve and this evening, beginning at 6, down at First Methodist Church there will be a spirit-filled service. So before you open the gifts or fill the stockings, come to Fourth and Scurry.

It's a family tradition that as families gather from near and far they gather to praise God for the gift of His Son. There will be beautiful, familiar Christmas music, lighting of that special candle in the center of the Advent wreath and Pastor Sharon Wiese will bring the sermon entitled "The Gift of Jesus."

We will observe open communion during this special time and at the close of the service as lights dim and our own candles are lit, we go out into the crisp evening singing "Silent Night." It's the perfect beginning for such a Holy Day. You are invited to the celebration.

On Sunday, at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. services of worship, Pastor Wiese will bring a message entitled "A Gift Worth Receiving," based on scripture readings from Samuel, Psalms and Luke. There

will be no Sunday evening activities for the remainder of the holidays.

As the year comes to an end, we begin the plans for a new and promising 2010. Print-outs which include committees, committee assignments and lay leadership designations can be found on a table in the sanctuary foyer.

Financial books and reports will close Dec. 31. We ask that you go prayerfully into the New Year and count the many blessings that are yours each day in this wonderful country.

During this Holy Season the folks at First Methodist send Merry Christmas greetings as well as special love and good wishes for the coming year to each of you. If you are searching for a church home come give us a try at our last service of the year or our first or anytime in between.

We are First Methodist, located in the heart of downtown Big Spring, where families grow in Christ.

Baptist Temple

We are in holiday mode this weekend in order to allow our people to spend time with family and friends. This Sunday we will have only Sunday school at 9:45 a.m. and morning service at 11 a.m. Cal Westerhof, director of the Hospitality House in Big Spring, will be our guest speaker. We will not have evening service on that day. We will have Wednesday evening activities Dec. 30.

Our weight-loss support group SPEED (Shedding Pounds Eagerly Every Day) is taking a Christmas break and will resume meeting on Tuesdays beginning Jan. 5.

We are temporarily postponing our 12-Step Recovery group that meets on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. due to Dean Thomas's (director of the group) surgery, but will start this group again after the New Year.

For more information, call 267-8287 or check us out on the Web at btcbig-spring.org.

First Presbyterian, Coahoma

The friendly folks at First Presbyterian Church, Coahoma invite anyone to come and worship with us. We meet at 11 a.m. Sunday to share the scriptures, sing, pray and worship, led by Commissioned Lay Pastor Tom Koger.

Tom continues to lead a Bible study, along with Big Spring's new pastor, Craig Holstedt, on the week's lectionary in

the library of First Presbyterian, Big Spring, on Wednesday at 5:17 p.m.

Last Sunday following worship, we elected Helen Shive and Bob Hicks as elders for the Class of 2012.

The next Frolic will be Saturday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m.

We will have a Christmas Eve worship service at 11 p.m. to welcome Christmas Day. Please come and bring your family and friends. The lectionary for Christmas Eve is Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; and Luke 2:1-20.

See **CHURCH**, Page 7A

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You can't fill that empty space with fruitcake.

The Rev. Barbara Kirk-Norris, Rector, and the congregation of St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church invite you to spend Christmas with us.

Christmas Eve worship at 10:30 p.m. and Christmas Day at 10:30 a.m. Sunday Services are at 10:30 a.m.

1001 S. Goliad, P.O. Box 2949, Big Spring, TX

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5 p.m.*

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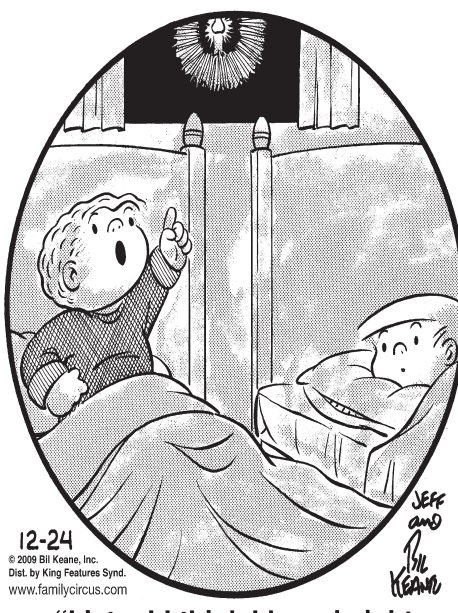
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5:PM:30	News ABC	News ABC	Locura Noticiero	Lopez Lopez	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News NBC	Seinfeld Office	Granger Brad	BBC Business	Deadliest Catch	Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Movie: Star Wars IV: A New Hope, Carrie Fisher	(4:47) Movie: Runaway Bride	Game The Santa Clause 2	(4:50) The Santa Clause 2	est Game	SportsCenter
6:PM:30	News Ent. Ton.	Jeopardy! Wheel	Pelicula: Jesus, el Niño Dios, Luis Alarcón	Two Men Bones	News CBS: NY	Pelicula: El Señor Doctor, Prudencia	News Millionaire	Name Name	Sanchez Dr.	PBS News-Hour	Deadliest Catch		Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Raising the Bar	Game The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause	NFL's Greatest Game	Football College Football: Sheraton Hawaii Bowl -- Nevada Methodist.	
7:PM:30	Middle	Middle					Movie: It's a Wonderful Life, Lionel Barrymore (DVS)	Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	Upd Sprna	Faith Hill, Joy	Deadliest Catch		Movie: Star Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back, Carrie Fisher	Raising the Bar	Game Phineas and Ferb	Super Bowl NBA Spe	Football: Sheraton Hawaii Bowl -- Nevada Methodist.	
8:PM:30	Cheer, C'mas	Family Cougar		Fringe	CSI: Crime Scn	Pelicula: Su Excelencia, Victor Alcocer		Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	Light of the Southwest	Christmas-Mor	Deadliest Catch		Movie: Star Wars VI: Return of the Jedi, Carrie Fisher	Raising the Bar	Game Phineas and Ferb	SportsCenter Special	vs. Southern Methodist.	
9:PM:30	Grey's Anatomy	Grey's Anatomy	Fosa de Guadalupe	Simpsons Friends	The Mentalist			Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	Upd Van Impe	Christmas at St. Olaf	Deadliest Catch	(-45)	Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Raising the Bar	Game Phineas and Ferb	SportsCtr.	NFL Live SportsCenter	
10:PM:30	News Nightline	First Baptist	Impacto	Raymond	News Noticias		News	Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	Bill Cloud	Charlie Rose	Deadliest Catch		Movie: Star Wars VI: Return of the Jedi, Carrie Fisher	The Mo'Nique	Wizards of Waverly Place	NFL Live	SportsNation	SportsCenter
11:PM:30	Christmas	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Misa de Gallo	Law & Order: SVU	Spirit of Xmas		To Be Announced	Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	Upd Swallow	T. Smiley	Deadliest Catch		Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Game Replace	World Series	SportsCenter		
12:AM:30	Prestonwood	Christmas Eve		King-Hill	Insider	Pagado		Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon	World Light of the Southwest	(Off Air)	Deadliest Catch		Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Game Emperor	2009 World Series of Poker	SportsCenter		
1:AM:30	Lights Fest	Paid	Navidad en Viena	RENO 911	Paid	Pagado		Movie: A Christmas Story, Melinda Dillon			Deadliest Catch			Game Dragon		SportsCenter		

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"YOU CAN GO AHEAD AN' BRING ME SOME CLOTHES. THAT ALWAYS MAKES MY MOM HAPPY."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

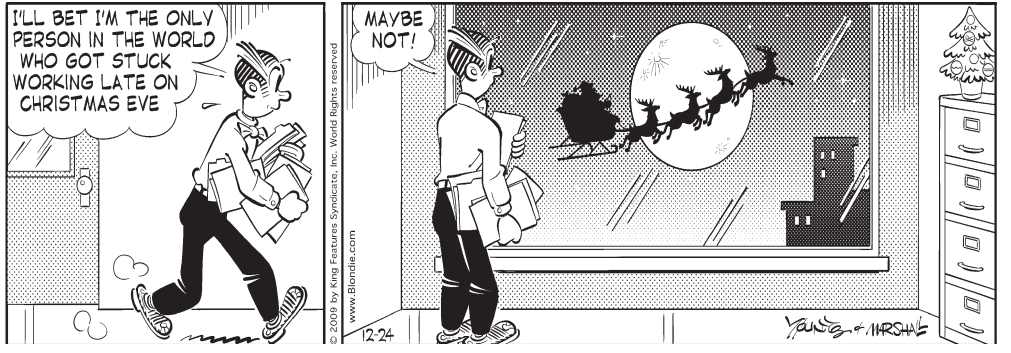


"Listen! I think I heard eight tiny reindeer!"

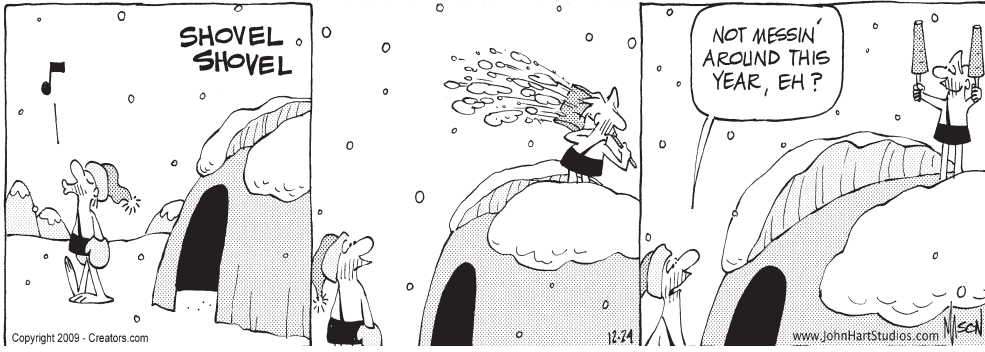
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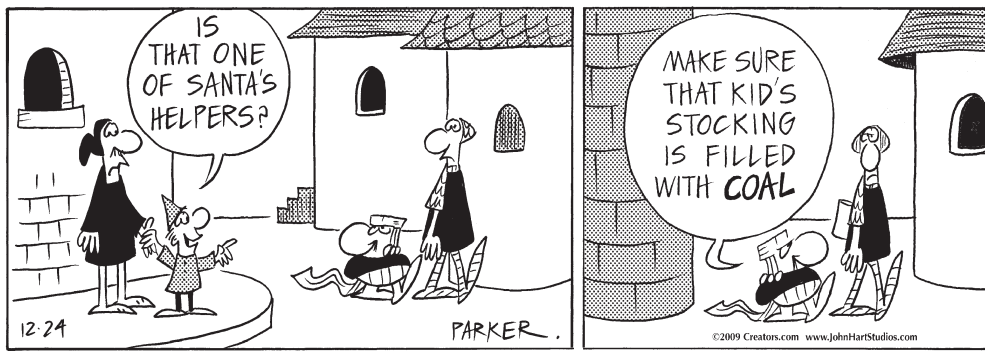
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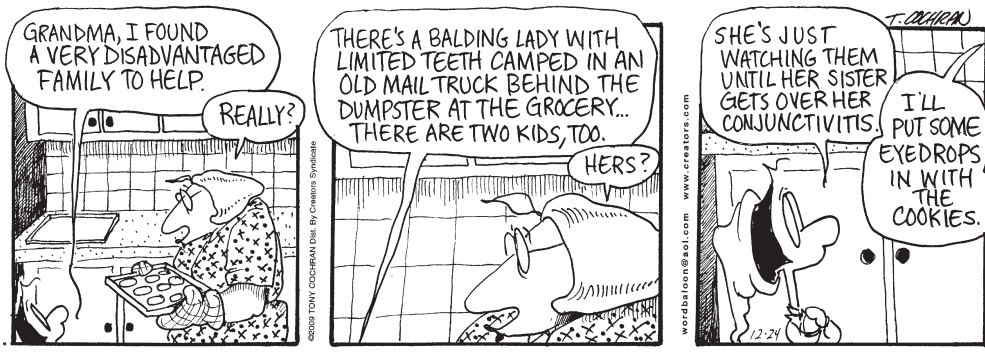
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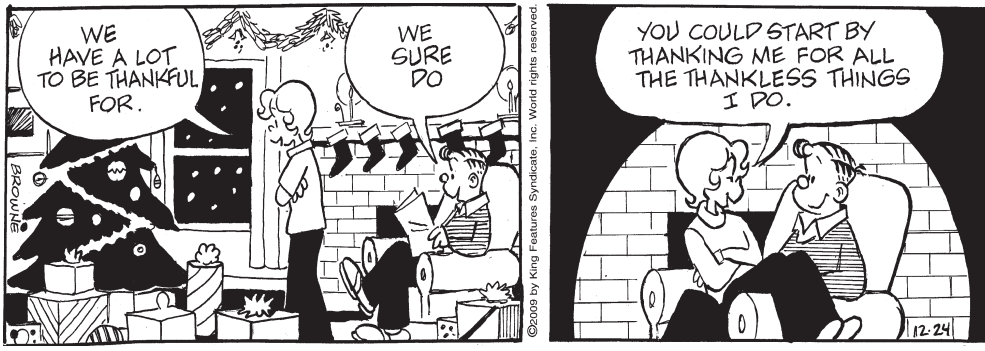
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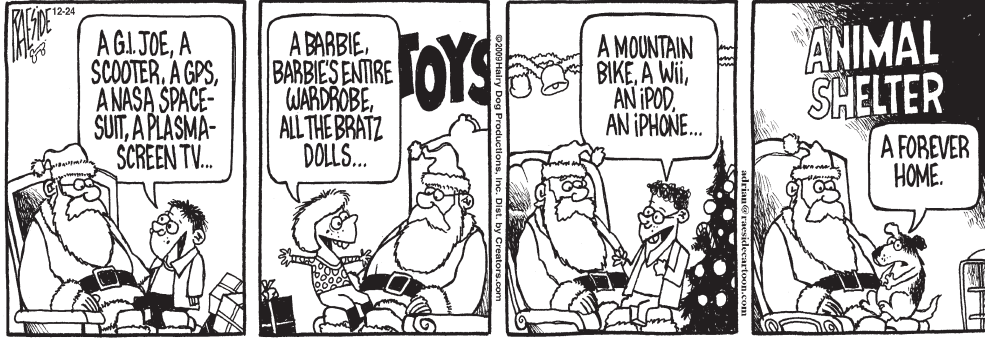
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HI AND LOIS



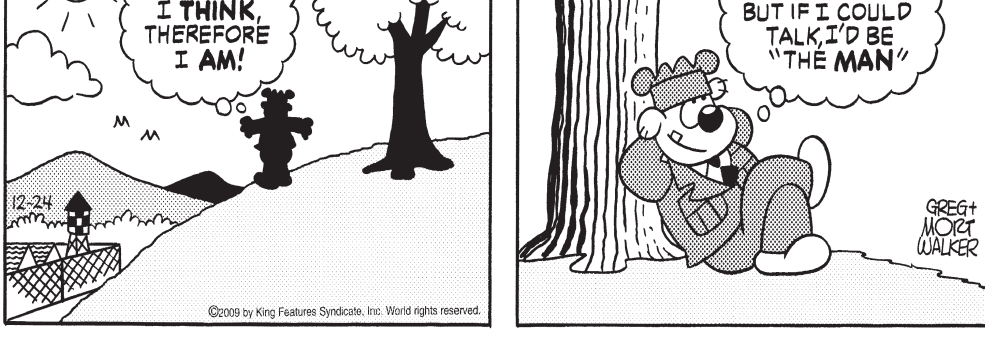
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 24, the 358th day of 2009. There are 7 days left in the year. This is Christmas Eve.

Today's Highlight in History:

- On Dec. 24, 1809, legendary American frontiersman Christopher "Kit" Carson was born in Madison County, Ky.
- On this date: In 1524, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama — who had discovered a sea route around Africa to India — died in Cochin, India.
- In 1814, the War of 1812 officially ended as the United States and Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium.
- In 1851, fire devastated the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., destroying about 35,000 volumes.
- In 1865, several veterans of the Confederate Army formed a private social club in Pulaski, Tenn., called the Ku Klux Klan.
- In 1871, Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Aida" had its world premiere in Cairo, Egypt.

Recording company executive Mike Curb is 65. Rock singer-musician Lemmy (Motorhead) is 64. Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., is 63. Actor Grand L. Bush is 54. Actor Clarence Gilyard is 54. Actress Stephanie Hodge is 53. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai is 52. Rock musician Ian Burden (The Human League) is 52. Actor Anil Kapoor is 50. Actor Wade Williams is 48. Designer Kate Spade is 47. Rock singer Mary Ramsey (10,000 Maniacs) is 46. Actor Mark Valley is 45. Actor Diedrich Bader is 43. Actor Amaury Nolasco is 39. Singer Ricky Martin is 38. Author Stephenie Meyer ("Twilight") is 36. "American Idol" host Ryan Seacrest is 35.

Answer to previous puzzle

FARE	ISNT	STARE
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VOGUE	WORD	AMINO
ORE	NEO	DELETES
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ERR	PET	NAMES
BADLY	RIDE	COLE
ASIF	GOTIN	HOSE
LEER	RIOT	SIREN
DATE	PALM	TAN
SAT	EBENEZER	
SAMPRAS	ACT	EVA
ARIEL	OMD	HATTER
WINE	EL	CANE
NATTY	GYRO	USSR

Newsday Crossword MAKING THE GRADE by David W. Cromer Edited by Stanley Newman

www.stanxwords.com

67 Golf-scorecard standards

68 Bare minimum

69 Sans tread

70 From that time

71 Villainous look

21 Small amounts

22 Pharmaceutical watchdog org.

25 High-calorie

26 She: Fr.

27 Insult, informally

29 Of a sense

30 Floral ring

31 Myanmar neighbor

33 Jabbers

35 Restore to health

36 Diner desserts

37 Former Fords

39 So-so mark

40 Blueblood

41 Permanent or frosting

45 Pops

46 Est.-tax recipient

47 Postgraduate work

49 Ne'er-do-well

50 Jazz pianist Chick

51 Exterior

53 Turn away from

55 Title for a 40 Down

56 What an orchestra tunes to

57 Broad bean

58 Forum garb

59 Plant place, perhaps

63 Marge and Homer's neighbor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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67					68						69		

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'Twas the night before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas more than two thousand years ago. Santa had not made his debut. No one knew that reindeer could fly, and Clement C. Moore was not around to create visions of dancing sugarplums in children's heads. Yet, 'twas the night before Christmas.

In the usually quiet little town of Bethlehem, havoc reigned in the streets. Angry men shouted at each other, and exhausted women, hanging onto crying children, pushed their way through the crowds. The harried

inn keeper stood at his door. "There is just no more room," he asserted, "not even room to sleep on the floor."

As the disgruntled mob grew, tempers flared, donkey's brayed, and camels spat on anyone who came too close. Some cursed the emperor Caesar Augustus for demanding that a census be taken. Others blamed Cyrenius the

governor of Syria for their plight. "Every man must go to the city of his ancestral origin to be registered," they mocked. "What difference does it make where a baby is born? Can't men be counted where they live?"

Out in the fields, a small group of smelly shepherds watched their sheep that night. Perhaps they huddled together around a camp fire, laughing and telling stories while their sheep slept on the hillside. Suddenly, their conversation was disrupted by the strangest sight. An angel stood right there in their midst, and something they had never seen before, the glory of God, shone all around them.

The frightened shepherds sprang to their feet, shielding their eyes from the light, but the angel of the Lord

said, "Do not be afraid."

Still startled, the shepherds could hardly believe what they were hearing. The angel was telling them about some good news that was for all people, and a baby born in the city of David. This was not just any baby; He was the Savior, Christ the Lord. The angel even gave the shepherds a sign. They would find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Still stunned by the presence of one angel, the dazed shepherds looked around and saw a multitude of heavenly host praising God. They were all saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

As soon as all the angels vanished into heaven, the shepherds made a hasty

trip to Bethlehem to find the baby in the manger. Sue enough, they found Mary and Joseph and the baby just as the angel had said they would.

After telling Mary and Joseph about seeing a multitude of angels, they told them what the angel of the Lord had said about their new baby, Jesus. Praising God all the way home, the shepherds told everyone they met what had happened. But Mary, the new mother, pondered their words in her heart.

Now, 'tis the night before Christmas in your house and mine. How will we celebrate Christmas this year? Will we throw open our shutters tonight in hopes of seeing a jolly old elf, or will we like Mary ponder the birth of the Savior in our hearts?

CHURCH

Continued from Page 5A

We will have our regular Sunday worship Dec. 27. The lectionary for the first Sunday after Christmas is I Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; and Luke 2:41-52.

First Presbyterian, Big Spring

The Lectionary Bible study met Wednesday at 5:17 p.m. The choir did not practice Wednesday and will not meet next week.

Jennifer Patterson will provide refreshments for "Take Ten" Sunday morning. Jamie Walker is liturgist.

We will continue to receive the Christmas Joy Offering, which is used to serve neglected former pastors and their families and Presbyterian racial ethnic schools, including Pan American School in Kingsville.

Our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 7 p.m. in the church sanctuary. The choir will present "Silent Is the Night" by Jay Althouse; "Welcome, Dearest Jesus," a Dutch melody; and "A Christmas Antiphonal" by Hal Hopson during the service.

Friday we celebrate the nativity of Jesus Christ with family and friends and wish for everyone a blessed Christmas Day.

The lectionary for the first Sunday after Christmas is I Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; and Luke 2:41-52. The chancel choir will sing Natalie Sleeth's "Sing Noel" for the anthem. "See Amid the Winter's Snow" by John Goss is the offertory anthem. We will collect our monthly Noisy Offering to help feed those who are hungry.

If you cannot attend worship, listen in on KBST 1490 AM, beginning at 11 a.m. If you wish to have a printed bulletin for Sunday services, call the church office at 263-4211. You may also see what's happening at the church by visiting our Web site: www.fpcbs.org

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East Fourth Street Baptist

The Adult Choir presented its Christmas musical this past Sunday morning. It was enjoyed by all. The choir gathered Sunday evening for a Christmas social following the evening service. Thanks to

Denise Weaver for her leadership.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the White Christmas. We delivered food to five families.

We invite you to the Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. There will also be a New Years Eve service.

Want to remind the youth of East Fourth of the Youth Lock-in at the First Baptist Church on New Year's Eve from 9 p.m. until 6:30 a.m. Cost is \$10 a person for food and a T-shirt.

If you are seeking a church home, visit with us at 401 E. Fourth St. Our Sunday services start with Sunday school at 9:45 a.m.; worship service at 11 a.m. and our evening service at 6 p.m. Our Pastor is Bro Keith Weaver.

Signal Mountain Emmaus Community

Signal Mountain Emmaus Community meets at Spring Creek Fellowship, 501 Birdwell Lane, the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. Babe Chick meeting is at 6:30 p.m.

The next meeting is Jan. 14. Mark your calendar.

At this month's community gathering, we will honor Men's Walk 9, LD Gary Tucker from 1998; the 1999 Walks; Women's Walk 12, LD Kay Simpson, Men's Walk 13, LD Gary Reid, Women's Walk 14, LD Terry Tucker and Men's Walk 15, LD Mike Moates, WW 16 LD Sammie Campbell, 17 LD George Franklin. Plan to attend. Bring a dish and join us at 6 p.m. for a potluck fellowship.

On Feb. 11 will we honor the 2000 Walks; Women's Walk 18 LD Sheree Moates, Men's Walk 19 LD Jim Campbell, Women's Walk 20 LD Lynda Walker, Women's Walk 21 LD Marilyn Clark and Men's Walk 22 LD Steve Herren.

For more information, see our Web site www.signal-emmaus.org

Birdwell Lane Baptist

We are in the community to help you in the spiritual needs that you may have. We would count it a privilege to be acquainted with you, to be able to help you when and where the need should arise. Our pastor, Steve King, is just as close as a telephone; if needed, call 267-7157 or 267-8214.

Sunday worship is at 10:55 a.m. and 5 p.m. Children's church is

during the morning worship for ages 4-12. If you need a ride, call 267-7157 or 264-9924.

We are located at 1512 Birdwell Lane. Mid-week service is at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. We are a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, missionary-minded, Independent Baptist Church for the winning of souls to Christ, to the edifying of the saints, and for the Glory of God — where you are always welcome. Come worship the Lord and hear God's Word with us.

We are in need of an organ player. If you play an organ, give our pastor a call at 267-7157.

May you have a very merry Christmas and a blessed new year. Happy Birthday, Jesus!

For further information, call 267-7157 or 267-8214.

Alive in Christ Lutheran LCMS

Our motto is "Celebrating and sharing God's love and grace in our lives."

We are located at 2805 Lynn St. in the Kentwood Subdivision in Big Spring. Our phone number is (432) 264-7818. Our Web site is www.lutheransonline.com/aliveinchristbstx. We would love to have you join us for church Sundays at 9 a.m. with Sunday school around 10:15.

Pastor Alan Abel will be preaching this Sunday. Angela Newton is our organist. Acolyte will be Mateo Rodriguez. Our elders are Richard von Hassell and Richard Knocke. The liturgy will be read by Dolline Budke. Readings are Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15, Psalms 111, Colossians 3:12-17, and Luke 2:22-40.

Our traditional Christmas Children and Congregational Service, Away In A Manger, held Dec. 20, was a huge success. The solos and beautiful music were indeed a celebration of God's love. The solos sung by Larry Thi-beault, Dana Byrd, and Breanna Conner were so special. Thank you, Alex Byrd

The Christmas Eve candlelight service was so beautiful and the Christmas Day Service was very inspiring; both were both heart warming and touching. Thank you, Pastor Carroll Kohl, for the wonderful sermons.

We pray that your Christmas was a joyful and blessed event for you and your families.

We would like to thank all those who donated

items, time, money, etc to the "Home Town Christmas." Your generosity and Christmas spirit has shown us the true meaning of Christmas giving this season.

Mid Week School is being held Wednesday evenings with a light meal to be served at 5:30 p.m. with both Mid Week School classes and confirmation classes at 6. There will be no Wednesday evening meal until after the Christmas holidays. Meals and Mid Week School will resume Jan. 6.

Learn how to make banners for our church. This opportunity will be offered after the first of the year. Get out your sewing machines and glue guns. More information will be coming.

An 11:30 a.m. Bible study at church during the on Thursdays is being well attended and enjoyed by all participants. See **CHURCH**, Page 8A

Merry Christmas
from the friendly staff at
Best Western Palace Inn & Suites
915 Lamesa Hwy. • 264-1500

Ray E. & Barbara Kennedy
rayk@parksinsurance.com

OFF: (432) 2679-5504
FAX: 267-3618
RES.: 263-4640

Happy Thanksgiving!

**900 MAIN • PO. BOX 230
BIG SPRING, TX 79721**

Howard County Junior College District STATEMENTS OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Exhibit 2
Year Ended August 31, 2009

REVENUES	
Operating revenues	
Tuition and fees (net of discounts of \$2,315,815)	\$3,070,133
Federal grants and contracts	1,754,837
State grants and contracts	923,048
Local grants and contracts	90,862
Nongovernmental grants and contracts	671,588
Sales and services of educational activities	258,524
Auxiliary enterprises	583,029
Other operating revenues	318,078
Total operating revenues	<u>7,670,099</u>
EXPENSES	
Operating expenses	
Instruction	\$10,756,657
Public service	775,073
Academic support	1,519,792
Student services	2,709,142
Institutional support	4,242,445
Operation and maintenance of plant	3,714,197
Scholarships and fellowships	2,300,004
Auxiliary enterprises	1,748,144
Depreciation	938,648
Total operating expenses	<u>28,704,102</u>
Operating loss	(\$21,034,003)
NON-OPERATING REVENUES (EXPENSES)	
State appropriations	13,201,632
Property taxes for operations	3,833,245
Property taxes for debt service	1,860,225
Federal revenue, non operating	3,301,415
Investment income (net of investment expenses)	392,194
Interest on capital related debt	(176,105)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	(11,386)
Other non-operating revenues	338,173
Net non-operating revenues	<u>22,739,393</u>
Income before other revenue	1,705,390
Other revenue	
Capital contributions	<u>130,000</u>
Increase in net assets	1,835,390
Net assets - beginning of year	<u>30,871,167</u>
Net assets - end of year	<u><u>\$32,706,557</u></u>

Tomorrow's Horoscope

It's Christmas Eve under the energetic Aries moon, and little children everywhere will lie awake in their beds tonight. The Capricorn sun reminds us of the importance of tradition. Whether it's a practice you learned long ago or something you dreamt up just yesterday, take part in a kind of ritual to commemorate this time in your life.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It may feel like you're going as fast as you can, but everyone still wants you to go faster. Remind yourself who is in control. Take back the power you relinquished to others. Set your own pace.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're in an amiable mood, and that's why others ask you for favors. You will enjoy helping out for the most part. Watch for, and avoid, those who are likely to take advantage of your nice-



HOLIDAY MATHIS

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You value warm relationships, and so you will continue to work toward earning the trust of others. You will feel honored by the number of people who feel safe enough to open their hearts to you.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Keep track of the thoughts and feelings that pass through your head as you interact with others. Later, it will be interesting to compare your internal dialogue and expectations with the way things actually turned out.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Even though you can't pinpoint the exact reason for your current set of circumstances, you figure you must have done something to create it. Taking responsibility is an essential piece of your success equation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You will be aware of the precarious balance of the ordinary world, and it will inspire you. Be on the lookout for everyday miracles. It won't be hard to find them in your current mindset.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). People will hear what they want to hear. You'll find it interesting how they misunderstand or manipulate your message. You'll learn what they want and what they are willing to trade for it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll do something just for you. This warrants an enthusiastic response, even if it's a private moment. When you give yourself applause, the ovation will resound louder than would a cheering stadium full of fans.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's true that you don't care as much about being liked as you once did, but you will still do all of those nice little things you used to do when you did care. Only now you'll contribute just because it's fun.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your life is yours. It has always been this way. Some days you just need to shake yourself and wake up to the fact that you're in charge. Don't let anyone persuade you to do or believe what feels wrong to you.

AQUARIUS (Jan.

20-Feb. 18). Insightful conversations will put you in an introspective mood. You'll be inspired to reconsider your choices and objectively evaluate many elements of your life, from your personality to your plan.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Team up wherever possible today. For the most part, loved ones have a positive influence on you. Something you wouldn't do alone seems more palatable with a friend, like watching a bad movie or running a mile.

T O D A Y ' S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 24). Your commitment to excellence shows in every aspect of your life. You'll take relationships up a notch by creating bonding events and surprises for your loved ones. March brings an influx of new friends. Work becomes a serious focus in May, and you'll hone your talents. A purchase in August allows you to work faster. Libra and Taurus adore you. Lucky numbers are: 50, 2, 21, 43 and 18.

S A G I T T A R I U S FORE-CAST 2010: You

are comfortable with yourself. You don't need to be the center of attention, and this secures your position in your group as a person of class and style. You'll find many occasions to sit back and observe. Because you are becoming increasingly in tune with your surroundings, you'll develop healing abilities and apply them to creating physical and emotional health for you and yours.

Money and Career: You'll strike just the right tone with your peers. You will exert your influence without being pushy, express a variety of ideas without seeming unfocused and come across as confident without intimidating those around you. Making money is often hard work, but the windfall in July and October will come easily.

Love: Your emotions run deep, but you know better than to act impulsively, speak your mind prematurely or divulge your heart before you're sure. Your maturity will attract steadfast and abiding affection. Your relationships will be peaceful and dignified.

Personal Development: Your point of view is valued, and many will ask for your advice and opinions. Your generosity will allow you to share even more. **CELEBRITY PROFILES:** "Twilight" series author Stephenie Meyer was born close to the new moon herself, as her sun and moon are both in the ambitious and goal-oriented sign of Capricorn. Her natal Mercury in Sagittarius professes a fascination with other cultures and worlds — in Meyer's case, worlds that she herself creates. Venus in Aquarius indicates a passion for music and an affinity for cutting-edge technology.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. © 2009 CREATORS.COM

Dear Annie: My daughter and her children live in a small home with three dogs and three cats. She doesn't work, and her husband has been on disability leave for a year. It breaks my heart to see them living in squalor and poverty. My daughter was not raised like this, and it sickens me that she is OK with her circumstances.

She and her husband have a choice, but the kids do not. We have helped (maybe too much), but it seems nothing makes a difference. Our daughter gets defensive if we say anything. She was always so practical and used good common sense prior to marrying this guy. She got wonderful grades in school, set goals and had dreams, but not now.

Her husband has been let go of several jobs, but it's never his fault. Just about every word he says is untrue. I just hate the thought of our grandchildren growing up with these values.

We love our daughter and her family and would do anything in the world for the grandchildren, but it gets harder to deal with each day. What can we do? — *Worried and Disappointed Grandparents*

Dear Worried: Your daughter gets to live her own life, even if it means she chooses to live in squalor. Whatever work ethic you may have instilled in her has apparently been forgotten. You cannot fix it, so say nothing more about it. You can, however, be supportive of the grand-

children. Offer to take them for the afternoon, weekend visits, vacation trips, whatever you can manage, and let them see what a well-balanced home looks like.

Say nothing negative about her husband or her home. You might casually ask if she'd like a cleaning service as a gift because, after all, everyone could use a hand now and then.

If she sees that you don't intend it as a judgment on her housekeeping skills, she will be more receptive.

Dear Annie: With the holidays coming up, I have a decision to make, and I trust your advice.

My sister and I had a falling out last year. She thinks I wronged her in a big way. I think she made some bad choices. In any case, she's furious with me and we haven't spoken for months.

The question is about holiday gifts. I'd like to send something to her and her boys, but I'm afraid it might make her angrier. Right now, reconciliation seems unlikely, but it may be possible someday. Is there anything I can do that won't further annoy her? — *The Best Gift Would Be Peace*

Dear Best: Send the gifts. And enclose a card to your sister, saying you love her and miss her. Even if she becomes angry, at least you will have done something that shows your care. Maybe it will help.

Dear Annie: This is for "Miserable in Missouri," whose mother-in-law drops by unannounced once a month: Get a grip.

If she is the "lovely person" you say, how can her presence be

such an imposition? How about showing some compassion? Her husband died, and her son got married the same year. Good for your husband for having lunch with his

mother once a week. You should be going out to dinner with her once a week. I was not able to live close to my mother or mother-in-law. My mother has been gone almost 10 years, and my "mother-in-love" died last year. Even a newlywed can spare a couple of hours a week for Mom. Someday you may wish you had. — *Florida Friend*

Dear Florida: We don't disagree with the idea of welcoming Mom more often, but she should still not drop by unannounced, and that was a big part of the problem. Visits are more appreciated when they aren't inconvenient surprises.

Dear Annie: My husband's daughter-in-law accused me of abusing



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

her 6-year-old son while they were at our home during a Christmas dinner two years ago. Several months had gone by, and during a phone call from my stepson, we asked why they hadn't

come for Easter dinner. We were then told that the boy had bruises all over his body because I had abused him, and that they were not coming for any more holidays.

I don't know how they could think this. I would never hurt a child. Plus, we have a small home. With 12 adults and six children visiting, and me constantly in the kitchen cooking, this would have been impossible. This child has a history of problems, as does his biological father. I am the one who insisted we buy this troubled little boy special toys in order for him to feel important. The mother comes to our home, sits in a bedroom with the children and does no socializing at all. She has never said hello or acknowledged me in any way. After this accusation,

my husband said his daughter-in-law was not welcome in our home.

However, he has since had second thoughts and invited them for Christmas.

I say the only way they will be welcome is if she apologizes to me. My husband disagrees because he wants to keep his family together at the holidays. Should I keep the peace or insist on an apology? — *Upset in Santa Cruz*

Dear Santa Cruz: You may be owed an apology, but we doubt you will get one, so be careful about issuing ultimatums.

Your husband wants his son with him, and we caution you not to get in the middle. But there is a more critical issue:

If this boy has bruises, we worry who is putting them there. Please allow your stepson and his family to come to your home so you can keep an eye on them and make sure one of the parents is not hurting this child. It sounds as if he could use a caring grandparent.

Dear Annie: My husband of 40 years and I are having a dispute. We will be going out of

town on vacation soon, and I would like to attend the concert of a particular country-western singer. He doesn't care for concerts and says, "If you want to go, go ahead, but I'm not going with you."

I don't want to go without him. I'd feel strange and abandoned knowing I have a spouse who could be there but isn't. This only happens a couple of times a year, but I feel he is wrong. Your response will resolve it. — *Single Concert Goer*

Dear Single: It would be nice if your husband would agree to go on those rare occasions when you need an escort, but you can't force him to see it your way. Offer him a compromise. Tell him you will make a genuine effort to find a friend or family member to go with you and you will also check to see if there are any organized groups you can join for the evening. And do it. But if you can find no one despite your best efforts, he ought to accompany you, especially on vacation in a strange city.

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Annie's Mailbox ®

Merry Christmas
Sherry Wegner Agency
1902 N. Hwy. 87 267-2555

Sears Hometown Store
Merry Christmas
Mr. Jody Wayne Swinney
Owner
Big Spring Mall 1801 E. FM 700 #C-6 Big Spring, TX 79720
Tel. (432) 267-1127 Fax (432) 267-1999

STC
MERRY CHRISTMAS
SURETY TITLE COMPANY
Cindy Pittman
Escrow Officer
805 S. Scurry 263-2407
cindyasurety@crcom.net Fax - 263-4693

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432-263-8235

In remembrance of Adriana Martinez

"You are this year's angels," Sherry Hodnett, volunteer and bereavement coordinator of Home Hospice said of the women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

These women were by the side of Adriana Martinez and her family for 3-1/2 years as she battled breast cancer.

Service to others is one of the main tenets of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It is a tradition of the Relief Society, the women's organization, whose motto is "Charity never faileth" to go about doing

good as the Savior did.

To honor her memory, 25 women gathered to fill 80 candy boxes with homemade fudge for Home Hospice patients. After a Christmas dinner, an assembly line was organized to cut the fudge and pack the candy squares in boxes, which were tied with a ribbon and given a decorative label.

"The boxes of candy were beautiful and the patients loved the little extra gift," said Hodnett.

Adriana passed away in August, but as long as she was able,

she did for others.

"Her life embodied every Christian virtue. Her courage and determination were an example to all," said Janie Harrison, Relief Society counselor.

She was the wife of Able Martinez, and mother of children — Matthew, Crystal, and Aaron. Her parents are Jose and Maria Chavez and siblings, Susan Barrios, Vicky Rios, and Jose Chavez Jr.

"Adriana was a friend to many and dear to the hearts of the Relief Society women," added Harrison.



Courtesy photo

From left, Maria Chavez, Janie Harrison and Home Hospice representatives Megan Chandler and Marty Whitworth with boxes of homemade fudge for hospice patients.

CHURCH

Continued from Page 7A

pants; a new Bible study will begin in January. If you have a particular

Bible study in mind, please contact Shyrlee Reid. The next meeting will be Jan. 14. A light meal will be available. You do not need to be a member of our congregation in order to attend any of our Bible studies.

Youth Ministry 2010 Synposium has

been scheduled for Jan. 8-10 of 2010 at the J.W. Marriott Hotel at the Galleria in Houston. Mark our calendars to attend this very challenging growth opportunity to help youth develop a Christian worldview.

January 11, the LWML will serve refreshments at the VA. The Board of Education will meet Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. at the church. The LWML will meet Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. at the church. The Elders meet Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. at the church.

First Baptist

First Baptist Church of Big Spring will hold a New Year's event for all youth at the Family Life Center.

Performing an acoustic set will be Clay. Also performing will be the band One Less Stone. Hot dogs, snacks, ice cream sundaes and donuts will be available throughout the night.

Youth arrive at 9 p.m., followed by instruction and prayer at 9:45 p.m.

After a 10:30 p.m. worship service, there will be tournament style games with prizes for winners. There will be movies as well as board games, cards and Guitar Hero. Prizes will be given away throughout the event.

We will conclude with breakfast and everyone will head home at 6:30 a.m. Admission is \$10 per person, which includes a T-shirt.

For more information, call Bobby Floyd at 267-7429, (806) 786-5111 or e-mail bobbyfloyd@gmail.com.

The event is sponsored by the Crossroads Baptist Association.

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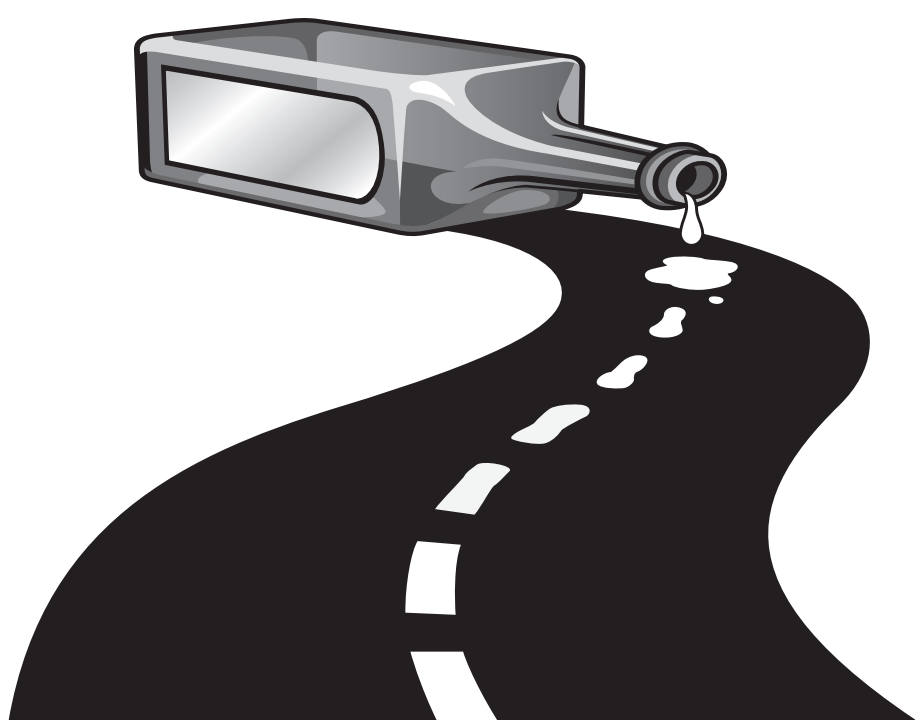
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