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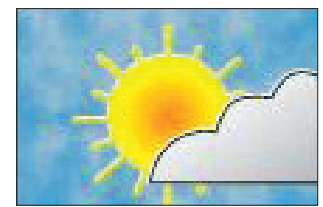


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BIG SPRING HERALD

WEDNESDAY

MARCH 24, 2010



VOLUME 105, NUMBER 92

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

It's time to party!

Gregg Street businesses to celebrate end of construction

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

The Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce and several Gregg Street merchants are having a block party — covering a lot of blocks — Saturday.

To celebrate the completion of Gregg Street renovations, the cham-

ber and various merchants are hosting various activities, including discounts, drawings, kids' crafts, ice cream and more, Chamber Executive Director Debbye ValVerde said.

Even Elvis is making an appearance.

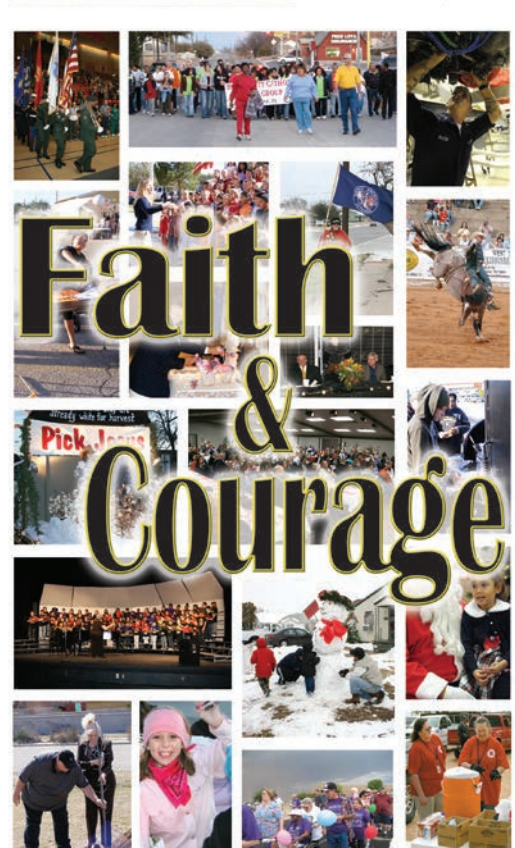
The year-long construction proj-

ect was tough on merchants along Gregg Street, ValVerde said.

"Some of the merchants said people found an alternate way to get to their businesses," ValVerde said. "but for some, there was definitely some hardship."

See **PARTY**, Page 3A

GET YOURS MARCH 31



Valuation mistakes haven't hurt BSISD much

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

A second error in the certified tax values for this fiscal year will have little effect on Big Spring Independent School District finances.

Officials recently reported that Aquilla Drilling misreported more than \$6 million of taxable property to Howard County, meaning that county taxing entities face potential revenue shortfalls.

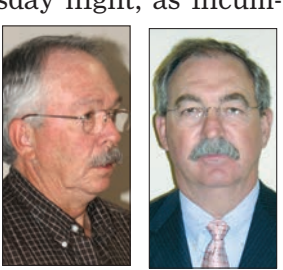
That mistake comes on the heels of other late last year, when it was learned that a clerical error resulted in a

See **BSISD**, Page 3A

Tax error fuels debate at council meeting

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

What could have been a simple budget amendment turned into a pre-election debate Tuesday night, as incumbent Mayor Russ McEwen and challenger Tommy Duncan squared off concerning a problem with the municipality's certified taxable values for the 2009-2010 tax year.



According to City Finance Director Peggy Walker, the miscalculation — which cost city coffers approximately \$68,400 — was made by an Abilene based tax management company which incorrectly rendered a drilling rig valued at \$6.6 million in Howard County.

"A few months ago we had a \$9 million appraisal value that came off of our certified values. This is now a second correction to those original appraised values," said Walker. "There was a company that basically indicated they had a drilling rig that should be taxable within Howard County, therefore it was appraised and included in the certified values."

"Once the tax bill went out it was determined that it (the drilling rig) was

See **CITY**, Page 3A



HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

A construction worker prepares a window sill on the second floor of the historic Settles Hotel for the installation of windows Wednesday morning. According to officials with the Settles Hotel Development Company, restoration of the downtown landmark is moving along at a good pace, although recent high winds have hampered some work on the windows and painting.

Experts: Health care suit will fail

BRENDAN FARRINGTON
Associated Press Writer

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The White House says it isn't worried that 13 state attorneys general are suing to overturn the massive health care overhaul, and many legal experts agree the effort is futile.

But the lawsuit, filed in federal court seven minutes after President Barack Obama signed the 10-year, \$938 billion health care bill, underscores the divisiveness of the issue and the political rancor that has surrounded it.

Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum led the effort to file the suit

"The Constitution nowhere authorizes the United States to mandate, either directly or under threat of penalty, that all citizens and legal residents have qualifying health care coverage."

that claims Congress doesn't have the constitutional right to force people to get health coverage. It also

says the federal government is violating the Constitution by forcing a mandate on the states without providing resources to pay for it.

"To that I say, 'Bring it on,'" said White House domestic policy chief Melody Barnes, who cited similar suits filed over Social Security and the Voting Rights Act when those were passed. "If you want to look in the face of a parent whose child now has health care insurance and say we're repealing that ... go right ahead."

A 14th state, Virginia, did not join the bigger lawsuit, but filed its own,

See **SUIT**, Page 3A

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Pitcher powers Lady Steers over Plainview

BY JOE ZIGTEMA
Sports Editor

The Big Spring Lady Steers avenged a district-opening loss against Frenship with a 3-1 win over the Plainview Lady Bulldogs Tuesday at the Big Spring Sports Complex.

Kenzie Hunt earned her 12th win of the season as she limited the Lady Bulldogs to one run in the third inning. Hunt struck out five in the game.

"Kenzie is doing a great job from her spot in the circle," coach John Sparks said. "She makes the hitters not hit the ball well, and she makes the defensive plays when she needs to."

Linzee Yarbar got Big Spring (16-6, 1-1) on the board in the first inning when she reached on an error. Logan Yarbar sacrificed her to second on a bunt, and Hunt drove Yarbar in with a single to right field.

After Plainview tied the score in the third, both pitchers settled in as they put up zeroes the next two frames. The Lady Steers broke through again in the sixth when Valerie Ross hit a ground ball to third base with Valle on first. Valle had rounded second and looked to be caught in a rundown, but the throw went wide of second into right field, allowing both Ross and Valle to score.

"Beating Plainview was a good win for us," Sparks said. "We are still struggling with our confidence at the plate, but the girls know they can put the ball in play, and when they get things going their way, good things are going to happen."

The Lady Steers play their third consecutive home game Friday against San Angelo Lake View at 6:30 p.m.

"We will need to be ready for Lake View," Spark said. "They can sneak up on anybody."

Big Spring 3, Plainview 1
Plainview 001 000 0 -- 1
Big Spring 100 002 0 -- 3
Hunt and Womack. W- Hunt (12-5)



HERALD PHOTO/Tony Claxton
Big Spring freshman Logan Yarbar drops down a bunt Tuesday.



HERALD PHOTO/Tony Claxton
Martin Yanez connects on a solo home run in the third inning Tuesday at Steer Park. Yanez went 2-for-3 in the game but Big Spring fell 5-1 in its district 4-4A home opener.

Plainview pitcher stymies Steers

BY JOE ZIGTEMA
Sports Editor

The Big Spring Steers' district opener Tuesday didn't quite go as planned.

Plainview pitcher Jason Miller may have had something to do with that.

Miller mowed down eight Steers on strikes, allowed five hits and a lone walk in seven innings as Plainview downed Big Spring 5-1 at Steer Park.

"He's pretty good," Bulldogs coach Carter James said. "It's tough enough (to pitch seven innings), and I was worried about his legs getting a little tired. But he was still able to spot it up there at the

end." Alex Hensley pitched the first six innings for the Steers, allowing five runs, two of which were earned, on 10 hits and eight walks. He had four strikeouts, but the Steers committed five errors in the field as well.

"We weren't relaxed," said Steers coach Bert Otto of his team, which returned only one starter from a year ago. "I could just tell we were tense, and that comes with the inexperience. Personally, I've never had a group this young, so it's a learning experience for me as well."

The Steers' lone run came on a solo shot from Martin Yanez in

the third, who took an 0-2 pitch over the high fence in left field. Yanez was 2-for-3 on the day with a single.

Jacob Acosta was 2-for-2 with two singles and a walk as well, but Big Spring didn't generate much in the way of offense.

"We just weren't doing our normal thing," Otto said. "We weren't waiting for our pitch. We've been preaching 'our pitch' and we've been swinging at ones on our hands inside, and we aren't making adjustments. We made no adjustments today."

Big Spring (7-11, 0-1) had a chance to put more on the board in the fifth when Xavian Parnell was hit by

pitch, struck second and came around on a Yanez single. But Parnell was gunned down at the plate as his head-first slide couldn't beat the throw from Plainview (6-12, 1-0) right fielder Chris Raygur, according to the umpire.

"We had to make something happen," Otto said. "The way it was going, we weren't going to be able to go station to station. (Parnell) has speed so I sent him, and I disagreed with the umpire, I thought he had his hand in there, but the umpire called him out."

Plainview got a run in the second on a two-

Hart, Bulldogs beat Indians for key win

HERALD STAFF REPORT

TUSCOLA — The Coahoma Bulldogs scored three runs in the sixth inning as they powered to a 7-4 win over Jim Ned to open District 7-2A play in Tuscola on Tuesday.

Chance Hart earned the win for Coahoma, striking out 11 with no walks and just three hits.

The Bulldogs got a lead-off home run from Rey Gutierrez for one in the first, and scored three more in the third when Lane Douglass knocked in Hart on an RBI single, followed by two runs as Jared Doport and Gutierrez each scored on passed balls.

After Jim Ned tied the score with a run in the bottom of the fifth, the Bulldogs came up with a three-spot in the top of the sixth. Douglass reached first on a dropped third

strike, Lupe Abrego singled, Adrian Amaro sacrificed the two over and Dakota Griffith knocked two runs in with a single off the glove of the shortstop in shallow right field.

"I honestly think (Jim Ned) is the toughest team in the district," Coahoma coach Shane Fuller said. "Beating them on the road was huge so we get them at home next time."

The Bulldogs also turned in some stellar defensive plays as line drives skidded off gloves and directly into the hands of other infielders, Fuller said.

"We just got some lucky breaks," he said. "The defense and Chance didn't walk anybody."

Coahoma 7, Jim Ned 4
CHS 103 003 0 -- 7 5 2
JN 021 010 0 -- 4 3 2
Hart and Amaro. W- Hart. L- O'Dell. HR- Gutierrez.

Bulldogettes, Newton shut down Jim Ned

HERALD STAFF REPORT

TUSCOLA — Heather Newton got back into a groove Tuesday in Tuscola.

Newton got back into the win column as she tossed a two-hit shutout of the Jim Ned Lady Indians.

Newton struck out 12 in the game for her

12th win of the year and Coahoma's (16-6, 1-0) first in district 7-2A. The Bulldogettes, ranked No. 4 in the latest 2A softball poll, scored four runs in the first three innings as they cruised to the win.

Newton went 4-for-4 at the plate, including a home run and a double

Forsan rolls 10-0 in five innings over Albany for 11th straight

BY JOE ZIGTEMA
Sports Editor

FORSAN — Chalk up another for the Forsan Buffaloes on the diamond.

The Buffs topped Albany 10-0 in five innings Tuesday for their 11th win in a row as pitcher Dylan Lowrey tossed a no-hitter in a run-rule shortened game.

"It's real nice," Forsan coach Jason Phillips said of his team's start. "We're playing really well. The last few games we had a couple of shaky innings defensively, but today we played five

good innings."

The Buffs scored eight runs in the fourth and fifth innings as Evan Burton ended the game with a bases-clearing triple. Burton went 2-for-3 in the game with a solo home run and four RBI.

The Buffs started the game with one in the first as Burton reached on an error and scored on a Foster Burchett RBI single. They got one more in the third as Lowrey walked, his courtesy runner Ty Johnson stole second and then scored on a Zane Herrin RBI double.

Forsan's big inning came in the fourth, when the Buffaloes sent 11 batters to the plate. Zack Dykes began the inning with a walk and Bryson Phillips singled. Dykes stole third on a passed ball and scored on a catcher's throwing error. Elgen Suazo knocked in Phillips with an RBI single.

Lowrey knocked in Suazo with a two-run shot to right-center field to make the score 6-0. After a pitching change, Burton went out to deep right field for a solo shot to round out the scoring.

Lowrey went 2-for-3 at the plate with a walk and single.



HERALD PHOTO/Joe Zigtema
Forsan's Dylan Lowrey didn't allow a hit in five innings Tuesday.

Sports in brief

Big Spring to start Pony League signups

Big Spring Little League will be having Pony League signups for 13-15-year-olds starting today at Gartman Refrigeration. Signups will be held weekdays until April 2. Bring a birth certificate.

Signups will also be held at the Big Spring Mall Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and April 3 at the same time. Due to a rule change, 15-year-olds can pitch this year. Contact Bryan Kilgora at 816-2582.

Ragball tournament rescheduled to Friday

The 2010 Spring Break ragball tournament has been rescheduled to Friday to send Big Spring ISD students to Florida for a World Strides Science in Motion event.

Registration is from 5-7 p.m. Friday, with games starting at 7 p.m. Call 935-2371 after 6 p.m. to sign up early for the tournament, sponsored by Big Spring UFO (Unlocking Future Opportunities).

Forsan beats Menard 14-0, ranked No. 9

The Forsan Lady Buffs took down Menard 14-0 Tuesday for their 10th win of the season.

Forsan (10-3, 6-0) needed only five innings to end the game by run-rule. Pitchers Amanda Longorio, Ashley Buzbee and Kevy O'Brien combined for a two-hit shutout.

The Lady Buffs will play at home Friday against Miles. They were ranked No. 9 in the latest 1A poll.

Obituaries

William 'Bill' Louis Cook

William "Bill" Louis Cook, 56, of Pecos died March 21, 2010, in Lubbock. Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday, March 25, 2010, at the First Christian Church, officiated by Dr. Kenneth McIntosh. Burial will follow in Mount Evergreen Cemetery.

Mr. Cook was born Sept. 27, 1953, in Pecos.

Survivors include his mother, Annie Halfmann Cook of Pecos; a sister, Cynthia Cook and husband John R. Scott of Big Spring; Jo Ann Beauchamp of San Angelo and Linda Bailey of Ballinger; uncles Ernest Cook of Pecos, Johnny Cook of Odessa and Willia Cook of Beaumont; a niece, Anna Scott of Big Spring; and numerous cousins.

He was preceded in death by his father, Marion Cook.

Services are under the direction of Pecos Funeral Home.

Paid obituary

John A. Restelli

John A. Restelli, 89, of Big Spring died Monday, March 22, 2010, in a Midland hospital. Graveside funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 25, 2010, at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 24, 2010, at the funeral home.

He was born July 8, 1920, in Great Falls, Mont., and married Gloria Butler in Denver, Colo. They were married for more than

50 years.

John worked in sales and then in management for Montgomery Wards, traveling around the country. He served in the U.S. Naval Air Corps as a gunner during World War II.

He was a member of First Baptist Church.

Survivors include his wife, Gloria Restelli of Big Spring; two sons and daughters-in-law, Richard Lee and Janice Restelli of West Columbia and Dean and Jeannie Restelli of Big Spring; one daughter and son-in-law, Gloria Lynn and Roger Wells of Katy; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Anthony Charles Restelli; his mother, Pamela Ann Beroni Restelli; and two sisters.

The family suggests memorials be made to a favorite charity.

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

Take Note

• Seventh, eighth and ninth grade students from Big Spring Independent School District who will be traveling to Florida this summer to take part in the educational Science in Motion Program. However, each student must raise \$1,800 to participate. Area residents who would like to make a donation toward these students' fees can do so by contacting Debbie Durham at State National Bank, 264-6100; Chrissy Shubert, 264-6492 (evenings only); or Vickey Bloodworth, 264-4135 during the work day, or 263-3149 after hours. The trip is slated for June 21-24 and the deadline to raise the funds is April 7.

Oralia Landin Perez

Oralia Landin Perez, 81, of Big Spring died Monday, March 22, 2010, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Vigil services will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday at Myers & Smith Chapel with Deacon Johnny Arguello officiating. Burial will be at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

She was born March 16, 1929, in Ozona to Saragosa and Jose Landin. She married Ernest Perez on Nov. 14, 1959, in Snyder. He preceded her in death March 26, 1996. She was a lifetime resident of Howard County and was a Catholic.

She is survived by one daughter, Adela Deanda of Midland; three grandchildren; three great grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by one brother.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Lucille Payne

Lucille Payne, 95, of Stanton died Tuesday, March 23, 2010, in a Stanton nursing home. Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Friday, March 26, 2010, at First Baptist Church of Stanton with the Rev. David Harp, pastor, officiating. Interment will follow at Colorado City Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Thursday, March 25, 2010, at the funeral home.

She was born April 19, 1914, in Fort Deposit, Ala., and married Leo Harold Payne in January 1931. He preceded her in death in 1990.

She is survived by three sons, Thomas Payne of Ruidoso, N.M., and Rodney Payne and Philip Payne, both of Garland; a sister, Opal Arnold of Fresno, Calif.; eight grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and 11 great-great-grandchildren.

She was also preceded in death by a son, Darrell Payne; a daughter, Nelda Payne; three brothers and three sisters.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be directed to the Martin County Senior Citizens Center, PO Box 1233, Stanton, Tx. 79782.

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

Support Groups

THURSDAY

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

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

Police blotter

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

Note: According to officials with the BSPD, activity and arrest reports for the corresponding times were not available Tuesday morning due to ongoing computer problems. It's unclear at this time when these issues, which have been persistent for at least a week, will be corrected.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 63 inmates at the time of this report.

• JUSTIN WESTERFIELD, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of theft.

• SOMER D. LANCASTER, 31, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of fraudulent possession of a controlled substance/prescription schedule.

• LOUIS ANTONIO SILVA, 21, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• MICHAEL DALE PARKER, 24, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of operating on a flat tire, violation of a driver's license restriction and a motion to revoke probation for evading arrest or detention.

• TAMMY KAY GROSS, 29, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of speeding, no driver's license and violation of a promise to appear.

• CHRISTOPHER SANDOVAL, 31, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of no driver's license, no safety belt and violation of a promise to appear.

• JONATHAN EMMANUEL TINDOL, 18, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid.

• DANIEL V. FLORES, 41, was transferred to the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on charges of expired motor vehicle registration, failure to maintain financial responsibility, expired driver's license, evading arrest or detention and driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension without fine resolution.

Fire/EMS

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

• TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 13000 Block of Gail Highway. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 5900 block of N. Service Road. Service refused.

• TRAUMA was reported in the 1500 block of Stadium. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1400 block of Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

Lottery

The winning numbers in Tuesday evening's drawing of the Georgia Lottery's "MEGA Millions" game were: 03-25-28-29-40, Mega Ball: 13.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Tuesday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 13-18-19-22-37.
Number matching five of five: 0.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 9-9-2-4. Sum It Up: 24.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 1-8-1. Sum It Up: 10.

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

No DNA sample for Roethlisberger

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia investigators have withdrawn their request for a DNA sample from Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger who is accused of sexually assaulting a 20-year-old college student at a nightclub, an attorney for the player said.

Ed Garland told The Associated Press that officials withdrew the request a week ago, but declined comment on why.

Police are looking into the claim that Roethlisberger sexually assaulted the woman early March 5 at the club in Milledgeville. Roethlisberger has not been charged, and

Garland has disputed the claim and has hired his own team to investigate.

It's the second time in a year the two-time Super Bowl champion has been accused of sexual misconduct.

Eagles acquire RB Bell from NO

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Mike Bell is joining the Philadelphia Eagles.

A spokesman for the New Orleans Saints said the team will not match Philadelphia's offer to the restricted free-agent running back. The Saints had until midnight to match the Eagles' one-year offer, but vice president of communications Greg Benschel told The Associated Press in an e-mail the team would not.

Bell had 654 yards rushing and five touchdowns last season for the Super Bowl champion Saints. He averaged 3.8 yards per carry.

W. Va. PG Bryant to miss tourney

MORGANTOWN,

W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia point guard Darryl "Truck" Bryant broke his right foot during practice and will miss the rest of the NCAA tournament.

The second-seeded Mountaineers, who won the Big East tournament, play 11th-seeded Washington on Thursday night in Syracuse, N.Y., in the East Regional semifinals.

Bryant has started 31 games and averages 9.3 points and is second on the team in assists (3.1) and 3-pointers (40).

GT coach Hewitt to interview with St. John's

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Tech has granted permission for St. John's to interview Yellow Jackets coach Paul Hewitt.

Georgia Tech associate athletic director Wayne Hogan says St. John's was given the OK to speak with Hewitt. Hogan says he does not know when the interview will take place.

Hewitt, who is from New York, coached Georgia Tech to the sec-

ond round of the NCAA tournament.

The Red Storm fired Norm Roberts last week.

Hewitt said Monday he is not looking for another job.

PGA commish says Elkington needs invitations

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem sent a memo to tournament directors to explain why Steve Elkington needed invitations to get into tournaments this year. At least two players — David Duval and Tim Herron — criticized Finchem for favoritism.

Elkington had been exempt for 23 consecutive years until the former PGA champion finished 183rd on the money list last year and lost his card. Four other times he finished out of the top 125. He had a 10-year exemption for winning The Players Championship in 1997.

Elkington has played five times this year, although he has yet to receive a sponsor's exemption. He got

into four tournaments through his status as a past champion, and played last week at Innisbrook because of a top-10 finish in Puerto Rico.

Canseco to appear in front of grand jury

NEW YORK (AP) — Jose Canseco announced on Twitter that he had been subpoenaed by a grand jury investigating whether Roger Clemens lied to Congress when he denied using performance-enhancing drugs.

Canseco posted on the social networking site that the FBI was about to visit his house, then said he had received a subpoena to appear before the grand jury "about roger clemens, andrew pettite and others" on April 8.

Reyes OK for ball

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) — New York Mets shortstop Jose Reyes has been cleared to resume baseball activities after doctors determined his thyroid levels have returned to normal.



HERALD PHOTO/Ron Midkiff

Big Spring resident and longtime bowler Simon Saldona rolled a perfect game March 15 at Bowl-A-Rama. It was his second perfect game and occurred during the men's Caprock league.

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COAHOMA

Continued from Page 1B

ble with three RBI and two runs scored. Batting right behind her in the lineup, Hayley McCullough

knocked in a run with two hits. Shortstop Joanna Gonzales, left fielder Jordan Martin and third baseman Ruiz all notched a hit and a run scored.

The Bulldogettes have won nine of their last

10 games. They will be in action Saturday as Coahoma travels to Ballinger. First pitch is at noon.

Coahoma 5, Jim Ned 0
CHS 121 100 0 -- 5 11 0
JN 000 000 0 -- 0 2 3
Newton and Castilaw. Myers and Shelton. W-Newton (12-3).

L-Myers. HR-Newton; 2B-Newton; SB-JN, Sartin.

Contact Sports Editor Joe Zigmata at 263-7331 ext. 237 or by e-mail at sports@bigspringherald.com

STEERS

Continued from Page 1B

-out single from leadoff hitter Chance Rollin, who scored Shaun Martinez. The Bulldogs got another in the fourth when Tanner Velasquez knocked in Raygur with an RBI groundout.

Two more crossed in the fifth when Heyden Alexander walked and C.J. Sanchez reached on an error. Hensley would get the next two out on a strikeout and popup,

but Rollin came through again with a 2-RBI, 2-out single as he was thrown out at second base.

"We walked eight, they get three runs. We've been preaching it, and sooner or later it's going to have to sink in that's not a recipe for success, it's for disaster," Otto said.

The Bulldogs' final run came on a Peter Landoros walk, who

scored when Jonathan Solis was plunked with the bases loaded.

Plainview 5, Big Spring 1
PV 010 121 0 -- 5 10 1
BS 001 000 0 -- 1 5 5
Miller and Velasquez. Hensley, Papajohn and Acosta. W-Miller (2-3). L-Hensley (1-2). HR-Yanez. SB-PV Raygur, BS Parnell.

Contact Sports Editor Joe Zigmata at 263-7331 ext. 237 or by e-mail at sports@bigspringherald.com

PROGRESS
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Publish Date March 28, 2010

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Local Weather

Thu 3/25	70/39	
Mainly sunny. High around 70F. Winds NW at 10 to 20 mph.		
Fri 3/26	79/51	
Sunshine. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the low 50s.		
Sat 3/27	73/41	
Mainly sunny and windy. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 40s.		
Sun 3/28	68/36	
Sunny. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid 30s.		
Mon 3/29	72/42	
Sunny. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 40s.		

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BSISD

Continued from Page 1A

\$9 million over-valuation of Western Container property.

While Big Spring city officials estimate the latest error will result in almost \$70,000 in lost tax revenue, the local school district will emerge relatively unscathed.

Sandra Waggoner, chief financial officer for BSISD, said the peculiarities of state education financing will help the school district avoid a significant revenue loss.

"It will have a minimal effect on the district," Waggoner said. "The reason it will be so small is because of target revenue guidelines."

"Target revenue" refers to the current state

financial aid formula in which school districts are allowed to raise only so much money per student — \$4,752 in BSISD's case — from local sources.

"That means that if we collect less than that target figure, the state will make up at least part of the shortfall," Waggoner said.

When the Aquilla Drilling error was discovered, it initially meant that BSISD would lose about \$74,000 in tax revenue. With the state taking up most of the slack, however, that figure will amount to only \$17,000, Waggoner said.

If necessary, BSISD will pay the \$17,000 out of reserve funds, she added.

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

PARTY

Continued from Page 1A

Which makes a party to celebrate the work's completion an even better idea.

VaVerde said that the idea for the celebration was the brainchild of Mike and Sheila Abusaab, along with Big Spring Mayor Russ McEwen.

"Mike and Sheila and Russ all thought it would be a great idea and we helped to bring everyone together," she said.

Formal activities will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot of the chamber of commerce, located at Third and Gregg streets. After Big Spring Mayor Russ McEwen reads a proclamation, motorcycle and classic car owners will travel south on Gregg to the VA hospital, where they will visit with patients and staff before making the return trip on Gregg.

Several of the businesses along Gregg will join in the festivities,

ValVerde said.

Among the firms participating are Al's Barbecue, American State Bank, Buckeasy, Caring Hearts, Compass Bank, Floral Designs by Lupe, H&R Block, HEB, Howard College, Seaton, Pizza Inn, Red Mesa Grill, Sonic Drive-In, Taco Villa, Ward's Western Wear and United Country Heart of the City Realtors.

Sonic will feature an appearance by an Elvis Presley impersonator and Howard College will park its Mobile Go Center at the intersection of 13th and Scurry. Other businesses plan a variety of attractions, such as "kid bouncers," discounts, drawings for prizes and free food and treats.

Valverde said times will vary according to the merchant, but most activities will run from between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

"This will just be a party," ValVerde said. "We've brought together chamber members and non-members ... for a fun afternoon."

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

CITY

Continued from Page 1A

not taxable to Howard County. Their home office is in Wichita Falls, which is where it should be taxable. The value on that rig was \$6.6 million and that amount will be coming off of the certified values. Our original values were about \$558 million and they are now down to just below \$543 million."

The miscalculation didn't sit well with Duncan, who is running against McEwen in the May election for the mayoral seat.

"My concern is if on two occasions we have to decrease the budget ... does that not show we had the opportunity earlier to sharpen our pencils and roll up our sleeves and not take that money from the taxpayers?" Duncan asked. "My second concern would be that the city of Big Spring has assurance from its elected officials — the mayor and the council — that you

have reviewed and are comfortable that we have systems in place now to prevent this from happening in the future."

McEwen defended the city's 2009-2010 budget — as well as the decision to absorb the \$68,400 shortfall through the municipality's general fund balance — but said no amount of diligence on the part of the council or himself could have prevented the pair of miscalculations in the certified taxable values submitted to the county's taxing entities by the county appraisal district.

"Why didn't we sharpen our pencils? In fact, we did sharpen our pencils to get the tax rate where it was and our budget to where it was," said McEwen. "In fact, we're not going to be looking at cutting services. Rather, because of the diligence of the city council and past city councils, we have built up a comfortable fund balance, and it's unfortunate we're going to have to use some of that, but that's exactly what that fund balance is for,

to take care of that.

"As for the systems we have in place, we have a certified value from the appraisal district and we have to rely on that. So, are we going to look closer at it? Yes. Can I tell you or anyone else this will never happen again? Absolutely not. There was no way to know this was going to take place until tax time, and they (Aquilla Drilling) said, 'Oh no, we have a tax bill we're not due from Howard County.' It's quite unprecedented to have something like this happen."

Duncan reiterated his stance on the matter, using the rise in the city's tax rate during the past three years as an example.

"I'm simply asking that the council take due diligence and follow through in watching these things and making sure every opportunity is taken to assure the certified values that come in are correct prior to actually counting the money," Duncan responded. "Our tax rates went up from 71 cents (per \$100 valuation) three years ago

to \$1.01 now. I think the citizens are concerned."

McEwen said Duncan simply wasn't comparing apples to apples when he used the rise in the tax rate to support his argument on the need for increased diligence from the city's elected officials, pointing out the majority of the rise in the tax rate was a result of a pair of voter-approved bond projects.

"I wish you had been here for the budget work sessions, because we did make significant cuts in different areas," said McEwen. "Also, when you cite 71 cents going to \$1.01, you're exactly right. However, the vast majority of that is because of a bond issue the citizens of Big Spring voted on (street reconstruction and sports complex), and that's where that came from, not from a tax increase this body decided to make."

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

SUIT

Continued from Page 1A

which other states are also considering.

McCollum, a Republican running for governor, has been talking about suing to overturn the bill since December. This month he invited other attorneys general to join him. So far South Carolina, Nebraska, Texas, Michigan, Utah, Pennsylvania, Alabama, South Dakota, Idaho, Washington, Colorado and Louisiana have agreed.

All the attorneys general are Republican except James "Buddy" Caldwell of Louisiana, a Democrat, who said he signed on because Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal asked him to and he felt the effort had merit.

The lawsuit, filed in Pensacola, asks a judge to declare the bill unconstitutional because "the Constitution nowhere authorizes the United States to mandate, either directly or under threat of penalty, that all citizens and legal residents have qualifying health care coverage."

Robert Sedler, a constitutional law professor at Wayne State University in Detroit, said the effort isn't going anywhere.

"This is pure, pure political posturing and they have to know it," he said.

But South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley disputed that characterization, saying his state will have to cut education and other programs to make up for increased Medicaid costs under the overhaul.

"This isn't about attorneys general trying to break into the realm of telling what needs to happen with health care reform," he said. "This is attorneys general saying you went too far with unfunded federal mandates. You exceeded your power under the Constitution."

Not so, said Bruce Jacob, a constitutional law professor at Stetson University in Florida, who said the suit seems like a political ploy and is unlikely to succeed.

"The federal government certainly can compel people to pay taxes, can compel people to join the Army," he said.

Some more states, including Missouri, may join the multistate suit. Still others are looking at other ways to avoid

participating, like passing legislation to block requirements in the bill.

McCollum predicted his suit would eventually end up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The health care bill "is not lawful," he said. "It may have passed Congress, but there are three branches of government."

The lawsuit claims the health care bill violates the 10th Amendment, which says the federal government has no authority beyond the powers granted to it under the Constitution, by forcing the states to carry out its provisions but not reimbursing them for the costs.

Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, a Democrat, said she strongly disagrees with Attorney General Rob McKenna's decision to sue, calling the lawsuit an effort to "gut the bill."

"There is no reason why we need to spend taxpayer money in the state of Washington to join this suit, when it's going to be litigated no

matter what," she said.

The lawsuit also says the states can't afford the new law. Using Florida as an example, it says the overhaul will add almost 1.3 million people to the state's Medicaid rolls and cost the state an additional \$150 million in 2014, growing to \$1 billion a year by 2019.

"We simply cannot afford to do the things in this bill that we're mandated to do," McCollum said at a press conference after filing the suit. He said the Medicaid expansion in Florida will cost \$1.6 billion, including administrative and other costs.

Under the bill, starting in six months, health insurance companies would be required to keep young adults as beneficiaries on their parents' plans until they turn 26, and companies would no longer be allowed to deny coverage to sick children.

Other changes would not kick in until 2014.

That's when most Americans will for the first time be required

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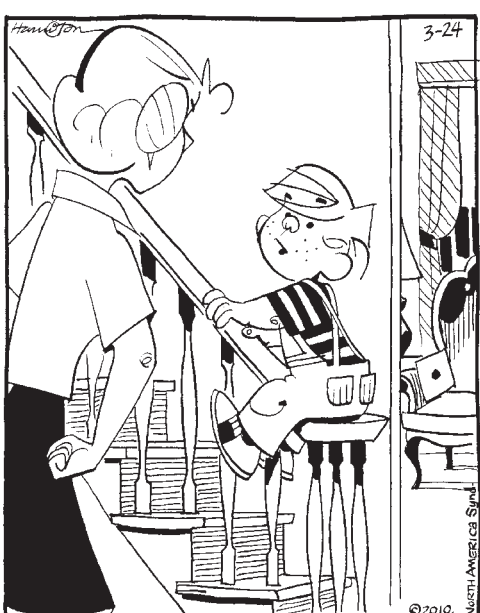
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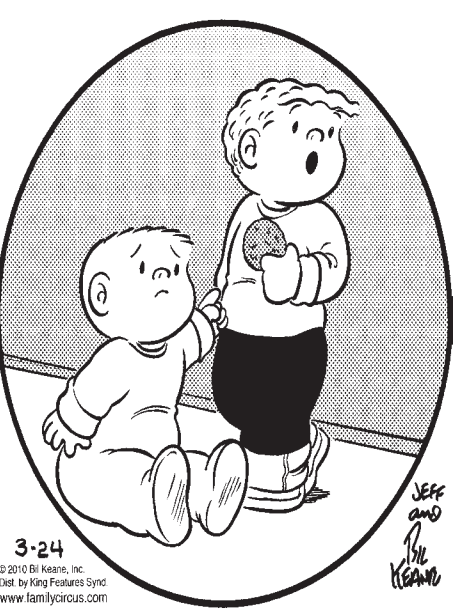
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5:PM	News ABC	News	Locura	Lopez	News	Noticias	News	Friends	Cortes	World	MythBusters	Brief, Sam Shepard	CSI: Crime Son	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas	Interrupt	SportsCenter
6:PM	News	Jeopardy!	Mi Pecado (SS)	Two Men	News	Junto Tri	News	Office	Harris	Business	MythBusters	UFC Un-leashed	Bones		Wizards	College Basketball	NBA Basket-ball: Denver Nuggets at Boston Celtics.	
7:PM	Family	Family	Hasta que el Dinero	Human Target	Survivor: Hero	Fútbol	Mercy	Millionaire	Seinfeld	House	PBS News-Hour	MythBusters	UFC Un-leashed	Bones	Movie: Boyz N the Hood	Agent Cody Banks, Angie Harmon	College Basketball	NBA Basket-ball: Lakers at Spurs
8:PM	Family	Family	Corazón Salvaje	American Idol	Criminal Minds		Law & Order: SVU	Browns	Browns	Light of the Southwest	Great Performances at the Met	MythBusters	UFC Un-leashed	Movie: Dis-turbia, Sarah Roemer	Rip-Runway	Phineas		
9:PM	(:01) Ugly Betty	(:01) Ugly Betty	Don Francisco	Simpsons	CSI: NY	¿Dónde Está Elisa?	Law & Order: SVU	Tyler Perry Show				Is It Possible?	UFC			Wizards	SportsCir.	
10:PM	News	News	Impacto	Raymond	News	Noticias	News	Lopez	Upd			MythBusters	UFC Un-leashed	Leverage	The Mo'Nique	Wizards	SportsCir.	
11:PM	Insider	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Gancho	Law & Order: SVU	Late	Decisiones	Late Night	Tyler Perry Show	CCM	World	MythBusters	UFC	Leverage	Wendy Williams	Suite Life	Fastbreak	SportsCenter	
12:AM	News	News	Amor sin Limites	Paid	King-Hill	Insider	Pagado	News	Sex & Sala	(Off Air)	Is It Possible?	UFC	UFC	CSI: NY	Movie: Boyz N the Hood	Cory	NASCAR	SportsCenter
1:AM	Paid	Paid	Mujer...	Paid	Ent	Pagado	Poker After Dark	Sex & Charles	Light of the Southwest		Overhaul'n	UFC	UFC	Leverage	Replace	NBA Basket-ball: Nuggets at Celtics	SportsCenter	

DENNIS THE MENACE



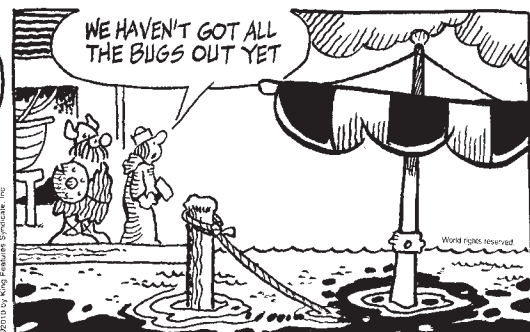
"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACT MY AGE. I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS AGE BEFORE."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

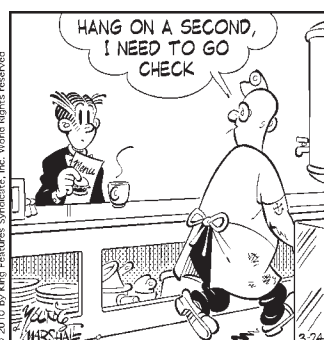
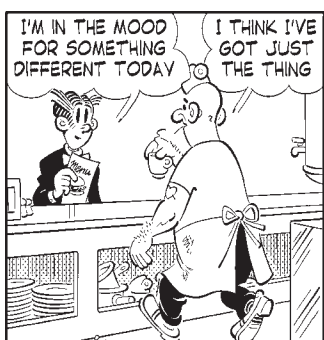


"Is it my job to teach PJ 'bout sharing?"

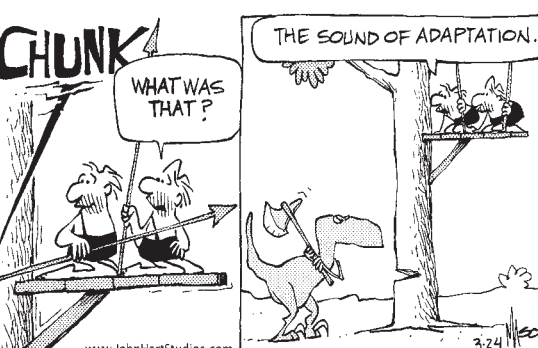
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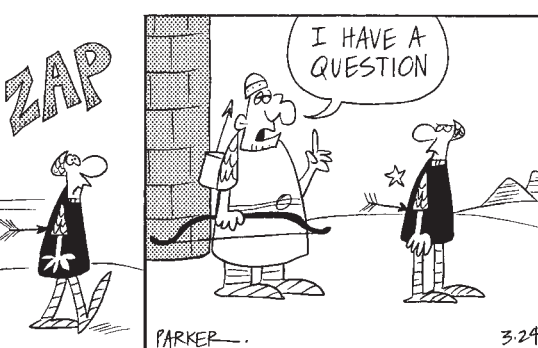
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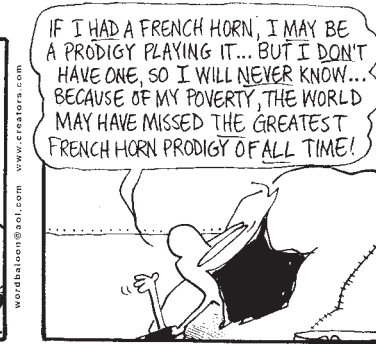
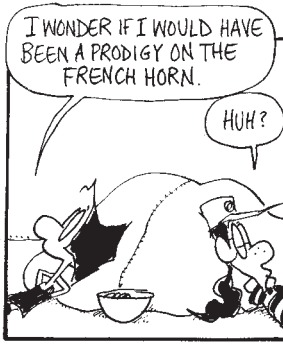
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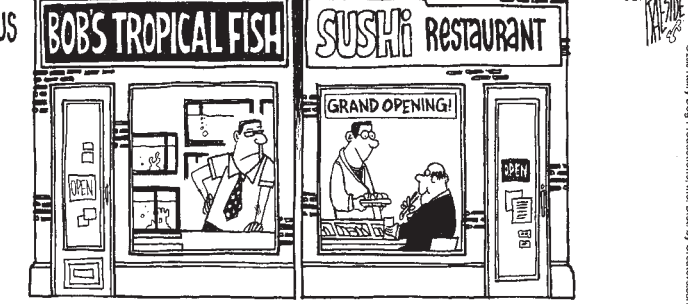
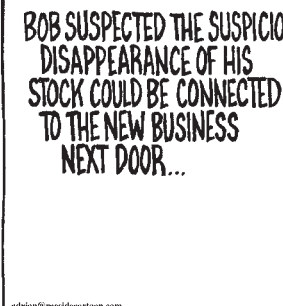
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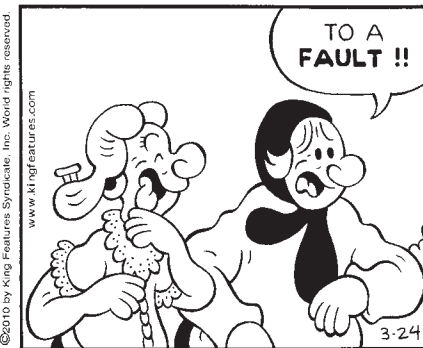
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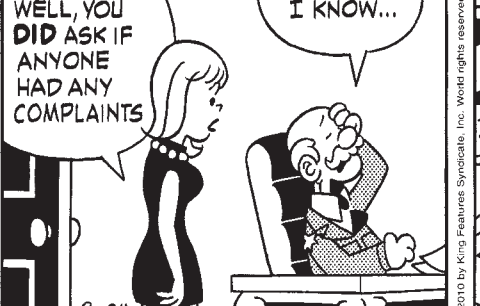
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, March 24, the 83rd day of 2010. There are 282 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 24, 1980, one of El Salvador's most respected Roman Catholic Church leaders, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, was shot to death by a sniper as he celebrated Mass in San Salvador. (Romero was assassinated after urging the Salvadoran military to halt death squads that had killed thousands of suspected guerrillas and leftist opponents of the government.)

On this date: In 1765, Britain enacted the Quartering Act, requiring American colonists to provide temporary housing to British soldiers.

In 1882, German scientist Robert Koch (kohk) announced in Berlin that he had discovered the bacillus responsible for tuberculosis.

In 1934, President Franklin

D. Roosevelt signed a bill granting future independence to the Philippines.

In 1944, in occupied Rome, the Nazis executed more than 300 civilians in reprisal for an attack by Italian partisans the day before that had killed 32 German soldiers.

In 1955, the Tennessee Williams play "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" opened on Broadway.

In 1958, rock-and-roll singer Elvis Presley was inducted into the Army in Memphis, Tenn.

In 1976, the president of Argentina, Isabel Peron, was deposed by her country's military.

In 1989, the supertanker Exxon Valdez (vahl-DEEZ) ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound and began leaking 11 million gallons of crude oil.

In 1995, after 20 years, British soldiers stopped routine patrols in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In 1999, NATO launched airstrikes against Yugoslavia, marking the first time in its 50-year existence that it had ever attacked a sovereign country. Thirty-nine people were killed when fire erupted in the Mont Blanc tunnel in France

and burned for two days.

Today's Birthdays: Poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti is 91. Fashion and costume designer Bob Mackie is 71. Actor R. Lee Ermey is 66. Movie director Curtis Hanson is 65. Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire is 63. Rock musician Lee Oskar is 62. Singer Nick Lowe is 61. Rock musician Dougie Thomson (Supertramp) is 59. Fashion designer Tommy Hilfinger is 59. Comedian Louie Anderson is 57. Actress Donna Pescow is 56. Actor Robert Carradine is 56. Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer is 54. Actress Kelly LeBrock is 50. Rhythm-and-blues DJ Rodney "Kool Kollie" Terry (Ghostown DJs) is 49. TV personality Star Jones is 48.

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Answer to previous puzzle

AMASS	SLOPE	CBS
VALET	LINEN	HAW
GROCERY	CART	USA
SETTEE	PRECIP	
SIRS	ANKLE	
FUSION	ALLNEW	
ACTION	ATEAT	ATV
CLAN	SPINY	OGRE
TAG	SPORT	SNOOT
ESCAPE	BLEND	S
PACER	SILLO	
AROMAS	SAGGED	
PEA	WHEELBARROW	
ENC	HORSE	NOISE
RAH	YEAST	SWEET

Newsday Crossword

SLITHER by Fred Piscop
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS
- 1 Name in fine china
 - 6 Realty unit
 - 10 Ticket portion
 - 14 Witches' get-together
 - 15 Bills, circulars, etc.
 - 16 Sushi fish
 - 17 Cause problems
 - 20 Z's value in Scrabble
 - 21 Lab rat's challenge
 - 22 April 1st baby, for example
 - 23 " _ #1!"
 - 24 Galore
 - 26 Vet-assisting legislation
 - 29 In a tough spot
 - 30 Altar exchanges
 - 31 Couplet composers
 - 32 QB stats
 - 35 Hard to grasp
 - 39 Business-card abbr.
 - 40 Woodwind group
 - 41 Target-practice need
 - 42 Lacking spice
 - 43 "Never mind!"
 - 45 Ballroom dance
 - 48 Fisherman's take
 - 49 Blow one's stack
 - 50 Give an autograph
 - 51 Domino spot
 - 54 Treacherous one
 - 58 Exhaust
 - 59 Final Four sports org.

- 60 Goes sprawling
 - 61 Calls, as a bet
 - 62 Alphabetize
 - 63 Underdog's win
- DOWN
- 1 Tam sporter
 - 2 Whom the Swiss Guard guards
 - 3 Pizzeria fixture
 - 4 Place to hibernate
 - 5 Glossy paint
 - 6 Totally wow
 - 7 Sugar source
 - 8 2016 Olympics locale
 - 9 North Pole worker
 - 10 Kept for later
 - 11 Italian city
 - 12 Not yet fulfilled
 - 13 Deep, musically
 - 18 Sagan of Cosmos
 - 19 Former Polish president
 - 23 Trace, as of smoke
 - 24 Fields of study
 - 25 Collies and canaries
 - 26 Main point
 - 27 Just sitting around
 - 28 Be hopping mad
 - 29 Lified
 - 31 Lying face down
 - 32 Fill-in worker
 - 33 Moore of G.I. Jane
 - 34 Vending-machine feature
 - 36 Showing good manners
 - 37 Abba of Israel
 - 38 Do perfectly
 - 42 Zilch
 - 43 Stuffing seasoning
 - 44 Martial art
 - 45 Triumphs over
 - 46 Bert's TV pal
 - 47 Six Degrees of Separation playwright
 - 48 Drum-kit part
 - 50 Top the marquee
 - 51 Folks to hang out with
 - 52 Wight or Man
 - 53 Furtive "Hey!"
 - 55 Officeholders
 - 56 Cpl., or sgt.
 - 57 Blame, so to speak


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15						16	
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54					55	56				57		
58					59					60		
61					62					63		

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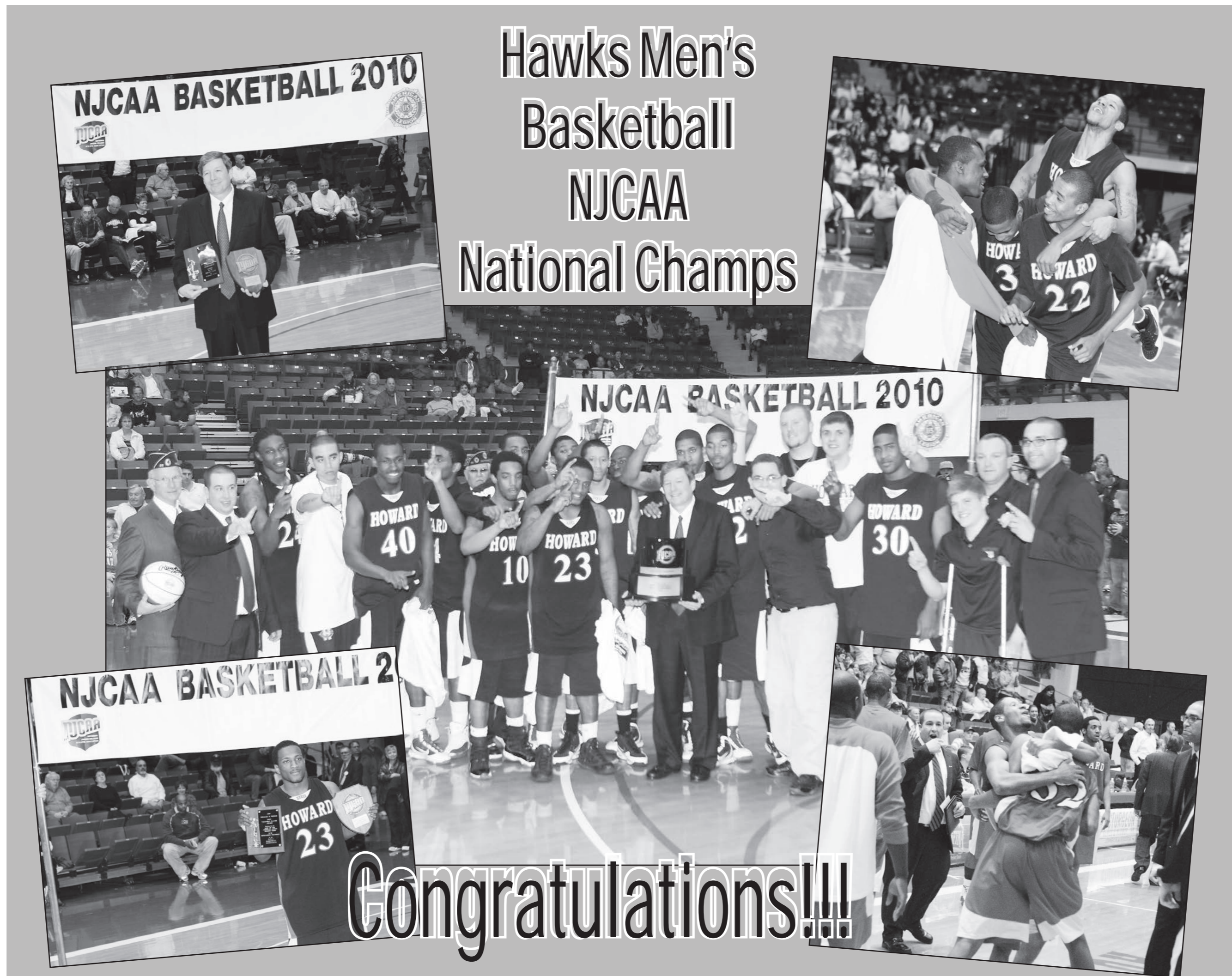
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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Ron Midkiff
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEW

Let's all enjoy, Gregg Street's finally finished

It's time to celebrate! At least that's the way the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce and a number Gregg Street merchants see the completion of more than a year's worth of construction on Gregg Street.

That's why they're inviting everyone in the community to the "Gregg Street Celebration" set to begin with a proclamation by Big Spring Mayor Russ McEwen that kicks off the festivities on the Chamber's parking lot at 11 a.m. Saturday.

The various businesses involved in the event will be offering children's bouncers, Easter egg discounts, ice cream, hot dogs, kids crafts, drawings, all sorts of freebies and much more, according to Chamber officials.

Times will vary from business to business so come out and have some good family fun and "Cruise Gregg" on Saturday!

Businesses participating in the event include Al's and Son Barbecue, American State Bank, Buckeassy, Caring Hearts, Compass Band, the First United Methodist Church, Floral Designs by Lupe, H&R Block, HEB, Howard College, the law office of R. Shane Seaton, Pizza Inn, Red Mesa Grill, Sam's Liquor, Sonic Drive-In, Taco Villa, Ward's Western Wear, United Country Heart of the City Realtors and Vision Makers.

We here at the Herald couldn't agree more. Completion of repaving Gregg Street is something to kick up one's heels about. The work conducted by Price Construction was difficult for everyone in our community, as well as those needing to drive through our city on U.S. Highway 87.

However, there's no question it was hardest on the businesses located on Gregg Street. Such projects cost businesses money, and the fact they still want to have a celebration, and give things away is a testament, we think, to why it's always important to shop Big Spring businesses first.

We hope to see everyone enjoying the celebration Saturday. We certainly will be!

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

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

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

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

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

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

You, Lord, possess a powerful combination of foresight and love. May we trust in You.

Amen

Our Taliban's gaining traction

The Dutch government is the Afghanistan War's latest casualty. When the Labor Party recently exited the Netherlands' ruling coalition government to protest the extension of the Dutch deployment in Afghanistan, the Taliban rejoiced.

Perhaps you thought I meant Afghanistan's Taliban.

No, I meant the Taliban in the Netherlands.

Never heard of it? It's the "Freedom Party," and it's poised to become a top vote-getter in the elections scheduled for early June because of the ruling coalition's collapse.

Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders would violently object to his party being labeled the Dutch Taliban.

He's anti-Islam, after all, and has famously called the Koran a "fascist book."

But the far-right wing in the Netherlands — and its counterparts across Europe — is just as intolerant and narrow-minded and xenophobic as the radical Islamists it dislikes so much in Afghanistan.

Both Taliban consider their own societies too tolerant. They want their religious traditions to be dominant. They disdain modern governments, but they're happy to manipulate those state apparatuses to impose their own values.

But here's an interesting twist. Wilders and the Freedom Party want the Dutch out of Afghanistan.

It's perhaps no surprise that a populist party should adopt a popular position — 58 percent of

Dutch want out of Afghanistan, compared to only 35 percent who want to stay. It's part of a larger trend.

Public opinion throughout Europe has decisively turned against the war. But the European left, by and large, hasn't taken advantage of this sentiment.

The Democratic Party in our country faces a similar quandary. Obama's Afghanistan surge rebranded the Dems, for the umpteenth time, as the war party.

So where some fear to tread, others rush in boldly. Ron Paul's anti-war message at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference, for instance, helped boost him to the top of the event's presidential straw poll.

This anti-war message will become more popular with November's midterm elections looming. It doesn't look like Obama will bring all combat troops home from Iraq by August.

More Americans oppose the Afghanistan War than back it (52 percent vs. 47 percent, according to a recent CNN poll).

And that gap will likely widen.

The Europeans — and the Canadians and Australians — are about to begin bringing their troops home. The Afghanistan War will generate more and more U.S. casualties (we just went over 1,000). A rising number of Afghan casualties — such as the 27 civilians who died in the recent airstrike on a convoy of buses — will undercut the supposed hearts-and-minds element of the current surge. And the Democratic Party's attempt at both guns and butter will founder as surely as Lyndon Johnson's did in the 1960s.

And what about our own intolerant, racist, xenophobic, narrow-minded, religiously conservative political movement?

There's some overlap between Christian fundamentalists and anti-government extremists, but they haven't joined hands to form a true U.S. Taliban. Unlike the Dutch Freedom Party, our Tea Party movement has not taken a prominent position on the war. So far it's focused on a domestic message: free markets, limited government, no taxes.

But there's a fight going on inside this movement.

Sarah Palin, whose views on war are so naively hawkish as to earn a rebuke from none other than Dick Cheney, aspires to lead that movement. And Ron Paul, whose presidential campaign in 2008 served as the Tea Party's inspiration, now argues that the Republican Party is exerting a "neocon kind of influence" over the populist groundswell.

Unless the Democrats' anti-war faction grabs the steering wheel, the peace movement stands a good chance of getting outflanked.

A nativist anti-war movement, which wants "our boys" back home to patrol the borders against the very people who keep our economy going, could steal the populist vote from the Democrats and the left in general.

Democrats have to counter with a campaign that translates dollars spent on war into dollars that could be spent on jobs.

Let's consider the Dutch political crisis as a warning. There are always people like Geert Wilders waiting in the wings.

The last time Democrats screwed up so royally on a war-vs.-economy issue, we got Richard Nixon for nearly six years. This time around, we might get something a whole lot worse.

John Feffer is the co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies



Don't look behind the curtain

You've really got to hand it to President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Saddled with a majority of both houses and a hold on the White House, they somehow managed to pass the Senate health care bill in the House. It's practically a miracle.

And because Washington loves a victory, Pelosi is now seen as stronger, not as a Democrat who unconscionably lost 34 Dems and every Republican.

Monday, conservative radio talk-show Rush Limbaugh was having a field day playing audio clips of then-Sen. Barack Obama promising that the health care package he envisioned would reduce health care premiums "by up to as much as \$2,500" per family per year.

There are a few provisions in the bill Congress ultimately passed that should cut costs. For example, Democrats bravely and correctly chose to yank \$120 billion to subsidize Medicare Advantage programs. Because Medicare is running in the red, seniors should pay for their extras.

Other than that, ObamaCare's

alleged deficit reduction of \$138 billion is pure fiction — and it is so bald I do not understand why the Democrats even bothered.

Consider the "doc fix." In April, Medicare payments to physicians are supposed to be reduced by 21 percent, as Washington's standard way of cutting spending has been to pass laws calling for spending reductions without cutting services.

In a press conference last week, Pelosi said Congress is committed to passing a "doc fix." But it wasn't in Sunday's bill because the \$208 billion tab for the fix would turn ObamaCare's fictional \$138 billion in deficit reduction into \$59 billion in deficit spending by 2019.

In the Sunday New York Times, Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former economic adviser to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., criticized the inclusion of \$70 billion in premiums for a new Community Living Assistance Services and Supports program in the bill to feed the illusion of deficit reduction, when "the benefits it is intended to finance are assumed not to materialize in the first 10 years, so they appear nowhere in the cost of the legislation."

My fear is that as soon as workers see more than \$100 withheld from their monthly paychecks for this plan, they will run from that scheme clutching onto their wallets — while only low-income

workers who are subsidized by taxpayers would remain. It could be Adverse Selection Hell.

The largest fiction of all, however, is the contention that ObamaCare will reduce America's health care costs. Some 32 million people eventually will be covered. Families of four earning as much as \$88,000 per year will be eligible for health-care tax credits.

The Senate bill established an excise tax on so-called Cadillac health care plans — the House stalled the starting date for this tax from 2013 to 2018 — with the argument that only a tax on employer-funded plans can prompt consumers to cut costs. But how? New plans will have to cover the full freight for preventive care, including annual physicals.

Pelosi boasted the measure would "end insurance company discrimination based on pre-existing conditions." Forcing insurers to cover those with pre-existing conditions is a good thing. But do not tell me it will reduce costs.

And don't tell me that the typical family will save \$2,500. You see, you have to be elected to Washington to buy that brand of new math.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsanders@sfchronicle.com.

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Courtesy photo

Future Fallen held an end of spring break concert at the Coahoma Community Center last weekend. Band members are, from left, Macy Bailey, 18, electric guitar; Brenden Payte, 18, bass guitar; Mark Gutierrez, 19, vocalist; Steven Elder, 18, drums; and Jake Owens, 17 electric guitar.



Courtesy photo

The Grady Independent School District CX Debate team of senior Maxwell and freshman Jack Henry Kennady recently returned from the state meet held in Austin. The team placed into the top 16 1A schools in the state. This is Maxwell's fourth time to compete at the state meet in CX and his second time to advance into the top 16 schools at state. This is Jack Henry's first time at the state CX debate meet in Austin.



Courtesy photos

In the two photos above, Marcy Elementary Principal Brenda Dunlap was turned into a human sundae by Mary Lou Yanez's first-grade class recently. Her class had the most Accelerated Reading points and won the chance to pelt Dunlap.



su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box. Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

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

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Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

The Play's the Thing

South dealer.
East-West vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K
♥ 9 5 4 3
♦ Q 10 6 2
♣ J 10 7 5

WEST
♠ Q 10 8 6 3
♥ 8 7 2
♦ K 5 3
♣ 9 4

EAST
♠ 9 7 5 2
♥ K Q 6
♦ 9 8 7 4
♣ A 3

SOUTH
♠ A J 4
♥ A J 10
♦ A J
♣ K Q 8 6 2

The bidding:
South West North East
2 NT Pass 3♣ Pass
3♦ Pass 3NT

Opening lead — six of spades.

You can't play bridge by rote. For example, take this deal where West leads a spade against three notrump. Let's say declarer wins with dummy's king and immediately attacks clubs in order to develop his longest suit.

However, this doesn't work out well. East takes the ace and returns a spade, and South eventually goes

down one with normal play, the defense scoring five tricks before declarer can score nine.

Now let's go back to trick two and have South play the hand differently. Instead of leading a club, he leads : diamond to his jack. It might seem odd that declarer's first move is to take a diamond finesse that, even if i wins, gains him only one trick whereas attacking clubs initially produces four tricks.

Nevertheless, a diamond to the jack at trick two is the right play because it guarantees the contract 100 percent, while leading a club a trick two jeopardizes the contract.

This is because, if the finesse wins, South can next establish club to assure nine tricks, while if the finesse loses, West cannot safely return a spade, giving declarer time to collect at least 10 tricks.

Ordinarily, declarer tries to establish the suit that offers the best source of tricks, but this rule should not be followed blindly. In the present case, declarer should depart from the rule because a diamond to the jack at trick two cannot fail to make the contract, whether the finesse wins or loses.

Tomorrow: The disappearing trick.
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In Sunday's Big Spring Herald

Make-ahead menu

After dyeing the eggs, hiding the eggs, filling Easter baskets, and making sure the whole family looks bright and shiny for church, who has time to think about Easter dinner? We've got the entire make-ahead menu for you! Plus, ukulele darling and financial Q&A.

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Why not check this out? At your county library

Howard County Library will be undergoing some changes in the way we check books in and out. Effective March 19, we began a changeover to a new computer program.

From the 19th to April 1 we can only check books out. DVDs will not be available for checkout until we change to the new system. I apologize for the inconvenience, but in the interest of keeping things straight and to not make errors in who has what checked out, I think this is the best way to go.

Also, a heads-up on when the Library is closed for Easter: The library will be closed Friday, April 2, and Saturday, April 3. We will re-open on Monday, April 5, at 10 a.m.

In our large print section, staff has just processed a Carmine Delmonico mystery. The year is 1967 and the Cold War is in full flood. At Chubb University in Connecticut, Captain Delmonico is faced with solving 12 murders that occurred in one day. In "Too Many Murders" (LP M MCC C), Colleen McCullough will bring many strands together as Delmonico seemingly solves the case. I think McCullough has left the story hanging for a sequel.

I am not familiar with the Last Stand series by Brenda Novak but it looks like a good one. In "The Perfect Murder" (LP F NOV B), Sebastian Costas has followed a ghostly lead in the murder of his ex-wife and son. He thinks that the second husband, a cop, murdered them. However, as he tries to prove that theory, Costas runs into some snags. Check this out to see how the story plays out.

While listed as a western, this

is more of a romance set in the 1850s Texas. Jessie Barton and her three little girls are desperate for a place to stay, far away from cold-hearted in-laws. On the run from Chicago, she comes to Texas where Teagan McMurray, a pen-pal of Jessie's deceased husband, lives: From the title, "Tall, Dark and Texan" (LP W THO J), third in the Whispering Mountain Series.

I think you can tell where this is going. Rough, tough Teagan and the sweet, needy Jessie marry so the cold, cruel in-laws cannot take the children. It is a fine romance with the requisite gun battles to save the ranch from dastardly hands. We do have "Texas Rain" (LP F THO J), which is the first in the series. There will probably be a couple more books as there are two more McMurray siblings.

"Where Hope Begins" (362.88 SOF A) by Alysia Sofios is the story of the family of Marcus Wesson, his wife, Elizabeth, and 17 children; all who lived sequestered in a social and emotional prison of Wesson's creation. None of the children ever had a childhood — going to school, playing with friends, going on dates — all were forbidden.

Together, they endured his tyrannical reign of physical, sexual and mental abuse. Then, in 2004, as a family confrontation erupted into a harrowing standoff, with police and SWAT teams descending on the small blue house on West Hammond Avenue, Marcus Wesson murdered nine of his children.

The television reporter who got the first tip about Wesson's arrest, Alysia Sofios, would ultimately cover the case through Wesson's trial. She quickly learned that the surviving female family members — Elizabeth, Rosie, Kiani and Gypsy — had nowhere to go but the streets. Torn between journalistic ob-

jectivity and her desire to help them, Sofios risked her job and her life by taking them into her home and helping integrate them into society. Here, these brave survivors candidly recount their traumatic past and look to a bright future that now holds plans and dreams they never thought possible — from college to careers to families of their own. This description is from the book flap.

Another dreadful story is the Amish schoolhouse shooting. "Think No Evil" 364.152 BEL J0 by Jonas Beiler is the story of that tragedy. Deborah Tannen writes "You Were Always Mom's Favortie!" (306.875 TAN D) and it is the stories of sisters — how they connect, love or hate each other. There is a deep emotional tie between sisters and whether you love them or not, this book should shed some light upon the subject.

"Hello, Cupcake" (641.865 TAC K) by Karen Tack and Alan Richardson gives you instructions of making and decorating cupcakes. I understand that there are sweet shoppes that have nothing but cupcakes — I think there is one in Midland that you can order the specialty cupcakes for a special occasion.

Alana Stewart (ex-wife of Rod Stewart) was Farrah Fawcett's closest friend. In "My Journey with Farrah" (791.430 STE A), she writes of that friendship and the illness that ultimately took Farrah's life.

Howard County Library is open from 9 to 6, Monday through Friday and Saturday from 10 until 2. The Internet/Video room closes one-half hour before closing and Saturdays it is closed from 12-1. The library is located at 500 S. Main St. Our phone number is 264-2260.

Hollis McCright is director of the Howard County Library.



HOLLIS
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Parent's Corner

Remembering 'The Sandpiper'

Recently, I was reading a copy of "The Sandpiper" by Robert Peterson, which is a story that really touched my heart. It is a true story that happened more than 20 years ago.

Allow me to share some comments of the author: I drive to the beach whenever the world begins to close in on me. There I saw a young



DARRELL
RYLAN

girl with eyes as blue as the sea building a sand castle. "Hello," she said. I answered with a nod, not really in the mood to bother with a small child.

"I'm building," she said.

"I see that. What is it?" I asked, not really caring.

"Oh, I don't know, I just like the feel of sand."

That sounds good, I thought, and slipped off my shoes. A sandpiper glided by.

"That's joy," the child said.

"It's what?"

"It's joy. My mama says sandpipers come to bring us joy."

As the bird went gliding down the beach I thought to myself, "Good-bye joy and hello pain!" I was depressed and my life seemed completely out of balance.

"What's your name?" She wouldn't give up.

"Robert," I answered. "I'm Robert Peterson."

"Mine's Wendy, I'm six." "Hi, Wendy" I said.

She giggled and said, "You're funny."

In spite of my gloom, I laughed too and walked on. Her musical giggle followed me.

"Come again, Mr. P," she called. "We'll have another happy day."

The next few days consisted of caring for my ailing mother. I think I need a sandpiper, I said to myself, gathering up my coat.

The ever-changing balm of the seashore awaited me. The breeze was chilly but I strode along, trying to recapture the serenity I needed. Suddenly I heard, "Hello, Mr. P."

I looked up with a twinge of annoyance at the sight of Wendy. "Where do you live?" I asked.

"Over there." She pointed toward a row of summer cottages.

Strange, I thought, in winter.

"Where do you go to school?"

"I don't go to school. Mommy says we're on vacation."

She chattered little girl talk as we strolled up

See RYAN, Page 7A

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The youth in this area have been selected to qualify for a learning trip to Florida this summer in order to expand their scientific knowledge through hands on experience. A selection of 7th, 8th and 9th grade students from the Big Spring Independent School District are looking to the community for their educational support.

This once in a lifetime opportunity can give these select few individuals the chance to visualize future employment and learning opportunities. It is, however, an expense that few families can undertake individually. Therefore, on behalf of the parents of these children, we have grouped together in order to endeavor in raising the funds so that each child is able to attend. It is through the generosity of local businesses and individuals that we will endeavor to further the education of these deserving students through this exceptional educational program provided by Science in Motion. Each child must raise \$1800.00 before April 1st in order to attend. I know that this is short notice and seems like a large task, but we students are determined to raise enough money so that all who are invited to attend are able. We are requesting any donations that you would be willing to provide us with, your support toward our educational endeavor would be greatly appreciated.

This trip all takes place June 21st to 24th, 2010. We will get on a charter bus here at the Jr. High at midnight of the 21st and go to Dallas where we will board a plane that will take us to Florida. We will then catch the plane on the 24th, fly back to Dallas and get back on the charter bus that will bring us back home, arriving on the 25th, early in the morning.

I personally would like to thank you for giving our students this opportunity.

Vicky Bloodworth
Science in Motion Team Leader

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RYAN

Continued from Page 5A

the beach, but my mind was on other things. When I left for home, Wendy said it had been a happy day. Feeling surprisingly better, I smiled at her and agreed.

Three weeks later, I rushed to my beach in a state of near panic. I was in no mood to greet Wendy.

"Look, if you don't mind," I said crossly as Wendy caught up with me, "I'd rather be alone today."

She seemed unusually pale and out of breath. "Why?" she asked.

I turned to her and shouted, "Because my mother died!" I said abruptly.

"Oh," she said quietly, "then this is a bad day."

"Yes," I said.

"Did it hurt?" she inquired.

"Did what hurt?" I was exasperated with her and with myself.

"When she died?"

"Of course it hurt!" I snapped and strode off.

A month or so after that, when I next went to the beach, she wasn't there. Feeling guilty, ashamed and admitting to myself I missed her, I went up to the cottage after my walk and knocked at the door. A drawn looking young woman with honey-colored hair opened the door.

"Hello," I said, "I'm Robert Peterson. I missed your little girl today and wondered where she was."

"Oh yes, Mr. Peterson, Wendy spoke of you so much. I'm afraid I allowed her to bother you. If she was a nuisance, please, ac-

cept my apologies."

"Not at all — she's a delightful child." I said, suddenly realizing that I meant what I had just said.

"Wendy died last week, Mr. Peterson. She had leukemia. Maybe she didn't tell you."

Struck dumb, I groped for a chair. I had to catch my breath.

"She loved this beach, so when she asked to come, we couldn't say no. She seemed so much better here and had a lot of what she called happy days. But the last few weeks, she declined rapidly..." Her voice faltered, "She left something for you."

She handed me a smeared envelope with "MR. P" printed in bold childish letters. Inside was a drawing in bright crayon hues, a yellow beach, a

blue sea and a brown bird. Underneath was carefully printed: A SANDPIPER TO BRING YOU JOY.

With tears welling up in my eyes and a heart that had almost forgotten to love, I uttered, "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry," and together we wept.

The precious little picture is framed now and hangs in my study. Six words — one for each year of her life — that speak to me of harmony, courage and undemanding love. A gift from a child with sea blue eyes and hair the color of sand who taught me the gift of love.

Thanks, Wendy!

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

Elusive monkey still on the lam

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — In the hours after a monkey on the lam fell into a woman's pool and then swiped some fruit from her backyard tree, fans of the wily primate cheered it for avoiding capture.

"I sure hope 'they' don't catch you!" wrote a woman named Kathleen. "Why can't 'they' just leave you alone?"

Why, indeed?

The rhesus macaque monkey has avoided capture for nearly a year. Authorities don't know where the animal came from, but some believe it could have gotten separated from a troupe of wild monkeys in an Ocala-area state park, about 120 miles (195 kilometers) north of St. Petersburg. Another possibility: the animal could have escaped from an unpermitted owner.

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Stargazer: Lunar math of the Moon's phases

Only in the night sky does a quarter equal a half and a half is full. It's not new math — it's lunar math. When we see a first quarter Moon, it looks like a half moon, so perhaps you've wondered why it's called quarter.

Like planets, the Moon emits no light but rather reflects sunlight as it orbits Earth every four weeks (more precisely, 29.53 days). When it's between Earth and Sun at new Moon, we don't see it as the Sun illuminates the side facing away from us.

A day or so after new Moon, we begin seeing a slight sliver soon after sunset, called a waxing crescent — waxing because it gets more illuminated each night and crescent because of its appearance from our

perspective.

In a week, when it has traveled a quarter of the way around Earth, its 1st quarter phase looks half-lighted to us.

Then for the next week as the Moon continues to wax, it appears more than half illuminated, but less than full — a phase called gibbous (Latin for hump).

After two weeks, the Moon has completed half its journey and is on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun which illuminates the entire half of the Moon facing us — called a full Moon.

Then for the next two weeks, the Moon become less illuminated each night, called a waning Moon. During the third week it is in its waning gibbous phase on its way to 3rd

quarter (sometimes called last quarter) when it again appears half illuminated.

And during the last week of its sojourn, it is in its waning crescent phase (seen in the morning sky) until it again reaches new Moon and starts its next monthly cycle.

Regardless of how much of its surface we happen to be seeing on any given night (or day), half of the Moon, just like half of the Earth, is always illuminated — whichever half is facing the Sun.

Sky Calendar.
• March 21 Sunday: Saturn is at opposition -- on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun -- when it rises at sunset, is up all night, and sets at sunrise.
• 23 Tuesday: The

Moon is at 1st quarter.

• 24 Wednesday evening: The Moon is to the lower right of Mars, and then to the planet's lower left the next night.

• 28 Sunday, all night: The Moon accompanies Saturn across the sky.

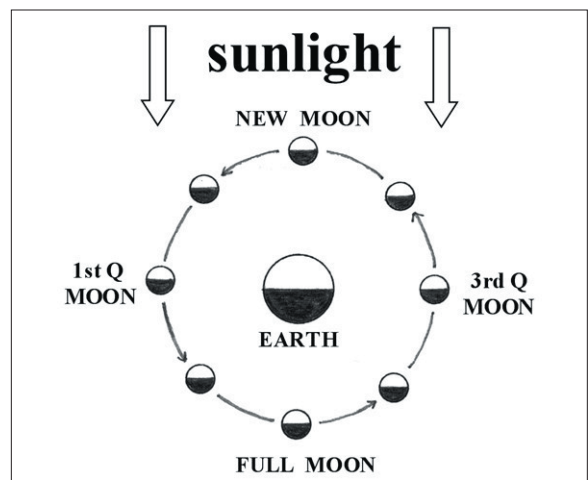
• 29 Monday morning: The full Moon is called Lenten Moon, Sap Moon, Crow Moon, and Worm Moon.

• Apr. 3 Saturday morning: The gibbous Moon is less than two moonwidths above the star Antares in the south.

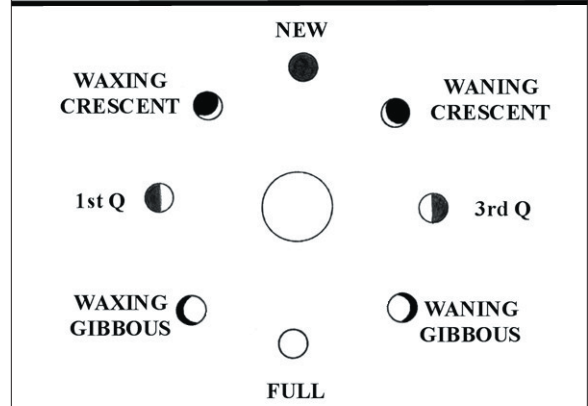
• 6 Tuesday: The Moon is at 3rd quarter.

• 8 Thursday evening: Mercury, at its best for this appearance, is to the lower right of Venus low in the west at dusk.

— Naked-eye Planets. (The Sun, Moon, and planets rise in the east and set in the west due to Earth's west-to-east rotation on its axis.) Evening: Saturn is low



Moon in orbit around the Sun



Moon as it appears from Earth

in the east with Mars high overhead; Venus is very low in the west after sunset. Morning: Saturn, low in the west, is now the only morn-

ing planet.

Stargazer appears every other week. Paul Derrick is an amateur astronomer who lives in Waco. Contact him at 918 N. 30th, Waco, 76707, (254) 753-6920 or paul-derrickwaco@aol.com. See the Stargazer Web site at stargazerpaul.com



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

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

The Cancer moon is a call to settle into a sense of home. For some, this is less about a location than about a state of mind and heart. Cancer is the sign of the crab, many species of which carry their homes on their backs. What or who fosters a feeling of home in you? If it's a person, pull this one close and share your feelings.

HOLIDAY
MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll be in demand, and even more so when you seem busy. Instead of volunteering your schedule readily, try the old "I'm sure we can do something at some point."

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Loved ones ask for nothing; you give them everything. Why? Because you're feeling flush and you genuinely enjoy being generous in the extreme. And also because the more you give the more

you get.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Know your exceptional qualities. You'll be celebrated for them, but if you don't know what they are, you'll think all the attention is misplaced. Be assured, if someone celebrates you, there is a reason.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). New alliances, particularly with earth signs Taurus, Virgo or Capricorn, will help you get a project off the ground. Determine what you'd like to get from a situation, and then cater your giving to a specific direction.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The giddy feeling of new love is featured — but this is not about a romantic relationship with a person. The truth is that you are enraptured by a project and more excited about its prospects than you've been about anything in a while.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll offer to assist someone who will be resistant to your help. Pride is the main reason. You feel certain that without support, this person will suffer. Push the issue slightly

more than you normally would.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A tense situation suddenly feels manageable. You can and will handle this with small and certain actions. One thing at a time and this problem will soon be just another amusing anecdote for the files.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your value is not dependent on how many people are "friending" you on a social networking site — or in real life, for that matter. You determine your value, and popularity has nothing to do with it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). An impromptu strategy will be even more effective than one you took hours and days to plan out. Trust those instincts. You won't regret acting out of self-confidence.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). People will want to hang out with you, but you're not in a "hanging out" kind of mood. It's nothing against your potential company. It's just that you'd prefer to go to bed tonight knowing you accomplished some-

thing tangible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Magical connections will override any scheduling or communication difficulties that may crop up. Your family will feel stronger just knowing that you are somewhere in the world loving them.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll be inspired by complexity — good thing, since there's lots of it around you. Everyone in your vicinity feels your positive charge. And your observations help others open their eyes.

T O D A Y ' S BIRTHDAY (March 24). Things get very simple for you. You cut out a lot of mess, confusion and wasted time by getting down to basics. You realize what you want to create and make it happen. Love is high on your list. April brings magical connections and romance. You're like Midas in June — the projects you touch turn to gold. Cancer and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 34, 30 and 14.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "The

whole eighth house thing is so confusing to me. I just don't get it. Would you please explain?"

Certainly. First, it may help to know that Scorpio the Scorpion is the natural occupant of the eighth house. Before the discovery of Pluto, this constellation was signified not by the scorpion but by the Phoenix, a mythological firebird that is continually burned but never dies. Instead, it rises up from its own ashes and is reborn. Second, it takes about seven years for all the cells in the human body to be replaced, so that by every eighth year of your life, you are literally a different person. This, really, is the essence of the eighth house. Life is a never-ending cycle of creation and destruction, right down to our molecules. Trees bud in spring and shed their leaves in winter. Empires rise and fall, as do people. By determining which planets are in the eighth house of your astrological chart, you can gain valuable insight into the recurring patterns that are present in your

life. We are constantly growing and changing as individuals, rising up from the ashes of our old selves and getting a second chance.

C E L E B R I T Y PROFILES: Football quarterback extraordinaire Peyton Manning was born under the fiery sign of the ram — perfect, since he's gone helmet to helmet with some of the greatest athletes on the planet and has proved himself repeatedly. Jupiter was also in Aries the year Manning was born, endowing him with the warrior spirit. He's at his best when the game is tough. A Capricorn moon indicates a ruthless work ethic.

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Annie's Mailbox®

friend into town to meet my mom.

I felt that was insensitive. Then, at Christmas, he set up a system so his children can e-mail their grandmother and she will receive it via the regular postal system.

It was a nice idea, but most of the letters have been from John, containing news of his engagement (replete with photos of the ring) and, most recently, information about his upcoming marriage and the extensive remodel of the house he shared with my sister.

These letters were clearly upsetting to my mom.

For the 25 years my sister was married to John, she lived quite modestly.

They couldn't afford much. She often wore my hand-me-downs. John was never very sensitive to my sister's needs.

Nor to his children,

apparently, because they were shocked when he announced his plans to marry at their family Christmas gathering.

The children had no idea, and it was quite painful for them.

I say John is acting immaturely. There is no need to give us all these details, especially my mom.

While she expected him to carry on with his life, this is a bit much.

I think he is being inconsiderate, insensitive and boorish, but

Mom doesn't want to rock the boat. Is it OK for me to e-mail John and ask him to please stop sending letters with the details of his love life? — *Enough Already Sister*

Dear Sister: Yes, provided you can do it in a civil, semi-friendly way.

Try this: "I appreciate that you are trying to keep us informed about your life.

However, you may not realize how painful it is for us, especially my mother, to hear all the details of your upcoming marriage and home renovations.

I know it is not your intention to hurt any of us, so perhaps you could share a little less information. Please know we all wish you the best."

Dear Annie: I am a 57-year-old female, widowed twice. My adult daughter lives 30 minutes away.

I have a male cousin who is divorced and lives nearby.

We have been spending time together and really enjoy each other's company.

My daughter feels this is morally wrong and is giving me a lot of grief about it.

She thinks if we had met by chance, it would be OK, but not if we are related.

I'm not entirely sure what the relationship

is, but we are not first cousins.

Our grandmothers were sisters. Previously, the only times our paths crossed were at funerals and weddings. What do you think? — *Kissing Cousin*

Dear Cousin: If your grandmothers were sisters, that makes you second cousins.

We see no harm in dating your second cousin. It is not against the law, and we assume you are not planning on having children together, so there is no genetic prohibition.

Our Biblical ancestors were often married cousins. We hope your daughter can get over her judgmental attitude and be happy for you.

Dear Annie: This is for "Making Sure Zipper Is Up," my fellow neurotic who also always checks his zipper in public.

The easiest and most

discreet way of doing this is to develop the habit of placing your right hand on the belt buckle, and then using the tip of your little finger to feel for the fastener of the zipper. No one will see. — *London*

Dear London: Thanks to you and all the others who wrote.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, long-time editors of the Annie's Mailbox column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Ste. 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

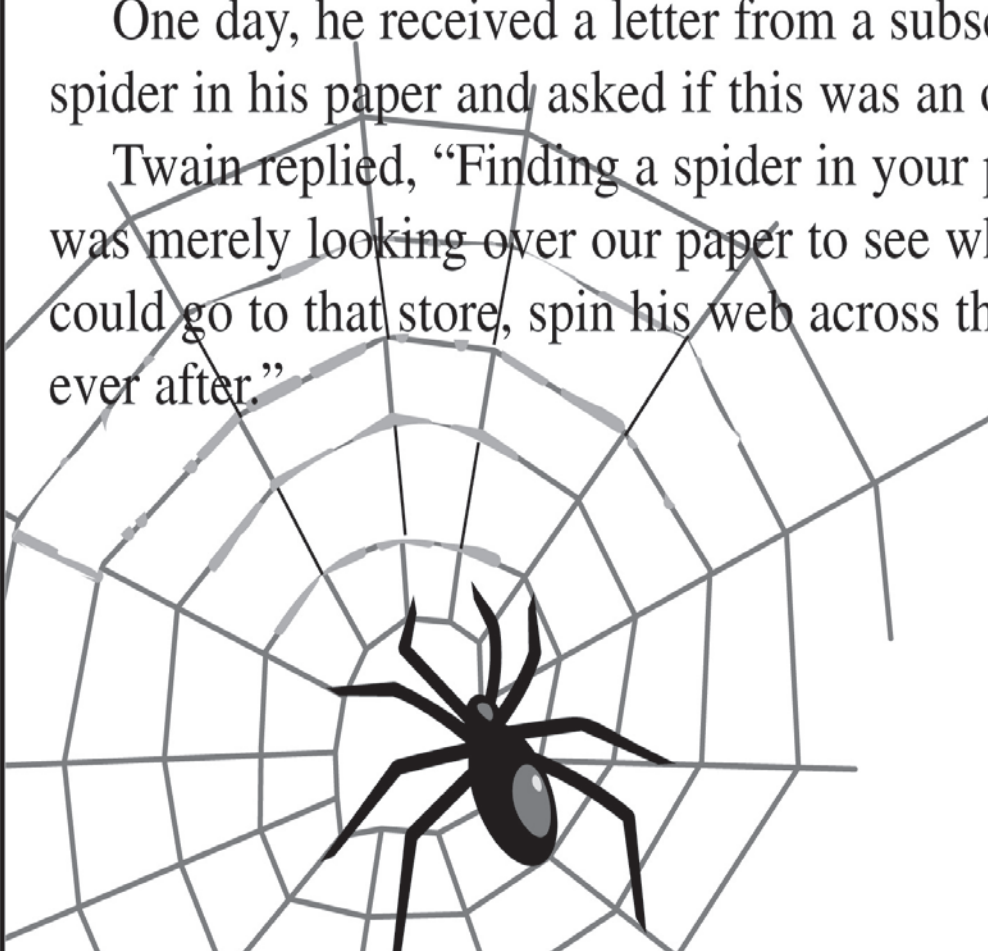
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