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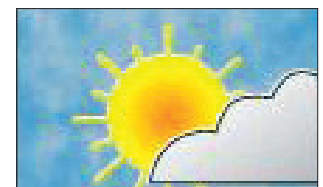
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BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY
 DECEMBER 21, 2010



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HERALD photo/Steve Reagan
Officials say more than 9,000 people have visited the 14th annual Comanche Trail Festival of Lights since it opened its holiday run Dec. 15. Long-time event director Pat Simmons said 9,560 people from 20 states have visited the attraction. The festival, which continues nightly through Dec. 31 at Comanche Trail Park, is free to the public, although donations will be accepted. Visitors are asked to enter the park at the Whipkey Drive entrance off Highway 87.

Grisly discovery

Possible portion of human skull found in northern Howard County

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

Officials with the Howard County Sheriff's Office are investigating the discovery of what may be part of a human skull Monday morning in the northern part of the county. According to Sheriff Stan Parker, his office received a tip regarding the item around 11 a.m. Monday, but declined

to go into detail as to the location of the find.

"All I can say right now is it was found at a location in northern Howard County," Parker said.

"It appears to be a piece of a human skull, but it will have to be sent to a specialist before



Parker

we'll know for sure. Right now we're working with the Justice of the Peace office to decide where it needs to be sent."

Parker also declined to discuss the details of the call his office received regarding the discovery.

"It's an open investigation, at we're currently at a point where I can't release much in the way of details," Parker

said. "If it is a human skull, we don't yet know the identity of the person it belonged to at this time. Also, there haven't been any arrests as a result of the discovery."

Parker urged local residents to be patient with the case, which could take a great deal of time to develop.

"The specialists that examine these sorts of remains take quite a while, so it could

be some time before we hear back from them," Parker said. "Until then, we'll continue to investigate the matter with the information we have, but details will most likely come slowly."

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

Offices to close for holidays; emergency services available

By **STEVE REAGAN**
 Staff Writer

Most municipal and county offices will be closed Thursday and Friday for the Christmas holiday, officials announced.

The city of Big Spring will close all offices, including the landfill and compost facility, according to a news release. There will be no sanitation pickups on these days.

In addition, city offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 31, in observance of the New Year's Day holiday.

Howard County will close its offices at 3 p.m. Wednesday and the offices will remain closed Thursday and Friday for Christmas. Unlike the city, however, county offices will remain open on New Year's Eve.

City and county emergency offices

— police, sheriff, EMS and fire — will maintain normal operations throughout the holidays.

Howard County public schools, plus Howard College, have dismissed classes for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Big Spring, Coahoma and Forsan school districts will resume classes Jan. 4. Spring semester classes at Howard College begin Jan. 18, officials said.

Texas likely to gain more House seats

By **APRIL CASTRO**
 Associated Press

AUSTIN — A heavy influx of new residents, many of whom are Hispanics, has Texas poised to gain more congressional seats than any other state, and Tuesday's announcement of the exact number begins what figures to be a politically divisive process on how to divvy

them up. The big question to be answered when the U.S. Census Bureau releases key population figures for reapportionment is whether the state will get three or four new seats in the U.S. House. Either way, the second-largest state is expected to have the nation's highest gains.

Although Texas Republicans have

fortified their already strong hold on the state Legislature with landslide victories in the November election, they won't have unchecked authority to draw the state's congressional map to benefit the GOP.

Texas is one of the states whose redistricting plans require

See **SEATS**, Page 3A

INDEX

Comics	6B
Classified	3-5B
Features	5-6A
Obituaries	2A
Opinion	4A
Sports	1-2B

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File Photo

Coahoma quarterback Tanner Ruiz was named District 2-2A's Offensive MVP after a season where he helped lead the Bulldogs to the playoffs.

Coahoma, Stanton, Forsan rake in honors

BY ADAM COLEMAN

Sports Editor

Coahoma quarterback Tanner Ruiz and Stanton linebacker Grayson Gray won District 2-2A Offensive and Defensive MVP honors with the all-district selections being announced this week.

The Coahoma Bulldogs, including Ruiz, had 12 players earn honors.

Dakota Griffith was named first team running back, Hunter Williams was named first team tight end and Josh Castilaw, off his all-state selection, was named first team center.

Justin Coker nabbed second team fullback and Sheigh Cravens was second team receiver. Jacob Echavarria made the second team as an offensive lineman.

On the defensive side of the ball, Jason Martinez and Skyler Coates made the first team as linebackers. Braden Iden made it at defensive end. Pete Acosta, also an all-state selection, made the first team as defensive back. Brent Wright made the second team as a defensive end and Sheigh Cravens and Dakota Griffith are on the second team as defensive backs. Griffith also grabbed second team kicker.

Stanton was well-represented on the list. Including Gray, the Buffs had 12 players earn honors, too

The dependable Tyler Fulton made the first team at quarterback, standout running back Blake Evans and receiver Thomas Ramos, tight end Ryan Brantley and Gray and Cody Holt also made the first team.

Running back Andres Chavez, receiver Adam Montez, offensive linemen Dillon Kennedy and Jorge Reyna, Evans as a linebacker, Kennedy as a defensive lineman, Reyna as a defensive end made the first team as defensive players.

Rene Padron, Andrew Chapa, Brantley as a defensive end and Ramos and Montez as defensive backs made the second team. Ramos also was first team kicker.

Wideout Kolten Self was the only first team selection for the Forsan Buffaloes. Ty Johnson made the second team as a running back.

Linebacker Patrick Robles and defensive lineman Copeland Riddell made the second team.

Idalou's Nick Gary, who led the Wildcats to a state championship this season, was named District MVP. Idalou's Matthew Sales and Bryce Schilling earned Newcomer of the Year and Utility Player of the Year, respectively. Idalou head coach Johnny Taylor was named Coach of the Year.

Coahoma and Stanton made the playoffs this season and while Forsan didn't, the Buffs got two wins in district play in 2A after getting none in Class A last season.

Romo status unclear for Cowboys-Cardinals

The Associated Press

IRVING (AP) — The return of Tony Romo remains on hold.

Since Romo broke his left collarbone Oct. 25, the Dallas Cowboys have pointed toward having him back in the lineup this week. However, team owner Jerry Jones said Sunday he was not optimistic and Monday interim coach Jason Garrett was very noncommittal.

"We'll just see how he does tomorrow, see how he feels," Garrett said.

The Cowboys are usually off on Tuesdays, but will be practicing because they play Saturday night in Arizona. They only have two games left and can't make the playoffs, so it seems pointless to take even a minimal risk of Romo getting hurt.

Besides, Jon Kitna has done just fine as the starting quarterback. Their statistics are quite similar, with the notable exception of Dallas going 1-5 in Romo's starts and 4-4 with Kitna. There's no quarterback controversy, though, because Kitna is 38 and Romo remains the face of the franchise.

If anything, the Cowboys would be better off checking out third-stringer Stephen McGee just to see if the second-year QB is a keeper.

Dallas could have placed Romo on injured reserve a long time ago, ending his season and freeing up a roster spot for someone else. But Jones was

holding out hope that Romo could return, especially since all he needed was rest, not surgery, to repair the bone on his non-throwing side.

The outlook dimmed after seeing Romo throw before the game Sunday.

"Frankly, he's still having sensitivity there," Jones said. "We're a little behind where I thought we would be on how healthy he is. ... He's not ready to play. That doesn't mean he might not get out there throw and practice, but he's not ready."

Another issue is defining readiness.

When a guy is slightly banged up, he usually has to make it through one practice to prove he can be effective in a game. Romo has missed eight games and hasn't practiced at all since the injury. The Cowboys are expected to practice in pads Tuesday, so that could be a stiff test for him.

Then again, he's the most experienced guy in this offense, which Garrett coordinated for 3½ years before getting promoted. So he should be able to pick things up quickly — if he's healthy enough.

"I think you want to see any player feel comfortable practicing before you put them in a game-type situation, regardless of their experience," Garrett said.

How long does it take to get comfortable?

See **COWBOYS**, Page 2B

Mavs' end Heat 12-game streak

The Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The streak-busters of the NBA hail from Dallas.

And for whatever reason, unless there's a championship at stake, the Miami Heat simply cannot beat the Mavericks.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 26 points, Jason Terry had all of his 19 in the final 11 minutes, and the Mavericks held LeBron James scoreless in the first half on the way to ending Miami's 12-game winning streak with a 98-96 victory on Monday night.

It was Dallas' 14th straight regular-season win over the Heat, and the Mavericks had been the most recent team to beat Miami this season, too. Dallas has snapped six opponent winning streaks of at least five games this season — including a pair of 12-gamers, against San Antonio on Nov. 26 and now Miami's.

"I don't make a huge deal out of the streak," Mavs coach Rick Carlisle said. "We are just trying to play solid basketball and win as many games as we can."

Terry has spoken often about how losing to Miami in the 2006 NBA finals still upsets him.

So while shooting at the East end of the court — the one over which the Heat championship banner softly sways — he put on a fourth-quarter show.

His biggest blow was a 3-pointer with 1:25 left, putting Dallas up 89-85 after Nowitzki airballed a 3-pointer but Miami couldn't get the rebound.

Miami got within 91-90 on a three-point play by James, but that was the last gasp.

"Jet finally showed up in the fourth," Nowitzki said. "That's what he does. He's our finisher. He's our closer. He got hot."

Miami was within one point four times in the final 6:27, but Dallas never relinquished the lead.

"Couple of crazy bounces ... and they capitalized," Heat forward Chris Bosh said. "That's how the night went for us."

Caron Butler scored 13 for Dallas, which won despite giving up a 17-0 run in the first half and a 13-0 run in the third quarter.

Dwyane Wade scored 22 points, while James and Bosh each scored 19 for Miami. By the time Wade hit a meaningless 3-pointer with 0.8 seconds remaining, James was already tugging at his jersey and heading off the floor.

"All year, we're going to continue to get better, to improve to get to the elite level," Wade said. "We're 30 games in. These elite teams, they've been playing together for a long time."

Mario Chalmers had 13 points and James Jones added 10 for Miami. Shawn Marion finished with 13 rebounds and Tyson Chandler grabbed 10 for Dallas.

Terry simply took over in the final 12 minutes, shooting 6 of 10 from the field. His teammates

See **MAVS**, Page 2B

Obituaries

Maria G. Padron

Maria G. Padron, 75, of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 20, 2010, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel with Pastor Burt Gusman officiating.



She was born Dec. 6, 1935. She married Roberto Padron on May 30, 1951. She had worked at Webb Air Force Base and Fiberflex. She was a member of El Centro Baptist Church and was a lifetime resident of Big Spring.

She is survived by one daughter, Marina Ramirez of Midland; one granddaughter, Mercedes Ramirez of Midland; one brother, Edward Ramirez of Big Spring; one sister, Eulalia Viera of Big Spring; and a number of nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Roberto Padron; four brothers, Mike, Pablo, Sixto and Chuy Ramirez; and two sisters, Inez Natividad and Cipriana Rodriguez.

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

Paid obituary

Michael Garcia

Michael Garcia, 58, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 18, 2010, in a local hospital. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2010, at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Dwayne Wheat officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Crematory.



The family will receive friends from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2010, at the funeral home.

He was born June 16, 1952, in San Antonio and married Ann Bair on Dec. 3, 1973, in Augsburg, Germany.

He was a member of Berea Baptist Church. Survivors include his wife, Ann Garcia of Big Spring; four sons, Michael Garcia Jr. and wife Elizabeth of England, Jason Garcia and wife Marsha of Yorkville, N.Y., David Garcia of Austin and Peter Garcia and wife Krystal of The Colony; one daughter, Ramona Garcia of Big Spring; his mother, Guadalupe Garcia of San Antonio; three brothers; one sister; and seven grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his father, Eliseo John Garcia; and a grandson.

The family suggests memorials be made to Muscular Dystrophy, MDA, 6315 Fly Road No. 102, East Syracuse, N.Y. 13057.

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

Virginia 'Virgie' Munoz

Virginia "Virgie" Munoz, 53, of Big Spring died Sunday, Dec. 19, 2010, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Vigil Services will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral mass will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church with burial at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.



She was born Sept. 11, 1957, in Big Spring to Adelinda and Oscar Munoz Sr. She lived most of her life in Big Spring and San Antonio. She had been employed by the Big Spring Herald, Juvenile Probation

Department of Howard County and the Big Spring Police Department.

She is survived by her father, Oscar Munoz Sr. of Schertz; two brothers, Oscar Munoz Jr. of Schertz and Rene Munoz of West Jordan, Utah; one sister, Patty White and husband Danny of Abilene; and a number of cousins, uncles and aunts.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Adelinda Munoz; and one sister, Maria Teresa Munoz.

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

Jack Hanson

Jack Hanson, 87, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2010, at the Veterans Administration Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Police blotter

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

- PATRICK KESLER, 32, of 1600 Lancaster, was arrested Monday on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid with a previous conviction.

- JUAN ANTONIO SALAZAR, 17, of 703 W. 18th St., was arrested Monday on charges of reckless damage or destruction and consumption of alcohol by a minor.

- MARIO ILDEFONSO SALAZAR, 21, of 1604 E. 11th Place, was arrested Monday on a charge of reckless damage or destruction.

- EVELYN JOYCE HAWKINS, 52, of 810 Cherry, was arrested Monday on a warrant for harassment.

- GARY DEAM FOLK, 44, of Odessa, was arrested Monday on a charge of shoplifting.

- FRANK FIERRO JR., 62, of 603 N.W. Fifth St., was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.

- STEFAN LAMAR ALEXANDER, 19, of Lamesa, was arrested Monday on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

- STUART RYAN SHADE, 21, of 1103 E. 13th St., was arrested Monday on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

- KRYSTAL MICHELLE OLIVER, 25, of 3509 E. Interstate Highway 20 Lot 27, was arrested Monday on charges of possession of a controlled substance (two counts), possession of marijuana – two ounces or less and possession of a dangerous drug.

- JOSHUA CLIFFORD OLIVER, 26, of 3509 E. Interstate Highway 20 Lot 27, was arrested Monday on a charge of possession of a dangerous drug.

- BURGLARY OF A BUILDING was reported in the 2600 block of Crestline.

- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported: In the 4000 block of Dixon.

- In the 1900 block of Wasson Road.

- In the 400 block of E. Fourth Street.

- THEFT was reported:

- In the 800 block of S. Scurry.

- In the 2500 block of Cindy.

- In the 200 block of W. FM 700.

- In the 2500 block of Barksdale.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 76 inmates at the time of this report.

- MICHAEL JOSEPH LEDFORD, 32, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a revocation of probation for possession of marijuana.

- EVELYN HAWKINS, 52, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of harassment.

- EDWARD GLENN GUERRERO, 32, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on capias warrants for violation of a promise to appear, no driver's license and speeding.

- GARY DEAN FOLK, 44, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of theft.

- EDGAR EDUARDO ALVAREZ, 25, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the Glasscock County Sheriff's Office on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.

- STEFAN LAMAR ALEXANDER, 19, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

- FRANK FIERRO JR., 62, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

- STUART RYAN SHADE, 21, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

- KRYSTAL MICHELLE BURGANS, 25, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on charges of possession of a controlled substance (two counts), possession of a dangerous drug and possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

- JOSHUA CLIFFORD OLIVER, 26, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of a controlled substance.

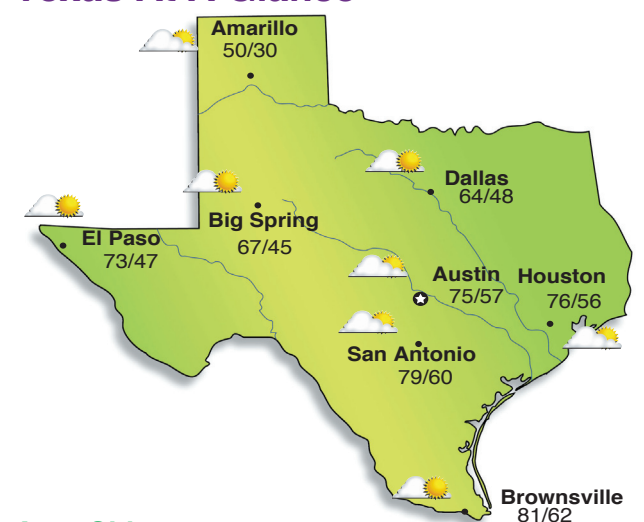
- SAMUEL REY SEGUNDO, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge

Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Wed 12/22	Thu 12/23	Fri 12/24	Sat 12/25	Sun 12/26
 67/45 Sunshine and clouds mixed. High 67F. Winds NE at 10 to 15 mph.	 71/39 Occasional showers possible. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the upper 30s.	 60/28 Mostly sunny. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the upper 20s.	 57/28 Sunny. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	 62/33 Mainly sunny. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM	Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM	Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM

Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	63	45	pt sunny
Amarillo	50	30	cloudy
Austin	75	57	cloudy
Beaumont	72	54	cloudy
Brownsville	81	62	pt sunny
Brownwood	70	50	pt sunny
Corpus Christi	79	61	pt sunny
Corsicana	63	49	cloudy
Dallas	64	48	pt sunny
Del Rio	76	56	pt sunny
El Paso	73	47	pt sunny
Fort Stockton	76	49	mst sunny
Gainesville	59	40	pt sunny
Greenville	60	43	pt sunny
Houston	76	56	cloudy
Kingsville	82	61	pt sunny
Livingston	69	52	cloudy
Longview	61	45	cloudy
Lubbock	61	37	pt sunny
Lufkin	66	52	cloudy
Midland	68	49	mst sunny
Raymondville	84	60	pt sunny
Rosenberg	76	56	cloudy
San Antonio	79	60	cloudy
San Marcos	76	58	cloudy
Sulphur Springs	59	45	pt sunny
Sweetwater	64	46	pt sunny
Tyler	61	45	cloudy
Weatherford	61	43	pt sunny
Wichita Falls	58	37	pt sunny

of minor in consumption of alcohol.

- ELEUTERIO PADRON, 61, was arrested Tuesday by DPS on a charge of public intoxication.

- JIMMY RAY WATSON, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of minor in consumption of alcohol.

- CADE AARON HOLLANDSWORTH, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of minor in consumption of alcohol.

- CHRISTOPHER KENT BROOKS, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of minor in consumption of alcohol.

- HUTTON TAYLOR EVANS, 19, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of minor in consumption of alcohol.

- MICHAEL JOSEPH MARTINEZ, 27, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

Fire/EMS

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

- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 700 block of Tulane. Service refused.

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Donnelly. One person was transported to SMMC.

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COWBOYS

Continued from Page 1B

player to player," he said. When asked why the Cowboys haven't just given up on Romo this season, Garrett said, "It's just important to evaluate on a day-to-day ba-

sis." Even he laughed at his evasiveness. The question of how hard Dallas should be trying has been debated among fans lately. While they are rooting

for a better draft pick, Jones wants to have a competitive enough team to sell seats and luxury suites at his \$1.2 billion stadium and Garrett is trying to shed the interim la-

bel. The Cowboys beat Washington 33-30 on Sunday to improve to 4-2 since Garrett took over. "We try our best to win every week," Garrett said.

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

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

MAVS

Continued from Page 1B

shot 3 of 10, Nowitzki going 0 of 5. Somehow, it was enough. "Bottom line is they made bigger plays down the stretch more consistently than we did," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. The first half had about as many story lines as it had minutes. Dallas came out flying, running out to a 14-2 lead and looking every bit like the team that has dominated Miami since the start of the 2004-05 season, and the Mavericks' zone defense was giving the Heat fits. "They can get you off-balance," James said. "Definitely." Miami trailed 23-10 when James and Bosh checked out of the game for the first time. When they returned, Miami led 27-23. It was 17 unanswered for the Heat, Wade leading the charge, personally accounting for the first 15 points — scoring nine of them, and setting up 3-pointers by Jones and Chalmers, the last of which put Miami ahead for the first time early in the second quarter.

James played 12 minutes in the first half, going to the bench with 6:01 left until intermission with three fouls. A late Miami spurt, fueled by Mike Miller's first appearance of the season, gave the Heat a 44-43 lead at halftime. "Just shows the depth we have on this team," James said. Miller checked in for the first time with 3:52 left in the half, the crowd greeting him with one of its loudest ovations of the season. Miller missed all four of his shots, all from beyond the 3-point arc, but grabbed three rebounds on what'll go down as a bizarre Heat possession. Most NBA possessions last less than 24 seconds, with one or two shots. The Heat had one trip last 52 seconds — with eight shots. Miller had a defensive rebound to start the possession, two more offensive rebounds to keep it alive, and after seven misses, Chalmers hit a 3 with 1:53 left for a 42-39 lead. James got his first points with a 3-pointer early in the third — starting a 13-0 run that ended with the league's two-time reigning MVP making another 3 to give Miami a 61-55 lead. James struck again at the buzzer to end the third, his jumper over Jason Kidd putting the Heat up by three, then scored the first points of the final period for a 70-65 lead.

Texans try to regroup after latest tough loss

The Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — With their playoff hopes all but gone, the Houston Texans hoped to win their last three games, finish at .500 and salvage something positive out of a disappointing year. Instead, their seventh loss in eight games has guaranteed another losing season.

"We've lost some tough football games, so it's very disappointing," coach Gary Kubiak said. "We've still got a lot to play for these last two weeks and we need to find a way to man up and play better."

The Texans were 4-2 entering their bye week and have since dropped to 5-9 — eliminating them from the playoffs for the ninth straight year. Still, Kubiak insists that fact shouldn't change his team's intensity as it wraps up the season.

"You play for your pride," he

said. "You're a pro football player, you're a coach, you're paid to do a job. Obviously the stakes change for you but ... it should not change the way we go about our business or do our job." Whether those stakes include Kubiak's job status has been the subject of much speculation in Houston. Bill Cowher, who retired as Pittsburgh's coach after the 2006 season, reportedly could be interested in coaching the Texans if Kubiak is fired after the season. Kubiak, in his fifth season in Houston, bristled when asked if expressing interest in someone's job while they still have it broke an unwritten code. "Well, he's a (darn) good coach," Kubiak said of Cowher. "I can't do (anything) about what he says. I don't have a handbook that has a code. I don't know. I have no idea." Kubiak said he is far more

concerned about how his team can win its last two games than who may be interested in his job. Players and coaches agree that the key to winning these last two games, starting with Denver, will be to start fast after being outscored 96-36 in the first quarter this season. The problem was perhaps the worst on Sunday when Tennessee jumped out to a 21-0 first quarter lead in a 31-17 victory. "I think it has been a combination of things," Kubiak said. "It's not one area. It hits all areas. When you go four-and-out and three-and-out and you give up three touchdowns in the first three touches of the ball, the team is not going to play well." Receiver Andre Johnson was at a loss when asked why Houston has had so much trouble in the first quarter this season, but he did have an idea of why they can't seem to win lately.

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

No Way Out

East dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ K J 6
♥ 6 5 3
♦ 7 6 5 2
♣ A K 4

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

EAST
♠ 10 8 7
♥ K Q J
♦ 9
♣ Q 9 7 6 5 3

SOUTH
♠ A Q 9 4
♥ A 9 4
♦ A J 3
♣ J 10 8

declarer allowed East's jack to hold. When East continued with the queen, South correctly took his ace, preserving the nine as a potential throw-in card later on.

From what had transpired thus far, declarer concluded that West started with five diamonds (since East did not return a diamond at trick three) and at least three hearts (from his lead of the deuce, indicating length). If he also had his share of the missing spades, East would have most of the outstanding clubs, making that finesse a strong favorite to lose.

This possibility loomed even larger when South next cashed four spade tricks and discovered that West had started with three spades. But declarer found the answer. He cashed the ace of clubs and exited with a heart, forcing East to win with the king. East had no choice but to return a club, allowing South to score the jack and make his game.

It is true that East could have wriggled out of the endplay by discarding his king of hearts on the fourth spade. But in that case, the same heart lead by declarer would endplay West. After taking the nine with the ten and cashing the eight, West would be forced to lead a diamond from the Q-10 into declarer's A-J, again handing South the game-going trick.

West therefore shifted to the deuce of hearts at trick two, and

Tomorrow: A spot card shows the way.

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

ANSWERS

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

UConn women a win away from topping UCLA

NEW YORK (AP) — UCLA's 88-game winning streak had just been snapped by Notre Dame in 1974 when Bruins coach John Wooden was asked how long it would be before somebody beat the streak. "I have no idea how long it will be before somebody else wins that many. I know it takes at least three years," he replied. Try nearly 37 years. And the University of Connecticut women's team can do it Tuesday night. Coach Geno Auriemma and his players — just Huskies, never the Lady Huskies — have been so dominant that some in the sports world have even suggested their overwhelming

success is no good for the game. Auriemma took the debate a step further Sunday after UConn's 88th straight win, questioning whether there is a gender bias against his team. "The reason everybody is having a heart attack the last four or five days is a bunch of women are threatening to break a men's record, and everybody is all up in arms about it," he said. There is no dispute, however, that the streak has raised the profile of women's basketball by daring to compare UConn's accomplishment to one of the most revered numbers in sports history.



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Take Note

- Howard County Library will close at 3 p.m. Wednesday and reopen at 10 a.m. Monday, Dec. 27.
- Big Spring's own Charley Johnson will be inducted as a member of the 2010 Class into the Texas Sports Hall Of Fame on Feb. 7, 2011, in Waco. If you can't attend but would like to list your name in an official program ad that congratulates Charley for this momentous achievement, contact Ken Johnson at 940-325-4366 for details or e-mail at kenrocknj@suddenlink.net. If you want to attend the ceremonies, contact Ken about discount tickets.

- Three-time Grammy Award winner and Tex-Mex artist Little Joe & La Familia, with special guest Robert Pulido, will be at the Howard County Fair Barn for a Christmas Eve dance. Tickets are \$20 and table reservations are \$15. For more information, call John Ontiveros at 432-816-5231 or Gracie Acosta at 432-599-2891.

- The Big Spring Christmas Bird Count, organized by Midland Naturalists Inc. of Midland, is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 27. Please contact compiler Bill Lupardus at 432-638-1585 or e-mail him at lupejwl@aol.com for more information. The count, first conducted in 1948, will be done in a 15-mile diameter circle with the center being near Refinery Lake north of Midway Road. No private property will be accessed without permission.

- An account has been set up to help Bob and Jeanine Fishback with Bob's medical and travel expenses: Bob Fishback Medical Account 915967, Big Spring Education Employees Federal Credit Union, 1110 Benton, Big Spring 79720. For more information, call 263-8393.

- A fund has been established at Citizen's Credit Union for the Lupe Chavarria family, who lost all of their possessions in a recent house fire. For more information, contact the credit union at 267-6373.

- Do you have a minute? An hour? How about making a difference in someone's life? Become a hospice volunteer. One hour a month can make a difference. Whether it visiting a patient, or working in the office, or helping with a craft, you can make a difference. We can work around your schedule. If interested, please call Michelle Coutermarsh, at Compass Hospice, 263-5999 or apply in person at 1003 E. FM 700 in Big Spring.

- Weight Watchers meets at 6 p.m. Thursdays at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Weigh-in is at 5:30 p.m. Bring this note when you join and receive a box of Weight Watchers snacks through Oct. 31. Weigh-in is confidential and you don't have to talk if you don't want to. Flexible payment options.

- Big Spring Band Boosters meet the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the BSHS Band Hall. All band parents are welcome.

- Mobile Meals is in need of volunteers to deliver meals to the homebound elderly in Big Spring. If you can donate at least one hour a week, call Macaria Cantu at 263-4016 and leave a message.

- 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. We have 55 children in foster care without a volunteer. We need your help. If you're interested in volunteering please contact Suzy Milliken at 1-877-316-8346 or visit www.BecomeaCASA.org or www.casawtx.org.

- Big Spring and surrounding counties are in critical need of foster families. Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected. For more information on becoming foster parents or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

Civil rights groups seek review of Texas schools

HOUSTON — Two civil rights organizations are seeking a federal review of public school education in Texas, accusing state school administrators of violating federal civil rights laws after curriculum changes approved earlier this year by the Texas Board of Education.

The request to the U.S. Department of Education made by the Texas NAACP and Texas League of United Latin American Citizens on Monday contended that the curriculum changes passed in May "were made with the intention to discriminate" and would have a "stigmatizing impact" on African-American and Latino students.

"The State of Texas is failing to provide many of its minority students with equal educational opportunities," documents sent to the federal department said.

The request, signed by Gary Bledsoe, president of the state NAACP, and Joey D. Cardenas Jr., state director of Texas LULAC, asked that implementation of the cur-

riculum changes and new standardized tests be stopped for being racially or ethnically offensive or historically inaccurate.

Besides the curriculum complaint, they accused the state, the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Board of Education of "miseducation" of minority students, disparate discipline for minority students, using accountability standards to impose sanctions on schools with high numbers of minority students and rules leading to underrepresentation of minorities in gifted and talented school programs.

Texas Education Agency spokeswoman Suzanne Marchman said the complaint was being reviewed but had no immediate comment Monday. Gail Lowe, chair of the education board, said she was aware of the filing "but I don't know the specific nature of any allegations or problems they allege."

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

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Maria Padron, 75, died Monday. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Chapel.

Virginia "Virgie" Munoz, 53, died Sunday. Vigil services will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Thursday at Sacred Heart Catholic Church with burial at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

Jack Hanson, 87, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

SEATS

Continued from Page 1A

"pre-clearance" by federal authorities under the Voting Rights Act, which aims to protect the interest of minority voters.

Because much of the population growth came among Hispanics, who tend to favor Democrats, experts expect one or two of the new seats will need to be Hispanic-leaning to clear the federal law.

Republicans can be expected to target the only two districts still represented by white Democrats for those new minority seats — Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Austin and Rep. Gene Green of Houston, said Nathaniel Persily, a political science professor and redistricting expert at Columbia Law School.

That means Republicans would only draw themselves one or two new GOP-leaning seats, he said.

But, that debate is far from settled.

Some Republicans in Congress are still pushing for three or four new GOP seats, said Rep. Aaron Pena, a Republican from the Rio Grande Valley. He said he believes Hispanics should have an opportunity to win a minimum of two seats.

One of those, he predicts, will come from Dallas, where the Hispanic population is bigger than that of the Valley.

"The Hispanic community in Dallas has exploded in population numbers and has no Hispanic-leaning districts, whereas the Valley has three with a smaller Hispanic population," he said.

The environment is ripe for racial tensions.

"Anytime any one community grows, others may be diminished," Pena said. "And absent enlightened leadership, it could lead to some political tensions."

Federal lawsuits are essentially guaranteed as part of the process.

Even then, tradition in Texas means the final map won't come without months of turmoil and strife.

In 2003, Democrats twice left the state to bring legislative business to a standstill and delay a vote on redistricting proposals. Repeated special sessions and gridlock eventually gave way to a 2006 U.S. Supreme Court order that new lines be drawn in several districts to protect the rights of Hispanic voters in South Texas.

As for the actual number of congressional seats gained, one expert said he is predicting four, which would likely be double the number gained in any other state.

"That puts Texas ahead of its long-term rivalry with California, which may not gain

any," said William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Frey said Texas' gains are largely because the state's economy fared better through the recession than other states, leading to more people relocating to Texas than moving out. Reapportionment is the process of redistributing the 435 U.S. House seats according to population growth every 10 years. It will be followed by redistricting, the legislative act of redrawing political districts to help elect more members of the party in power.

The seats go where the people are and Texas grew by almost 20 percent, to nearly 25 million people, from the 2000 Census to July of last year. Republicans hold 20 of the state's 32 congressional seats. In

the 2010 elections, the party picked up another three seats.

"The Republicans did so well in this last election, I think they will concentrate on shoring up their victories instead of expanding to seek new opportunities," Persily said. "The challenges in Texas, with up to four additional congressional seats to play with, they need to figure out how to make their incumbents safe while also not violating ... the Voting Rights Act."

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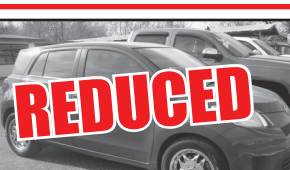
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EDITORIAL

"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.

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OUR VIEW

What better place to buy late gifts than right here?

The holiday season has reached the critical stage with only three shopping days left before Christmas. There's perhaps no better time of the year in Big Spring, the surrounding area or anywhere else for that matter.

With so little time remaining for people to pick up those last-minute gifts, the pace in local stores is getting a little frantic in some cases.

What we've found, though, is that there's no better place to shop for Christmas than right here in Big Spring, regardless of how little time there is left to shop.

Remember, Big Spring is literally dotted with interesting stores — from the downtown area to Scurry and Main streets, to the mall and all along Gregg Street and FM 700, there are a wide variety of gift purchasing opportunities.

From the latest item to hit the stores to antiques and hand-crafted items, you'll find just about everything you need right at home. As we have noted before, shoppers are limited only by their imagination.

While we would never begin to tell people they shouldn't shop out of town, we will ask that you check Big Spring first because the money you spend with a local merchant makes a difference in the lives of your friends and neighbors.

Come to think of it, if you've by chance already shopped out of town and still can't find what you're looking for and are forced to go to "Plan B," be sure that "Plan B" involves shopping here at home.

Dollars spent with local merchants wind up being spent with other Big Spring or Howard County merchants ... turning over three, four, five or more times. And that rollover effect simply can't be created when you buy out of town or on the Internet.

Bottom line: Do your best to shop at home and make it a Merry Christmas for us all.

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

When we walk down the road with You, Lord, we avoid going in the wrong direction.

Amen

Larding path to economic recovery

When former GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich proclaims a measure to be "good for the country," that usually means it's good for Gingrich. When President Obama tells the media that his \$858 billion compromise tax package is the fruit of negotiations with GOP "hostage-takers," you have to wonder if he even wants it to pass.

Obama finally figured out that Democrats have only hurt themselves in pushing for an extension of the Bush tax cuts — except for the top 2 percent of earners.

You don't raise taxes on anyone during a shaky recovery.

Even so, I think Democrats like Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland are right to object to the measure's \$23 billion estate-tax "giveaway."

I'd be happy to discuss philosophical questions on death taxes after the budget is balanced. For now, the country can't afford it. The Concord Coalition sees "no stimulative effect" in this tax break. Congress would do well to return the estate tax rate to 2009 levels — 45 percent for es-

tates over \$3.5 million — instead of 35 percent after \$5 mil as per "the deal."

The tab for extending unemployment insurance benefits for 13 months is \$56 billion. In this deal, neither the left nor right pays for its peanuts.

Obama boasts that he won a one-year 2 percent Social Security payroll tax reduction in lieu of his lesser "Make Work Pay" 2009 tax credit.

Remember all those liberal complaints about how wrong it was for George W. Bush to cut taxes while America is at war — make that two wars?

Well, forget all that.

Obamaland clearly isn't worried about further destabilizing Social Security.

Ahead of predictions, this year, Social Security began to pay out more — a projected \$41 billion — than it takes in. This scheme only makes the situation worse.

Every politician's favorite economist, Mark Zandi of Moody's, called the payroll-tax holiday one of the compromise's "big surprises." The biggest surprise of all would be if Washington doesn't make this temporary tax cut permanent. As Tax Foundation analyst Nick Kasprak observed, "It's a lot easier to cut taxes than it is to raise them."

Then there are billions in corporate welfare, including

tax breaks for NASCAR, rum-makers and film producers. Farm-belt senators wanted to extend a 45-cents-per-gallon ethanol subsidy that goes to Big Oil. They got it.

Left Coast Democrats protested and demanded funds for "clean energy." They got it, too.

With 81 senators voting for the package Wednesday, clearly the measure would have passed without the pork. But this Senate doesn't know how to pass a bill without larding it with goodies for special interests.

Having trashed this bill, I nonetheless understand why Democrats and Republicans would vote for this poor excuse of a compromise. They are afraid not to.

Zandi predicts it will add 1 percentage point to the nation's 2011 GDP and create jobs "ensuring that the still-fragile economic recovery evolves into a self-sustaining economic expansion."

No one wants to damage the recovery.

Then again, if America's small businesses had known sooner that their taxes wouldn't be going up in January, the recovery likely would be on surer footing already.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@sfcronicle.com.

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Thought health care was fixed?

So you thought health care was fixed? Well, maybe not "fixed," but you assumed that the new law had put us on the path to solving one of America's most pressing problems — spiraling health care costs amid surging numbers of uninsured citizens.

No, no, no, no. The recent decision by Judge Henry E. Hudson, of a U.S. district court in Virginia, pumps new life into Republican efforts to kill health care reform by draining the program of a means to pay for it. Hudson argued that forcing anyone to buy something — in this case, a private insurance policy — is unconstitutional. (Two other district court judges rejected that interpretation.)

Why is the individual mandate essential? Current law requires hospital emergency rooms to treat all comers. Without the mandate, uninsured people could wait to buy coverage until they're in the ambulance. In 2008, doctors and hospitals delivered \$43 billion in "free" care. (Of course, it was not free. Taxpayers and anyone with private coverage picked up those bills.)

Years ago, Massachusetts forbade insurers to discriminate against sick people, but it didn't also insist that everyone obtain coverage. What happened? Pre-

miums jumped. Since it added the mandate in 2006, premiums have fallen 40 percent.

If the mandate goes, so go the parts of the law that stop insurers from rejecting those with pre-existing conditions or canceling policies once the policyholder becomes seriously ill. In an efficient insurance pool, as we've seen in Massachusetts, healthy people must subsidize the sick.

This concept is not foreign to Republicans and has been part of their own past health care proposals. But the new law's inclusion of an individual mandate has suddenly become a big, big problem for them.

Actually, Republicans do not object to expanding government health care as much as they mind paying for it.

They did not set aside a single penny for their 2003 Medicare drug benefit, tacking it all onto the national debt. (A giveaway to insurers and drug companies, the Medicare drug benefit is costing about the same as the Democrats' reform of the entire system.) Former U.S. Comptroller General David Walker called it "the most fiscally irresponsible piece of legislation since the 1960s."

And let's drop the fairy tale that the Grand Old Party's deficit cowboys have been replaced by fiscally conservative new blood. In their book, "Young Guns — a New Generation of Conservative Leaders," Reps. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, Eric Cantor of Virginia and Kevin McCarthy of California talk pi-

ously of fellow Republicans having "lost their way" and pretend they are different.

But when it came time in 2003 to vote on the "most fiscally irresponsible piece of legislation," what did the "young guns" actually do? They voted for it. Ryan said "yea." Cantor said "yea." (McCarthy was not yet elected to Congress.)

This latest legal attack on the health care law doesn't make much sense. The federal government argues that the mandate to buy coverage is indeed constitutional because the fine for not having it would be levied as an income tax.

Meanwhile, it's hard not to laugh at the cries over the "injustice" of forcing people to buy coverage.

Working Americans are already forced to buy health coverage — but for others. They can't choose not to pay the Medicare payroll tax.

They can't even make a deal with the government, promising, "I will forgo all future Medicare benefits if I can be freed from the Medicare payroll tax."

If the new health care reforms die, America will find no relief from the economic deadweight of spending twice per capita on health care as other rich countries. It would mean another push

down the slope of national decline.

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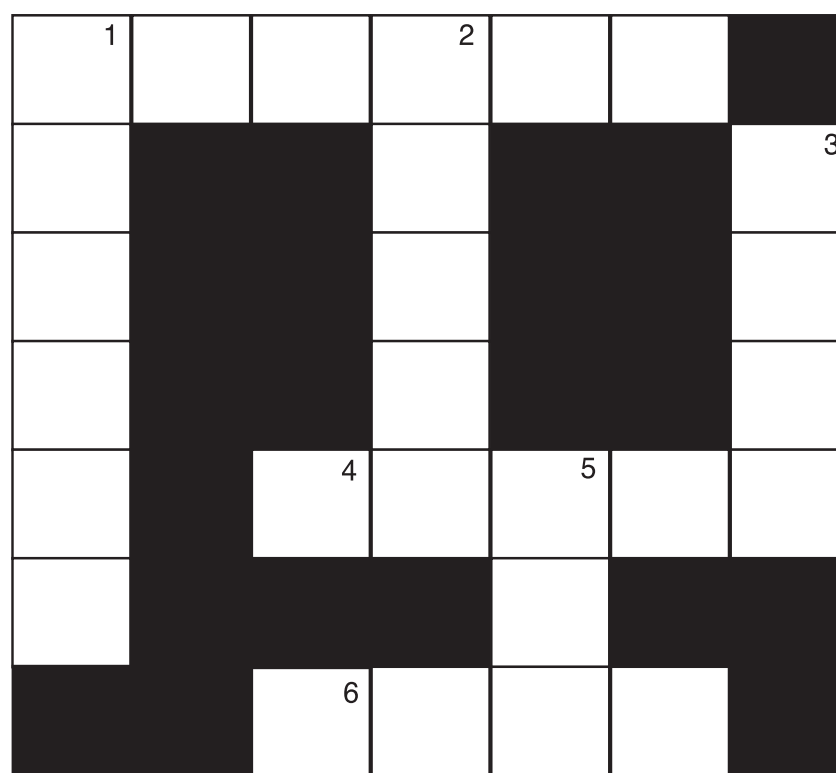
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Crossword Puzzle



THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- **1152:** HENRY II OF ENGLAND IS CROWNED AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
- **1941:** ADOLF HITLER BECOMES SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE GERMAN ARMY.
- **1998:** THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FORWARDS ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT AGAINST PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON TO THE SENATE.

ACROSS

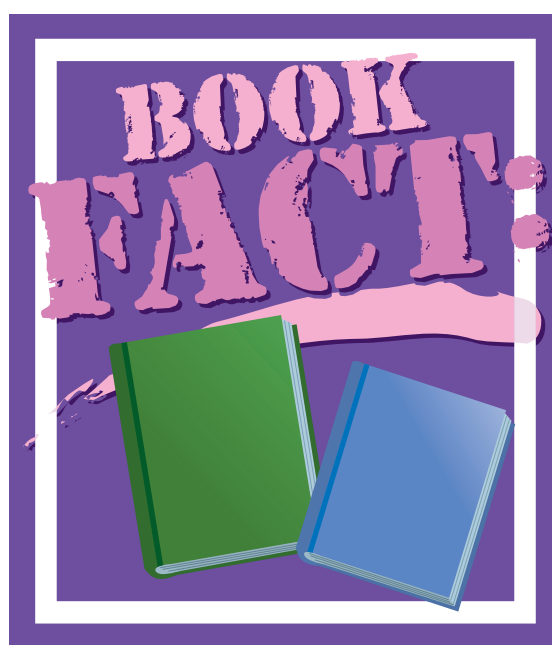
- 1. Cold season
- 4. Deposit of small ice crystals
- 6. Brief written message

DOWN

- 1. State of being warm
- 2. Tall structure
- 3. Outer clothing
- 5. Opposite of "in"

Answers:

1. winter 2. tower 3. coats 4. note
5. out 6. frost



WHO WROTE THE POEM
"STOPPING BY WOODS ON A
SNOWY EVENING"?

ANSWER: ROBERT FROST



drift

be carried slowly
by a current of air

How they SAY that in...

- ENGLISH:** Winter
- SPANISH:** Invierno
- ITALIAN:** Inverno
- FRENCH:** Hiver
- GERMAN:** Winter

Did You Know?

SNOWFLAKES ARE
HEXAGONAL,
MEANING THEY
HAVE SIX SIDES.



GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what
the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: SNOW FLOW

SLYLOCK FOX and COMICS FOR KIDS

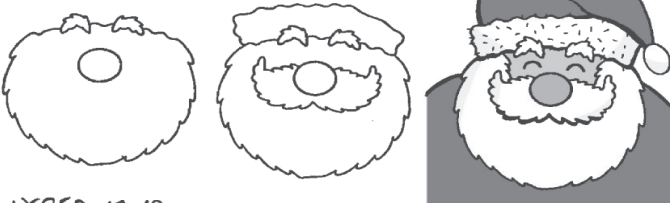
BY BOB WEBER JR.

Cassandra Cat is months behind in her rent, but insists she will catch up soon because she landed a starring role in an upcoming Hollywood movie about surfing. Cassandra says this photo shows her with the director. Why does Slylock Fox suspect the photo is a fake?



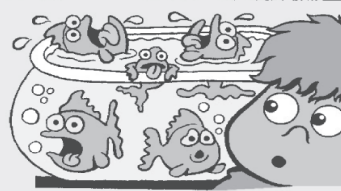
Solution -- The picture only shows a shadow behind the director. Cassandra superimposed her image onto the photo. Slylock believes.

HOW TO DRAW Santa Claus



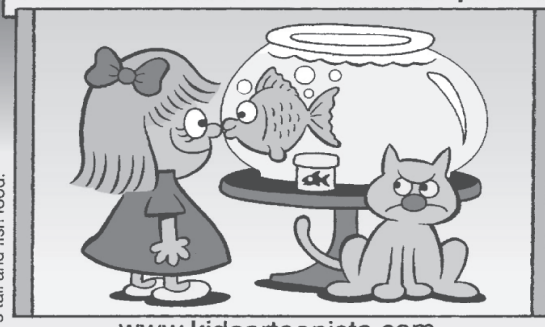
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Today's terrific artist is Greta Usaitė, age 16. Submit your drawings at www.kidcartoonists.com



Are you giving your goldfish enough space to swim and breathe? Each one-inch goldfish needs about one gallon of water.

Find six differences between these panels.



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

Tomorrow's Horoscope

It was a long night, and the total lunar eclipse could be blamed for some less than heartening thoughts or dreams. But the full Gemini moon has also given us a sense of community, and there's something else to celebrate now, too: The sun enters Capricorn and promises to stick around a little longer each day — at least until next time!



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If you feel that you keep repeating the same behavior over and over again, today provides just the pattern interruption you need. It's like a great cosmic throat clear — "ahem" — that somehow startles you onto a new path.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It's not about finding the right person for you; it's about being the right person for you. Give yourself a treat to show your love. Nothing fancy is necessary, just a gesture that says you're paying attention to your own needs.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The shift in consciousness that you need is not difficult to make. Rather, it's so easy that you might even call it fun. Do what you want to do. There, it's that simple!

CANCER (June 22-July 22). If you want to get results, you have to be the squeaky wheel. Normally, you are too cool to take this approach, and yet there are times, like now, when being cool is seriously overrated.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There will be a lull in the action, and it comes at the perfect moment. Now you can sit back

and figure out just how to make the most of the recent turn of events. Strategize.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Because of your charm, grace and charisma, you'll be in a position to keep the social brew bubbling. If you only follow one rule this evening, make it this one: Never be boring.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be in a position to learn about others. You'll ask questions and focus intently on the answers. Instead of relaying everything about your own situation that comes to mind, you simply listen.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). While someone you know is dreaming about tomorrow, you'll be busy making today worth remembering. You'll have many spontaneous and creative notions about how to accomplish this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You might try and miss today, which is to be expected for someone who is still learning. You're going to get it eventually if you keep trying. On the other hand, if you don't try, you're guaranteed to miss.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You sync up with nature in some way, perhaps by connecting with an animal or getting out into the open air. There is a deep feeling of contentment within you because you are in harmony with the natural world.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You may feel compelled to tell your side of a story, especially because the other sides of the story seem to be riddled with half-truths. If it's imperative that you say your piece, leave quickly afterward.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your sign can change moods as

quickly as a chameleon changes colors. But today you'll be in a state of mind that you want to hang on to for as long as possible. External circumstances cannot change this.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 21). The year starts off on a streak of financial luck. You courageously attempt things at which you are not an expert and wind up broadening your

horizons. New people come into your life in January. You land in peculiar circumstances in February and find a way to shine. May brings fun dates. July brings travel. Cancer and Aries people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 4, 20, 22 and 19.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Born in London on the cusp of Capricorn and Sagittarius, Kiefer

Sutherland is actually a Sagittarius, though he does have love planet Venus in Capricorn, so that energy is prominent in his chart. It's a mix of high-energy excitement and cool containment. With lucky Jupiter in Leo, the sign of the entertainment industry, this second-generation movie star was meant for the bright lights.

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

Bringing the War Home

Dear Annie: My husband, "Bill," and I have been married for almost two years. Bill was in the U.S. Army and served in Iraq. When he got back, we were married, but, Annie, he has totally changed.

This past year, all we seem to do is fight. Bill gets upset about everything I do and say. I can't even mention any of his behavior without it leading to a fight. A year ago, he got drunk and accused me of sleeping with one of his friends. He yelled at me so loudly that the neighbors called the police.

I have tried suggesting we talk to a counselor, because nothing is helping us get along better, but he refuses. If he drinks, he treats me like dirt. When we are at a party, he'll totally ignore me and spend all his time flirting with other women. I am tired of being treated this way, and I know the drinking is a huge part of it.

I am eight months pregnant and an emotional mess. I've told him that fighting is not healthy for the baby. I believe he has Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but he says he doesn't need any help. I don't know how much longer I can last in this marriage. I feel like I've lost the man I fell in love with. Please tell me what to do. — *Don't Know Where To Get Help*

Dear Don't Know: It's a shame Bill is unwilling to get help when he clearly needs it. He may be suffering from PTSD, or he may have developed an alcohol problem, or both. Whether or not he is willing to get help, however, you absolutely must. You can get information on PTSD through the Veterans Administration at



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

ptsd.va.gov. We also recommend you contact Military OneSource (militaryonesource.com) at 1-800-342-9647. It is an excellent resource for service members, veterans and their families.

Dear Annie: Why do intelligent, educated people fail to practice the most basic rules of e-mail etiquette? Do they not realize how intrusive many practices have become?

One of the most flagrant abuses is to forward a message without removing the names and e-mail addresses of others. Another travesty is the chain e-mail that promises good luck if you forward it or, worse, predicts bad luck if you don't. Does anyone actually believe them? And what about those that insist you demonstrate your affection for the sender by returning the message?

Please provide your readers with a refresher course in courtesy when sending personal e-mails. Thank you. — *Shreveport, La.*

Dear Shreveport: Whether dealing with e-mail, phone calls or visits, it is common courtesy

not to be overly intrusive. That means asking whether someone wants to be on your mailing list for jokes, political rants, religious editorials and chain letters, and respecting the answer. It means deleting the e-mail addresses of others, along with any extraneous material, when forwarding something. When sending a personal e-mail, be friendly. Don't type in all caps unless you are furious. And please do not send pornography.

Dear Annie: I beg you to reconsider your answer to "Smokeless in Seattle," who didn't want to spend Christmas Eve with Grandma because she smokes.

Please educate your readers about the dangers of third-hand smoke. This refers to contamination that settles into the environment and remains on clothing, upholstery, pets, etc. long after the smoke has cleared. Infants and children are thought to be in the most danger since they touch surfaces and then put their fingers in their mouths. I doubt you would advise exposing an infant to 250 chemicals just to keep Grandma happy. — *Oncology Certified Registered Nurse*

Dear Nurse: We cannot live in sterilized bubbles. Parents are capable of watching their children carefully for an evening at Grandma's once a year, although we concur that other family gatherings should be held elsewhere.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers 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.
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COMPLETE STORY

Parent's Corner: We can all learn from Rudolph's creator

I read a delightful story that I thought you would enjoy, especially since it's the Christmas season.

A man named Bob May, depressed and brokenhearted, stared out his drafty apartment window into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap quietly sobbing.

Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. She looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?" Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question

brought waves of grief, but also of anger.

It had been the story of Bob's life; life always had to be different for Bob.

Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports and he was often called names he'd rather not remember.

From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in.

He did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived.

Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums.

Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938.

Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift; but if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one, so he made a storybook!

Bob had created a character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope.

Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling.

Who was the character?

What was the story all about?

The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form.

The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose.

Bob finished the book just in time

to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there.

The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores.

By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph.

That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book.

In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller. Many toy

See RYAN, Page 7A



DARRELL
RYAN

National news in brief

SKorean fighter jets scream through skies to prepare for possible surprise NKorean attack

YEONPYEONG ISLAND, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean destroyer prowled the sea and fighter jets screamed across the skies Tuesday in preparation for possible North Korean attacks a day after staging provocative artillery drills on an island the North shelled last month.

North Korea has said it would not retaliate for the exercises off Yeonpyeong Island — reversing its earlier threats. A senior South Korean government official, however, said that the lack of response so far does not mean Pyongyang is backing down, noting that North Korea thrives on "surprise" attacks. The official spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Pyongyang considers the waters around the island — a tiny enclave of fishing communities and military bases within sight of North Korean shores — its territory, and similar drills last month triggered an artillery barrage that killed four South Koreans, in the first attack targeting civilian areas since the 1950-53 Korean War.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who made an unofficial visit to North Korea this week, praised Pyongyang's "statesmanlike" restraint.

Richardson, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations who has served as an unofficial envoy to North Korea in the past, said in Beijing on Tuesday that during the trip North Korean officials agreed to let U.N. atomic inspectors visit its main nuclear complex to make sure the facility is not producing enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb. That, Richardson said, could provide an opening for a resumption of negotiations aimed at dismantling the country's nuclear program.

2010 census expected to show slowing U.S. population growth, gain in House seats for GOP states

WASHINGTON (AP) — If government estimates hold true, the closely watched 2010 census will show America's once-torrid population growth dropping to its lowest level in seven decades. In Congress, the steady migration to the South and West should be a boon for Republicans, with GOP-leaning states led by Texas picking up House seats.

The Census Bureau expects to release Tuesday the first results from the once-a-decade government count, figures that will be used to reapportion the 435 House seats among the 50 states. The numbers trigger a high-stakes process wherein the dominant party in each state redraws the election map, shaping the political landscape for the next 10 years.

Census estimates provided this month based on birth and death records place the 2010 count somewhere between 305.7 million and 312.7 million, up from 281.4 million in 2000. That range means U.S. growth over the previous decade would be at a slower pace than the 13.2 percent increase from 1990 to 2000.

Demographers believe the official 2010 count will be 308.7 million or lower, putting U.S. growth at around 9 percent, the lowest since the 1940 census. That is the decade in which the Great Depression slashed the population growth rate by more than half, to 7.3 percent.

The U.S. is still growing quickly relative to other developed nations. The population in France and England each increased roughly 5 percent over the past decade, while in Japan the number is largely unchanged and in Germany the population is declining. China grew at about 6 percent; Canada's growth rate is roughly 10 percent.

Toyota to pay a record \$32.4M in additional fines for handling of safety recalls

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota Motor Corp. has agreed to pay the U.S. government a record \$32.4 million in additional fines to settle an investigation into its handling of two recalls at the heart of its safety crisis.

The civil penalties will settle investigations into how Toyota dealt with recalls over accelerator pedals that could get trapped in floor mats and steering relay rods that could break and lead to drivers losing control.

The latest settlement, on top of a \$16.4 million fine Toyota paid earlier in a related investigation, brings the total penalties levied on the company to \$48.8 million. It caps a difficult year for the world's

No. 1 automaker, which recalled more than 11 million vehicles globally since the fall of 2009 as it scrambled to protect its reputation for safety and reliability.

Toyota's board of directors agreed to pay the fines on Tuesday at the company's board meeting in Japan, according to an official familiar with the case, and the company said it agreed to the penalties without admitting to any violations of U.S. laws. However, that does not free Toyota from potential civil and criminal penalties in private lawsuits and other federal investigations.

Support builds in Senate for approval of U.S.-Russia nuclear treaty as more GOP senators join

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is moving closer to gaining Senate approval of a major arms control treaty with Russia as he builds support among reluctant Republican senators.

The administration has stepped up its lobbying of pivotal Republicans to win approval of the New START treaty, which has become Obama's main priority for the remaining legislative session.

With lawmakers moving toward a final vote expected this week, the White House and senior Democrats were expressing confidence Monday that they had the votes for the accord.

Senior Democrats were pushing for a decisive vote Tuesday to cut off debate and set the stage for the final vote. Republicans and Democrats were discussing amendments to the accompanying resolution, not the treaty, that would deal with Republican problems with missile defense.

California faces 5th day of relentless rain, snow in mountains, high winds

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The latest in a series of powerful storm systems is bearing down on California, pelting mountain areas with heavy rain, snow and high winds, prompting evacuations and leaving thousands without power.

Virtually the entire state has been affected by the storms that began Friday, dumping moisture from far Northern California south to San Diego. More than 12 inches of rain have fallen in parts of the Santa Monica Mountains in the south and 13 feet of snow has accumulated at Mammoth Mountain ski resort.

Downtown Los Angeles had received 5 1/4 inches of rain since Friday morning, more than a third of the average annual precipitation.

In the Wrightwood area, about 15 people were evacuated Monday night after the Sheep Creek Wash overflowed and threatened homes.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Alive in Christ
Lutheran Church - LCMS

Children's Christmas Program
Wednesday, Dec. 22 • 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service
Friday, Dec. 24 • 6:00 p.m.

Carol Service
Sunday, Dec. 26 • 9 a.m.

Sunday School To Follow

2805 Lynn
264-7818

The Big Spring Herald will be closed on Friday, December 24 in observation of Christmas Eve.

Early Deadlines For Retail Advertising are as follows:

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 DEADLINE:
Wednesday, December 22, 10:00 am

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26 DEADLINE:
Wednesday, December 22, 1:00 pm

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27 DEADLINE:
Wednesday, December 22, 3:00 pm

Early Deadlines For Classifieds are as follows:

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 DEADLINE:
Thursday, December 23, 11:59 am

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26 DEADLINE:
Thursday, December 23, 11:59 am

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27 DEADLINE:
Thursday, December 23, 11:59 am

Join us **Christmas Eve**,
at 7:00p.m. for a
Silent Lord's Supper
in honor of
the King of Kings
at
East 4th Street Baptist Church

For more information please call 267-2291

HIP IMPLANT RECALL

Johnson & Johnson has recalled the **DePuy ASR XL Acetabular** hip socket implant system due to an unacceptably high failure rate. One in eight patients experience symptoms like infection, bone fracture, dislocation and pain. Other complications include **increased metal ion levels in the blood, bone staining, necrosis, swelling, nerve damage, tissue damage and/or muscle damage.** If you had hip replacement surgery during or after 2005 and you know you have a **DePuy ASR XL Acetabular** hip implant, or are unsure, please talk to your doctor right away, then contact us toll-free for professional insight into your legal rights.

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5:PM	News ABC	Alma	Lopez	News	Noticias	News	King	Scrivner	World Business	Lyrics!	Dirty Jobs	Overboard, Edward Herrmann	Ways Die Auction	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Good Shake it	Nation Pardon	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Llena de Amor (SS)	Two Men	News	Caso Cerrado	News	King	Uri Harel	PBS News-Hour	70s Show	Dirty Jobs		Auction	Bones		Shake it	College Basketball	Football
7:PM	Skating-Stars	Eva Luna (SS)	Glee	NCIS	Aurora (SS)	Minute to Win It	Fam. Guy	Upd	NOVA (DVS)	One Tree Hill	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Mrs. Doubtfire, Pierce Brosnan	Auction	Bones	Beyonce's I Am World Tour	Beauty and the Beast		College Football
8:PM	No Ordinary Family	Soy Tu Dueña (SS)	Million Dollar	NCIS: Los Angeles	El Fantasma de	SNL Presents: A Very Gilly Christmas	Fam. Guy	Light of the Southwest	Independent Lens	Life Unexpected	Dirty Jobs		Movie: A Christmas Carol, Joel Grey	Food: T.I. BET Christmas	Deck			College Basketball
9:PM	Detroit 1-8-7	Aquí y Ahora (SS)	Simpsons How I Met	The Good Wife	Alguien te Mira (SS)		Fam. Guy	Glory Daze		Married	Auction		MAN	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Hannah		Brady's Bowl St. Petersburg
10:PM	News	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	Mark	Charlie Rose	King	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Ever After: A Cinderella Story, Dougray Scott	MAN	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Hannah		SportsCtr
11:PM	Nightline	Noticiero	Raymond	Letterman	Decisiones (SS)		Lopez Tonight	Ministerio-Vida	World	South Pk	Dirty Jobs		MAN	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Hannah		NFL Live
12:AM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Verdad	Law & Order: SVU	Late		Late Night	Conan	Upd	World (Off Air)	South Pk	Dirty Jobs		MAN	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Hannah		SportsNation
1:AM	Extra	Tontas Cielo	Paid	Decision		Decision	Conan	Upd	Cops	Focus 4	Auction	Movie: The Princess Bride	Stunts Go Bad	Certain Age	Movie: Get Rich or Die Tryin', Walter Alza	Wizards	NBA	SportsCenter
	Paid	Mujer...	TMZ	Insider	Pagado	News	Lopez Tonight	Church	Focus 4	Homecoming	Dirty Jobs		Amazing Video	Leverage	Wizards Suite Life	Wizards Suite Life	2010 Poker	SportsCenter
	Paid	Cero	King/Hill	Insider	Pagado	Poker After Dark	Lopez Tonight	Light of the Southwest	Homecoming	Dirty Jobs					Wizards Suite Life	Wizards Suite Life	2010 Poker	SportsCenter

DENNIS THE MENACE



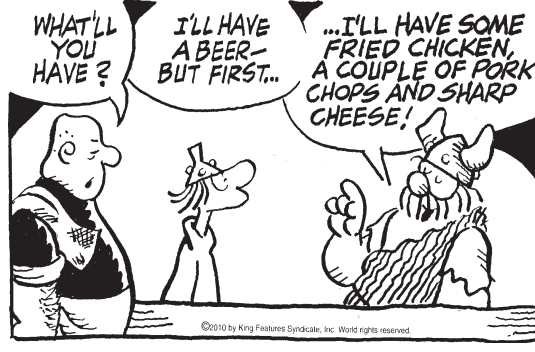
"I HOPE YOU'LL LIKE IT. I WRAPPED IT ALL BY MYSELF."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

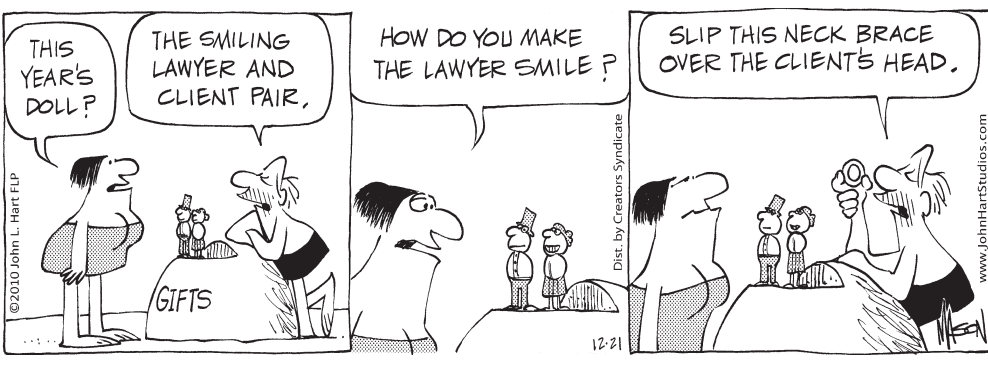


"... 'cause then everybody'll ask for it and Santa might run out."

HAGAR



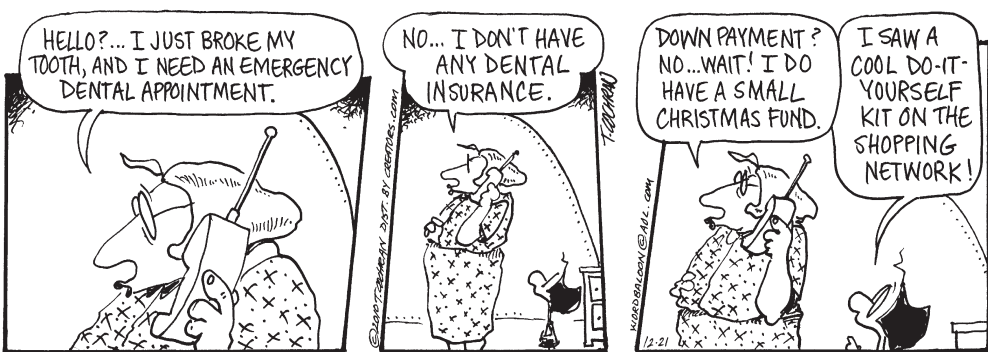
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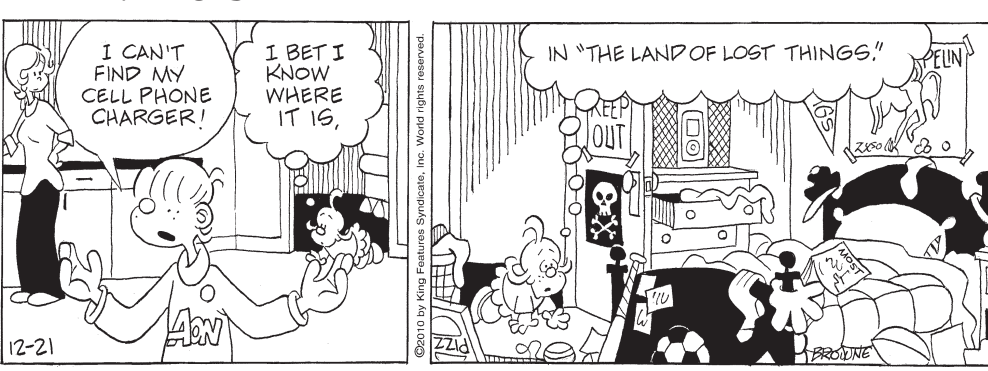
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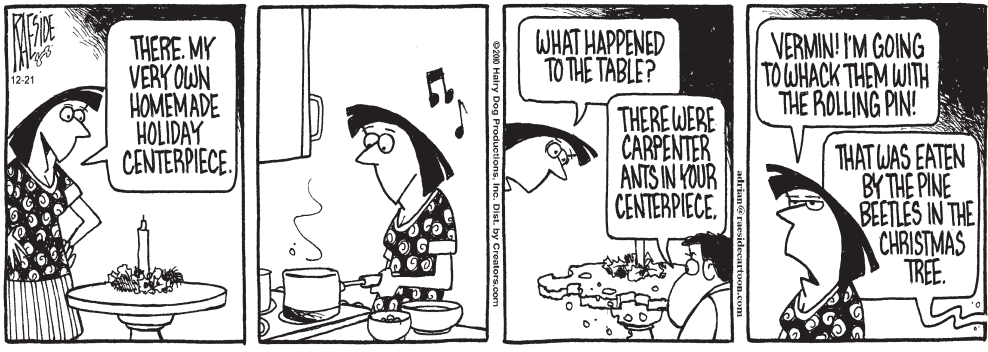
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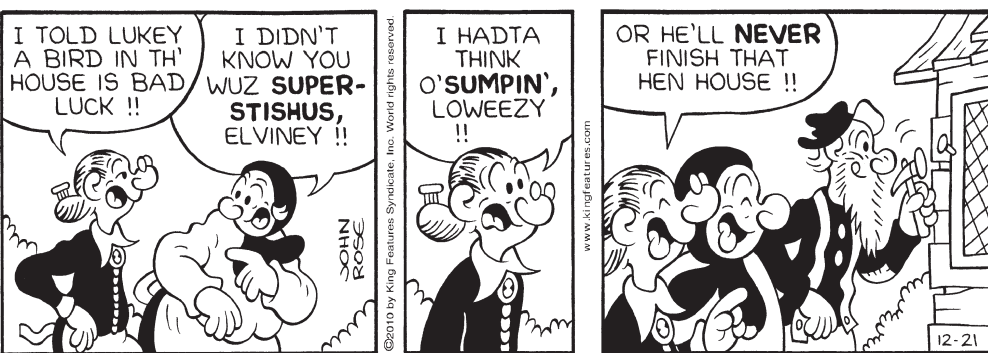
HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 21, the 355th day of 2010. There are 10 days left in the year. Winter arrives at 6:38 p.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 21, 1620, Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower went ashore for the first time at present-day Plymouth, Mass.

On this date: In 1860, American Zionist leader Henrietta Szold, founder of the Jewish women's group Hadassah, was born in Baltimore.

In 1910, 344 coal miners were killed in Britain's Pretoria Pit Disaster

In 1940, author F. Scott Fitzgerald died in Hollywood, Calif., at age 44.

In 1945, Gen. George S. Patton died in Heidelberg, Germany, of injuries from a car accident.

In 1948, the state of Eire, or Ireland, passed an act declaring itself a republic.

In 1958, Charles de Gaulle

was elected to a seven-year term as the first president of the Fifth Republic of France.

In 1968, Apollo 8 was launched on a mission to orbit the moon.

In 1971, the U.N. Security Council chose Kurt Waldheim to succeed U Thant as Secretary-General.

In 1976, the Liberian-registered tanker Argo Merchant broke apart near Nantucket Island, off Massachusetts, almost a week after running aground, spilling 7.5 million gallons of oil into the North Atlantic.

In 1988, 270 people were killed when a terrorist bomb exploded aboard a Pam Am Boeing 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland, sending wreckage crashing to the ground.

One year ago: President Today's Birthdays: Country singer Freddie Hart is 84. College Football Hall of Fame coach Joe Paterno is 84. Actor Ed Nelson is 82. Talk show host Phil Donahue is 75. Movie director John Avildsen is 75. Actress Jane Fonda is 73. Actor Larry Bryggman is 72. Singer Carla Thomas is 68. Musician Albert Lee is 67. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas is 66. Actor Josh Mostel is 64. Actor

Samuel L. Jackson is 62. Movie producer Jeffrey Katzenberg is 60. Actress Jane Kaczmarek is 55. Country singer Lee Roy Parnell is 54. Entertainer Jim Rose is 54. Actor-comedian Ray Romano is 53. Actor-comedian Andy Dick is 45. Rock musician Gabrielle Glaser is 45. Actor Kiefer Sutherland is 44. Actress Karri Turner is 44. Actress Khristyne Haje is 42. Country singer Brad Warren (The Warren Brothers) is 42. Actress Julie Delpy is 41. Country singer-musician Rheaun (rehn) Boyer (Carolina Rain) is 40. Contemporary Christian singer Natalie Grant is 39. Actor Glenn Fitzgerald is 39. Singer-musician Brett Scallions is 39.

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Answer to previous puzzle

GIS	OATH	SLASH
BRAT	PLEA	AEIOU
LOGO	EONS	TERSE
EARNONESSPURS		
SNEER	LAP	PER
SSE	CRATER	BEAU
	OHARE	PIERS
BACKINTHESADDLE		
AWARD	ERASE	
LAMA	BREADS	AFT
EYE	ERE	ENSUE
LEARNTHEROPES		
COATS	TOOL	HILT
BUtte	EGOS	ORES
STEEL	DATE	WED

Newsday Crossword

CREAM OF THE CROP by Billie Truitt Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS**
- 1 Wood strips
 - 6 Eve's husband
 - 10 Thick carpet
 - 14 Erected
 - 15 Scholarly book
 - 16 Metric weight, for short
 - 17 Defendant's story
 - 18 Pirate's take
 - 19 Fascinated by
 - 20 Large grocery
 - 23 Prosecuting attys.
 - 24 Small batteries
 - 25 "Yeah, right!"
 - 27 "In a bustling way
 - 31 Deserve
 - 33 Strong __ ox
 - 34 Droplet
 - 36 Hospital professional
 - 40 Current must-read
 - 43 Drained of color
 - 44 Voice below soprano
 - 45 Sky-colored
 - 46 Carolers' songs
 - 48 Some cooked chickens
 - 50 Seller
 - 53 Sheep's cry
 - 54 Pub pint
 - 55 Evning viewing
 - 62 Highlands miss
 - 64 Field of expertise
 - 65 "Yes __, Bob!"
- DOWN**
- 66 Suffix for major
 - 67 Gets some sun
 - 68 More chilly
 - 69 Dry run
 - 70 Aide: Abbr.
 - 71 In want
- 11** Caste member of India
- 12** Place to exchange vows
- 13** "Silly" bird
- 21** Perhaps
- 22** Person, place or __
- 26** Short and thick, as fingers
- 27** "Ali __ and the Forty Thieves"
- 28** Puts to work
- 29** Wide belt
- 30** Have in mind
- 31** Shopping meccas
- 32** Revise
- 35** Israeli airline
- 37** Part in a play
- 38** Tart-tasting
- 39** Scrapes by, with "out"
- 41** Nose around
- 42** Like some diet foods
- 47** Misprints
- 49** Trail-mix fruit
- 50** Car parker
- 51** Make happy
- 52** Wasps' homes
- 53** Cruel person
- 56** Some savings plans, briefly
- 57** Clothing-store section
- 58** Cats' quarry
- 59** Great Lake
- 60** Started a golf round, with "up"
- 61** Extremely
- 63** Complete collection

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
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62					63	64					65			
66						67					68			
69							70				71			

Bird Poop:

A very Merry Christmas for federal agent

Crisp autumn winds blew past Halloween and into November. To compensate for the chill in the air was to enjoy Sunday morning coffee and the Dallas Morning News. Leisurely thumbing through a favorite insert, I absorbed the latest book reviews and news from the Museum of Art. Even the advertisements were eye-catching and entertaining, except one.



BEBE McCASLAND

Noticing the color displayed for the reader's attention, I read several times what the hawk was selling. Troubled by its brash presentation caused me to make a mental note.

During lunch, Art and I continued to peruse our favorite newspaper. Having finished the sports section, he reached for the insert while I was reading the editorials. Our quiet, leisurely weekend moment was interrupted by his adamant directive, "You have to do something about this!" Seeing the look on his face, I knew he had finally come to the worrisome ad. My hunch on how he would react had been accurate. Leaving him to read further, I went down the hall to use the phone.

Getting the name of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife agent in the metropolitan area, I thanked Midge Erskine of the Eos Sanctuary for the information. Feeling we were correct in our analysis of the advertisement, she wished us luck.

Early Monday morning, I placed a call. If I was correct in what I thought the peddlers were selling, then there was a flagrant disregard for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The agent agreed after hearing me read the ad.

Based in Fort Worth, he was surprised that I had found the ad in the Dallas paper. Unless someone had brought it to his attention, he never would have known a possible violation might be "right next door."

After giving him a description of the insert, page number, and date, I added that I could be mistaken. Having previously read a copy of the act, however, I knew "it is unlawful for anyone to kill, capture, collect, possess, buy, sell, trade, ship, import, or export, any migratory birds, or part, or nest or egg thereof unless they first obtain an appropriate federal permit, issued pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulations, authorizing such activity. In most cases, a state permit is also required."

Surely, no business of group of individuals could gather from the



Courtesy photo

Federal protection for all wild birds, including the Northern cardinal pictured above, is provided by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Exempt are resident game birds that are managed by the states, and the English sparrow, starling and feral pigeon.

ground enough to supply the general public. The ad blatantly stated for sale were cardinal, blue jay, oriole, painted bunting, and no telling from what else, feathers for arts-and-craft endeavors.

As we closed our conversation, the agent said he appreciated the call. Having worked with game wardens and another federal agent, we accepted the fact that we might never know the outcome of his investigation.

During early December, we stayed busy with migrating hawks. Our gusty winds and dry weather had either slammed the birds into structures or denied them the small mammals they needed for survival. Injured or weak, the raptors needed our help.

Water dependent birds, such as loons,

grebes and coots had a later than usual journey to the south. Invariably, they landed on pavement and could not become air-borne again. With them, a trip to a nearby lake sufficed to send them on their way.

Late in decorating our home for the holidays, we did succeed in making candy for friends and a fruitcake laced with rum and candied delights. Soon each room in the house had a reminder of Christmas.

Wrapping last minute gifts, I was surprised when the phone rang. "Not another bird call," I thought. Upon my answering, a male voice said, "Just wanted to thank you for the bust."

Then identifying himself as the federal agent, he added that the ad had led to a much larger operation than anyone had ever suspected. Not sharing any

details as to the outcome, he emphasized that a lot of birds would be spared. "It was a really big bust."

In my mind I could hear the cardinals' morning chorus, whoo-ett, whoo-ett, whoo-ett; tuer, tuer, tuer, followed by prèt-ty, prèt-ty, prèt-ty. Momentarily, I could imagine the blue jays' raucous protests when looking for acorns.

Summer orioles and their noisy presence

would not be silenced. The colorful male painted buntings and their greenish ladies would return to summer nesting grounds.

Knowing not to ask about particulars, I could only thank him by wishing him a Merry Christmas. His reply was, "It really is!"

Bebe McCasland is author of The Scoop from Bird Poop. She is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.

RYAN

Continued from Page and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter.

But the story doesn't end there either. Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry.

"Rudolpher the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas."

The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning to bless him again and again.

And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad.

In fact, being different can be a blessing.

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

Contact the Herald at 263-7331

St. Mary The Virgin Episcopal Church

Merry Christmas!
Please Join Us!
Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 - 7 pm
Christmas Day, Dec. 25 - 10 am
267-8201 1001 S. Goliad

Your Christmas Gift Headquarters

Upholstered Footstool \$19⁹⁵

Bean Bags
starting at \$47⁰⁰

Jewelry Armoire
starting at \$97⁰⁰

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w/Cup Holder, Choice of colors, Cowboys, Aggies, Longhorns, Red Raiders
starting at \$97⁰⁰

Coat Tree
Cherry or Oak \$27⁰⁰

Lamp Magazine
Cherry or Oak \$77⁰⁰

Vanity & Stool
Cherry or Oak Finish \$97⁰⁰

Cheval Mirror
Cherry or Oak Finish \$37⁰⁰

Cedar Chest
w/Padded Seat Only \$197⁰⁰

Pillowtop Queen Size Mattress Sets
only \$297⁰⁰

Ashley Recliner
Choice of Colors Starting at only \$197⁰⁰

Solid Oak TV Tray
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