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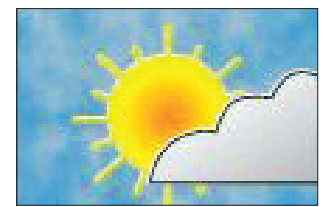
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BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY

DECEMBER 28, 2010



VOLUME 105, NUMBER 326

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HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins
Howard County Tax Collector and Assessor Kathy Sayles, right, looks over the tax rolls with Deputy Clerk Vanessa Olivias early this morning. Taxes are due by Monday, Jan. 31, at 5 p.m.

Deadline to remit taxes nears

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Area residents who haven't paid their property taxes have until the end of January to ante up their 2010 tabs or face penalties and interest, according to local tax officials.

Area property owners can avoid the annual last-minute dash to pay their taxes by getting them out of the way early in the month, according to County Tax Assessor Kathy Sayles.

"Once the taxes go delinquent in February, the pen-

alties and interest start at 7 percent and increases each month," said Sayles. "As of July 1, penalty and interest grows to 18 percent, with an additional penalty tacked on for attorney fees."

Approximately 36,000 to 37,000 tax statements were mailed out in mid-October, according to Sayles, and area residents who aren't sure how much they owe can get that information over the phone or in person at the tax office.

See **TAXES**, Page 3A

Special bins are for trash and not trees

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Time is running out for area residents looking to get rid of their mountain of Christmas trash — wrapping paper, boxes, bows — without a trip to the landfill.

Trash containers set up last week in the parking lots of Coronado Plaza, Big Spring Mall, College Park Shopping Center, Howard County Fair Barn and in the 700 block of N. Gregg Street are set to be

removed Wednesday, according to officials with the city of Big Spring.

"We've placed five large dumpsters at several different sites around the city in an effort to deal with the large amount of trash generated by the holiday," Todd Darden, assistant city manager, said. "Those dumpsters will remain in place until Wednesday, giving folks a chance to get rid of items — such as

See **TRASH**, Page 3A

Baby boomers near 65, retirements in jeopardy

By **DAVE CARPENTER**
AP Personal Finance Writer

CHICAGO — Through a combination of procrastination and bad timing, many baby boomers are facing a personal finance disaster just as they're hoping to retire. Starting in January, more than 10,000 baby boomers a day will turn 65, a pattern that will continue for the next 19 years.

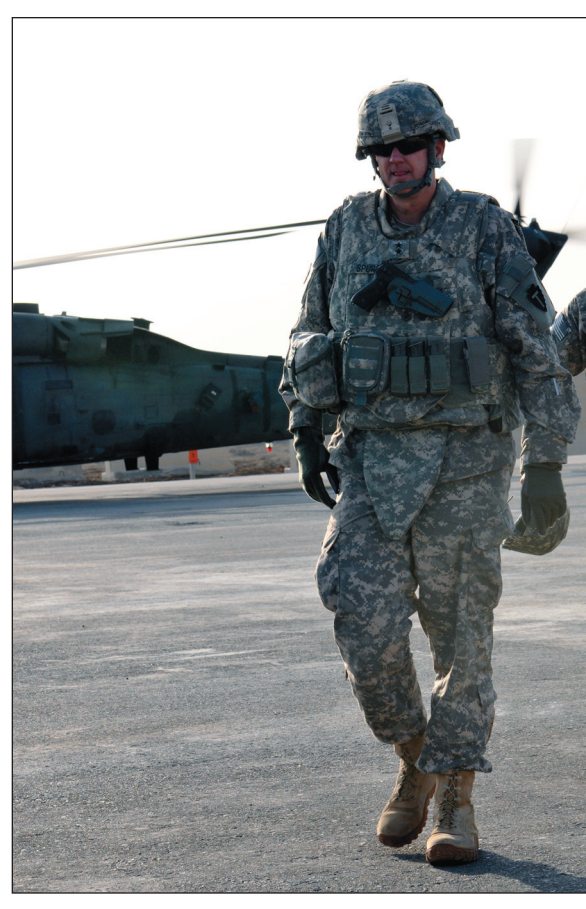
The boomers, who in their youth revolutionized everything from music to race relations, are set to redefine retirement. But a generation that made its mark in the tumultuous 1960s now faces a crisis as it hits its own mid-60s.

"The situation is extremely serious because baby boomers have not saved very effectively for retirement and are still retiring too early," says Olivia Mitchell, director of the Boettner Center for Pensions and Retirement Research at the University of Pennsylvania.

There are several reasons to be concerned:

- The traditional pension plan

See **BOOMERS**, Page 3A



Big Spring native Maj. Gen. Eddy M. Spurgin, commanding general of the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division, arrives in Basra, Iraq. Spurgin will take command of United States Division-South in early January. The 36th Infantry Division headquarters will be only the third National Guard division headquarters to command and control active duty and reserve troops since the beginning of combat operations in Iraq. Under Operation New Dawn, the 36th Infantry Division will work to build and strengthen an enduring and strategic partnership with the Republic of Iraq.

Army photo/Sgt. David Bryant



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Kitna to start if OK; McGee preparing

The Associated Press

IRVING — Jon Kitna will be the starting quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys in their finale Sunday if his strained abdominal muscle heals enough.

It's not likely, though, so second-year backup Stephen McGee probably will make his first career start.

"We have to see what Jon's availability is throughout the practice week and see what he is able to do," interim coach Jason Garrett said Monday. "Can he

play? Can he practice well enough to play in this game on Sunday? So that's the No. 1 consideration. If he's not able to do that, we will play Stephen. But if he's able to do that, Jon will be our quarterback."

The Cowboys believe an injured Kitna would give them a better chance to beat Philadelphia than a healthy McGee.

Kitna has gone 4-5 since replacing Tony Romo and has been hailed for his leadership. His stats are on

par with Romo's.

But Kitna is 38. The Cowboys already are planning on him being Romo's backup next season. So why not start McGee against the Eagles no matter what, just to find out what they have — especially since Kitna certainly won't be at full strength?

"There's probably a lot of different reasons," Garrett said. "We just feel like it's best to give Jon a chance to come back and play if he is healthy enough to do it."

McGee made his NFL debut Saturday night after Kitna was hurt during the second quarter against Arizona. He rallied the Cowboys from an 11-point deficit to a late lead, only to see the defense blow it in the final seconds. He completed 11 of 17 passes and didn't have any turnovers.

His biggest concern was not fumbling his first snap. The more he played, the better he felt. To appreciate how much of a step up in competition this was,

he hadn't played a game that counted since he was at Texas A&M, and he'd never thrown to Jason Witten and Miles Austin.

He'd had only three series with the first-team offense, despite being the No. 2 guy the past nine weeks.

"Being out there and playing, getting those snaps, those are priceless, a confidence boost," McGee said. "Hey, I've got that out of the way. I've taken snaps. I've played. There are a lot of plays from that game

I can draw from and use this week to really focus on and get better."

Dallas added another quarterback Monday, signing Chris Greisen to the practice squad.

Greisen is 34 and has never taken a snap in the NFL despite being Arizona's No. 3 quarterback from 1999-2001. He spent a few weeks on Washington's practice squad in 2002 and has since played in NFL Europe, af2, the AFL and the UFL. One of his

See **COWBOYS**, Page 2B



File Photo

Josh Colunga (25) was named Six-Man Division I District 7's Offensive MVP. The senior was one of the catalysts for Garden City's run to a second consecutive state championship.

Colunga, Chudej named district's MVPs

BY ADAM COLEMAN

Sports Editor

The Garden City Bearkats were led by Josh Colunga and Brett Chudej all season during their run to a second consecutive state championship.

So, it seems right the two swept the district's Offensive and Defensive MVP awards.

With the Six-Man Division I District 7 football honors being released, Colunga was named Offensive MVP and Chudej, who regularly made plays at linebacker, was named the district's Defensive MVP.

The Bearkats had 13 players earn honors. Chudej, Reggie Halfmann, Ruben Mier and Brian Hirt earned multiple honors.

Ian Schaefer nabbed a first team selection at tight end. Joining him on first team offense was Chudej at wideout, Aaron Long at center, Blayne Batla at

quarterback and Brian Hirt at utility back. Chudej earned a first team selection at kicker, too.

For first team defense, the Bearkats were represented by Ruben Mier at nose guard, Austin Odom, Reggie Halfmann at linebacker and Hirt at cornerback.

For second team offense, the Bearkats had tight end Jonathan Young, Mier at fullback and Halfmann at utility back.

Defensive lineman Colton Belew, linebacker Peyton Schaefer and cornerback Frankie Zuniga made the district's second team defense. Halfmann earned a second team selection at punter.

Head coach Vance Jones was named Coach of the Year after leading his team to an undefeated season and another state title.

The Bearkats ended the season with on a 29-game winning streak, ending it with a win over Throckmorton in the state final in Abilene.

Amid speculation, Texans' Kubiak focuses on finale

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Gary Kubiak's time with the Houston Texans could be quickly running out after the team's unexpected plunge this season.

Houston (5-10) lost for the eighth time in nine games on Sunday, blowing a 17-0 halftime lead in a 24-23 loss to Tim Tebow and the Denver Broncos.

Houston will miss the playoffs for the ninth straight season of its existence and is guaranteed its worst record since going 6-10 in 2006, Kubiak's first season.

The Texans play Jacksonville (8-7) in their finale on Sunday, and speculation has intensified that not even an impressive victory over the Jaguars will be enough to save Kubiak and his staff.

Kubiak has deflected questions about his future for weeks, and he did it again on Monday, saying he's only focused on the finale.

"Nothing's changed for me," he said. "I wouldn't answer the question any differently. I'm concerned about trying to get ready to win a game."

Kubiak's contract runs through the 2012 season,

and team owner Bob McNair offered a vote of confidence for his coach two weeks ago — after the team rallied from 21 points down to tie, but eventually lose, a Monday night game to Baltimore.

Houston was then routed by Tennessee and collapsed in the second half against Denver, where Kubiak thrived as an offensive coordinator for 11 seasons under Mike Shanahan.

Kubiak said Monday that he's as shocked as anyone that the Texans' season unraveled so badly. The team started 4-2, overcoming the suspensions of linebacker Brian Cushing and left tackle Duane Brown for violating the NFL's policy on banned substances.

But when Kubiak looks back on the season, he'll lament the half-dozen games that got away since then. The Texans have led or been tied in the fourth quarter of seven of their past eight games, and lost all but one of those.

"Getting close doesn't matter. You've got to win those games," Kubiak said. "The key is to get yourself to play in games like that every week, and we're

playing in them. We're not winning them. That's what's very disappointing. You have to learn to make those plays."

Kubiak said that the defense never recovered from the loss of Pro Bowl middle linebacker Demeco Ryans, who ruptured his Achilles' tendon in the sixth game. The Texans have given up at least 24 points in each of their past eight losses.

"If I could change one thing, I'd like (Ryans) to be playing throughout the course of the season," Kubiak said. "That's a big, big miss. We lost our leader and our quarterback on defense the day we left the field 4-2. So that's been very, very difficult."

The Texans' defense ranks 29th overall and last against the pass, allowing 277 yards per game. Tebow threw for 308 yards on Sunday in his second career start.

Kubiak's decision to start rookie Kareem Jackson and second-year pro Glover Quin at cornerback has proven disastrous.

See **TEXANS**, Page 2B

Obituaries

Walter Owen Kelly

Walter Owen Kelly, 87, of Stanton passed away peacefully Dec. 25, 2010, at the Hospice Inpatient Unit at Midland Memorial Hospital. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2010, at 2 p.m. at the Downtown Church of Christ in Stanton with Elmore Johnson, retired pastor, and Deral McWhorter officiating. Interment will follow at Resthaven Memorial Park in Midland. The family will receive friends at Gilbreath Funeral Home in Stanton on Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2010, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Owen was born Sept. 18, 1923, in Stanton to Walter and Stella Kelly. He grew up and spent his life in Stanton, working as a farmer. He graduated from Courtney High School in 1941 and married Maxine Cain on Feb. 2, 1941, in Seminole. She preceded him in death Feb. 11, 2005.

Owen served as president of the Martin County Farm Bureau and had been an elder, deacon and song leader at the downtown Church of Christ. He also served on the Stanton School Board, was a member of the Martin County Sheriff's Posse and was a 4-H Gold Star Winner and 4-H Leader. He loved fishing and especially hunting arrowheads.

Survivors include three sons, Bobby Owen Kelly (Janice), Roy Kelly (Sue) of Stanton and Terry Kelly (Roxy) of Midland; a daughter, Sandra Cooley (Eddie) of Midland; 11 grandchildren, D'awn Pruitt (Aaron), Sonya Jones (John), Jim B. Kelly (Angela), Dana Ralston (Curtis), David Pinkerton (Lindra), Theresa Cooley, Bryan Cooley, Austin Kelly (Kristi), Ryan Kelly, Sloan Kelly and Keegan Kelly; 15 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

He was also preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Stella Kelly; and two brothers, Grady Kelly and George Benny Kelly.

The family would like to express their sincere love and appreciation to the staff at the Hospice Unit, who took care and gave unconditional love the past three weeks, and to his home nurses, Linda and Amy, during the past year. A special thanks to people who have helped provide compassionate care and love over the past six years, which allowed dad to remain at home, especially Annie and Israel Garanzuay, Toni Flores, Teresa Booth, Reina Luna and Juanita Avalos.

The family suggests memorials to be made to Hospice of Midland, P.O. Box 2621, Midland 79702; the Martin County Senior Citizens, 201 Convent, Stanton 79782; or to a charity of your choice.

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

Paid obituary

Wilma Holley Cashion

Wilma Holley Cashion, 85, of Greenville, formerly of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 27, 2010, at Briarcliff Health Center in Greenville. The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday at Trinity Memorial Park. Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Amalia Larez

Amalia Larez, 90, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2010, at her residence. Services are pending with Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Support Groups

- TUESDAY
- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; closed discussion meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
 - Al-Anon, 615 Settles for family members and friends of alcoholics meets at 8 p.m.
- WEDNESDAY
- RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; open 12 & 12 study meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Carl B. Riherd

Oct. 23, 1919 - Dec. 24, 2010
Carl B. Riherd of Robinson passed away Friday, Dec. 24, 2010, at his residence. Services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2010, at Central United Methodist Church with the Rev. Carl Freeto officiating. Burial will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 30, 2010, at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring. Visitation will be held from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2010, at Wilkerson-Hatch-Bailey.

Carl was born Oct. 23, 1919, in Harbin to John Bell Riherd and Rosa Belle Kiker Riherd. He graduated from Abilene High School in 1937 and McMurry College in 1941, where he was a member of Ko Sari Social Club. He served in the Army Air Corps from 1941 to 1945 as an aircraft maintenance instructor, pilot and a glider pilot.

After his service he worked in Abilene, where he met his wife, DeAlva Watkins, and they married June 3, 1948. He taught school in Sweetwater and then was recalled to active service during the Korean Conflict. In 1979 he retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve as a major.

After the service he relocated to Big Spring and worked at Cosden Oil and Chemical Company as a quality control chemist from 1954 until 1983. While in Big Spring, the pair were very active in the First United Methodist Church, serving in many capacities.

They moved to Waco in 1994 and joined Central United Methodist Church in Waco. His hobbies were woodworking, carpentry and traveling, touring a great part of the world.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 57 years, DeAlva Riherd, in 2005; a son, Joe Donald Riherd in 1980; and a grandson, Dustin Riherd in 2010.

He is survived by his daughter, Peggy Williams and Richard of Robinson; son, John Riherd and Jan of Carson City, Nev.; grandsons, Matthew Williams and Stephanie, Jonathan Williams and April; granddaughters, Nicole Methner and Joe, Morgan Riherd and Mike; and a great-grandson, Kyson. Also surviving is his sister, Melba Menninger; and nephews, Jim and John Garner.

The family wants to express their appreciation to the Galilean Sunday School Class, Meals on Wheels and neighbors, Larry and Grace Obr.

Memorials may be made to Central United Methodist Church, 5740 Bagby, Waco, 76712; or to West Texas Boys Ranch, 10223 Boys Ranch Road, San Angelo 76904.

The family invites you to leave a message or memory in our "Memorial Guestbook" at www.WilkersonHatchBailey.com.

Paid obituary

Police blotter

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

- GRACIELA LEAL, 39, of 505 S. Aylesford, was arrested Monday on a warrant for of failure to maintain financial responsibility.
- CODY NICOLAS SPOLLINO, 23, of 3910 Parkway, was arrested Monday on warrants for possession of marijuana - two ounces or less and delivery of marijuana - less than 1/4 ounce.
- RODOLFO GONZALES JR., 49, of 1601 Johnson, was arrested Monday on a warrant from another agency.
- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported: In the 3200 block of Drexel.
- In the 1900 block of Wasson Road.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 800 block of W. 13th Street.
- BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE was reported in the 400 block of E. Fourth Street.

Sheriff

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

- Note - Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 60 inmates at the time of this report.
- DIONICIO MEZA SALGADO, 37, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a fugitive warrant from

Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Thu 12/30	Fri 12/31	Sat 1/1	Sun 1/2	Mon 1/3
 71/38 Partly cloudy and windy. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the upper 30s.	 59/26 Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the mid 20s.	 53/27 Plenty of sun. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	 56/32 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.	 61/33 More sun than clouds. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:51 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:51 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:52 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:53 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:54 PM

Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	70	43	pt sunny	Kingsville	83	62	pt sunny
Amarillo	63	26	windy	Livingston	72	60	cloudy
Austin	72	57	pt sunny	Longview	68	59	cloudy
Beaumont	74	62	pt sunny	Lubbock	66	31	windy
Brownsville	81	63	windy	Lufkin	72	60	cloudy
Brownwood	73	49	cloudy	Midland	69	39	windy
Corpus Christi	78	63	pt sunny	Raymondville	84	60	pt sunny
Corsicana	67	57	cloudy	Rosenberg	75	62	pt sunny
Dallas	68	57	cloudy	San Antonio	77	58	pt sunny
Del Rio	76	46	pt sunny	San Marcos	74	58	pt sunny
El Paso	59	32	windy	Sulphur Springs	66	59	cloudy
Fort Stockton	70	41	pt sunny	Sweetwater	71	41	windy
Gainesville	66	51	cloudy	Tyler	67	58	cloudy
Greenville	65	55	cloudy	Weatherford	67	51	cloudy
Houston	75	62	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	71	44	pt sunny

Oklahoma and a warrant for failure to appear - possession of a dangerous drug.

• RAMON MOLINA, 45, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while license invalid.

• GRACIE LEAL, 39, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to maintain financial responsibility.

• CODY N. SPOLLINO, 23, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of delivery of marijuana - less than 1/4 ounce and possession of marijuana - two ounces or less.

• CHESLEY WAYNE GARRETT, 31, was arrested Monday by DPS on charges of driving while license invalid (two counts).

• RODOLFO GONZALES JR., 49, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a Wichita County warrant for non-payment of child support.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2000 block of Rickabaugh. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Stadium. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of S. Benton. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of Third Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- GRASS FIRE was reported near the intersection of N.W. Second Street and Channing.
- STRUCTURE FIRE was reported in the 1600 block of E. 15th Street.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of N.E. Ninth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

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TEXANS

Continued from Page 1B

Houston has allowed 32 touchdown passes

and 17 pass plays covering at least 40 yards, both league highs, and most of those defensive breakdowns have occurred in the fourth

quarter. "I don't think it's one mistake," Kubiak said. "I think there are things that happen through the course of a game

that put you in those situations. But usually, in the fourth quarter, there are four, five or six plays that are the difference in the game,

and you've got to make three or four of them. Obviously, we haven't been doing that." With Sunday's loss, Kubiak's record slipped

to 36-43 through five seasons. The Texans' progress has stalled after they went 9-7 last season, the franchise's first winning record.

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

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

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Famous Hand — Part Two

North dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 5 4
♥ J 5 4
♦ 6 4
♣ K 7 6 5 4 3

WEST EAST
♠ A K 10 2 ♠ Q J 9 7
♥ 9 8 ♥ 7
♦ J 7 5 3 2 ♦ A K Q 10 9 8
♣ Q J ♣ 10 8

SOUTH
♠ 8 6 3
♥ A K Q 10 6 3 2
♦ —
♣ A 9 2

The bidding:
North East South West
Pass 1♦ 4♥ 4♠
5♥ 5♠ Dble

Opening lead — jack of hearts.
Yesterday we discussed a hand from a pair championship where the British East-West pair, Kenneth Konstam and Maurice Harrison-Gray, had a misunderstanding about a suit-preference signal. As a result, they allowed their Italian opponents, Walter Avarelli and Massimo D'Alelio, to make five hearts doubled.

By a strange coincidence, on the very next deal the Italian pair ran into a situation that also involved a suit-preference signal. But the Italians, as

usual, were more in harmony. Harrison-Gray, West, made a fine decision when he elected to bid four spades over four hearts with only a four-card suit. D'Alelio, South, would have made 11 tricks in hearts very easily. When Avarelli pressed on to five hearts, Konstam very reasonably carried on to five spades, doubled by D'Alelio.

Avarelli led the jack of hearts, and D'Alelio played the ten on it. This had to be a suit-preference signal, since D'Alelio could hardly be asking for a heart continuation; rather, he was requesting a shift to the higher-ranking of the two side suits.

So Avarelli, displaying full faith and confidence in his partner, switched to a diamond. D'Alelio ruffed and played the A-9 of clubs, and Avarelli, after winning with the king, led another diamond. South ruffed for the defense's fifth and final trick, and the Italians collected 500 points for their fine defense.

The hand is an excellent example of the great value of a partnership understanding in a situation where most players have at best only a vague arrangement. Speaking exactly the same language in various common situations is what makes for a good partnership.

Tomorrow: Choosing the right line of play.
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91-year-old bowls her way to victory

BY DIANA DODD

Special to the Herald

At 91 years young, Georgie Tarver proved you're never too old to compete in the sport of bowling. Bowl-A-Rama's 1st annual Christmas Tournament, which took place Dec. 16, consisted of bowling four games one right after another. Two of the games were done in regulation play and two games of "No Tap", which means if a bowler knocks down nine pins on their first ball it counts as a strike. After bowling her first three games, she found herself in third place. With one game remaining she shocked the field of 35 other bowlers, rolling her final game of 247. Tarver is to the local bowling community what Reba is to Country and Western music, known by just one name: "Georgie". The lady with the smile that would light up a West Texas night sky.

In the spirit of the season, all 36 bowlers made a significant contribution to one of our local charities to help those less fortunate during this holiday time. Not to be out done by the bowlers Diana and John Dodd, Bowl-A-Rama owners, graciously matched dollar for dollar the donation collected.



Courtesy Photo

At 91 years old, Georgie Tarver bowled a 247 in her final game of the Bowl-A-Rama 1st annual Christmas Tournament.

COWBOYS

Continued from Page 1B

Arena League teams was the Cowboys-owned Desperados.

When Kitna was hurt, Greisen thought there was a remote chance he might get a call from the Cowboys. He actually missed it while at a Christmas party.

Dallas' pro scouting coordinator Will McClay — who'd been Greisen's coach on the Desperados — left a message.

"I had to call him back," Greisen said, laughing. "He said, 'I have a proposition for you: Do you want to become a Cowboy?' I said, 'Heck, yeah.' It was a great, great surprise."

The Cowboys could move Greisen up to the active roster if Kitna is unable to play Sunday.

Mavs lose Nowitzki to injury

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Dallas Mavericks were already without their coach after knee surgery, then lost Dirk Nowitzki to his own knee injury.

And the Mavericks just kept rolling on the road.

Caron Butler scored 21 points and the Mavericks shook off the loss of Nowitzki in the second quarter to beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 103-93 on Monday night for their 17th victory in 18 games.

Nowitzki scored 13 points before leaving with 9:10 left in the second

with what the Mavericks said was a sore right knee. Shawn Marion scored 20 points off the bench to help replace him.

"You hate to see the big German go down," guard Jason Terry said. "But we saw him at halftime and he was smiling. He told us, 'No problem. You guys got this.'"

Dallas improved to 11-1 on the road this season, best in the NBA, and 24-5 overall.

"Just a great team win," said Mavs assistant Dwane Casey, running the team while Rick Carlisle recovers from his surgery. "Huge team win. The guys pulled together."

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ANSWERS

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



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TAXES

Continued from Page 1A

“Some individuals don’t get their statement for whatever reason,” said Sayles. “We can pull up their name on the system and tell them the amount that’s due. So if you haven’t received a statement, call us or come by the office. Some people, because of their homestead exemptions, have no taxes, so we don’t send them a notice. However, if they just want to make sure everything is OK, all they have to do is call.”

“They can reference their check with an account number that we can give them so they can get their payment in the mail. Once that’s done, we mail them back a receipt for their payment.”

For taxpayers over the age of 65 or currently on disability, Sayles said there is a special installment plan that can help them avoid penalties and interest, which can quickly add up.

“There is a provision that allows taxpayers over the age of 65 to pay their taxes in four installments without any penalties or

interest,” said Sayles. “You make your first payment in January, then you just make the remaining three payments in April, June and Aug. 1. This is for people 65 and older or are receiving disability.”

The tax penalty and interest schedule is as follows: After Jan. 31, 6 percent penalty and 1 percent interest; after Feb. 28, 7 percent penalty and 2 percent interest; after March 31, 8 percent penalty and 3 percent interest; after April 30, 9 percent penalty and 4 percent interest; after May 31, 10 percent penalty and 5 percent interest; and after June 30, 12 percent penalty and 6 percent interest, including an additional 20 percent attorney fee.

“Just remember, we go by the postmark on the envelope,” said Sayles. “As long as it’s postmarked by the deadline, you’re OK.”

Sayles said her office will be open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 31. For more information, contact the Howard County Tax Collector’s Office at 264-2232.

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

French fry dispute ends with unhappy meal

SANDUSKY, Ohio (AP) — Police say a dispute over the freshness of french fries got heated at a McDonald’s in northern Ohio.

Authorities say a customer refused fries waiting Sunday night in their serving pouches at the restaurant near Sandusky. The manager insisted the fries were fresh.

Police say they were called when the customer said he wouldn’t leave until he got different fries. He told officers a McDonald’s employee struck him with a mop.

The Sandusky Register reports that a witness said the worker acted only as though he was going to hit the man and said the customer called the employee a derogatory name.

No charges were filed. Police say the man got his money back and left without fries.

California thieves ditch TV too big for car

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Police in California say thieves who stole a large television from a Sacramento home were thwarted when it wouldn’t fit in the getaway car.

Investigators say the burglars entered the home through a back window Sunday afternoon, removed the TV and tried to load it into their Lexus. When it proved too big, they left it on the curb and drove away.

The Sacramento Bee reports that a neighbor witnessed the crime and called the police, who traced the car to a 19-year-old man. The suspect was arrested on suspicion of possession of stolen property.

TRASH

Continued from Page 1A

large boxes — in the meantime.”

One holiday item that is not allowed in those containers, however, are live Christmas trees, which will be accepted only at the landfill and compost facility.

“The compost facility will grind the

trees up to be used in the compost,”

Darden said. “That way we’re recycling them and not just throwing them in the landfill. The other reason we do this is to keep people from putting the trees in their dumpsters. When people put them in their dumpsters they get stuck and cause a serious problem for us.

“The tree recycling program is going to be operated mainly out of the

compost facility this year. If people want to leave their trees at the collection point at the landfill, we’ll be glad to pick them up and transport them to the compost facility. However, this year these two city facilities will be the only collection points.”

Darden said dropping your tree off is free of charge, and there are only a few, simple guidelines to follow.

“We need people to make sure all of

the lights and ornaments are off the tree,” he explained. “We also can’t take it if it’s still wrapped in plastic or anything like that. You also need to make sure the tree stand has been taken off. Once they drop it off, we’ll take it from there.”

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

BOOMERS

Continued from Page 1A

is disappearing. In 1980, some 39 percent of private-sector workers had a pension that guaranteed a steady payout during retirement. Today that number stands closer to 15 percent, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute in Washington, D.C.

— Reliance on stocks in retirement plans is greater than ever; 42 percent of those workers now have 401(k)s. But the past decade has been a lost one for stocks, with the Standard & Poor’s 500 index posting total returns of just 4 percent since the beginning of 2000.

— Many retirees banked on their homes as their retirement fund. But the crash in housing prices has slashed almost a third of a typical home’s value. Now 22 percent of homeowners, or nearly 11 million people, owe more on their mortgage than their home is worth. Many are boomers.

Michael Vanatta, 61, of Vero Beach, Fla., is paying the price for being a boomer who enjoyed life without saving for the future. He put a daughter through college, but he also spent plenty of money on indulgences like dining out and the latest electronic gadgets.

Vanatta was laid off last January from his \$100,000-a-year job as a sales executive for a turf company. And with savings of just \$5,000, he’s on a budget for the first time. In April, he will start taking Social Security at age 62.

“If I’d been smarter and planned and had the bucks, I’d wait until 70,” says Vanatta, who is divorced and rents an apartment. “It’s my fault. For years I was

making plenty of money and spending plenty of money.”

Vanatta is in the majority. Some 51 percent of early boomer households, headed by those ages 55 to 64, face a retirement with lower living standards, according to a 2009 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

Too many boomers have ignored or underestimated the worsening outlook for their finances, says Jean Setzfang, director of financial security for AARP, the group that represents Americans over age 50. By far the greatest shortcoming has been a failure to save. The personal savings rate — the amount of disposable income unspent — averaged close to 10 percent in the 1970s and ‘80s. By late 2007, the rate had sunk to negative 1 percent.

The recession has helped improve the savings rate — it’s now back above 5 percent. Yet typical boomers are still woefully short on retirement savings. Even those in their 50s and 60s with a 401(k) for at least six years had an average balance of less than \$150,000 at the end of 2009, according to the EBRI.

Signs of coming trouble are visible on several other fronts, too:

— Mortgage Debt. Nearly two in three people age 55 to 64 had a mortgage in 2007, with a median debt of \$85,000.

— Social Security. Nearly 3 out of 4 people file to claim Social Security benefits as soon as they’re eligible at age 62. That locks them in at a much lower amount than they would get if they waited.

The monthly checks are about 25 percent less if you retire at 62 instead of full retirement age, which is 66 for those

born from 1943 to 1954. If you wait until 70, your check can be 75 to 80 percent more than at 62. So, a boomer who claimed a \$1,200 monthly benefit in 2008 at age 62 could have received about \$2,000 by holding off until 70.

— Medical Costs. Health care expenses are soaring, and the availability of retiree benefits is declining.

“People cannot fathom how much money will be needed to simply cover out-of-pocket medical care costs,” says Mitchell of the University of Pennsylvania.

A 55-year-old man with typical drug expenses needs to have about \$187,000 just to cover future medical costs. That’s if he wants to be 90 percent certain to have enough money to supplement Medicare coverage in retirement, the EBRI said. Because of greater longevity, a 65-year-old woman would need even more to cover her health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket health expenses: an estimated \$213,000.

— Employment. Boomers both need and want to work longer than previous generations. But unemployment is near 10 percent, and many have lost their jobs.

The average unemployment period for those 55 and older was 45 weeks in November. That’s 12 weeks longer

than for younger job-seekers. It’s also more than double the 20-week period this group faced at the beginning of the recession in December 2007.

If financial neglect turns out to be many boomers’ undoing, challenging circumstances are stymieing others.

Linda Reaves of Silver Spring, Md., never had much opportunity to save as a single mother raising two sons and a daughter. After holding a variety of positions over the years — hotel office manager, research analyst for a mortgage company, hospital mental health counselor — she was still living paycheck to paycheck. Then she was laid off in 2007 at the age of 57.

She entered a training program to learn new skills, but all she has found since is a string of temporary jobs. In her daily quest for clerical or administrative work, she competes against much younger applicants.

Reaves, who turns 60 this month, plans to work until she’s at least 70 and then wants to travel, even if she doesn’t know where the money will come from.

“I just keep going. I don’t really worry about it,” she says.

Add this all up, and there’s a “slow-burning” retirement crisis for boomers, says Anthony Webb, a research

economist at the Center for Retirement Research.

“If you have a crisis where the adverse consequences are immediately clear, then people understand that they have to do something,” Webb says. “When the consequences will be felt 20 or 30 years in the future, the temptation is that we kick the can down the road.”

As a result, he believes many won’t change their behavior.

For less affluent boomers, it won’t take that long to feel the pain of poor planning. Concerns about financial trouble will hang over many of those 65th birthday celebrations in 2011.

Many seem to view their plight through rose-colored granny glasses. An AARP

survey last month of boomers turning 65 next year found that they worry no more about money than they did at age 60 — before the recession or the collapse of home prices. But in an acknowledgement of reality, 40 percent said they plan to work “until I drop.”

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Wilma Holley Cashion, 85, of died Monday. The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday at Trinity Memorial Park

Amalia Larez, 90, died Tuesday. Services are pending with Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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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

OTHER VIEWS

Reform brings greater transparency to health insurance markets

Last February, California's largest for-profit health insurance company tried to hike premiums by as much as 39 percent — 15 times the rate of inflation.

That was bad news for about 800,000 customers of Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield. But the bad news didn't stop there. Anthem operates in 14 states, including Missouri and Illinois. It asked for double-digit rate increases in at least 11 of them. We say "at least" because, unlike most states, Missouri doesn't require health insurers to publicly report rates or rate hikes.

So while it was easy for residents of other states to see how much more they were paying for health insurance sold to individuals and small businesses, people in Missouri could not.

That's about to change.

Thanks to the federal health care reform law and new rules released this week, insurance companies that want to hike rates by 10 percent or more in Missouri will have to publicly report the increase and file documents explaining why premiums are going up.

The new rules go into effect next year and get significantly tougher in 2012.

Even with the new rules, Missouri's Department of Insurance still won't have the ability to review and approve rate hikes. The Legislature would have to change the law to allow that. That's not likely given the political clout of insurance companies.

But public disclosure alone is an important tool to protect consumers.

When California regulators asked for more information from Anthem last year, the company quickly admitted that its rate increases were based on faulty assumptions and mistaken calculations.

The requested 39 percent increase became 14 percent.

Making rate information available to consumers could help them to shop for the best rates. But, in practice, it won't be quite that easy.

Each insurance company offers dozens of health insurance plans to individuals and small businesses. Some are "closed," meaning new customers aren't accepted.

Those often are the plans with the highest rate hikes; they've been abandoned by healthy customers who can qualify for lower rates in another plan.

More important, individual and small-group policies still are subject to medical underwriting until health care reform is fully implemented in 2014. Older customers, or those with existing medical problems, can be excluded until then. People who leave their existing insurance for price reasons might find themselves denied other coverage.

What's more, outside of Medicare, there still are no standardized benefits packages. Shopping on the basis of premiums alone can mean comparing apples to grapes.

Starting next year, federal and state officials will calculate a different rate reporting "trigger" for each state. Insurance companies that raise rates above that point will have to publicly report and explain their reasons.

Transparency is long overdue in the health insurance market. Premiums for family coverage have increased by 133 percent since 1999, far faster than the rate of inflation.

By itself, public rate reporting is unlikely to stop the rapid rise in health spending. But it's a big step in the right direction.

The real solution is to change how we pay for care. Doctors and hospitals should be rewarded for providing better care, not just more services.

Health care reform lays the groundwork for that change. Without it, we'll remain in the dark about what we get for our considerable investment in health care.

THE POST-DISPATCH
ST. LOUIS

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

May we avoid the wild goose chase, Lord, and come to You.

Amen

At this season's very end...

I love it when the first cold front blows through in September and the temperature drops 30 degrees. It means the summer season is over and fall is here.

I also love it when I look up at night and no longer see Scorpio's tail in the heavens, but Orion's belt and sword in the east. It means the season has changed and winter is here.

The cycle continues and just about the time my Wisteria begins to bloom, I tend to catch a giant V of geese headed back north to Canada.

And it is so much fun to sit down in my chair in the backyard, watch the sun go down and hear the locusts and crickets fire up for the first time. There is hope in seasonal changes.

God is the designer of times and seasons. He made sure people can separate in their mind the difference between childhood and young adult life. He wants things to be different for us in our strong 30s than it is in our mellow 70s.

For the person who hates the hard work of summer, there is always the harvest of fall. I love how God has such a value for hope.

Today, you find me at the end of a season.

For the past seven years I

have faithfully, and joyfully, hammered on my thoughts and theology in this column. I am hanging up my newspaper column hat today.

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

Nothing negative whatsoever provokes me to make this change. Seeing my writings in newspapers everywhere has been a dream come true for me. It's just that at 44, I do not find things slowing down but am much, much busier.

My recent move to downtown Joshua and our incredible church growth has me stepping and fetching in a way like I never anticipated.

My life has changed and so has my ability to meet another deadline.

I am about to start a school to train people in ministry, and once things settle down at Open Door, I will spend several days a month in foreign countries training pastors and working on my orphanages.

My calendar of conference speaking is filling up and, as grateful as I am to the Lord for that opportunity, I know it means saying goodbye to my love of writing this column.

I will still write it from time to time, but I just can't promise to keep a deadline anymore and my editors deserve better than that.

So I don't want to be like Bret Farve, I want to be like Michael Jordan and leave the game while people are still very happy with what I do.



TROY
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ADDRESSES

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A vote that will live in infamy

As I watched many young undocumented immigrants crying on television Saturday, I tried to put myself in their place. But I just couldn't. How could I possibly feel the impotence and frustration they must have felt as the U.S. Senate rejected their pleas for equality? Unless it is happening to us, how can we truly understand how it feels to be young and told that we have no future?

I was very lucky to be able to come to this country legally (from Cuba at the age of 11 in 1962) when my parents decided they wanted a better life for me. From the moment I arrived, when I set goals for myself in my new life as an American, I felt I had an equal opportunity to realize my dreams.

Yet the young Latino immigrants who were crying on television were never given those opportunities. They came here as kids because their parents also wanted better lives for them. Just like me, they did not make the decision to come to the United States. They were not asked whether they wanted to come here; they were told! Nevertheless, they grew up here, just as I did, dreaming American dreams.

Yet because they were brought here illegally, although we all recognize that it was through no fault of their own, we choose to punish them by denying them a path to U.S. citizenship.

I, who was lucky enough to be able to become a citizen, try to put myself in their shoes, to feel their frustrating futility, because I easily could have been one of them. Had my family been denied visas to come here as political refugees, knowing how much my parents wanted to free me from communism, I know we would have found a way to come here illegally.

So to me and to many other Latinos who are also voting Americans, this is very personal. When the Senate rejected the DREAM Act — and denied legalization even to undocumented immigrants who arrived here as children — I felt ashamed. Many

of us felt ashamed for the country we love.

Our lawmakers cast a vote that will live in infamy! Because we have a Senate that would vote this way — against young people pleading for an opportunity to attend college or serve in the military — we all should be ashamed of ourselves.

Choosing to condemn these young immigrants to lives of inequality, to living as second-class citizens in a country they love and want to serve, is much more than uncompassionate; it's downright cruel! We should be embarrassed for tolerating it.

What makes this tragedy even harder to accept is the fact that the DREAM Act — formally known as the Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act — was defeated by a minority.

Sometimes our democracy is hard to understand. Although public opinion polls say the majority of Americans are much more compassionate than the race-baiting politicians who rallied against the DREAM Act, although the bill passed the House by a 216-198 vote and although 55 senators voted for it and only 41 voted against it, because 60 votes were needed to move the bill forward, the dreams of thousands of young immigrants were cruelly thwarted.

Sometimes the majority doesn't rule and injustice prevails. This is one of those times.

Of course, with the new Republican majority in the House and greater GOP influence in the Senate, for undocumented immigrants, things are likely to get worse next year. With all the conservative newcomers who have peddled xenophobia to get elected to Congress, instead of a DREAM Act, we can expect nightmare legislation.

Chances of Congress' passing pro-immigrant legislation in the next two years are very low under the new wave of xenophobia expected to hit Washington when tea party extremists take office. Instead of gaining ground, pro-immigrant activists would be lucky to stop conservative efforts to take this country back to a time when civil rights were readily violated.

But what should these young Latino activists do to keep fighting the good fight for undocumented immigrants in this

SAYING GOODBYE

Just a moment ago my brother-in-law, Lonnie Applegate, called me and said that my good friend John Smith is living his last day in a hospital in Fort Worth.

John and I played in the same band, the Midnight Riders, as kids. We actually provided all the music for the Joshua Centennial, back in the day.

Apparently John has suffered some kind of diabetic stroke and today his family has painfully and prayerfully decided to pull the plug on John's machine.

I expect the next time I see him, he will be happy and young and funny like he was when he was a kid.

I look forward to that, and as I type this out, I pray that John's last moment in Texas will be peaceful and full of God's presence. It's the end of a season for my friend John and the beginning of a new one.

I have to go, guys. My daughter finished high school early and today, not unlike my friend John, is the day she graduates. Her older sister also graduated early from Burseson High and Rhema is walking the stage at TEAM school in Cleburne today.

It is a time of celebrating what we have done and moving on to the next big thing.

Blessings, peace and a really fun life be yours in Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Troy Brewer is the pastor of Open Door Church in Joshua and can be found online at www.opendoorexperience.com

country? Do they keep insisting on immigration reform legislation they know will be rejected, especially by the new Congress, or do they start a political movement to target and replace the politicians — Republicans and Democrats — who are clearly their enemies?

The vote on the DREAM Act — during a lame-duck session when its chances were favorable — proved to be very telling. Although the vote was mostly along party lines, with Republicans mostly against it and Democrats mostly for it, there were some notable exceptions. Of the 55 senators who voted for it, only three were Republicans: Bob Bennett of Utah, Dick Lugar of Indiana and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. All 55 deserve our support and gratitude.

Of the 41 who voted against it, five were Democrats: Ben Nelson of Nebraska, Mark Pryor of Arkansas, Jon Tester and Max Baucus of Montana, and Kay Hagan of North Carolina. One other Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, missed the vote because he had to go to a Christmas party. Amazing!

The DREAM Act was only the light version of the immigration reform this country really needs, a litmus test to determine just how much compassion our lawmakers have for these young people who are pleading — often in graduation caps and gowns — to be accepted as Americans.

But for Latinos, who overwhelmingly support the DREAM Act and consider this issue very personal, this also was a litmus test to determine which politicians are our "amigos" and which are our "enemigos."

All who failed to vote for the DREAM Act were, in effect, casting a very definite vote against the Hispanic community. They all deserve to be the targets of a massive national Latino campaign to ridicule them now and replace them as soon as they seek re-election.

Just like the conservatives who have targeted President Barack Obama and some Democrats for complete alienation, pro-immigrant Americans must target their enemies, and the DREAM Act has given us a good list.

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What's the Difference?

There are five things different between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?



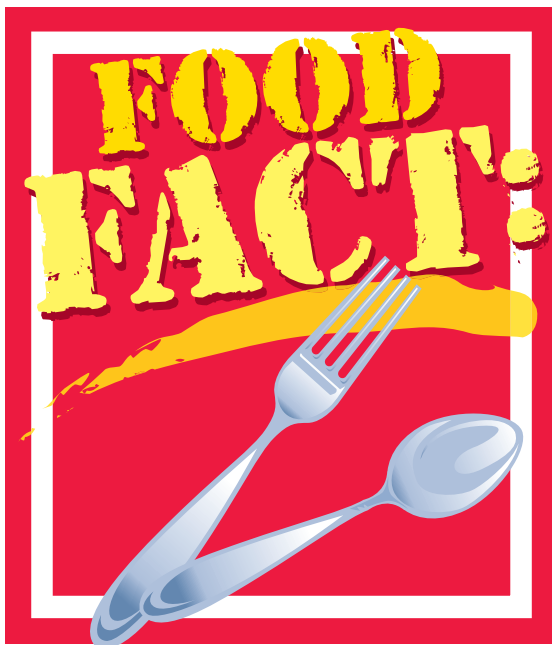
Answers: 1. missing arm 2. bigger hat 3. no mouth on middle snowman 4. extra buttons on left snowman 5. snow is falling

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- 1932: RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL OPENS IN NEW YORK CITY.
- 1945: TWENTY-EIGHT NATIONS SIGN AN AGREEMENT CREATING THE WORLD BANK.
- 1979: THE SOVIET UNION INVADES AFGHANISTAN.



WHAT HOLIDAY FOOD GIFT IS OFTEN THE TOPIC OF JOKES AROUND CHRISTMAS?

ANSWER: FRUITCAKE



mistletoe

parasitic plant that grows on broadleaf trees

How they SAY that in...

- ENGLISH:** Holy
- SPANISH:** Santo
- ITALIAN:** Santo
- FRENCH:** Saint
- GERMAN:** Heilig

Did You Know?



CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS MAY BE SHARP OR HAVE SMALL PIECES THAT CAN BE A HAZARD TO YOUNG CHILDREN. HANG THEM OUT OF REACH OF CURIOUS KIDS.

GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: CHRISTMAS STOCKING

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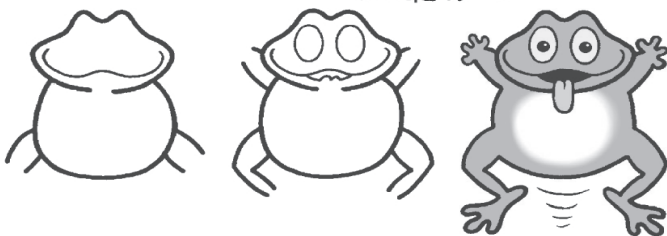
BY BOB WEBER JR.

Max Mouse is about to read one of his favorite websites. The mean and nasty Count Weirdly wants to spoil Max's computer fun time. Can you determine, in less than 30 seconds, whether Weirdly is about to cut the computer cable or the phone cord?



HOW TO DRAW a frog

weber 12-26



YOUR DRAWING

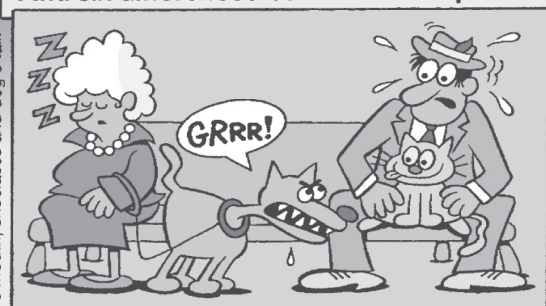


Today's terrific artist is Bobby George, age 12, of Lock Haven, PA

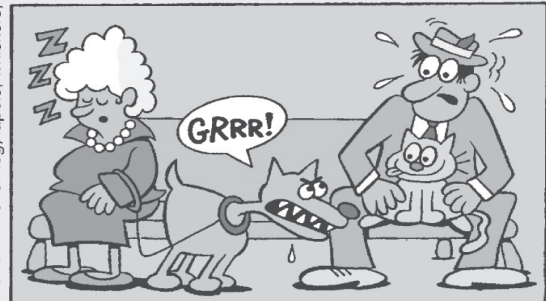
Submit your drawings at www.kidcartoonists.com

Have you ever managed to get a sticky wad of gum in your hair? Before you chop a chunk of hair, rub peanut butter through your hair until the gum comes out. Peanut butter will wash out with shampoo.

Find six differences between these panels.



www.kidcartoonists.com



Answer -- Bench leg, lapels, whiskers, lady's mouth, shoelaces and dog's tail.

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

Annie's Mailbox [®]

Dear Annie: Recently, my dear friend "Jill" learned that a long-lost high school friend has been incarcerated for nine years.

Jill insists on contacting "Alan" and has encouraged our friends to do the same, even though we have not spoken to Alan in more than 13 years.

I am scared of what might happen to Jill. The circumstances surrounding Alan's incarceration are nothing short of horrifying.

My husband and I feel there is no need to get in touch with him.

I love Jill with all my heart and soul, but I am unsure of how to break the news to her that this is a Pandora's box that should never be opened.

Jill is a trusting soul who feels the need to help everyone.

We don't want to hurt her feelings, so how can we explain that we don't want to write Alan? We need to protect our families. — *Wish To Tactfully Decline*

Dear Tactfully: Tell Jill plainly that you are not interested in contacting Alan.

You also should inform her that although she obviously feels sorry for a former classmate, it would be irresponsible to correspond with him without checking out the situation more thoroughly.

Prisoners have been known to take advantage of sympathetic friends and family members.

She should contact the warden at the prison and ask for information and suggestions.

Dear Annie: We have wonderful young neighbors we like very much. However, they continue to ask us to babysit their young children. We have raised our

kids and enjoy our empty nest. We do not enjoy babysitting, although we are willing to do so for our own grandchildren on rare occasion.

You would think they would get the hint since we have politely refused them more than 20 times.

How do we graciously decline without hurting their feelings? — **The**



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

Older Neighbors

Dear Older: You graciously decline by saying, "Sorry, we can't manage that." And say it as many times as necessary.

Either your neighbors are extraordinarily dense, or they are hoping to wear you down. Explaining that you don't like to babysit will likely result in a harangue about how easy their children would be to care for.

Still, you do not need to be frank if you are worried it would be rude. Simply continue to say no, politely and respectfully.

Dear Annie: After reading so many letters about the family problems that ensue when splitting up belongings after a death, I thought I'd tell you what my siblings did.

The nine of us met at our parents' house. We picked the largest room

in the house, put up nine pieces of paper on the walls and numbered them 1 through 9.

We then went through each room of my parents' home looking for items we wished to keep. We brought these things into the large room and placed them under each sheet of paper so that there were nine piles.

If one pile looked skimpy, we would add to it on our next trip. Appliances and furniture too large to move were numbered where they stood.

We then wrote the numbers 1 through 9 on pieces of paper and put them into a hat.

Each person pulled a number that corresponded to a pile, and the things in that pile belonged to them.

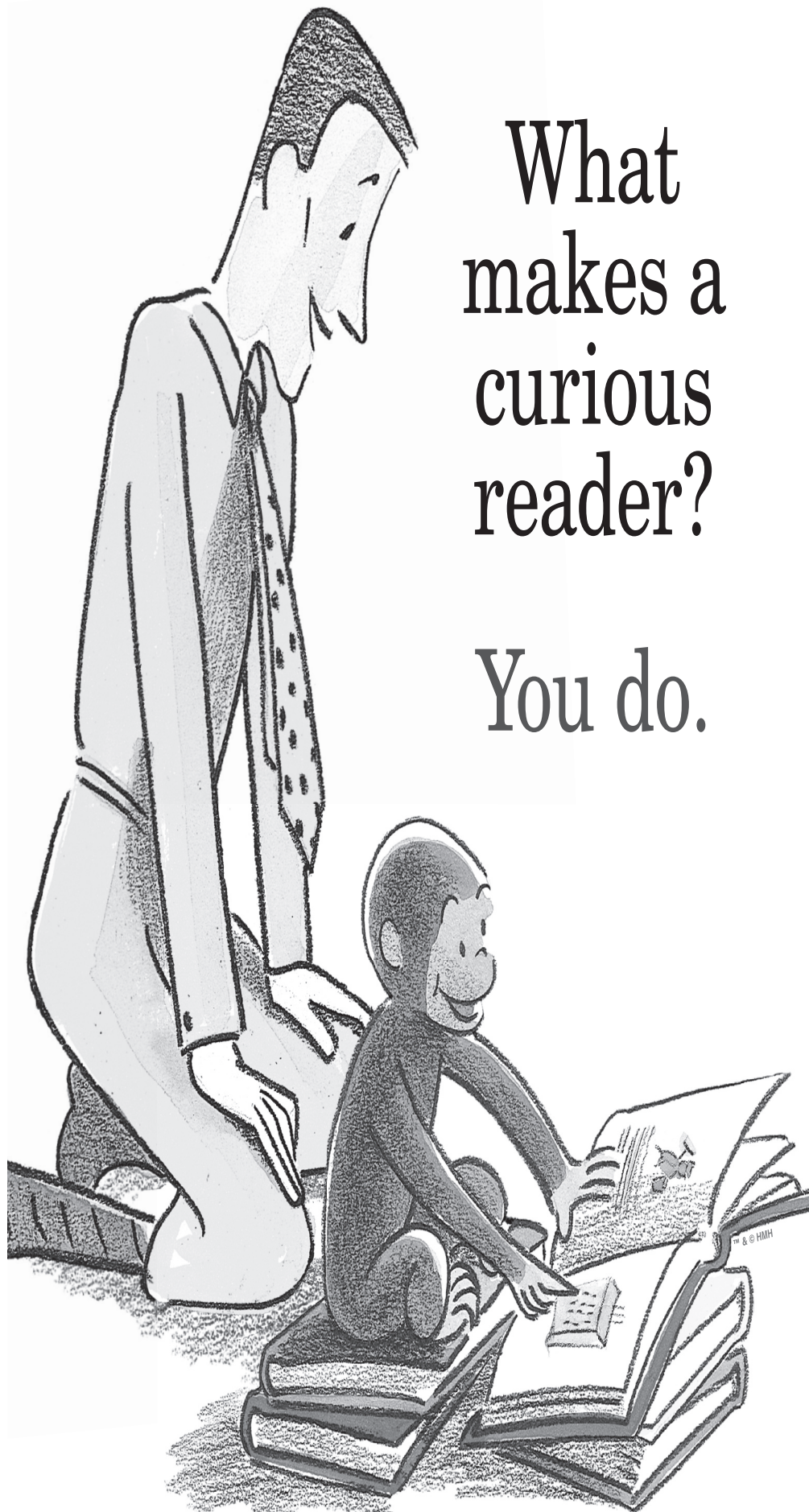
No one "rigged" a pile, because no one knew which number they would pick from the hat.

When we were finished, if anyone wanted to swap, that was up to them.

This system worked perfectly, and there was no fighting. Of course, it also helped that we are a close and loving family. — *Did it Right*

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, long-time 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. 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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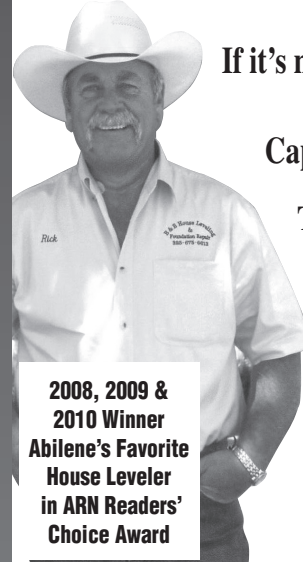
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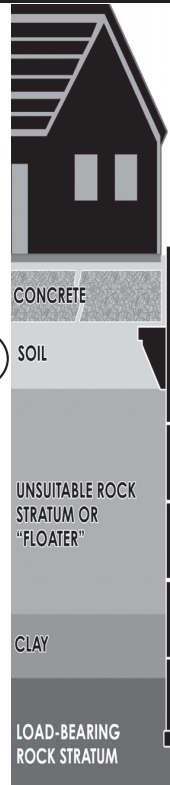
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BIRD POOP:

One red-tailed hawk succumbs to wounds

On call during the first weekend of December, the officer had gone to pick up a large hawk during the afternoon. After securing the raptor in his truck, he drove back to the shelter. The opportunity to handle such a bird reminded him of his days at the San Antonio zoo and other facilities.

After notifying the game warden, the officer was given our number to call. Since Odessa's animal control was officially closed, we arranged to meet on Sunday morning.

Having quickly examined the bird, the officer related seeing no wounds. Since the raptor held its wings equally to its body, he was unsure of what could be wrong. Aware of the hawk's diet, the man said he planned to offer it chunks of beef while it was confined.

Turning into the parking lot, we did not see his vehicle. He had warned us that if he was not there, he had gone out on a call. If that was the case, we told him we would wait. Soon another vehicle arrived.

Finally, the officer's truck entered the lot. Apparently, he had anticipated both vehicles.

After removing the remains of a pet from the other car, he gestured for us to enter the building.

Inside the glassed enclosure of a former office, we saw a cage. Stoically standing on a perch at the back was a mature, male red-tailed hawk. Smaller than a female, the bird was majestic in its composure and presence.

"It's eaten half of the meat I gave him," said the officer as Art opened the cage door. Slowly reaching inside, I was able to approach the hawk.

My gloved hand nearing it produced no reaction. Quickly inserting my index finger through its legs and closing my grip with thumb and middle finger, I had control. With no protest, resistance, nor flapping of wings, I brought the red-tail through the gate.

As I held its back against my chest, Art helped me extend each wing. Letting my fingers feel the bones from shoulder to wrist found no calcifica-

tion of an injury. With the tips of its tail feathers badly worn, we knew it had been grounded for some time.

Once home, we would give it a more thorough examination. Knowing something was wrong because the raptor was so passive, we promised to call with the results.

Laying the red-tail on its back and covering its head, Art spread its left wing. Every feather was in place. The barring and markings were typical.

After looking at its right wing, I asked Art to extend both wings. Finally I noticed what I had missed previously. An almost miniscule amount of a dried substance was noticeable on the tip of a feather on the upper chest. With the wing closed, it would have been hidden. Even with the wing open, I nearly overlooked it.

Parting the feathers in this area, I finally made my way to the flesh beneath. Parted in a semi-diamond opening, the skin's edges and the flesh inside were dried. Fortunately, little bleeding had occurred on this old wound. What had caused such an injury to tear the skin bothered us. "Could have been shot," thought Art.

Two days later the winds calmed enough for us to take the red-tail to Gail Barnes in Lubbock.

"It's beautiful! Except for the worn tail, there's not a feather out of place," she said.

Feeling the length of its wings, she could find no breaks. Wondering if the tear in the chest could have been caused by a rabbit's toenail seemed plausible.

Placing it in a mew where it could exercise and choose either a lower or higher perch, Gail felt we would know more after a few days. That the hawk was eagerly eating on its own was a good sign.

During the next week, the raptor only used the lower perch. After veterinarian Jeanette Lubenau felt of the wings and found no breaks, she called for a full body-scan.

"Your hawk is full of lead pellets, even in its legs," said Gail. Noting that it also had suffered a broken shoulder, possibly from having fallen from the sky or a telephone pole, she said the break had calcified. Even though the raptor could extend its wings and hold them normally, it would never fly again.

All of us knew that it is difficult to feel the shot once it has penetrated the skin and imbedded in the flesh.



Courtesy photo

With a four-foot wingspan, the red-tailed hawk soars over open land. Often it is seen atop utility poles as it watches for available prey. Beneficial to man, its diet includes ground squirrels, rabbits, snakes and carrion.

Through technology we had found the unwanted answer.

According to federal law, when a migratory bird is non-releasable and cannot be placed in an educational situation, it has to be euthanized. Unfortunately, this specie is abundant and requests for specimens infrequent.

Notifying both the animal control officer and the game warden of the outcome, I learned that the western area of that city is notorious for the shooting of birds. Catching the culprits is difficult, and education seems fruitless with the mind-set of individuals.

As Christmas approached, the news proved difficult to accept. Some

years we had numerous red-tails needing help. Other years, they mastered their migratory struggles to further their specie's survival.

Each had been unique. Coming to mind was a favorite quote I have posted inside a cabinet door in my kitchen. "I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained," wrote Walt Whitman. In spite of having the inhumanity of man thrust upon it, this raptor had retained its stately elegance.

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

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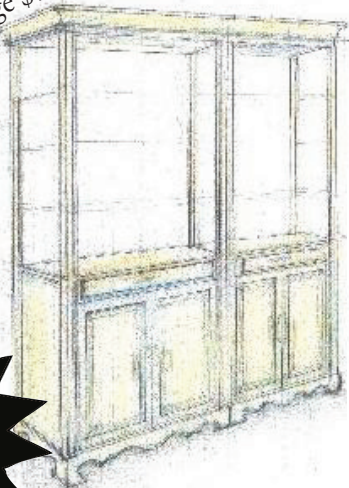
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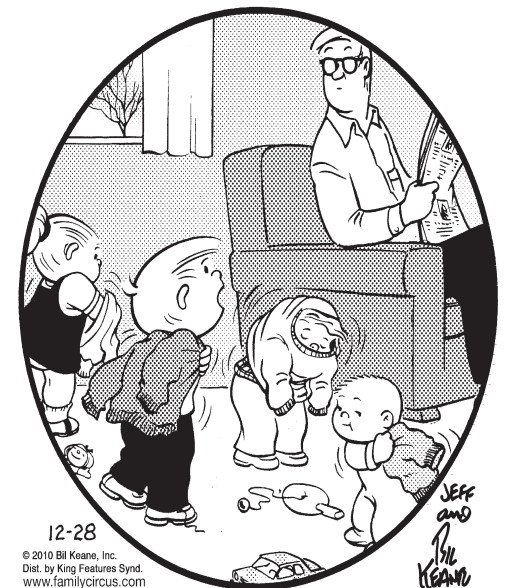
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	Midland	Spanish	Odessa	Odessa	Telemundo	Midland	Atlanta	Odessa	Odessa	Odessa	Discovery	Classics	Spike TV	Atlanta	Black Ent.	Disney	Sports	Sports
5:PM	News ABC	Alma Notic.	George Lopez	News	Noticias	News	King	Scrivner	World	Lyrics!	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Back to the Future, Crispin Glover	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order	College	Suite Life on Deck	NFL Live	SportsCtr
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Llena de Amor (SS)	Two Men	News	Caso Cerado	News	King	Dr. Young	Business	Lyrics!	Dirty Jobs	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Bones	College	College	Wizards	College	College
7:PM	Rudolph's New Year	Eva Luna (SS)	Glee	Ent	Aurora (SS)	Minute to Win It	Fam. Guy	Brad	70s Show	70s Show	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Back to the Future Part II, Lea Thompson	CSI: Crime Scene	College	College	Wizards	College	College
8:PM	No Ordinary Family		Glee	The 33rd Annual Kennedy Center Honors	El Fantasma de	The Biggest Loser	Fam. Guy	Light of the Southwest	Frontline (DVS)	Life Unexpected	Dirty Jobs	Movie: GoodFellas, Joe Pesci	Movie: Four Brothers	College Hill	College Hill	Deck	College	College
9:PM	Detroit 1-8-7	Aquí y Ahora (SS)	Simpsons	How I Met	Alguien te Mira (SS)		Fam. Guy	Glory Daze	Independent Lens	Married	Auction			College Hill	Wizards			
10:PM	News Nightline	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	Mark	Charlie Rose	King	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Back to the Future Part III, Mary Steenburgen		Southland	The Mo'Nique	Good	SportsCenter	
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Verdad Oculta	Law & Order: SVU	Late	Decisions (SS)	Late Night	Lopez Tonight	Ministerio-Vida	T. Smiley (Off Air)	King	Dirty Jobs		Jail	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Hannah	SportsNation	
12:AM	Extra	Tontas Cielo	Paid		Decision	Pagado	Conan	Upd		King	Dirty Jobs	Movie: Road House, Sam Elliott	Jail	Certain Age	Movie: Harlem Nights, Redd Foxx	Wizards	NBA	
1:AM	Paid	Mujer...	Raymond	Insider	Pagado	News		Church		King	Dirty Jobs		Focus 4	Leverage	Wizards	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
1:30	Paid	Cero	King/Hill	(:37) Up to	Pelicula:	Poker After Dark	Lopez Tonight	Light of the Southwest		King	Dirty Jobs		Homecoming		Suite Life	College Football: Champs	SportsCenter	

DENNIS THE MENACE



"I'M SENDING A 'THANK YOU' CARD TO SANTA FOR NOT GIVING DENNIS A DRUM SET FOR CHRISTMAS."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

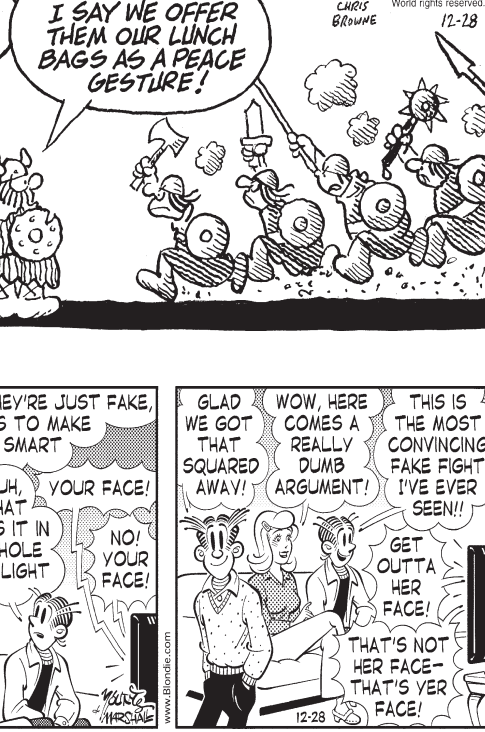


"C'mon, Daddy, you hafta put on your sweater. Mommy's feelin' cold."

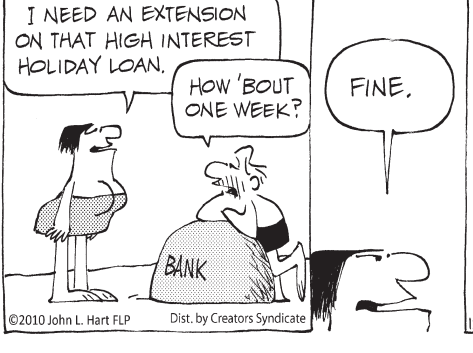
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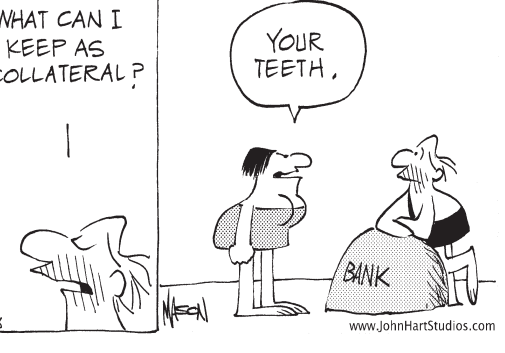
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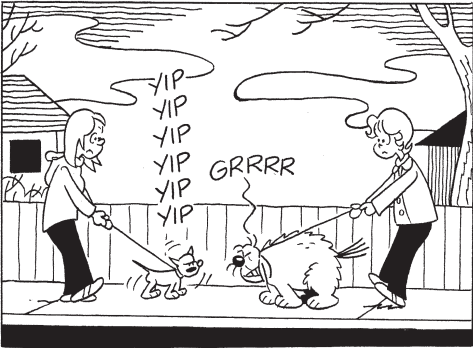
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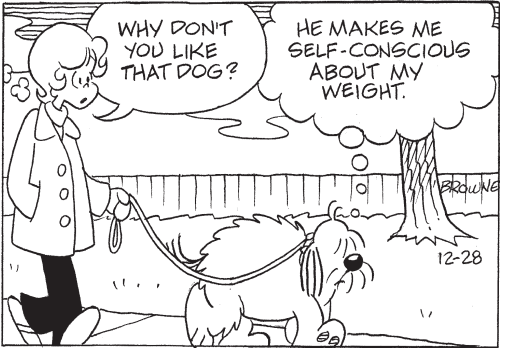
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AGNES



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 28, the 362nd day of 2010. There are three days left in the year.
 Today's Highlight in History:
 On Dec. 28, 1832, John C. Calhoun became the first vice president of the United States to resign, stepping down because of differences with President Andrew Jackson.
 On this date:
 In 1694, Queen Mary II of England died after more than five years of joint rule with her husband, King William III.
 In 1846, Iowa became the 29th state to be admitted to the Union.
 In 1856, the 28th president of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, was born in Staunton, Va.
 In 1897, the play "Cyrano de Bergerac," by Edmond Rostand, premiered in Paris.
 In 1908, a major earthquake followed by a tsunami devastated the Italian city of Messina, killing at least 70,000 people.

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Start to melt
- 5 Wandering animal
- 10 Big sheet of ice
- 14 Fence opening
- 15 Thorough investigation
- 16 Where Des Moines is
- 17 Much-admired celebrity
- 18 Actors' parts
- 19 Participates in a marathon
- 20 Criticize
- 22 Balance-sheet plus
- 23 "My ___ are sealed!"
- 24 Take up a hem, perhaps
- 25 Keep in a cage
- 29 Horse's foot
- 30 Grownup
- 31 Handout in a fine restaurant
- 35 Fizzy drink
- 36 Lessen
- 38 Capital of Norway
- 39 Railroad-bridge supports
- 41 Dog treats
- 42 Putter's target
- 43 Steering system components
- 45 Southpaw's nickname
- 47 Nary a soul
- 48 Is knocked for a loop
- 49 Cafeteria brawl
- 54 Prefix for dynamic
- 55 Similarly
- 56 Fly like an eagle
- 57 Duet plus one
- 58 Washbowl
- 59 Not punctual
- 60 Peered at
- 61 Paid out
- 62 Otherwise
- DOWN**
- 1 Employee's end-of-week shout
- 2 "___ but known!"
- 3 Oodles
- 4 Fuse, as metal
- 5 Ankle injury
- 6 Band of traveling actors
- 7 Breadbasket items
- 8 Assist in a crime
- 9 "Absolutely!"
- 10 Building's ground level
- 11 Contemptible one
- 12 Deed holder
- 13 Sunrise direction
- 21 Move like a butterfly
- 22 Skin-cream ingredient
- 24 Top-notch
- 25 Throw out a fishing line
- 26 Air-freshener target
- 27 Hosiery shade
- 28 Result of a sudden downpour
- 29 Best-seller
- 31 Used to be object
- 33 Winter coaster
- 34 Mix, as salad
- 36 Wartime partner
- 37 Stinging insect
- 40 Little kids
- 41 Butcher-shop buy
- 43 Adopted, as a pet
- 44 Start a paragraph
- 45 Skeptical
- 46 Very strange
- 47 Library no-no
- 48 Hotel-room fee
- 49 Envelope part
- 50 Speck of land in the sea
- 51 Soccer score
- 52 Berets and bonnets
- 53 Elm, for one
- 55 Tummy muscles, for short

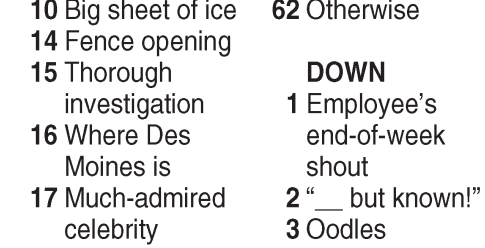
Answer to previous puzzle

BLOT	DETER	PROM
RIBS	EVADE	THAT
AMOK	FIXES	AIRS
TOETHEL	LINE	NET
SONS	NOBODY	
MASKED	WEDGE	
AHA	EDIT	RECAP
SOLE	PROPRIETORS	
HYENA	TEEN	DES
VIGOR	DEFEAT	
JEKYLL	SEAL	
ALI	ARCHBRIDGE	
POTS	MERIT	GOOD
APES	ONONE	HUNG
NEST	ROWED	TREE

FOR FUN by Gail Grabowski

Edited by Stanley Newman
 www.stanxwords.com

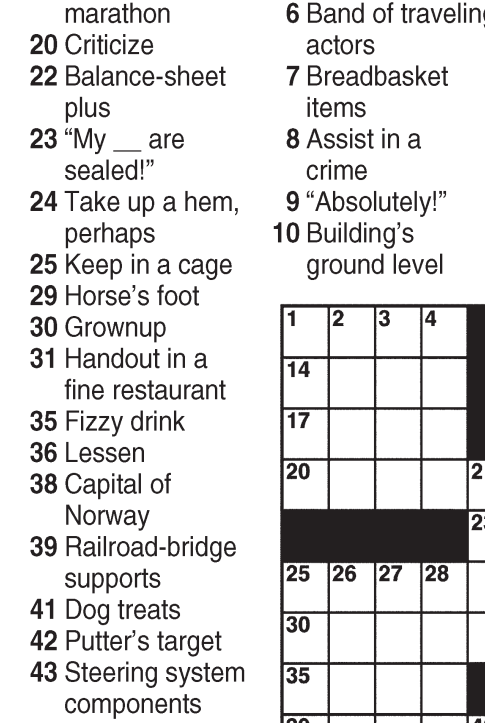
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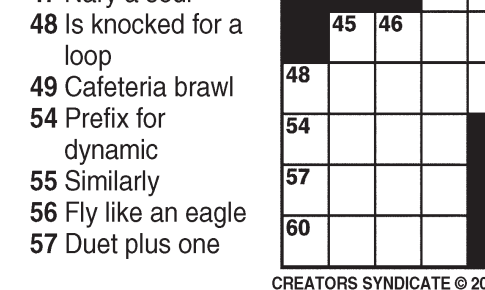
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AGNES



News in brief

2 charged in slaying at Pasadena gas station

PASADENA (AP) — Two men have been charged with capital murder after a Pasadena convenience store clerk was shot to death during a robbery Christmas morning.

Twenty-two-year-old Daniel Jacob Stiner and 29-year-old Michael Ray Morris, both of Pasadena, were charged Monday in the death of Jayachandra Elaprolu, a 22-year-old college student from India. They remained in Harris County jail Tuesday morning on no bond. Attorneys were not listed for them.

Pasadena police tell the Houston Chronicle that Morris has said he was just a customer during the shooting, but police believe he acted as a scout.

Police say Stiner immediately opened fire upon entering the store, striking Elaprolu at least five times.

Man drives into Port Arthur police lobby

PORT ARTHUR (AP) — Police say a man was arrested on a charge of felony criminal mischief after driving his car into the lobby of the Port Arthur Police Department.

The 53-year-old man drove into the lobby of the department in downtown Port Arthur on Sunday night. Before being booked on the charge, the man was taken to the hospital.

Sgt. Steve Davis tells the Port Arthur News, "At the hospital is when he told us he was hoping to harm himself and he drove through there intentionally."

The damage in the lobby extended into the front desk area.

East Texas man found in fire was shot to death

HENDERSON (AP) — Authorities say a man has been arrested on a murder charge after an autopsy showed that an East Texas man found dead in a house fire on Christmas Eve was shot to death.

Rusk County Sheriff Danny Pirtle says that deputies were dispatched to the home on Christmas Eve after getting reports that a man was shooting a gun in the front yard of the deceased man's home. When deputies arrived, they did not find someone shooting a gun, but did find the home engulfed in flames.

Pirtle tells the Tyler Morning Telegraph that after firefighters put out the flames, investigators found the body of 54-year-old Larry Glenn Hale.

900-acre Texas wildfire contained; no injuries

AMARILLO (AP) — Authorities say a wildfire burned about 900 acres of West Texas grasslands

before firefighters were able to contain it.

The fire was under control by Monday afternoon in Amarillo. Dozens of firefighters battled the blaze for more than three hours.

No injuries were reported. Two homes were threatened but not burned.

Oldham County Sheriff David Medlin says wind gusts of up to 30 mph fanned the flames and helped the fire quickly spread across pasture land in Oldham and Deaf Smith counties.

Texas company issues recall for parsley, cilantro

EDINBURG (AP) — A Texas produce company is voluntarily recalling curly parsley and cilantro after confirmation from regulators of a positive test for salmonella on curly parsley in Quebec and cilantro in Detroit.

Edinburg, Texas-based J&D Produce Inc. says it's recalling those two items packed on Nov. 30 and Dec. 6, as well as several other produce items run on the same packing lines.

Those items include arugula, leek, collards, curly mustard, gold beet, kale, green swiss chard, plain mustard, plain parsley, kohlarabi, rainbow swiss chard, mint, methleaf, beets, daikon, red swiss chard, turnips, turnip greens and dill.

Products are packed under the Little Bear brand.

Consumers with questions can call: 1-956-380-0353. The company is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST.

Police: Man kills self after trying to rob bank

DALLAS (AP) — Police say the man who killed himself after trying to rob a bank is the brother of an undercover Dallas officer and used his sibling's service weapon to commit suicide.

The fatal shooting Monday came after police say Khalifa Tehran King, dressed in black and carrying a firearm, tried to enter a bank. Employees, suspicious of his behavior, locked the bank doors before he could enter.

King fled the scene and refused to pull over when police tried to make a traffic stop. Police say he eventually pulled into a business parking lot and appeared to surrender before shooting himself.

Bank employees told police the same man, armed and dressed in black, also tried to enter the bank Friday.

Police declined to identify King's brother because he works undercover.

Police arrest man accused in toddler shooting

DALLAS (AP) — Police have arrested a man accused of opening fire on a minivan, shooting a toddler in the leg.

Dallas police said Monday that they arrested 31-year-old Carlos Cordova. He is in the Dallas

County Jail on charges of injury to a child and aggravated assault. His bonds total \$200,000. The jail had no information on an attorney.

Police originally said a bullet grazed the knee of an 11-month-old boy riding in the minivan Sunday night. Authorities now say the bullet fractured the boy's leg. Police said the boy underwent surgery and is doing well.

The shooting happened late Sunday, when someone fired multiple shots into the driver's door of vehicle driven by a 22-year-old man. A 22-year-old woman and her three small children were passengers.

3 from Texas killed in Wyoming plane crash

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Three members of a Texas family died in a plane crash in Wyoming's snowy Wind River Mountains, authorities said Monday.

Searchers began looking for the plane on Christmas Eve after a passing airliner picked up the emergency locator beacon, Fremont County Coroner Ed McAuslan said. A search team found the wreckage Friday and confirmed there were no survivors, he added.

McAuslan said the killed family members were pilot Ralph Day, 56; his wife Doris Day, 52; and Connor Day, 12, all of Jasper, Texas. They took off Dec. 22 in a single-engine plane from Loveland, Colo., headed to Jackson, he said.

The plane, a 1998 Commander AC 11, crashed about 15 to 20 miles southwest of Lander, near Christina Lake, at an elevation of about 11,700 feet, said Allen Kenitzer, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

McAuslan and Kenitzer said their agencies don't have any word yet on the cause of the crash. The National Transportation Safety Board was investigating.

A plane in October also crashed during a snowstorm in the Wind River Range.

It took searchers several days to find the bodies of Minneapolis pilot Luke Bucklin and three of his sons.

Part of mall on San Antonio's Riverwalk evacuated

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Heavy smoke from a grease fire forced officials to evacuate part of a mall on San Antonio's famous Riverwalk, and a pair of restaurants remain closed for cleanup.

Rivercenter Mall General Manager Chris Oviatt said about a third of the complex was cleared for more than two hours Monday after firefighters responded to a call shortly before 11 a.m. and extinguished a blaze contained in a kitchen grease duct.

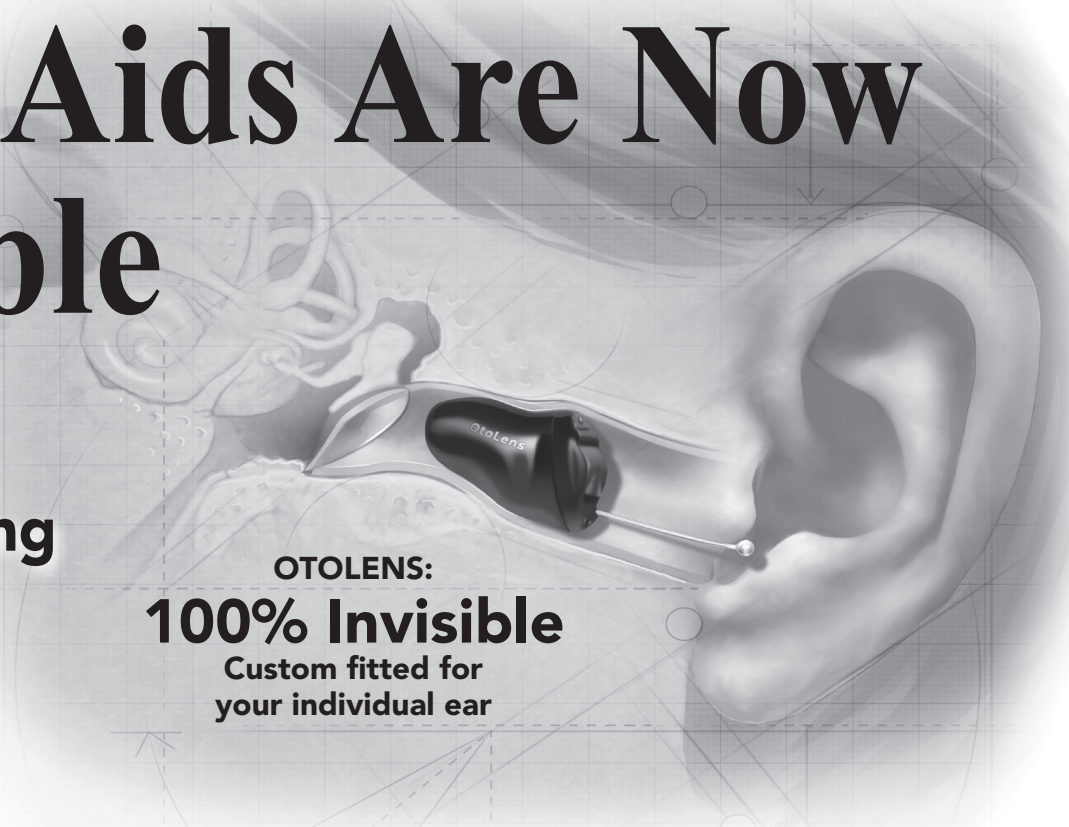
Oviatt said the mall is operating normally after authorities gave the all-clear.

PERSONAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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News in brief

Northeast snowstorm brought destruction and a bit of the surreal

NEW YORK (AP) — When Angela Madsen was pulled off her plane and her wheelchair stayed on board, she knew she was in for a rough night. The paraplegic athlete struggled to get into the bathrooms at Kennedy Airport. Turning the wheels on her borrowed wheelchair strained her shoulders. Sleeping was impossible. "I actually got out of it and laid on the floor," Madsen said.

It was, she said, a miserable time — one that was shared by millions of people on Monday, in travails big and small, serious and surreal, after the blizzard of December 2010 sucker-punched the northeastern U.S. during one of the busiest travel days of the year.

Air travel in the nation's busiest, most crowded airspace nearly shut down, and thousands of stranded passengers turned terminals into open-air hotels while they waited for planes to take off and land on plowed runways.

A tractor-trailer skidded off a road and smashed into a house in Maine. A woman went into labor on a New Jersey highway, causing a traffic jam that stranded 30 vehicles. Rails on the normally reliable New York subway shorted out. Winds topping 65 mph ripped power lines, leaving tens of thousands of people in the dark across New England.

Obama to name top economist

HONOLULU (AP) — Among the first announcements President Barack Obama will make upon returning from his Hawaiian vacation is his choice for top economic adviser, a decision that could signal a new direction for the administration as it struggles to jumpstart the economy and wrestle down unemployment.

It's far more than a personnel move. The replacement for the outgoing director of the National Economic Council, Lawrence Summers, will have a guiding hand in nearly every economic decision the Obama administration makes, and the president's choice is being closely watched for signs of where he wants to take his economic agenda in the second half of his term.

Will he tap the business world with a figure such as Roger Altman, an investment banker and Clinton administration alumnus who might carry too much baggage from his association with Wall Street? Will he turn to academia instead, calling on a scholar such as Yale President Richard Levin? Or will he go with deeply experienced insiders such as deficit hawk Gene Sperling at the Treasury Department or Jason Furman, the council's deputy director?

With the unemployment rate at 9.8 percent, the private sector struggling to maintain steady growth and the public ranking the economy as the top concern, Obama's handling of the issue over the coming months is certain to play a central role in his reelection bid.

The selection process for the council post has dragged on for months. Summers announced his resignation in September, and many in the administration knew well before then

that he planned to return to Harvard University after serving two years at the White House.

Pakistani intel officials: 2 suspected U.S. missile strikes kill 8 near border

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — Two suspected U.S. missile strikes targeting the same building killed eight people in a region near Afghanistan on Tuesday, including at least two people who were retrieving bodies from the first attack, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

The strikes come in the final days of a year that has seen an unprecedented number of such drone-fired attacks as part of a ramped-up U.S. campaign to take out al-Qaida and Taliban fighters seeking sanctuary outside Afghanistan.

Around 115 such missile strikes have been launched this year — more than doubling last year's total. Nearly all have landed in North Waziristan, a region that hosts several militant groups battling U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, including the feared Haqqani network.

The first strike Tuesday hit a house in the Ghulam Khan area of North Waziristan, killing six, two Pakistani intelligence officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to the media.

West Africa delegation heads to Ivory Coast to tell Gbagbo to step down

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — A delegation of West African leaders headed to Ivory Coast on Tuesday to confront Laurent Gbagbo and demand he step down from the presidency before he is forced out.

Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma took off on a flight from Freetown, Sierra Leone, along with other officials from his government. The presidents of the West African nations of Cape Verde and Benin and of the regional bloc ECOWAS were also expected to converge on Abidjan and meet with Gbagbo later in the day.

"We are leaving today and returning today after discussions with Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivory Coast and we are sure of getting positive results," Sierra Leone's information and communication minister Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said Tuesday.

The U.N. was tasked with certifying the results of the election as part of a peace agreement that ended a 2002-2003 civil war. The U.N. declared that Alassane Ouattara won the runoff held one month ago. Gbagbo refuses to concede defeat despite pressure from the United States, the European Union and the African Union.

Detained German journalists have met family members

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Two detained German journalists were allowed to meet their families, nearly three months after they were arrested while covering the highly publicized case of an Iranian woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery, Iranian and German officials said Tuesday.

The meeting took place Monday night in the northwestern city of

Tabriz, where the two Germans are being held, Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast told reporters in Tehran. He and German officials did not say whether the meeting was taking place in the prison or elsewhere.

A German Foreign Office spokesman said the meeting was "still taking place" Tuesday morning, without elaborating. The spokesman spoke on condition of anonymity in line with department policy.

Iran's English-language Press TV broadcast Tuesday a brief footage of the meeting. It showed the two men seated around a dining room table at what appeared to be a hotel restaurant. There were also two women wearing headscarves and several other men at the table.

India's home ministry sounds alert across country

NEW DELHI (AP) — India increased security in major cities across the country Tuesday after receiving information that a Pakistan-based militant group was planning an attack over New Year's weekend.

More police were deployed to city streets, including in India's financial capital, Mumbai, which was attacked in 2008. Airports and railway stations and the popular beach resort state of Goa all tightened security following intelligence reports that the banned militant group, Lashkar-e-Taiba was planning to target these places, an official with the Home Ministry said. He spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

India has taken even minor terror threats seriously since a three-day

terrorist siege killed 166 people in Mumbai, though there has been no major attack there since.

Police have been searching since Friday for four men who authorities believe entered Mumbai to carry out a terrorist attack.

Computer-aided photographs of the four suspects were released.

AT&T expands Wi-Fi zones; relief for network in NYC, San Francisco

NEW YORK (AP) — AT&T Inc. is expanding Wi-Fi access for its subscribers in New York and introducing it in San Francisco, adding data capacity in two cities with heavy wireless network use from the iPhone and other devices.

The phone company is to announce Tuesday that it will expand Wi-Fi hot spots in New York's Times Square just ahead of New Year's revelers cramming there for the annual countdown to midnight.

It is also deploying its first hot spots in a public, outdoor area of San Francisco, the Embarcadero waterfront district.

For years, AT&T has operated a wide network of hot spots in hotels, airports, Starbucks coffee shops and other indoor locations. The new "hot zones," as AT&T calls them, are different in that they cover public, outdoor spaces are and cluster together many access points to cover a larger area.

The zones provide fast data service for AT&T subscribers and divert traffic from the company's cellular network. Many AT&T smart phones, including the iPhone, connect automatically to AT&T Wi-Fi when it's available.

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Bedroom Stairside Bunkbed \$447 Twin Twin Bunk Bed \$197 Rustic Bedroom Set: Mansion Bed, Dresser, Mirror Chest, Night Stand \$1677 Solid Wood Bedroom Sets: Queen Bed, Night Stand, Dresser, Mirror \$1497	Mattress Truckload Sale Plush Full Sets \$197 Plush Queen Sets \$247 Queen Pillowtop \$297 Full Pillowtop \$277 Luxury Pocketed Coil: Firmness choice; Full \$347 Queen \$397 King \$497	Chairs/Recliners Plush Recliners Several Colors Suggested price \$597 NOW \$347 Rodeo Tanner Recliner \$197 Plush Recliner \$247 Big Man Chair \$377	Odds & Ends Dining Room Chairs \$27 Stools \$47	Living Room Sofa & Love Seat \$497 One Only Sofa \$297 2 Pc. 2 Tone Sectional \$597 Taupe Leather Sofa Suggested Price \$1197 NOW \$497
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