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TUESDAY



January 4, 2011

50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

VOLUME 106, NUMBER 28

PBUWCD gathering level data

Special to the Herald

Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District personnel began conducting their annual depth-to-water level measurements this week.

The data collected helps the PBUWCD determine the effect of the 2010 pumpage on groundwater levels in the aquifers, the Ogallala aquifer being within Howard and Martin counties. Water level measurements are made in a network of 120 wells, most privately owned.

"We will be taking these measurements until the project is complete," said PBUWCD Manager Leatrice Adams. "It is important for producers to know that district personnel will be visiting observation well sites from early January until completion of this work effort. The staff of the PBUWCD appreciates

See UWCD, Page 3



HERALD photo/Steve Reagan Bundles of artificial turf material are stacked adjacent to Steer Park Sunday evening. Installation of the new baseball surface should be completed by Jan. 15, officials said.

No scuttlebutt on skull

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Law enforcement officials say they are still waiting on preliminary findings from the laboratory examining what is believed to be a piece of a human skull discovered Dec. 20 in Howard County.

Howard County Sheriff Stan Parker said he had hoped to have a preliminary report on the skull last week, but as of yet the laboratory examining the evidence has not yet released any information.

"We had hoped to have the results of the preliminary examination by now, but we're still waiting at this point," Parker said. "The investigation is still open and ongoing, so I can't discuss the details at this time. We're just going to have to be patient."

A press release issued by the Howard County Sheriff's Office Dec. 20 stated law enforcement officials were called to the scene — believed to be

a salvage yard in the northern part of Howard County — around 11 a.m. after what appeared to be a piece of a hu-

man skull was found.

Parker said he's hopeful an examination of the skull will turn up some key information, either confirming or disproving the piece of evidence is indeed a human skull, as well as information such as sex and age.

When asked if the skull is believed to be tied to any other ongoing investigations such as a missing person or possible homicide — Parker declined to comment, once again citing the open investigation. A local resident, however,

speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed to the Herald the skull was discovered in the trunk of a brown 1985 Buick. However, the informant could not confirm whether the skull was human.

Parker declined to comment on the claim, saying patience is vital at this point in the Sheriff's Office investigation.

"I really can't comment on those or any other details at this point in the investigation. It's going to take some time to have it examined, and I would ask everyone to please remain patient in the meantime," Parker said.

See **SKULL**, Page 3 SKULL

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Texan jailed for 30 years expected to be cleared

Craig Watkins DNA exonerees spent more

JEFF CARLTON **Associated Press**

DALLAS — Cornelius Du-

pree Jr. finally made parole in July, after spending 30 years in prison for aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon. A week later, DNA test results came back proving his inno-The 51-year-old Texas man

will finally get his own day in court Tuesday, when a judge is expected to set aside his conviction on claims of actual innocence. The hearing comes a day after Dallas County District Attorney



If the conviction overturned as expected, Du-

this crime."

said the DNA

testing shows

"did

commit

Dupree

pree will have the unhappy distinction of being the longest-serving DNA exoneree in Texas, which has freed 41 wrongly convicted inmates through DNA since 2001 more than any other state. Nationally, only two other

time in prison, according to the Innocence Project, a New York-based legal center representing Dupree that specializes in wrongful conviction cases. James Bain was wrongly imprisoned for 35 years in Florida, and Lawrence McKinney spent more than 31 years in a Tennessee

Dupree's 30 years in prison will surpass James Woodard,

who spent more than 27 years in a Texas prison before he was cleared of murder in

There have been 21 DNA exonerations in Dallas alone since 2001, more than any other county in the nation.

Dallas' record of DNA exonerations is unmatched nationally because the county crime lab maintains biological evidence even decades after a conviction, leaving samples available to test. In addition, Watkins has cooperated with innocence groups in reviewing hundreds of requests by inmates for DNA testing. Watkins, the first black

See **CLEARED**, Page 3



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Obituaries

Kathleen Barg

Kathleen Barg, 61, of Big Spring died Friday, Dec. 31, 2010, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral

Adam Eziah Viera Adam Eziah Viera, 16 months, died Sunday, Jan.

2, 2011, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Support Groups

- The Path, faith-based addiction recovery, meets at 6:30 p.m. at Spring Tabernacle Ministeries, 1209 Wright St.
- 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.

Take Note

- Mobile Meals is in need of volunteers to deliver meals to the homebound elderly in Big Spring. If vou can donate at least one hour a week, call following activity: Macaria Cantu at 263-4016 and leave a message.
- 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.
- 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, which lost all of its possessions in a 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 four ounces. 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 than four ounces. 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.
- 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 currently 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.

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Police blotter

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

- MELISSA GAY YOUNG, 41, of 1700 W. Third St., was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxi-
- LUIS MIGUEL LOPEZ, 27, of 907 S. Bell, was arrested Monday on a warrant for harassment. STACY RONALD, 34, of 1906 Alabama, was
- arrested Monday on a warrant for assault causing • ERNEST SARMIENTO, 39, of 1405 N.W. Park St.,
- was arrested Monday on a warrant for operating an ATV on a roadway.
- MICHAEL ANTHONY HORN, 22, of 2524 Albrook, was arrested Monday on a warrant for theft - more than \$500, less than \$1,500. MICHAEL SCOTT HUMPHERY, 42, of 207 N.E.

12th St., was arrested Monday on charges of posses-

- sion of a controlled substance in a drug free zone (two counts) and possession of marijuana in a drug free zone - more than two ounces, less than four • SUSAN OVERTON, 24, of 1408 E. Sixth St., was arrested Monday on charges of possession of a con-
- trolled substance in a drug free zone (two counts) and possession of marijuana in a drug free zone more than two ounces, less than four ounces.
- BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE was reported: In the 1900 block of Morrison.

In the 2100 block of Wasson Road.

ASSAULT was reported in the 1600 block of Martin Luther King Blvd.

Sheriff

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 67 inmates at the time of this

• LUIS MIGUEL LOPEZ, 27, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of no driver's license (two counts), harassment, failure to maintain financial responsibility and unrestrained child less than 18 years of age.

• ERNEST SARMIENTO, 39, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of operating a recreational vehicle on a roadway.

 RONALD DWAYNE STACY, 35, was transferred • An account has been set up to help Bob and to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of assault causing bodily injury.

MICHAEL HORN, 22, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of theft – more than \$500, less than \$1,500.

 MAX DALE ELLSWORTH, 46, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a parole violation for driving under the influence of alcohol.

• CHANCE FELKER COOKE, 26, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of assault – family violence. • SUSAN ETTA OVERTON, 24, was transferred to

the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on charges of possession of a controlled substance in a drug free zone (two counts) and possession of marijuana in a drug free zone - more than two ounces, less than

• MICHAEL S. HUMPHERY, 42, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on charges of possession of a controlled substance in a drug free zone (two counts) and possession of marijuana in a drug free zone – more than two ounces, less

Fire/EMS

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

- TRAUMA was reported in the 2600 block of Fairchild. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of
- Young. One person was transported to SMMC. TRAUMA was reported in the 2600 block of
- Albrook. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of

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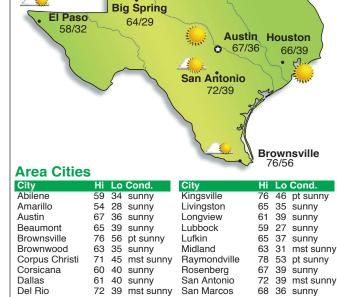
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Today's Weather Local 5-Day Forecast 1/6 1/7 1/8 1/9 1/10 64/29 66/36 65/35 66/36 59/27 Plenty of Mix of sun Times of sur Plenty of Abundant sun. Highs i and clouds and clouds the mid 60s Highs in the Highs in the the mid 60s Highs in the and lows in mid 60s and mid 60s and and lows in upper 50s and lows in the upper lows in the mid 30s. mid 30s the upper Sunrise: Sunrise: Sunrise: Sunrise: Sunrise: 7:48 AM 7:48 AM 7:48 AM 7:48 AM 7:48 AM Sunset: Sunset: Sunset: Sunset: Sunset:

Texas At A Glance



National Cities

58

66

32 pt sunny

36 pt sunny

El Paso

Fort Stockton

Greenville Houston

ı	City	HI	LO	Cona.	City	н	LO	Cona.
ı	Atlanta	48	31	mst sunny	Minneapolis	16	4	sn showe
ı	Boston	34	26	flurries	New York	36	32	flurries
ı	Chicago	25	12	flurries	Phoenix	61	38	pt sunny
ı	Dallas	61	40	sunny	San Francisco	60	48	mst sunn
ı	Denver	48	28	sunny	Seattle	49	46	rain
ı	Houston	66	39	sunny	St. Louis	34	25	pt sunny
ı	Los Angeles	66	47	pt sunny	Washington, DC	42	31	flurries
ı	Miami	77	51	t-storm				
ı								

Sulphur Springs

Sweetwater

Weatherford

Wichita Falls

59

60

40 sunny

33 sunny

59 35 sunny 60 32 sunny

Moon Phases



UV Index Moderate Moderate Moderate Moderate Moderate The UV Index is measured on a 0 - 11 number scale, 0 with a higher UV Index showing the need for greater skin protection.

Sycamore. One person was transported to SMMC.

Runnels. Service refused. • TRAUMA was reported in the 200 block of N.W. 12th Street. Service refused.

TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of

 MEDICAL was reported in the 1200 block of Ridgeroad. One person was transported to SMMC.

· MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Settles. Service refused.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Wasson. Service refused.



Philadelphia widow builds vault, could get corpses back

(AP) — It looks like Jean Stevens will be reunited with the two people she loved so much that she wanted them to keep her company after they

The 91-year-old widow who lived with the embalmed corpses of her husband and twin sister — until authorities found out and took them away — is hopeful they'll be returned

Workmen at Stevens' rural property outside the northern Pennsylvania town of Wyalusing have been busy the past few months, erecting a gabled building with gray siding and a white door. It resembles an oversized shed, or a smaller version of Stevens' detached garage.

In reality, it's a mausoleum that Stevens intends as the final resting

SKULL

Continued from Page 1

Parker did say no arrests have been made in connection with the investigation.

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

place of her husband of nearly 60 years, James Stevens, and her twin, June Stevens. And authorities have told her it's the only way she can get them back. She can't wait.

"I think about them all the time," Stevens told The Associated Press a few days before Christmas, "I always will." The coroner, she said,

"has them up there in the cold box, which makes me shiver. He says, 'They're all right, Jean, you don't have to worry about them."

Stevens had their bodies dug up shortly after they died — James in 1999, June in 2009 — because she couldn't bear not being able to see them again. She kept her husband on a couch in the garage, and her sister in a spare room off the bedroom, where "I could touch her and look at her and talk to her," Stevens told AP last summer. "Death is very hard

for me to take," she added then. Stevens' tale touched a

chord. She estimates she received about 70 letters from around the world, most of them expressing well-wishes

sympathy. She's written back to some. One of her new pen pals mailed a Christmas package with fruitcake, mints, and a holiday tin stuffed with Chex mix. "Dearest Jean," wrote her correspondent, "you've sent us a Christmas treasure, your letter!" Stevens also knows

that some people think she's strange. She laughs heartily as she leafs through a pair of supermarket tabloids that had blared her story. She says Jay Leno once cracked a joke about her. But it's Stevens who

may get the last laugh.

Bradford County authorities, who have been storing the bodies in the morgue since they took them away in June, have told Stevens she can have them back if she builds an aboveground vault.

Coroner Tom Carman said he plans to release them once it's complet-"I want to get Jimmy

and June back to her just as soon as I possibly can," he said.

Carman has struck up an unusual friendship with Stevens. He's spent hours listening to her

talk, mainly about the past. "She's a wonderful lady," he said.

Stevens plans to place her husband and sister in body bags with clear panels, so she can see their faces.

The mausoleum is large enough to hold as many as eight bodies. Stevens said she'd like to transfer the remains of several loved ones to the crypt, including those of her long-deceased mother and father.

One of the spots will be reserved.

"She means to be placed there, as well," Carman said.

4 and 20 blackbirds, and 3,000, dead in the sky BEEBE, Ark. (AP) at the time, save for the

Celebratory fireworks likely sent thousands of discombobulated blackbirds into such a tizzv that they crashed into homes, cars and each other before plummeting to their deaths in central Arkansas, scientists sav. Still, officials acknowledge it's unlikely they'll ever pinpoint a cause with certainty. So for the small town of

Beebe, Ark., where New Year's revelers spent the holiday weekend cleaning up more than 3,000 dead red-winged blackbirds, The Mystery of Why the Birds Fell Out of the Sky remains unsolved.

Some speculated Monday that a bout of bad weather was to blame. Others said one confused bird could have led the group in a fatal plunge. A few spooked schoolkids even guessed that the birds had committed mass suicide. "There was probably

some physical reason. but I doubt anyone will ever know what it was," said Thurman Booth, the state's wildlife services director. The birds were the sec-

ond mass wildlife death in Arkansas in recent days. Last week, about 83,000 dead and dying drum fish washed up along a 20-mile stretch

of the Arkansas River, about 100 miles west of Beebe. Wildlife officials say the fish deaths are not related to the dead birds, and that because mainly one species of fish was affected, it is likely they were stricken by an illness. Full test results could take up to a month.

While officials examine bird carcasses for signs of disease and labs test the contents of their stomachs for toxins, the tale of the blackbirds' tumble is quickly turning into the stuff of local legend.

The blackbirds rained onto rooftops and sidewalks and into fields.

as long as the individual wells provide satisfactory data. The current depth-to-water surements in individual wells are compared to that of the previous years to determine the annual change in water levels of the aquifers

then put into a spreadsheet, listing observation wells in each counOne struck a woman walking her dog. Another hit a police cruiser. Some sav an umbrella was one resident's only protection from the falling birds.

Birds were "littering the streets, the yards, the driveways, everywhere," said Robby King, a county wildlife officer in Beebe, a community of 5,000 northeast of Little Rock. "It was hard to drive down the street in some places without running over them."

A few stunned survivors stumbled around like drunken partiers.

There was little light across the countryside

ty within the district

and this year's water

glimmer of fireworks and some lightning on the horizon. In the tumult, many birds probably lost their bearings.

"The blackbirds were flying at rooftop level instead of treetop level" to avoid explosions above, said Karen Rowe, an ornithologist with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. "Blackbirds have poor eyesight, and they started colliding with things."

Shane Roberts said it sounded like hail pelting his house.

"I turn and look across my yard, and there's all these lumps," Roberts

servation at (432) 756-

UWCD

Continued from Page 1

the cooperation of the landowners as we continue to provide this service for the residents of Howard and Martin counties."

depth-to-water The level measurement is made by lowering a steel tape to a pre-determined depth in the well. The

lowered into each well is coated with carpenters' chalk, which turns a darker shade of blue when it comes into contact with water. The distance from land

first few feet of the tape

surface to the static water level is determined subtracting amount of tape with the darker blue chalk from the total feet of tape extended into the well.

After the measurement is made, a blue vinyl sticker with the observation well number, the depth-to-water level measurement, and the date of the measurement is affixed to the well equipment or other appropriate surface near the well site.

Water district personnel measure the same wells in the observation well network each vear. within the district. The data collected is

levels. The file can be viewed at the PBUWCD website, www.pbuwcd. com, once the program is complete. Additional informa-

tion about the observation well program and annual depth-to-water level measurements is available by contacting the Permian Basin Underground Water ConMYERS & SMITH **FUNERAL HOME** & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8288

Kathleen Barg, 61, died Fridayr. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Adam Eziah Viera, 16 months, died Sunday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

CLEARED

Continued from Page 1

district attorney in Texas history, has also pointed to what he calls "a convict-at-all-costs mentality" that he says permeated his office before he arrived in 2007.Under Texas law, Du-

pree should be able to file for \$80,000 compensation for each of the 30 years he was incarcerated, plus a lifetime annuity based on life expectancy and other factors. The compensation would not be subject to federal income The DNA testing in Du-

pree's case also excluded a second defendant, Anthony Massingill, who was subsequently convicted in another sexual assault case and

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sentenced to life in prison. Massingill remains in prison but maintains his innocence. DNA testing in that second case is ongoing.

Dupree was charged in 1979 with raping and robbing a 26-year-old woman. He was sentenced a year later to 75 years in prison for aggravated robbery. He was never tried on the rape charge.

According to court documents, the woman and her male companion stopped at a Dallas liquor store in November 1979 to buy cigarettes and use a payphone. As they returned to their car, two men, at least one of whom was armed, forced their way into the vehicle and ordered them to drive. They also demanded money from the two victims. The men eventually or-

dered the car to the side of the road and forced the male driver out of the car. The woman attempted to flee but was pulled back inside. The perpetrators drove

the woman to a nearby park, where they raped her at gunpoint. They debated killing her but eventually let her live, keeping her rabbit-fur coat and her driver's license and warning her they would kill her if she reported the assault to police. The victim ran to the nearest highway and collapsed unconscious by the side of the road, where she was discovered.

Dupree and Massingill were arrested in December because they looked similar to two suspects being sought in another sexual assault and robbery. The 26-year-old woman picked both men out of a photo array, but her male companion did not identify either defendant in the same photo array. Dupree was convicted

and spent the next three decades appealing. The



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Saturday, January 8 1:00 PM Southern Hills Church of Christ

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Court of Criminal Appeals turned him down three times.

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FROMA

HARROP

DITORIAL

"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."

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

Ron Midkiff

Publisher

John A. Moseley Managing Editor

Bill McClellan News Editor

Our View

There's still time to get your tax payments made

t's that time of year. It's January and it's time for us to remind people about paying their property taxes. And we're convinced Lit's again time to remind everyone that a word to the wise is sufficient — at least that's the way the adage goes.

We've made that point before in this space on a number of occasions, because it applies to so many different matters we all face in life. That's especially true when it comes time to paying your property taxes.

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 penalties 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."

Sayles said taxpayers have until Jan. 31 to pay their taxes and avoid penalties and interest. After that date, things can get rather costly. "Taxpayers have from Oct. 1 to Jan. 31 to pay

their taxes without any penalties or interest," said Sayles. "In February, the penalties will start at 7 percent (6 percent penalty, 1 percent interest), and increases each month."

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.

For more information, contact the Howard County Tax Collector's Office at 264-2232.

"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 dis-

And one more thing. Remember that Sayles and her employees go by the postmark on the envelope, so make sure those tax payments get mailed by the end of this month.

OK. That's more than a few words to the wise, but that are, we think, words well spent.

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

You, Lord, are our Heavenly resource for everything good in our life.

Slow-growing population? Great!

he analyses of the new census numbers were predictable, and I take issue with nearly every one. Let's start with the suggestion that population rising at the lowest rate since the Great

Depression is to be lamented. Anything likened to the Great Depression can't be a positive development, right? Wrong. But this is how

USA Today put it: "The U.S. population grew 9.7 percent in the past decade to 308,745,538, according to the first results of the 2010 Census — the slowest growth since the Great Depression for

and housing bust.'

Nearly 10 percent population growth is slow only in relation to that of Burundi, the African country with the world's lowest per capita gross domestic product. Our population growth rate is comparable to Mexico's, Brazil's and Indonesia's.

a nation hard hit by a recession

For Americans concerned with a loss of open space and thickening congestion, a 10 percent growth rate should seem darn high. If unemployment were 2 percent and houses were selling like Justin Bieber tickets, a sharp hike in population would still be nothing to cheer. By the way, Nevada had the nation's fastest population growth and

now the highest unemployment and the worst housing collapse. As it happens, America had half as many people in 1950. Was America less lovely then? It was certainly more powerful.

Tied to the notion that a population boom equals success is the oft-repeated headline that the census report produced "winners" and "losers." CBS News' Political Hotsheet wrote: "The biggest winner out of the government's decennial population count? It is without a doubt the state of Texas, which will see its House delegation and Electoral College representation increase by four seats.'

Well, greater political clout is something any state would welcome, and there's lots of room in

But anyone who drives on Dallas' North Central Expressway at 4 p.m. on a workday knows the meaning of "crowded." The Lone Star State's big growth has been in the urban corridors, where there's no shortage of company.

Those who declare New York state a "loser" in the census count, meanwhile, may not have visited Rockefeller Center in recent weeks. Yes, the Empire State will have two fewer congressional seats than before, but ask New Yorkers this: How many of you would prefer competing with several million more souls for space to losing some **Electoral College votes?**

One must note that New York and other "losers" — Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and

Massachusetts — have actually gained population in the past decade. They just added fewer people than states in the South and West.

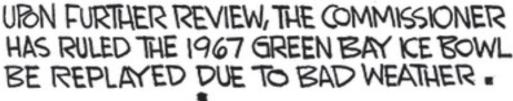
The less nuanced commentary treated population gains in socalled Red States and losses in so-called Blue States as an unalloved blessing for the Republican Party. A GOP advantage, for sure, but limited.

Delivery room doctors in Texas or Arizona don't stamp "Republican" on the cute bottoms of newborns, and the babies are ever likelier to be Latino and part of a group that traditionally votes for Democrats. Until recently, Texas Republicans have been able to corral Latinos into bizarrely shaped districts. But their creativity will be taxed as the state's Hispanics overtake Anglos in number.

Of course, it's nonsense to imply that any state is permanently dyed red or blue. Changing populations change the politics. And changing parties change the politics even where populations are stable. The people's republic of Vermont used to be the most reliably Republican state.

I don't know many Americans, or noncitizen immigrants for that matter, who think that 100 million more people would make the United States a better place. If the U.S. population is slowing, let's celebrate — and hope it slows some more.

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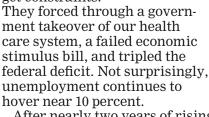


New goal: Cut spending, taxes

t is often said that: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Congress would be mindful to remember these wise words as we move forward to address the country's most

critical problems in the new session of Congress.

The last Congress, led by an overwhelming Democratic majority in both the House and Senate, pursued a legislative agenda that moved against the tide of public opinion, economic realities, and budget constraints.



KAY

BAILEY

Hutchison

After nearly two years of rising jobless rates and record deficits, on November 2, 2010, voters said, "enough." The Democrat leaders in Congress did not prioritize the country's greatest concerns: job creation and the soaring federal deficit, and many paid the price at the ballot box for out-ofcontrol spending and their role in growing the size of the federal

In the final weeks of the 111th Congress, key votes on taxes and spending give us some reason to hope that job-creating policies and fiscal restraint will be

Amen priorities moving forward.

During a lame duck session in December, Congress passed a compromise two-year tax agreement which prevented a massive, job-killing tax increase on New Year's Day. Raising taxes during an economic recession is unthinkable. Although the agreement was not perfect, I believe it was necessary and ultimately a victory for all Ameri-

The tax agreement maintains the current tax policy. It blocks higher taxes on capital gains and dividends, extends relief from the marriage penalty, preserves the \$1000 per child tax credit, and protects at least 21 million additional families from the Alternative Minimum Tax. And it also alleviates the burden of the death tax, an egregious policy that punishes families and small businesses for success and ultimately discourages the American dream.

After holding the line on tax increases, Senate Republicans stood united in opposition to the 2,000 page, \$1.3 trillion dollar omnibus spending bill.

Passage of the omnibus would have cemented spending increases for the next year and tied Republicans hands in the next Congress by making fiscal reforms and budget cuts more difficult.

Later this month, the newly elected Republican majority in the House and the strengthened Republican ranks in the Senate

will now have greater influence in future spending decisions. With the start of the new Congress, Republicans have

the opportunity to take the lead

on budget issues and make the tough yet necessary decisions to cut federal spending and put our country back on a sustainable

and responsible fiscal track. There is much the United States can and should learn from history regarding deficit reduc-

In a research study by the American Enterprise Institute, building off the earlier work of two Harvard economists, analyzed the policies employed to fix unsustainable government spending by 21 countries. Their findings clearly show that successful reform efforts to balance budgets were almost entirely done by cutting government spending, while failed attempts predominantly focused on tax increases.

The federal government has been spending at the expense of economic growth and job creation, as well as stability and credibility in global financial markets.

Ultimately future generations of Americans will bear the great est cost. We have an opportunity to restore fiscal sanity to the federal budget and make the tax cuts permanent. This will allow businesses to have certainty for their future planning which will spur hiring and job creation.

The American people expect Congress to have learned from the mistakes of the recent past and not repeat them.

Kay Bailey Hutchison is the senior U.S. Senator from Texas and is the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

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IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE NEW YEAR WAS CELEBRATED ON WHAT DAY?

ANSWER: FIRST DAY OF SPRING

New Year's Word Find

Just in time for New Year's Day, find the hidden words in the puzzle.

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DANCING

BALL

BALLONS

CELEBRATE CHAMPAGNE					JANUARY MIDNIGHT					RESOLUTIONS YEAR				
R	Q	O	F	F	R	P	J	Z	E	M	J			
Y	S	Z	M	D	В	A	J	N	T	I	A			
P	S	N	L	X	N	X	G	Η	A	D	P			
Η	В	P	O	U	Y	A	V	J	R	N	F			
Y	\mathbf{W}	A	A	I	P	C	L	S	В	I	В			
W	T	R	L	M	T	L	P	X	E	G	K			
A	Y	R	A	L	A	U	Q	O	L	Η	T			
U	K	Η	A	В	O	E	L	G	E	T	F			
I	\mathbf{C}	W	W	P	M	O	M	O	\mathbf{C}	R	U			
G	N	I	C	N	A	D	N	D	S	A	Q			
C	O	N	F	E	T	T	I	S	N	E	W			
G	D	S	R	Η	\mathbf{C}	V	O	U	N	Y	R			

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- 1927: THE FIRST TRANSATLANTIC PHONE CALL IS MADE.
- 1990: THE INTERIOR OF THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC BECAUSE OF SAFETY CONCERNS.

Holiday Match

Match the symbol with the holiday to which it belongs.

1. Menorah A. New Year's Day

2. Mistletoe B. Independence Day

Answers: I. C, 2. D, 3. A, 4. B

3. Noisemakers C. Chanukah

4. Fireworks D. Christmas resolution

a firm decision to do or not do something

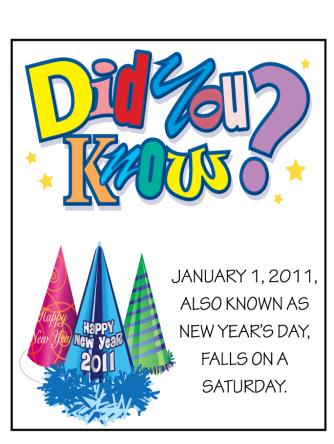
ENGLISH: Day

SPANISH: Día

ITALIAN: Giorno

FRENCH: Jour

GERMAN: Tag





Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

YNSMEK: NOISEWYKEK

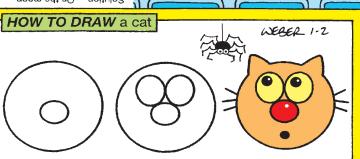
BY BOB WEBER JR.

SLYLOCK FOX and COMICS FOR KIDS



pear each other. there is no sir, Sound can't travel in a vacuum. The aliens would not be able to Solution -- On the moon

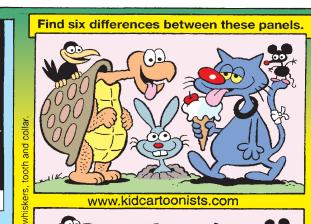






What's wrong with this owl?

Answer -- Owls can't move their eyeballs. They need to turn their heads to look to either side.





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

Bird Poop:

Kestrel survives being wounded by BB gun pellet

arge portions of "down town" had withered away. At Poncho's, however, those seeking a wide variety of newspapers, maga-

zines, or books competed for parking spaces with the populace seeking the advice and wares of the tobacconist



Веве

from the vacant Settles Hotel, the rare gem of West Texas beckoned to strangers as well as town folk. The narrow aisles ensured your being drawn to the latest the store could offer.

Even those who worked in the twostoried building across the street enjoyed using their break time to visit the eclectic shop. While searching through the rows of printed offerings, office workers often laughed at the avian antics of the resident parrot.

Greeting a potential buyer, the raucous voice of patronage hawked not only Poncho's diversity, but also its own colorful appearance. From movie stars to bus drivers, the bird had earned its keep.

Having stayed late to finish a report and finally leaving for home, an employee, whose office faced west, noticed the last tinges of a vivid sunset highlighting the buildings behind and to the north of the shotgun-style "news stand." Reminding her of times gone by, some of their dark silhouettes now stood silently empty.

As she stepped from the curb into the street, she noticed a movement near the rear tire of a customer's vehicle. Assuming it to be the usual trash-blown castaway of a thoughtless person, she did not give it a second glance.

Hurriedly purchasing from Poncho's the latest paperback, she pushed open the heavy, glass door at the entrance. Another step forward and again she saw what she thought was trash. In the shadows cast by the store and customers leaving for home, she was finally able to discern the outline of a bird.

When it disappeared under an adjacent car her interest became acute. Kneeling on the uneven pavement, she glanced under the vehicle. Quickly halfrunning, half-walking, the shadowy being ducked under a truck, then turned to the west.

With the woman in pursuit, the bird's effort to run soon turned into a struggle to fly. Elevating about a foot and a half above the surface of the parking lot adjacent to Poncho's, the creature soon touched down, ran, and then tried again to gain altitude.

After chasing it through the open space, she realized it was headed for the alley at the back of the store. She had no choice. To find out why that bird couldn't readily leave the area made her run even harder.

Metal garbage cans, some with and without lids, peppered the alley as relics of another time. Abandoned, they looked like dwarfs compared to modern



A small, slender falcon, the American kestrel easily uses the wind to hover over possible prey. Facing into a breeze with its body tilted slightly upward, the raptor seems to hang in the air. After occasionally beating its wings to remain in position, it suddenly plunges toward the ground and its unsuspecting catch.

dumpsters assigned to take their place.

Skirting behind some discarded boxes scattered nearby, the desperate bird hid quietly as the woman approached. Removing her coat, she was reminded of the unforgiving cold of early January.

One by one, she moved a box out of the way. Then another. As she started to slide the last box aside, she heard something. Hoping she had made the right decision, she quietly placed her coat between the box and a building's wall.

Tip-toeing to the other end of the cardboard structure, she would use her foot, both hands and upper body to stop the bird from escaping.

Taking a deep breath, she moved the box, saw a movement and grabbed the elusive, frightened bird. With a lack of gratitude, it bit

her hand repeatedly. Its feet flailed at her arms as she finally brought it under control.

It was then she realized its tiny talons had penetrated her sweater to inflict even more pain as they gripped whatever skin was available. Having seen the

woman chasing something in the parking lot and alley caused a patron to rush to her aid. Untangling what looked like a small hawk, she and her rescuer hurried to use the phone in the store.

On entering Poncho's, Art and I could readily sense the chagrin felt by the parrot as it looked down on its sudden feathered competition. On the floor, someone had placed an American kestrel inside a small cage for safekeeping.

Protesting to his fullest capacity as I extracted him from the enclosure, the smallest of falcons screamed avian profanity that was deafening at close range. After briefly allowing interested patrons to see the bird, we hurried home to examine our feisty fellow.

Extending his left wing revealed a small, round bloody spot. With no evidence of broken bones, this "sparrow hawk" had a good chance for recovery. After medicating the wound, we placed him inside an enclosure that insured his privacy.

Delivering the kestrel to Midge Erskine at the Eos Sanctuary in Midland, we had our suspicions confirmed. The handsome falcon had been shot with a BB

As she took him from my hand, I memorized once again the beauty of his blue gray head topped with a russet crown.

His white throat and

cheeks were augmented with vertical black stripes. Accenting his blue gray wings was his rusty back with black bars. Even his rusty tail had black bands. Below, his buff-colored breast and sides were highlighted with numerous

small black spots. Indignant at being captive, the kestrel would be assured his wildness as he recovered.

After demonstrating at a later date his ability to master a flight cage, the colorful falcon could return to scanning and hunting the ground for prey.

The easements and alleys that always attract rodents had encouraged his journey into our town and unfortunate mishap.

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

Cleanup of San Antonio River Walk begins

(AP) — Henry Rymers hawked cheap eats Monday at his restaurant along San Antonio's famed River Walk, but his coveted waterfront tables had an unappetizing view: the river freshly drained, filthy with trash and mud, and prowled by dirt-cov-

ered workers collecting sunken garbage.

"It's a miracle we didn't close today," said Rymers, a seating host at the Lone Star Café.

San Antonio is cleaning the river gunk out of the River Walk, draining the busiest quarter-mile stretch of the iconic Texas tourist des-

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tination as part of a historic, sediment-removing scrub down that is far more thorough than the city's usual annual

The city plans to finremoving more than 6,000 tons of waterclouding sediment from the winding downtown waterway over the next two weeks. Muck-hoisting cranes closed usually busy streets packed with tourists, and loud bulldozers and pumps rumbled in the riverbed outside lavish hotels white-tablecloth restaurants.

Few are around to notice the commotion. The city

River Walk each year during the predictable lull of early and chilly January, when the last Alamo Bowl fans and New Year's Eve revelers have left town and the convention center is without a big event.

They're missing a bigger tidy-up than normal: city officials said the project marks the first time that sediment has been removed from the River Walk on this scale, getting rid of the dirt and silt stirred up by barges and boats.

The result will be cleaner, clearer water in the "Historic Bend" swath of the river at the heart of downtown,

said Paula Stallcup, the city's downtown operations director.

"When I started this job four years this was something we never attempted to address," Stallcup said of the sediment removal. "Probably because the question has never been asked."

Crews began removing sediment last year along a quieter portion of the River Walk and hope to finish the project this year. Efforts to improve water quality have included boarding up a bridge where a colony of bats made their home — and a mess beneath them.

On Monday, three city workers in rubber boots dragged garden hoes along the drained river bottom that is normally a five-foot deep waterway. They scooped up cameras that tourists long ago helplessly watched sink, silverware from waterside Tex-Mex restaurants and beads from any number of floating parades. One worker fished out a tire wall and chucked it onto the riverbank.

Outside the Lone Star Café, there was no wait and practically no potential customers for Rymers to lure out of the gloomy, 50-degree afternoon.



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SPRING HERALD

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> Page 7 Tuesday, January 4, 2011

Steers at home against Lubbock Cooper



Heather Leiphart/Odessa American

Big Spring's Chazzell Robertson shoots a basket during the Steers' game against Monahans earlier this season. The Steers are back at home against Lubbock Cooper at 7:30 p.m. today in Steer Gym.

BY ADAM COLEMAN

Sports Editor

While Big Spring boys' basketball head coach Cliff Thompson is counting down the days until District 5-3A play begins, he's also making sure the Steers are fully equipped for the ride.

That includes making sure every aspect of his team is at its highest level before that Jan. 14 matchup at Brownwood and adding a few new wrinkles to the offense.

The Steers have been adding new plays and hope to test them in tonight's game against Lubbock Cooper at 7:30 p.m. in Steer Gym.

"We're really anxious to see how we execute those," Thompson said. "Hopefully they'll be in man (defense) so we can get the chance to run them. Coming up to district, we want to get the execution of our plays where it needs to be. It's

not quite there." The Lubbock Cooper

See **STEERS**, Page 12

Garrett's day-after duties could indicate a return as head coach

The Associated Press

IRVING — Jason Garrett stood before the Dallas Cowboys on Monday and gave them their marching orders for the offseason. He encouraged them to watch the playoffs and to be frustrated over not being a part of it. He talked about things they can do to become a playoff team next year.

Speaking to reporters, Garrett said he'll be at the Senior Bowl later this month to check out potential draft picks and that "going forward, we will continue to implement the changes in regards to the offseason and how we do training camp and some of those things."

In every way, he sounded like a guy who plans to remain in charge.

Garrett has acted like a permanent coach since becoming the team's interim leader two months ago. So the image he projected Monday was no sur-

If anything, team owner Jerry Jones allowing

Garrett to fill those roles Monday was the latest indication he will be returning.

"It's probably not the day to talk about that, to be honest with you," Garrett said. "Today is really a day to start the evaluations of our players and, in due time, we'll have some conversations about

Garrett has built a strong case by taking a team that had been 1-7 and going 5-3, with the losses by a total of seven points. He might already have the job if not for a league rule requiring Jones to interview a minority candidate.

Jones is expected to meet with receivers coach Ray Sherman, who is black. He's talked about meeting with outside candidates, too. Jones also said he plans to keep the pool small and wants to decide soon. When asked Sunday about the new coach's involvement on hiring assistant coaches, Jones may have revealed his intentions by replying, "That is certainly something that Jason needs to have input in."

Garrett said he and Jones have no meetings set up. Don't read anything into that because Jones already has said he doesn't need to interview Gar-

"The last eight games spoke for themselves," said linebacker Bradie James, a defensive captain. "That's why he was able to address us today. If they wouldn't have went the right way, he wouldn't have been up there. It would've just been Jerry." Other teams with vacancies could seek permis-

sion to interview Garrett. Technically, when the season ended Sunday his status reverted to assistant head coach and offensive coordinator. He's under contract for those jobs for one more season.

Asked if he would even talk to other teams, Garrett said, "We'll just let that whole situation unfold."

While Garrett dancing around most aspects about his future, he offered morsels of insight. Such as

See **COWBOYS**, Page 12

Texans keep Gary Kubiak as coach but fire defensive coordinator

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Gary Kubiak kept his job and could bring in Wade Phillips to revamp the Houston Texans' awful

The Texans said Monday that Kubiak will return as head coach next season, but the team fired defensive coordinator Frank Bush, secondary coach David Gibbs, linebackers coach Johnny Holland and assistant linebackers coach Robert Saleh.

Houston (6-10) lost eight of its last 10 games, mostly due to a defense that gave up a league-high 4,280 yards passing along with 33 touchdown passes, tied with Dallas for the most.

"We've got some serious problems that we've got to address," Kubiak said. "It definitely wasn't all coaching, in my opinion. We've got issues across the board. I had to make a decision on how we can get better, and so doing that, I made that decision to let those four guys go."

Kubiak acknowledged that he'll consider Phillips to fill the vacancy. Phillips has been out of work since the Cowboys started 1-7, their lone victory a 27-13 win over the Texans in Houston in Week 3.

Phillips was the defensive coordinator in Denver from 1986-92, overlapping Kubiak's playing career as John Elway's backup for the Broncos.

"I know Wade, I've competed against him many times," Kubiak said. "I have a lot of respect for him as a coach, but we'll talk to a number of people. It's pretty safe to say that Wade will be one of the people we'll talk to, and it'll probably be very

quickly." Pro Bowl middle linebacker De-Meco Ryans, who sat out the final 10 games with a ruptured Achilles' tendon, expected a staff shakeup, but was surprised the team released Holland, who had worked with Kubiak for all five seasons in Houston.

"It's tough to lose a guy who's been with me for my first five years in the league," Ryans said in a phone interview. "I learned a lot from him. That

See **TEXANS**, Page 12

Luck leads Stanford past Va Tech in Orange Bowl, 40-12

The Associated Press

MIAMI — John Elway flashed his familiar grin and Jim Harbaugh gave a jubilant shout from the sideline as Andrew Luck sprinted up the field to join a celebration in the end zone.

Nearly a quarter remained

in the Orange Bowl, but the Virginia Tech 40-12. Stanford Cardinal were on the way to their first bowl victory in 14 years. And it was a blowout.

Luck, the Heisman Trophy runner-up, threw for 287 yards and four touchdowns Monday night to lead fifthranked Stanford past No. 12

"I'm extremely excited," Luck said. "Couldn't be happier for the Stanford commu-

It was a performance reminiscent of Elway, the former Stanford quarterback who is expected to become the Denver Broncos' chief football ex-

ecutive this week. He served as an honorary captain, and ex-Stanford QB Jim Plunkett was also on hand to lend support.

The Cardinal (12-1) likely will end the season ranked in the top 5 for the first time since the unbeaten 1940 team finished No. 2. Their success comes only four years after they went 1-11 and hired Harbaugh as coach to lead a turn-

around. Virginia Tech (11-3), playing in a bowl game for the 18th consecutive year, fell to 1-27 against top-5 teams.

See **LUCK**, Page 12

Sports in brief

Big Spring Fall Banquet for athletics

Big Spring High School will host its athletic banquet for fall sports at 6 p.m. Jan. 8 in the high school cafeteria.

Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the door. Football players, volleyball players and cross country runners will be recognized at the annual event. If there are any questions, call Denise Carillo at 432-816-1685.

Men's city bowling tournament

This tournament takes place Jan. 23 and 24 at Bowl-A-Rama in Big Spring.

The entry forms are to be turned in by Jan. 17. Entry forms can be picked up at the Bowl-A-Rama. The local USBC Chapter is donating \$150 to the prize fund.

For more information contact Diana Ewing at 432-816-7631, Claud Fryar at 432-517-0475, or Sheila Armstrong at 432-270-7596.

2011 MAYB River City Shootout **Basketball Tournament**

Registration is ongoing for the 2011 MAYB River City Shootout Basketball Tournament to take place on February 19 and 20. The tournament is for boys and girls, grades 3 through 8. Please email wardca@yahoo.com or call (979) 417-3721 for additional information. Online registration is available at www.otcybc.com.

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HIGGINBOTHAM BARTLETT is now hiring for CDL driver and warehouse/rental positions. Both must have clean driving record and be able to pass drug screen and criminal background check. Warehouse/rental needs experience with small engine repair. No phone calls please. Apply in person at 1900 E. FM 700.

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Annie's Mailbox ®

Dear Annie: I am a 20year-old college sophomore. The summer before my senior year of high school, I took a trip Europe with a religious youth group. From the moment we boarded the plane, "Rachel" and I shared a connection.

By the second day, we were inseparable. After the trip, we stayed in touch.

A year later, the youth group held a reunion and I got to see Rachel again. That

December, she came to my school's postseason football game, and we both finally said "I love you." spent last summer in her hometown, attending classes at a local

KATHY MITCHELL MARCY SUGAR

university and

working part time. The summer could not

have been better, but Rachel and I both decided to step back and go our separate ways since she wanted the full "college experience" for her freshman year.

But now I want to find ways for us to be together. I feel that this isn't over — it can't be.

I have no doubt that we are in love. We are perfect for each other in our values, aspirations everything and between. T

will give her whatever time and freedom she needs. All I want to know is whether

I am right to believe the love we share is too special to die. Do I have to let her go and move on forever, or should I try to get back together when the time is right? Confused and In Love

Dear Confused: The intensity of finding someone special during the summer may not translate to a permanent relationship, regardless of how it seems to you now.

And too much intensity can be frightening. You and Rachel may have a future together, but you should not presume it, nor should you put your social life on hold waiting for her.

Yes, there is a risk that she will find someone else (so might you). We recommend you limit this to a light and easy friendship, periodically texting and keeping in touch via Facebook. If

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she wants more, she will let you know.

Dear Annie: Several years ago, a dear friend suddenly ended friendship.

Confused, I asked why, and "Anna" presented me with a litany of my faults. I felt blindsided and unfairly treated. I thought I was a good friend. I even took care of her when she was recovering from surgery.

Two weeks later, Anna asked if we could be

friends again. I replied, "Of course!" and things

returned to normal. But last

year, she once again abruptly ended things. I have since discovered she has treated others this way.

Anna's cold shoulder is beginning to warm again. I admit, I miss my friend — she's smart,

funny and has many good qualities. But a big part of me says to value my dignity and mental health more. Am I on the right track? — Agony in Iowa

Dear Iowa: Anna sounds mentally unstable. Without appropriate treatment, we can guarantee her hot-and-cold attitude will continue.

If you think you can convince her to get help, it might be worth retaining the friendship, but otherwise, you are smart to let this one go. Sorry.

Dear Annie: I can understand the health concerns of "Smokeless in Seattle," who doesn't want her kids exposed to the grandparents' smoking.

But I totally agree with you, Annie. How much longer will Grandma and Grandpa be able to continue the tradition of having the family for Christmas dinner?

Could the children buy an air purifier for the grandparents' home as a gift?

 If all the family members contributed, a top-of-the-line system could be purchased. This is also a good way to let the grandparents know you are concerned for their health, as well as that of the children.

As someone who had wonderful grandparents and who is now a grandparent myself, I hope they will not do anything to endanger that very important relationship. Connecticut Grandmother

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email 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 pageatwww.creators.com.

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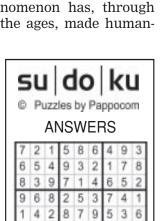
Tomorrow's Horoscope

Today brings the first of six eclipses in 2011, four solar eclipses and two lunar eclipses. If you think this sounds

like a lot of eclipses for one year, you're right There are only six years in the entire century that hold this many

HOLIDAY **M**ATHIS eclipses.

Such a phe-



5 7 3 6 4 1 8 2 9

3 9 7 1 6 5 2 8 4

4 1 5 3 2 8 9 6 7

2 8 6 4 9 7 3 1 5

West dealer.

WEST

♦63 ♥J753

The bidding:

Pass

East-West vulnerable.

NORTH

SOUTH

♦ K 10 9 8 4 2 **♥** A 4

East

Pass

Opening lead — king of clubs.

Assume you're in four spades

and West leads the K-A and another

club. You ruff, but the outlook is

bleak because it seems likely you'll

lose two diamond tricks and go down

Upon further consideration, though, you see that you might be

able to execute an elimination play

that would allow you to make the

contract. Accordingly, you cash the

♥Q982

♣J 7 5

♦ K 10 9 6

South

♥K 10 6

♦ J 8 4 3

uncomfortable. kind Have faith that the sun will shine again.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Get rid of the temptations that are around you, and make it very difficult, if not impossible, to get to them. You'll find it easier to indulge in moderation when that is the only option available to you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). No one can be just like you, least of all you. You'll try to execute a job or performance the same way you did last time, and it's not the way it will go down. But the new way is good, too, for different reasons.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The composer Igor Stravinsky, your sign mate, claimed that his music was best understood by children and animals. Likewise, you will deliver gifts to the world that are meant to be felt, not intellectualized.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Just when you think you really understand another person, doors open to deeper and unknown territory. Let this learning unfold naturally. There's no reason to push things along.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It is not so easy for any accomplished person to be modest, but for the emotionally immature, it is extremely difficult. That's why the quality is as rare as it is appealing in a young person.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You will participate in an act of sublime surrender. You will produce things of beauty, hold them up and open your hands, letting the wind carry them where

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Make a conscious effort to dream. Try to stay lucid and guide the imagery that is the language of your mind toward scenes that give you great satisfaction. Your reality will interpret your dreams.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Reconnect with the people, areas of interest and games that make you feel the most playful. You could use something to confirm your status as a grownup child.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You will be protecting your interests and forwarding them, as well. Be like a warrior with a keen sense of when to attack and when to retreat. Stay flexible and aware as you keep your options

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Whether you are cooking a meal, constructing a building or directing a boardroom, if you can do things simply, you will do them well. Your job is to pare down a complicated task to its essence.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Just because you are hopeful doesn't mean you're naive. When the odds are not in your favor, you may realize this fact and then go forward nonetheless, acting out of a combination of faith and loyalty.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You will show tremendous heart as you support someone who may or may not come through. This is more about loyalty than winning. Loved ones appreciate your encouragement.

TODAY'S BIRTH-DAY (Jan. 4). You have figured a few things out since your last birthday, and you're ready to show the world. This month brings an important new member of your team. February brings a financial injection. In love, trust that things will work out and they will. Your creation will be celebrated in March and again in August. Aquarius and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 13, 42, 19 and 28.

SOLAR ECLIPSE **RITUAL**: For some, the word "ritual" brings to mind visions of ugly green witches chanting around a fire as they stir up a poisonous brew that will ruin the princess and spice up the fairytale. For me, it's a simple word describing a series of actions that has value beyond the practical implications. For instance, a ritual like drinking coffee in the morning can do more than provide a desired caffeinated response. The actions taken in making the brew, pouring the liquid, dressing up the drink with sweetener or cream, and sipping from the cup from a certain place in the kitchen could be as much of a signal to the body and mind to start the day as the drink itself. A ritual is a symbolic orchestration that sets the mind on a particular intention.

Here's a ritual to acknowledge the energies of the solar eclipse in Capricorn. Go for a walk, especially one that includes a hill. Decide your destination beforehand. Pick up a rock at the beginning of your journey, and set the rock down when you reach your destination. Let nothing stop you from reaching that point. As you complete this goal, consider that other goals in your life could be just as easily accomplished.

CELEBRITY PRO-FILES: Rumor has it that actress January Jones was named for the month of her birth, as well as for a character in a Jacqueline Susann novel. Her cool Capricorn earth-sign beauty is balanced by the energy of Mars and Saturn in the ever-hot fiery realm of Leo. The result is an irresistible magnetism that has contributed significantly to the effectiveness of hit movies and television shows such as "Mad Men."

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, thevisit Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Contract By Steve Becker

The Art of Camouflage

ruff a heart. You next play the ace of diamonds, everyone following low, and exit with a diamond. West wins with the queen and is forced to return a heart or a club, allowing you to ruff in dummy while shedding the remaining diamond loser from your hand, and the contract is home.

A-Q of trumps, the A-K of hearts and

Note, however, that West could have thwarted your scheme by dropping his queen when you cashed the ace of diamonds, in which case you'd have had to lose two diamond tricks. Indeed, West should have seen the handwriting on the wall and made this play, as he had no chance of stopping the contract unless his partner had the K-10 of diamonds.

But note further that you could almost surely have forestalled such a play by West by doing a better job of concealing your intentions. Had you led a trump to dummy at trick four and played a diamond to the ace at trick five, West would have had to be uncommonly farsighted to drop his queen under your ace. And if he failed to do so, he would not have been able to extricate himself later from the ruff-and-discard situation that gives you the contract.

Tomorrow: The Gordian knot. ©2010 King Features Syndicate Inc.

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

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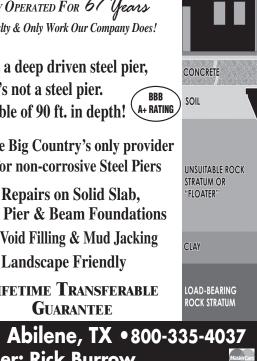
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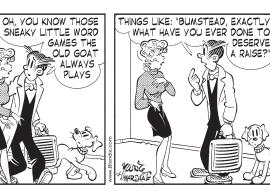


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This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 4, the fourth day of 2011. There are 361 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight History: On Jan. 4, 1951, during the

Korean War, North Korean and Communist Chinese forces recaptured the city of Seoul (sohl). On this date:

In 1821, the first native-born American saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton, died in Emmitsburg,

In 1861, Alabama seized a federal arsenal at Mount Vernon near Mobile.

In 1896, Utah was admitted as the 45th state. In 1904, the Supreme Court,

in Gonzalez v. Williams, ruled that Puerto Ricans were not aliens and could enter the United States freely; however, the court stopped short of declaring them U.S. citizens.

In 1948, Burma (now called Myanmar) became independent of British rule

In 1960, Algerian-born French author and philosopher Albert Camus (al-BEHR' kah-MOO') died in an automobile accident in Villeblevin, France at age In 1965, President Lyndon B.

Johnson outlined the goals of his "Great Society" in his State of the Union Address. Poet T.S. Eliot died in London at age 76. In 1974, President Richard M. Nixon refused to hand over

tape recordings and documents

subpoenaed by the Senate

Watergate Committee. In 1990, Charles Stuart, who'd claimed to have been wounded and his pregnant wife fatally shot by a robber, leapt to his death off a Boston bridge after

In 2007, Nancy Pelosi was elected the first female speaker of the House as Democrats took control of Congress.

he himself became a suspect.

Todav's Birthdays: Actress Barbara Rush is 84. Football Hall-of-Fame coach Don Shula is 81. Actress Dyan Cannon is 74. Opera singer Grace Bumbry is 74. Author-historian Doris Kearns Goodwin is 68. Country singer Kathy Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 56. Actress Ann Magnuson is 55. Rock musician Bernard Sumner

(New Order, Joy Division) is Country singer Patty Loveless is 54. Rock singer Michael Stipe (R.E.M.) is 51. Actor Patrick Cassidy is 49. Actor Dave Foley is 48. Actor Rick Hearst (TV: "The Bold and the Beautiful") is 46. Singer musician Cait O'Riordan is 46. Actress Julia Ormond is 46. Tennis player Guy Forget (ghee fohr-ZHAY') is 46. Country singer Deana Carter is 45. Rock musician Benjamin Darvill (Crash Test Dummies) is 44. Actor Jeremy Licht is 40. Actress-singer Jill Marie Jones is 36. Alt-country singer Justin Townes Earle is 29. Christian rock singer Spencer Chamberlain (Underoath) is

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Answer to previous puzzle

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ACROSS 1 24-hr. cash

sources 5 More than

10 Vicinity

cheese 15 "Shroud" city of

Italy **16** Official stamp

18 Gives it a go

23 Sculpted figure, for example

Abbr.

29 Angry mood

alternative

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60 Beasts of burden 10 Campfire residue 45 Quaint hotel 61 Insertion mark

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12 All

31 More frosty 32 "Ring-a-round"

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63 64 65 1/4/11 CREATORS SYNDICATE @ 2011 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM

The Howard College men's and women's basketball teams won each of their games in Arizona this past weekend. The women beat South Mountain Community College 75-51 Saturday, Phoenix College 89-80 Sunday and Glendale

Community College 66-42 Monday.

The men took care of business in the 2010 Fiesta Bowl Junior College Shootout by beating Scottsdale Community College 63-59 and Mesa Community College 54-47.

The Howard College men (12-1) and women (13-2) are off until WJ-CAC play picks up against South Plains on Jan.10 in Big Spring.

STEERS

Continued from Page 7

game starts a three-game stretch, which also includes another home game against Levelland and a trip to Andrews, before district play begins.

Having a chance to work out any kinks during this three-game stretch is vital before a district game Thompson said might be the toughest in Brownwood.

Adding the new plays almost acts as a Plan B for the Steers. Thompson said the Steers' district opponents will continue to learn more about what Big Spring can do on the court and it will be nice to

have other options on offense.

On the other hand, defense continues to be a focus for Thompson. He said his players have to get stops and rebounds, two things that haven't been consistent.

As for Cooper tonight, the Steers might be getting a preview of what district play will be like. Thompson compared Cooper's style of play with one of the tougher teams in District 5-3A.

"I've called about four or five coaches who have

"I've called about four or five coaches who have played them and they say we matchup with them pretty well,"Thompson said. "I know they have a new coach. I don't think they'll be really athletic, but I think they'll be pretty well-coached and fundamental. They're kind of more like an Abilene Wylie."

Area basketball: District play continues for area teams

Coahoma-Stanton

Coahoma and Stanton jump back into District 3-2A play today against one another in Coahoma. The Bulldogettes play the Lady Buffs at 6 p.m. and the Bulldogs are scheduled to play the Buffs at 7:30 p.m. The Bulldogettes are coming off a subpar showing in the tournament at Reagan County and hope to get back on track with a win tonight. On the boys' side, the Buffs are led by Tyler Fulton, who is one of the go-to players for Stanton.

Forsan

The Forsan Lady Buffs and Buffs are on the road against Post today, picking district play back up as well. The Lady Buffs play at 6 p.m. and the Buffs play at 7:30 p.m. in Post. Ambra Hill has been lighting it up as of late for the Lady Buffs, while Ty Johnson and the Buffs hope to build off a win over Coahoma to open district play.

Sands

Both Sands girls and boys' teams will be in Gail tonight to open district play

against Borden County. The girls are scheduled to play around 6 p.m. and the boys will follow. The boys won first place in the Sterling City tournament last week.

Garden City

District play continues for the Garden City Bearkats and Lady Kats. The Lady Kats will take the court against Veribest at 6:30 p.m. and the boys' game starts at 8 p.m. The Bearkats started district play with a win over Paint Rock, while the Lady Kats are 2-1 in district play after wins over Robert Lee and Paint Rock and a loss to Sterling City

Grady

The Grady boys and girls' teams hope to continue their hot streaks against O'Donnell in Lenorah. Play for the varsity girls is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the boys' game will follow.

COWBOYS

Continued from Page 7

his belief that being both offensive coordinator and head coach — as he's done since early November — is "an efficient way to do it."

He avoided a direct answer about whether he and Jones have discussed removal of the interim tag by saying, "A large, large majority of our conversations have been what we're doing each and every day." Thus, a small, small minority of their conversations were about that.

"We've always had the feel that he's our head coach since he's taken over," said third-string quarterback Stephen McGee, who led Dallas to a victory over Philadelphia on Sunday in his first career start. "He got everybody to buy in from the very beginning. ... I think everybody that's played for him believes in him and would love to play for him."

Jones spoke to the club Monday, too, and brought up his favorite subject: the Super Bowl.

Failing to make this one extends Dallas' drought to 15 straight seasons, the longest in franchise history. This failure hurts more because the game

will be played in Cowboys Stadium.

"I encourage every teammate to watch it and let your stomach boil a little bit," tight end Jason Witten said. "That's what it's about, the playoffs and seeing those teams celebrate and go for the ultimate prize."

Jones was counting on the Cowboys becoming the first team to play in a Super Bowl at home. It seemed realistic coming off a division title and a playoff win.

But the season spun out of control early, forcing him to fire coach Wade Phillips midway through. When he promoted Garrett, all Jones asked was to make the team competitive again. Garrett did that from the start, taking Dallas to New York and beating the division-leading Giants.

"What I told them today was I was

very proud of them, of how they

played the last eight weeks," Garrett said. "To continue to play hard — win some hard-fought games, lose some hard-fought games, but continue to go about it the right way — it was impressive to me as a coach and really as a fan of football."

Garrett has to feel good about hav-

ing drawn that out of them. He can't celebrate that quite yet, though, not until Jones said it was good enough to cement the job.

TEXANS

Continued from Page 7

was definitely shocking, that he had to go."

The Texans are 37-43 in Kubiak's five seasons, and the franchise is still seeking its first playoff appearance. The best Kubiak has done so far is guide the Texans to a 9-7 mark in 2009, the only winning record in the team's nine seasons of existence.

Kubiak, whose contract runs through the 2012 season, admitted that he felt fortunate that owner Bob McNair decided to retain him.

"We visited and decided on a new direction," Kubiak said. "Obviously, him giving me a chance to move us in that direction, I'm very thankful for that. But I know I've got a lot of work to do and a lot of problems to fix."

Bush seemed resigned to his fate after the final practice of the season on Friday.

"I've got to go out and try to find a way to sell myself to another organization," Bush said. "I'll stay positive, I'll stay upbeat, I'll keep believing in the things I do. Quite frankly, I felt like we had the right approach. Things didn't

work out, but I'll stay positive about the whole situation and keep moving forward."

2008. The Texans' defense played well over the final 13 games of 2009, giving up 19 points and 84 yards rushing in that span.

But the unit was bad from the start this season, yielding 410.5 yards through

Bush was promoted to defensive coordinator after the Texans finished 8-8 in

the first six games. The Texans only started 4-2 because the offense topped 30 points in each of the victories.

After Ryans was injured, the defense never got better.

Kubiak was also hurt by his preseason decision to start rookie Kareem Jackson and second-year pro Glover Quin at cornerback. Houston's secondary was beaten repeatedly on long pass plays, most critically in the fourth quarter. Defensive line coach Bill Kollar is keeping his job, even though the pass

rush was also an issue.

Defensive end Mario Williams had 8 1/2 sacks through the first 13 games

Defensive end Mario Williams had $8\ 1/2$ sacks through the first 13 games, but then went on injured reserve with a sports hernia. Houston had 30 sacks to rank 23rd in the league.

"I like the way he does his job," Kubiak said. "It has a lot to do with where I see us going forward."

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LUCK

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Stanford threw a completion for a bizarre safety and blew two extra points, but overcame those mistakes with six plays gaining more than

30 yards. Two came in succession on a twoplay, 97-yard "drive," and the Cardinal outscored Tech 27-0 in the

second half.

"They're really good, and we helped them be good," Hokies head coach Frank Beamer said.





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