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Giving Santa the lowdown

Emilee Barker discusses her holiday wish list with Santa Claus during the Big Spring Kiwanis Club's annual Christmas party for West Side Day Care Center children Thursday at Baptist Temple Church.

HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Torres files for Precinct 1 seat

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

Local resident Larry Torres has filed to run for the Precinct 1 seat on the Howard County commissioners on the Democratic ticket, with Monday the most recent deadline for political hopefuls to file to run in the upcoming March primaries.

According to Walter Shipman, Chairman of the Howard County Democratic Party, Torres — a jailer with the Howard County Sheriff's Office — has filed to run for the seat on the commissioners court, currently held by longtime commissioner Emma Puga Brown.

Shipman said Brown, who has run as a Democratic candidate in the past, has not yet filed with the Dems to run for re-election, but has indicated to him she plans to seek another term.

The deadline to file to run in the primaries was recently shifted from Thursday, Dec. 15, to Mon-

day at 6 p.m. following a decision handed down by the U.S. District Court, part of a lawsuit regarding election district boundaries which rages on in three federal courts.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia, on behalf of a three-judge panel in federal court in San Antonio, extended candidate filing deadlines for the second time during Texas's continuing redistricting fight, and said candidates will have yet another chance to file for office once the boundaries are made final.

"The court will reopen the filing period at a later time, at which time applications may be filed, amended or withdrawn," Garcia said in the four-page order.

Seats up for election in the 2012 election include 118th Judicial District Attorney, currently held by Hardy Wilkerson; Howard County sheriff, currently held by Stan Parker; county attorney, held by

See **FILING**, Page 3A

The deadline to file to run in the primaries was recently shifted from Thursday, Dec. 15, to Monday at 6 p.m. following a decision handed down by a U.S. District Court.

Secret Santa pays off customers' layaway

By **AMANDA MORENO**
 Staff Writer

Secret Santas are popping up everywhere.

Local resident Lupe Castro received an early Christmas present Friday afternoon when she was informed her layaway had been taken care of.

"It truly is a blessing," Castro said. "It is a rare thing to see, but it's nice to see there are still people out there with caring hearts."

Wal-Mart Assistant Manager Erica Rodriques said the anonymous donor walked in and expressed the desire to pay for 22 layaways.

"At first, I wasn't sure he

"It truly is a blessing, It is a rare thing to see, but it's nice to see there are still people out there with caring hearts."

Lupe Castro

could do that, but once I checked and found out he could, it truly touched my heart," Rodriques said. "I had to walk away for a minute because I started to cry, I was so touched."

The balanced paid — each left with less than a \$1 balance in order for them to remain in the system — ranged from \$30 to almost \$300. All were chosen at random with the only stipulation being the

layaways had to be toys.

Rodriques said the only explanation was the donor's heart was touched by the reports of other anonymous people paying off layaways at several Kmarts across the country. The donor said it was something that should be happening here.

"It helped me out and I will surely be paying it forward," Castro said.

The anonymous donor told

Rodriques hard times were understood and the main point was to offer help other people.

"I couldn't believe this was happening right here in our little town," Rodriques said.

Then again, Big Spring isn't the only little town experiencing the season of giving in its truest form. According to the Associated Press, several Kmarts have experienced anonymous donors coming in

and paying off layaways.

There has yet to be determined an explanation for this sudden burst of holiday giving. Some of the gestures have been attributed to the donors being able to relate to being in hard times. A donor in Indianapolis said the gesture was made in memory of her recently deceased husband. No reason may be available, but one thing is certain — each one was made from the heart and won't soon be forgotten.

Contact Staff Writer Amanda Moreno at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at life@bigspringherald.com



Dec. 18
 7 shopping days to Christmas

Quality Plumbing
 432-264-7006

Gas leak prompts school closure

By **AMANDA MORENO**
 Staff Writer

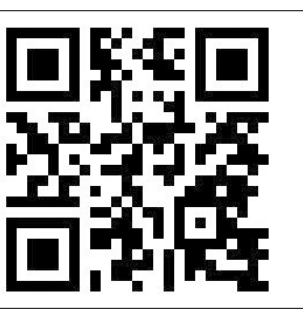
Lakeview Headstart, located at 1107 N.W. Seventh, had to shut their doors early Thursday.

Throughout the day, there had been a faint gas odor and for safety concerns Site Director Dominga Shockley decided it was in the best interest to go ahead and send students home for the day until the problem could be found and repaired.

Shockley first notified the executive

director about the problem and began sending students home for the day. Maintenance personnel from the Big Spring Independent School District — Lakeview Headstart building belongs to the school district — came out and located the source of the odor and made repairs.

According to Shockley, the problem was fixed by 5 p.m. Thursday. Classes went on as usual Friday, with an early release scheduled for the holiday break.



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Obituaries

Bill Bennett

Bill Bennett, 80, of Sand Springs, died Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, in a local hospital. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011, at Midway Baptist Church with the Rev. Jim Binnix officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

Bill was born March 22, 1931, in Vincent, Texas, and married Johnnie Padgett on Oct. 7, 1950 in For-san.

He was employed for 36 years at the Cosden Refinery, now Alon USA, as an operator.

He was a member of Midway Baptist Church. Survivors include his wife, two sons, Jody Ben-

nett and wife Kelly of Ardmore, Okla., and Randy Bennett and wife, Rhonda of Colorado City; three brothers, Gerald Bennett of Pecos, Buster Bennett, and Bo Bennett of Sand Springs; three sisters, Patsy Baird of Big Spring, Mildred Shortess of Breckenridge, and Betty Bartham of Denison; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, James and Faytie Bennett; sons Michael, Ricky and an infant son; three brothers, Jack Jr. and Oma; and four sisters, Adeline, Arlene, Peggy and Faye Jean.

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

Joseph Garcia Luna

Joseph Garcia Luna, "Jo Jo," age 22, of Odessa died Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011, at his home. He was born in Odessa on Feb. 17, 1989. He worked as a waiter at Tequila Tony's Mexican Restaurant.

Survivors include his father, Gilbert Luna and wife Rosa Garcia; mother, Cynthia Ann (Garcia) Ponce and husband Luis; maternal great-grandparents, Sabino and Josefa Garcia; maternal grandmother, Mary Jo Pineda; paternal grandmother, Felicita L. Valenzuela; and an uncle, Luis Luna, all of Odessa.

He is also survived by four brothers, Gilbert Luna Jr. and Anthony Tyrone Pineda, both of Odessa, Jessie Luna of Big Spring and Davien Garcia Luna of Odessa; two sisters, Christina Luna of Big Spring and Alex Luna of Big Spring; and numerous nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Rosary will be said Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. at Acres West Funeral Chapel. Funeral services will be at Acres West Funeral Chapel at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2011, with Salvador Hernandez and Glenda Rodriguez officiating. Interment will follow at Los Angeles Garden of Ecor County Cemetery.

Arrangements are entrusted to Acres West Funeral Chapel and condolences to the family may be sent online at acreswestfuneral.com.

Johnnie L. Monday

Johnnie L. Monday, 70, of Big Spring, died Friday, Dec. 16, 2011, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Robert E. 'Dog' Jones Sr.

Robert E. "Dog" Jones Sr., 64, of Big Spring, died Friday, Dec. 16, 2011, at his residence. His services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Police blotter

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

- TAMMY KAY LOCKHART, 35, of 1106 W. Third St. 13, was arrested Friday on a warrant on assault by contact.
- TONY ELBERT MCBEE, 46, of 1706.5 Johnson St., was arrested Friday on a warrant from another agency.
- JONATHON MICHAEL PAUL, 31, of 605 Circle, was arrested Friday on a warrant for criminal mischief.

- CODY KYLE WITT, 26, of 1605 Johnson, was arrested Friday on a charge of disregard a red light.
- DAVID ARNULFO GARZA, 48, of 1900 Martin Luther King Boulevard 201, was arrested Friday on a charge of driving while intoxicated/third or more.
- BURGLARY OF BUILDING was reported in the 1800 block of Wallace.
- THEFT was reported: In the 200 block of W. FM 700. In the 2500 block of S. Gregg Street.

Support Groups

- MONDAY
- Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, noon-1 p.m., 615 Settles.
 - PEP — Parent Education Program for CPS participating and non-participating parents, single parent, grandparents, adoptive or fostering parents. Every first and fourth Monday of the month from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Northside Community Center. Classes are free. For information, call 263-2673.
 - Alcoholics Anonymous open meeting, 8-9 p.m., fourth floor, VA Medical Center.
 - Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church at 10th and Goliad for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 6 p.m. Call 213-1342 or 263-6819.

- TUESDAY
- Big Spring Parkinsons Support Group meeting at the Big Spring Senior Center at 10:30 a.m. the second Tuesday of the month. This is a group for those with Parkinson's Disease, Young Onset Parkinson's, caregivers, and those interested in learning more about the illness. There is time for socializing and information. For more information about the support group or about Parkinson's Disease, contact Jody at 432-699-6640 or midlandparkinsons@yahoo.com or Jo Bidwell at the Lubbock APDA office at 806-785-2732.
 - Special Parents for Special Children support group meets the first Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m. at Elbow Elementary. Contact Kerri Rosenbaum at 432-816-3320 or kerriroosenbaum9488@msn.com

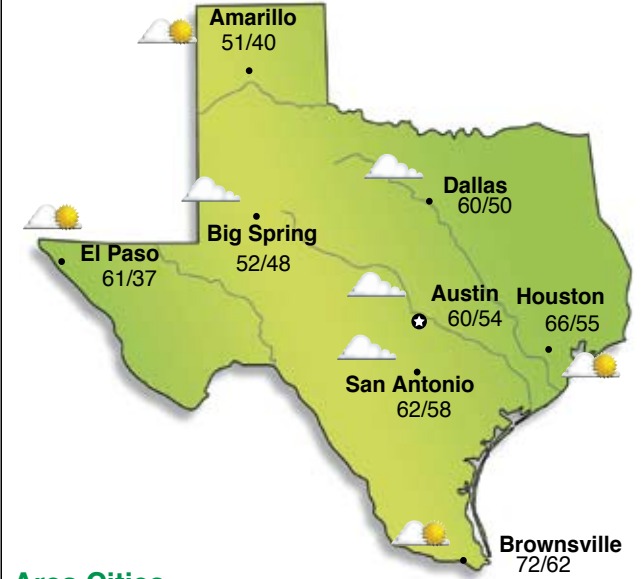
Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Sun 12/18	Mon 12/19	Tue 12/20	Wed 12/21	Thu 12/22
52/48 Overcast. High 52F. Winds SSE at 10 to 20 mph.	58/33 Rain. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the low 30s.	47/28 More sun than clouds. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the upper 20s.	55/35 Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the mid 30s.	63/33 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise: 7:41 AM Sunset: 5:44 PM	Sunrise: 7:42 AM Sunset: 5:44 PM	Sunrise: 7:42 AM Sunset: 5:45 PM	Sunrise: 7:43 AM Sunset: 5:45 PM	Sunrise: 7:43 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM



Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	57	51	cloudy	Kingsville	72	63	cloudy
Amarillo	51	40	pt sunny	Livingston	64	50	pt sunny
Austin	60	54	cloudy	Longview	62	48	cloudy
Beaumont	67	51	mst sunny	Lubbock	46	43	cloudy
Brownsville	72	62	pt sunny	Lufkin	65	49	pt sunny
Brownwood	58	51	cloudy	Midland	50	48	cloudy
Corpus Christi	70	63	cloudy	Raymondville	70	60	cloudy
Corsicana	60	49	cloudy	Rosenberg	66	55	pt sunny
Dallas	60	50	cloudy	San Antonio	62	58	cloudy
Del Rio	53	51	cloudy	San Marcos	61	54	cloudy
El Paso	61	37	pt sunny	Sulphur Springs	60	48	cloudy
Fort Stockton	54	44	cloudy	Sweetwater	54	50	cloudy
Gainesville	56	47	cloudy	Tyler	61	48	cloudy
Greenville	58	47	cloudy	Weatherford	57	47	cloudy
Houston	66	55	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	56	49	cloudy

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	58	34	sunny	Minneapolis	41	29	mst sunny
Boston	32	22	pt sunny	New York	37	30	pt sunny
Chicago	42	36	mst sunny	Phoenix	54	45	rain
Dallas	60	50	cloudy	San Francisco	61	45	mst sunny
Denver	51	25	sunny	Seattle	45	34	rain
Houston	66	55	pt sunny	St. Louis	52	44	mst sunny
Los Angeles	61	45	sunny	Washington, DC	43	32	flurries
Miami	78	66	pt sunny				

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Take note

• Holy Trinity Catholic Youth Group is collecting good coats, blankets, heaters, scarves, gloves for the community. Items may be dropped off at the Holy Trinity Office on Main or you may call Meranda Reyes at 935-0694 or Merlinda Moron at 213-3456. The needy in our community can come to Holy Trinity Church Hall on Sunday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at 1009 Hearn St. in Big Spring to look through the items we've collected. Refreshments will be served.

• A benefit account for the Arguello family, who lost two family members in a recent house fire in Coahoma, has been established at Western Bank. Interested persons can contribute to the account at any of the bank's three locations (two in Big Spring; one in Coahoma). For more information, call 432-394-4256.

• An account has been established at Wells Fargo to help defray medical expenses for 4-year-old Zayde Stallings, who recently died of a rare heart condition. She was the daughter of Kenny and Renea Stallings of Big Spring. If you need more information, contact Four Seasons Insulation and Siding at 264-8610. The account number is 7938527277.

• A fund has been set up at Myers & Smith Funeral Home for Mike Williams, 39, a lifetime resident of Big Spring who died Nov. 1. He leaves behind a wife and seven children. Any donations can be brought to the funeral home office at 301 E. 24th St. For more information, call 267-8288.

• American Cancer Society will have its board meetings at noon on the second Tuesday of the month through April. Lunch will be furnished. Meetings will take place

at Home Hospice, located at 111 E. Seventh.

• Home Hospice is seeking volunteers. Training will be provided and geared to your time frame. Volunteers are needed for in office duties as well as sitters, deliveries and crafts. To find out more information or to volunteer contact Sherry Hodnett at Home Hospice by calling 264-7599.

• Every 10 years, Texas requires that marks and brands be re-registered in the county or counties in which you operate. The re-registration period began Aug. 31 and runs through Feb. 29, 2012. At the conclusion date, all marks and brands that have not been re-registered are automatically available for registration by another party. For additional information, contact the Howard County Clerk's Office at 264-2214 or 264-2213.

• Hangar 25 Air Museum needs your help! We are in need of volunteers to fill a variety of positions such as tour guides, front desk, clerical, events, and many others. Set your hours and days of the week you are available. Meet new people and enjoy a rewarding experience. For more information, contact Emma Bogard at 432-267-2963.

• Big Spring Education Employees Federal Credit Union is raising money to benefit Maurine Pittman, who is undergoing cancer treatment in a Dallas-area hospital. For more information, call the credit union at 263-8393.

• A benefit fund has been established at Western Bank for Eric Kelly, a 24-year-old Big Spring resident with cystic fibrosis who is recovering from a double lung transplant in Dallas. All donations are appreciated. For more

information, call 432-213-0795

• The Salvation Army is holding its annual heater drive and is in dire need of heaters. Community members can donate new or used heaters. Monetary donations are also welcomed. Donations can be made at the main office, located at 811 W. Fifth St., Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

• The Homeownership Preservation Foundation (HPF) is an independent national nonprofit dedicated to helping distressed homeowners navigate financial challenges and avoid mortgage foreclosure. If you want to stop foreclosure and are in need of foreclosure help, the time to call 888-995-HOPE is now. The Homeowner's HOPE hotline is a counseling service provided by HPF to work with you to find a solution to your problem. HPF can provide counseling free of charge, in English and 170 other languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Free free foreclosure help, call the hotline.

• Fridays are live band dance nights at Big Spring Senior Center, 1901 Simler. Senior adults are invited to an evening of fellowship (and good exercise) from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. each Friday. Cost is \$8 per person. For more information or to find out what band is playing, call the Senior Center at 432-267-1628.

• A benefit fund for Chris Johnson (account 5945033396) has been established at Wells Fargo Bank to help defray expenses from a house fire. All donations are appreciated.

• The Salvation Army has funding for Texas Military Personnel now serving or has served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The military member or their family member may apply at 811 W. Fifth St. or call 267-8239. The grant is funded by the TRIAD Fund of Permian Basin Area Foundation.

• Weight Watchers meets at 6 p.m. Thursdays at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Weigh-in is at 5:30 p.m. Weigh-in is confidential and you don't have to talk if you don't want to. Flexible payment options.

• 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.org.

• Legal Aid of Northwest Texas is accepting appointments from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month. Individuals seeking legal advice for matters concerning family law, divorce, custody and child support issues, social security cases, employment and housing may contact the office to schedule an appointment. Criminal cases are not accepted. Anyone recently served with legal documents should call the office immediately at 800-926-5630 or 432-686-0647.

• Big Spring and surrounding counties are in critical need of foster families. Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected. For more information on becoming foster parents

or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

• HATS (Hope After The Sadness), an American Cancer Society Resource Room is available at First Methodist Church. This center provides information and valuable resources for those affected by cancer. This HATS ministry, established in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Shane Brue, maintains a room with free hats, wigs and head coverings available for check-out by those dealing with hair loss due to cancer treatment. Other services and resources are also available. Contact the "Hat Lady," Marci Lykken at 267-2915 or the local ACS office at 432-683-6375.

• Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call (877) 277-1618, the High Plains American Cancer Group Report Center. Anyone wishing to volunteer to drive in this program should call Sherry Hodnett, president of the Big Spring ACS Board, at 264-7599 at her office at Home Hospice.

• All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue has an account set up with Big Spring Salvage at 3608 N. Hwy. 87 for all types of metals and aluminum cans. Please tell them that your donations are for All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue. All Creatures Sanctuary and Rescue is also still taking weight circles off of all Purina brand dog foods. Send your Purina Weight Circles, to A.C.S.&R. at P.O. Box 871, Coahoma 79511. All Creatures Sanctu-

ary and Rescue is still accepting old and used cell phones and ink jet cartridges, for drop off locations in Big Spring and Coahoma, call Melanie at 267-7387.

• New Life Ministries Church of God In Christ is holding a soup kitchen every second and fourth Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 204 N.W. 10th. The meal is free. Call 264-0771 for more information.

• The Pet Patrol helps locate lost pets and owners of found pets. To volunteer or for more information, call Melanie Gambrell at 267-PETS (7387).

• Do you have a minute? An hour? How about making a difference in someone's life? Become a hospice volunteer.

One hour a month can make a difference. Whether it visiting a patient, or working in the office, or helping with a craft, you can make a difference. We can work around your schedule. If interested, please call Michelle Coutermarsh, at Compass Hospice, 263-5999 or apply in person at 1003 E. FM 700 in Big Spring.

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Johnnie L. Monday, 70, died Friday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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FILING

Continued from Page 1A

Joshua Hamby; tax assessor collector, held by Kathy Sayles; Precinct 3 county commissioner, held by Jimmie Long; and Precinct 1 county commissioner, held by Emma Brown.

Parker has filed to run for re-election, as have Long, Green and Wilkerson.

Local resident M.O. Horton has announced he will run against Parker for the office of sheriff. However, the *Herald* has been unable to verify if Horton has filed to run on the Republican ticket because calls to Republican Chairman Craig Bailey were not

immediately returned.

To file candidacy with the Republican party, contact Chairman Bailey at 267-2464. To file with the Democratic party, contact Shipman at 264-6660.

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

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CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Alive in Christ
Lutheran Church - LCMS

Children's Christmas Program
Wednesday, Dec. 21 • 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service
Saturday, Dec. 24 • 7:00 p.m.

Carol Service
Sunday, Dec. 25 • 9 a.m.

Sunday School To Follow

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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.

Bill McClellan Managing Editor	Ron Midkiff Publisher	Steve Reagan Staff Writer
Amanda Moreno Staff Writer	Thomas Jenkins Staff Writer	

HOME COUNTRY

Pop Walker sneaked out the kitchen

When Pop Walker sneaked out the kitchen door the other day, it affected all of us. He's been a resident of the Rest of Your Life retirement home for several years now.

He still remembers who said what during combat in Europe, but has a hard time remembering if he's had breakfast.

The call went out down at the Sheriff's office around 10 p.m. that Pop had slipped through the enemy lines, meaning the kitchen staff, and was on the loose. One of the deputies called Doc, who was a friend of his since forever, and Doc alerted the rest of us.

Pop is one of our own, of course. A couple of years ago, he took his coffee black and his philosophy straight at the philosophy counter at the Mule Barn.

It was cold, and they found his heavy coat still in his room, so this wasn't good.

The deputies checked out the interstate and volunteers hit the all-night diners to see if he'd checked in there. No luck.

The cook at the home was crying, and she said Pop had been talking about going to see his buddy, Jasper, again, and did we know someone named Jasper?

Sure. Jasper Blankenship, up at the cabin in the mountains. When we heard this, the hunt actually took more form. Two guys started up at Jasper's place and worked down the road. Steve and Dud both went horseback and started from the edge of town.

Steve found him. Pop was sitting and shivering under a tree high up on a ridge. Steve used the cell phone to let us know he was all right, then built a fire and wrapped a blanket around Pop.

Pop wouldn't go back until Steve told him Jasper was down at the home, waiting for him. And Steve let him ride in the saddle, too. But before that happened, Steve ducked off behind a rock and made another phone call, to be sure Jasper would be there.

Two hours later, everyone had coffee and doughnuts back at the home, and they fixed the lock on the kitchen door. We have to be careful with those who have problems. We can't afford to lose beautiful people like Pop.

Brought to you by Slim's award-winning book (and stocking stuffer) "A Cowboy's Guide to Growing Up Right." Learn more at <http://www.nmsantos.com/Slim/Slim.html>.

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

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

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

LETTER POLICIES

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

The little light which she holds

There's much to appreciate about friendly competition. This said, an addendum is in order — all's fair not only in love and war, but in Christmas decorating as well. In the latter category, however, we should forgive otherwise normal people who, at Yuletide, cast judgment aside in favor of reckless abandon.

Mild-mannered folks who never keep score on eggs or tomatoes borrowed over backyard fences during other months of the year sometimes grow fangs in December. Peace on earth and goodwill toward neighbors take back seats to frenzied quests for the best in annual outdoor Christmas decorations.

Feverish decorators — some creative, some klutzy — strive greatly to create the most talked-about neighborhood decorations. Their hero is Clark Griswold in the movie Christmas Vacation.

Until this year, my wife has been in the major leagues of Christmas decorating. In years past, she has strung thousands of lights, standing atop 12-foot ladders on third floor landings to get the star placed "just so." And, more recently, when she felt one more string of lights was needed, another dozen strings were strung.

This year, though, she has opted for simplicity.

Impressed by a display spotted last year, she surprised the family with this decree: "All I want this year is a cross, a cradle, a baby Jesus doll, a spotlight and a yard sign."

It sounded like a piece-of-cake request, emphasizing the cross needed to appear "aged and

strong."

"You mean old and rugged?" I questioned. She nodded.

Suddenly, I realized she had described a "man" project. After all, she shouldn't have to shop for 2x6 lumber eight feet long, dig a hole two-feet deep, saw-and-hammer a crossbeam, string a heavy duty electrical cord, construct a cradle and implant a spotlight.

Maybe the most awkward part would be asking a guy at the hardware store if he happened to have any weathered redwood. (Choosing "weathered" instead of "used" seemed to make me more credible.)

This might be a daylong Saturday project to pass my wife's muster.

I said a little Christmas prayer that all would be calm, and all would be bright.

The fateful Saturday came, and behold, in just six hours, all was in place. No blood had been shed, no fingers sawed and no thumbs bludgeoned. The entire project was seamless.

My wife, long labeled a perfectionist by hubby and daughters, handed out "A-pluses." The towering cross was "center-bubbled" on the level test, the electrical cord properly obscured, the light beam perfectly adjusted and the little cradle properly placed, just as she had envisioned. Only a hand-lettered sign remained undone and she'd handle that.

It had been a good day. Truth to tell, I gave myself a mental back-pat, caught up in the glow of a project that turned out well. After all, if good judgment had not prevailed, it could have been catastrophic.

The good judgment was mine. Upon learning what Brenda wanted, I called son-in-law Kyle Penney in Tyler. He can fix or build most anything, mechanical or otherwise. I invited him

and his family for a weekend visit.

He agreed and my life grew simpler. When they arrived, I handed him the shopping list and a credit card. Then, I retreated to the den to watch multiple football games on TV, and to keep my long string of nap days intact.

My waking from the day's final nap coincided with Kyle's project sign-off.

Within hours, all three daughters and sons-in-law, as well as six grandchildren, gave "thumbs up" to the Christmas scene.

It is a sharp contrast to others in the neighborhood. They feature lights racing across rooftops and mechanical reindeer prancing across lawns. Inflatable figures must not be forgotten; no matter how carefully inflated, they invariably droop in various stages of deflation.

Meanwhile, Brenda completed lettering on the little sign.

The simple message is paraphrased from John 3:16: "The baby came for this." The sign is centered, full light in front of the cross.

I could have claimed a small role in the project if she had chosen something from Isaiah. She might have asked me to confirm the spelling. Spell check I can do.

May your joys of Christmas be merry and bright, immersed in the wonder of the Savior's birth. One final thought: If you choose to bow out of next year's ruthless competition, why not consider mounting a simple, lighted wire frame on your roof? Write the letters "Ditto" inside, with an arrow pointing to your neighbor's house.

Dr. Newbury is a speaker in the Metroplex. Inquiries/emails to: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Phone: 817-447-3872. Web site: www.speakerdoc.com.

YOUR VIEWS

School spending

TO THE EDITOR:

Wow! \$800,000 for astroturf and \$400,000 for rest rooms and a master plan to see what else it needs. Plus about 20 coaches and assistants. Let's cancel this and field a math team.

MARCELLOUS (BOOSIE) WEAVER
BIG SPRING

Fair profit?

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is in reply to the gentleman who wrote in last Sunday's Herald about profit margins on gas etc. I think any reasonable person realizes you have to make a fair profit to stay in business.

What is a fair profit?

Two days ago I was in Lubbock and saw numerous gas stations, including Wal-Mart, advertising gas for 2.88.9 per gallon. That's 33 cents a gallon less than stations in Big Spring, same company, same supplier. I believe the highest I saw was 2.91.9 per gallon.

I think Thomas Jenkins was right on. I think we can draw our own conclusions if we are being ripped off in our city.

Still we say shop Big Spring first.

CLEM JONES
BIG SPRING

Another option

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in response to the school board approving to update the Memorial Stadium football field our high school football players play on. They propose to install an artificial turf field at about \$800,000 and then update the restrooms, field house and other entities at the stadium.

I am not opposed to a nice stadium for the kids to play on, but I am opposed to rebuilding a stadium owned by Howard College. Howard College should be the ones doing the renovation to their own stadium as they own it and not the Big Spring school system. We are only leasing it from them and as such they are responsible

for the upkeep of the facility excluding extras like field turf.

At any given time they can close it down or not let us lease it anymore and we will be out all the money we spent on this stadium. If you want a nice football stadium to play on then build a new stadium owned by the school system which can not be taken away from you at any time. If you do not mind giving money away for something that can be taken at any time say nothing. If you want something that can not be taken away from you then let you're school board know you are opposed to this renovation of Memorial Stadium.

The school system had over 50 years to save money for a new stadium and should build one that is up to date. Sure it will cost more money to build, but all proceeds go to the school system and not someone else.

Like I said I would like a good stadium for our kids to play on, but not giving money away for something the school system does not own.

CHARLES DYKES
BIG SPRING

You will be missed

TO THE EDITOR:

Some people do a good job even though they have a hard job.

One of these people has been on the other end of the phone for the Big Spring Herald for the past 4 ½ years and she is leaving this week. She will be sorely missed.

Kris Soliz has been our customer service representative and has been that friendly voice on the phone when people call because something has gone wrong with their paper delivery. This is a difficult job because Kris never talks to anyone who is happy. A customer calls in to make a complaint and are normally not in a good mood about it, Kris has been very good about assuring them their problem will be handled and has built friendly relationships with several customers.

She then hangs up with the cus-

tomers and calls the carrier who is not happy about a complaint call and tells them they need to take care of the problem. As you can see this can be a very frustrating job to say the least and Kris has handled it with grace for a long time.

Kris I wanted to let you know how much I have enjoyed working with you and have appreciated all of your efforts. I wish you all the luck in the future and hope you are successful in all your endeavors. I know you have a dream of opening a restaurant and I hope that dream comes true for you.

I just wanted to let you know you will be missed.

ROBERT SMITH
CIRCULATION MANAGER
BIG SPRING HERALD

Gift of giving

TO THE EDITOR:

What I am about to tell you has changed my life forever and has really shown me the true gift of Christmas and that gift is Giving.

My aunt, Jeanie Knocke, devotes an enormous amount of her time to giving to families in need. I found out a couple weeks ago Jeanie buys Christmas gifts for families who are in need in our community and this has truly inspired me and hopefully it will inspire you too.

How does she do this?

Jeanie gets a list of families from local schools and by word of mouth. She uses her own resources as well as many donations to buy gifts for all these little boys and girls who aren't able to have Christmas that year. She spends her lunch hour, hours after work, her weekends and she also takes a week of vacation to get everything "wrapped" up the week before Christmas.

I was at Wal-Mart the other night and there she was, with a friend, shopping for clothes and

See **LETTERS**, Page 5A

Museum hosts rodeo queens LETTERS

Continued from Page 4A



HERALD photo/Amanda Moreno

West Texas Rodeo Queen Leeann Moore (left) spoke with Vicki Denton and Gail Berringer (right) during the Country Cuisine book signing at the Heritage Museum Thursday afternoon. The book, consisting of 200 recipes, will be available at the Heritage Museum as well as several locations in Colorado City and on Amazon.com.

toys. It takes her weeks to get everything in order, from buying gifts, getting all the wrappers to wrap and then the special day when Santa will deliver the presents himself to each and every boy and girl.

That is right ... Santa will go to each door and drop off gifts. She literally is busy day and night and she loves every single second of it.

I called Jeanie a couple weeks ago and asked if I could help and she couldn't have been more grateful. When I have talked to Jeanie about some of the boys and girls on the list, some of these stories have just brought her full of tears. Her heart is so big and so generous.

I can honestly tell you I felt more joy and happiness being able to bring Christmas to some of these families who are in need of help. For some reason I just could not get into the Christmas spirit this year and once I did this it has completely lifted me up.

I hope, just maybe, everything my aunt does will inspire some of you to do the same. This season is all about giving and that is exactly what she does. She gives her heart to all of these families and she does everything possible to make their wishes come true. She is our St. Nick, our angel ... she is my aunt, Jeanie Knocke.

I just want to show my appreciation to her and all of the volunteers who have made all of this possible. Jeanie, I just can't thank you enough for all you do and you are a very wonderful woman. You are a true miracle for all of us. We love you.

CARRIE JOHNSON
BIG SPRING

Festival of Lights depends on volunteers

HOPE hotline offering support



HERALD photo/Amanda Moreno

Festival of Lights began Dec. 15 and remain lit until Dec. 31. The park will be open for visitors to drive through and experience the lights each night from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. The Festival of Lights is made possible through the many volunteers who offer their support year after year. Lights will also be placed on top of Scenic Mountain this year as well as out at the airpark.

The Homeownership Preservation Foundation (HPF) is an independent national nonprofit dedicated to helping distressed homeowners navigate financial challenges and avoid mortgage foreclosure.

If you want to stop foreclosure and are in need of foreclosure help, the time to call 888-995-HOPE is now.

The Homeowner's HOPE hotline is a counseling service provided by HPF to work with you to find a solution to your problem.

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- Dec. 14 – Senior Appreciation Day, 11:30 a.m.
Movie, 1:00 p.m. "A Christmas Carol"
- Dec. 15 – Mall Walking, 8:00 a.m.
Just Peachy's Café "Coffee Club," 10:00 a.m.
Bunko, 5:00 p.m.
- Dec. 16 – Pot Luck & (Christmas Present Party)
11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Dec. 19 – Games, 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
- Dec. 20 – Mall Walking, 8:00 a.m.
Supper Club, "Cowboy's", 5:30 p.m.
- Dec. 21 – Senior Appreciation Day, 11:30 a.m.
Movie, 1:00 p.m. "It's A Wonderful Life"
- Dec. 22 – Mall Walking, 8:00 a.m.
Coffee @ Just Peachy's Cafe, 10:00 a.m.



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Texas prisoner paroled after 60 years

By **MICHAEL GRACZYK**
Associated Press
TENNESSEE COLONY, Texas (AP) — When Harvey Stewart first went to prison 60 years ago, gasoline was 20 cents a gallon, a postage stamp cost three pennies and Harry Truman was president.

Now, as perhaps one of the longest-serving inmates in US history, the convicted killer is looking forward to the perks of freedom when he is released on parole in the coming weeks or months.

An iPod or cell phone perhaps?

Not for this 83-year-old. Stewart simply wants a root beer and a good meal.

"Imagine that! Sixty years being down in this damn hole," Stewart recently told The Associated Press from the Beto Unit in East Texas, one of his many stops in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. "I wouldn't recommend it. Man's a damn fool to even stick his foot in here."

Stewart, awaiting his release to a halfway house or nursing home after being granted parole earlier this year, recalled his youthful days of robbing brothels in Southeast Texas for

quick \$3,000 pay days, of getting shot in the back while holding up a junk yard and murdering a man in what he insists was a self-defense killing.

But the six decades in prison haven't been nearly as eventful.

He counts among his highlights his brief escape in 1965 and a recurring headache from a prison van wreck a couple years ago. Besides those short-lived respites from monotony, Stewart has served his time isolated from the outside world. He doesn't recall receiving a single visitor in more than a decade. He's outlived most or all his immediate family.

His parole was approved in April, with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles considering his recent history of good behavior, his age and declining health.

"I'm too damn old to do any robbing," said Stewart, his blond hair now a balding gray brush cut. "I think I am anyway. My old ticker might kick out on me."

Stewart is the longest-serving inmate among the 155,000 prisoners in the Texas system, though it's unclear if he is the nation's longest-serving inmate now or

He counts among his highlights his brief escape in 1965 and a recurring headache from a prison van wreck a couple years ago. Besides those short-lived respites from monotony, Stewart has served his time isolated from the outside world. He doesn't recall receiving a single visitor in more than a decade. He's outlived most or all his immediate family.

ever. Prison officials and historians say they're unaware of any agency or organization that keeps track of all inmates' jail time.

Among other states with significant prison populations, convicted murderer James Moore, 78, has been locked up in New York since 1963. In California, 80-year-old Booker Hillery first went to prison in 1955 for rape and was returned in 1962 for a murder earlier that year while on parole. Norman Parker is Florida's longest-serving inmate, arriving in 1967.

Stewart was first sent to prison in spring 1951 after a junk yard heist in Houston got him a 10-year sentence. He was paroled after serving six years but was convicted in 1958 of murdering a man in Beaumont and received a life sentence. Seven years later he broke out of prison for several days, then wait-

ed another two decades before being paroled a second time to a halfway house and worked as a dishwasher.

He used his freedom in 1984 to eat a Big Mac for the first time, but by summer 1986 he was back behind bars, busted for a robbery plot.

State corrections officials say he won't be released until a parole plan is completed, and will receive proper supervision in either a halfway house or nursing home. Officials would not estimate how much longer that could take or what kind of restrictions he'd continue to have.

Even under halfway house restrictions or in a nursing home, corrections experts say he could be in for some challenges, noting that even short-time prisoners get indoctrinated to the rigid rules of prison.

"It really is cognitively and emotionally

taxing, even though it is simple decisions you and I do every day without thinking," said Gaylene Armstrong, research director of the Correctional Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University. "These folks are not used to making those decisions. ... If you think of just in the last five years what's changed for us: smart phones, not being pay phones, self-checkouts at grocery stores, ATMs, how to do things online. Even folks who have been off the streets for just a few years, that's all new to them."

Stewart, whose last car was a 1958 Ford, maintains he's unfazed by how the world has changed during his confinement.

"I've functioned in a lot of places," he said. "I know what's there and what ain't there."

Stewart was born in Corpus Christi, one of five children whose father worked in the South Texas oil fields. A search for Stewart's relatives was unsuccessful, with records showing most of them deceased.

Having outlived so many he knew, Stewart says it's been probably a decade since he had a visitor.

"Looks like nobody wants something to do with me," said Stewart, who never married.

His days are spent quietly and simply. Among his joys now is interaction with female corrections officers. He called their presence "the only thing that lightens the whole atmosphere."

Then there's the occasional "pitty-pat" in his head, the result of being inside a prison van that rolled over in a wreck. His knees hurt but he's still able to walk, although "I'm not real fast anymore."

Asked how he spends his days, he responds: "Well, I fart every once in a while."

His cellmate these days is "only 70-something. In fact, I think he's 60-something. There ain't nobody my age down here."

Asked what he hoped to do when he does get out, he gets defensive.

"You think I want to get involved in some sex and get drunk," he said.

Told that many inmates talk about feeling the grass on their bare feet and looking up at the sky without fences topped by razor wire, he said sarcastically: "Well, that's poetic."

Instead, he looks forward to "a good easy-going meal and a root beer. I said a ROOT beer," he emphasized.

And the things he'll miss about prison?

"You ever run into a fence post or light post or something?" he asked. "You miss it?"

Merry Christmas

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

Some of the seasonal giving spirit will be focused on strangers with real need, and it will feel wonderful to offer generosity to those we don't know. That's easy. What's more challenging is to be kind and compassionate to those closest to our hearts. The limits of love will be tested, as Venus and Saturn are in a tense angle for most of the week.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There never has been and there never is going to be another you. As the only one in the whole entire world, it's your responsibility to explore who you are and express yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You may lie low today to give your-

self time to heal. You're not broken or wounded, per se, but your body and soul still need the right circumstances to repair the normal wear and tear of life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The game of life is full of prizes, but none is as sweet as the feeling you get when you are playing well. You'll be giving some thought to your strategy. Does it allow you to fully enjoy yourself?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You have a terrific imagination, and you'll use it to dream up a long-range plan. As you project your mind into the future, every detail you think about will help you determine the plan.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're usually steering the ship, but sometimes you take a break and drift instead, just to see where the current will take you. Let go for a while today. It will be a most pleasant experience.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You know something that no one else knows. You won't be paid for this knowledge — not yet, anyway — but there's no doubt in your mind that you're richer for it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Someone has the wrong idea about you, and you will set it right over the next three days. Changing your role in a person's life is not easy, but taking on the challenge will prove worth your while.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). As much as you would like to ignore it, there's a persistent thought that gently pokes at you throughout the day. You can't raise your consciousness and be unconscious at the same time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Being different is risky. It takes a certain boldness to let others know you want something special for yourself and you're not afraid to ask for it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll unearth a person's motive for treating you a certain way. You'll determine what the payoff is. When you know this, you'll have the power to change the dynamic if you want to.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll weigh your options. Take your time comparing and contrasting. Really get to know what you like and why. The better you know what you value, the easier it will be to make yourself happy.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll put special care into making your immediate environment specific to you. The particular culture of you will be reflected in your body, the way you dress, what you carry, the words you use and how you get around.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 18). Someone thinks you're amazing, and you'll enjoy many good times with this person throughout the year. Professional changes could lead to a March move. It may take several attempts, but you'll finally reach a goal in April. Friends influence your health and well-being this summer. July features family additions. Pisces and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 50, 3, 22, 14 and 39.

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.

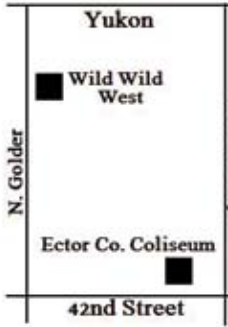
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News in brief

FBI arrests El Paso's former county judge

EL PASO (AP) — A former judge and three businessmen have been arrested in connection to the yearslong federal investigation into corruption in El Paso County, according to indictments unsealed Friday.

Former county judge Anthony Cobos is accused of receiving bribes and campaign contributions in exchange for his influence in refinancing \$40 million of the county's debt and replacing the county's financial advisor. Meanwhile Lorenzo Aguilar is accused of paying the bribes to Cobos. Both are charged with mail fraud, conspiracy to commit mail fraud and deprivation of honest services.

A separate 11-count indictment alleges that businessmen Ruben Garcia and Cirilo Lara Madrid, along with Garcia's LKG Enterprises Inc., offered bribes to get a lucrative county contract. Both are charged with theft of federal program funds, mail fraud and deprivation of honest services.

If convicted, all four men could face up to 20 years in prison.

The second indictment alleges that in 2005, Garcia and Lara Madrid approached a county judge, not Cobos, identified only as "DB" and offered her \$2,000 a month in exchange for her support. County judges in Texas are top administrative officials.

In October 2005, LKG secured a \$50,000-a-month contract with the county to supervise the performance of a federally funded program aimed at treating local children with mental illnesses. LKG was awarded the contract, even though the company it replaced offered to continue providing the service for half the price.

LKG charged the county for 11 months of services, until its contract was terminated in early 2007.

North Texas teen charged in juvenile center death

FORT WORTH (AP) — A North Texas teen has been charged in the strangulation death of a boy at the Granbury Juvenile Justice Center where both boys were housed, and an investigation into the death determined that the facility violated several state regulations.

The review, prompted by the October death of 14-year-old Jordan Adams, determined that both boys were kept in virtual isolation and weren't regularly checked on. The for-profit center, which is owned and operated by 4M Granbury Youth Services, was cited for noncompliance after the investigation ended this week, said Lisa Capers, deputy executive director of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

Adams died six days after being found unconscious in his cell with a sheet wrapped around his neck on Oct. 10. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office has said he died by asphyxiation

due to strangulation.

A 14-year-old boy who was in the adjacent cell has been charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide in Adams' death, Hood County District Attorney Rob Christian said this week. The suspect is from Parker County, though his name hasn't been released because of his age.

Adams' relatives said they were told he might have been lured into placing the sheet around his neck in a "choking game" that some youth play in an effort to mimic the feeling of drug-induced highs, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram (<http://bit.ly/vK9djC>) reported Friday.

The state investigation found that the center kept the two boys in virtual solitary confinement in their cells for all but one hour of physical activity that day, which violates state regulations. The report also indicated the facility failed to check on the boys every 15 minutes as required, forced them to eat their meals alone in their cells, and did not assign supervisors to the unit to allow them out of for activities.

Capers said solitary confinement of juveniles is "not common or appropriate" because they must have at least 10 hours of structured programming each day, mainly school.

The facility's administrator said changes have been made and the violations have been addressed.

Democrat drops out of race for Senate seat

AUSTIN (AP) — Retired Lt. Gen. Ric Sanchez, the sole major Democratic candidate in the race to replace Republican U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, said Friday he is dropping out of the Texas race because of "pressing personal challenges" and a lack of funds.

In an email to supporters Friday afternoon, Sanchez thanked those who had encouraged him to run but said he needed to put his family first.

"I am very grateful for the strong support and encouragement I have received from supporters across the country and the wonderful Texans I have met in every part of our great state," Sanchez said. "However, pressing personal challenges, coupled with the recent loss of our home due to fire and lagging fundraising numbers make a statewide election campaign impractical for me at this time."

While the Republican field to replace Hutchison is extremely crowded, Sanchez was the only major candidate from the Democratic party.

Hutchison announced earlier this year that she was retiring.

Many Democratic strategists hoped that Sanchez, who was born in the Rio Grande Valley, could marshal votes from the state's growing Hispanic population. But many liberals felt he was a flawed candidate because he was the commanding general in Iraq when the abuses against Iraqi detainees at

Abu Ghraib prison took place.

The official filing period for prospective candidates ends Monday. But because of ongoing litigation over political redistricting in Texas, the filing period will reopen after a federal court approves a final district map, likely in late January, and remain open until Feb. 1.

Suspect in Okla. slayings kills self in Houston

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — A man wanted by police for the slayings of his estranged wife and another man in Oklahoma killed himself Friday when confronted by federal agents in Houston.

Authorities told the Tulsa World they believe Terencio Turcios, 41, killed his wife, Victoria Turcios, 43, and David Grummert, 46, because he thought they were having an affair. Both were killed Wednesday, the same day Terencio Turcios was last seen in McAlester.

Police tracked him to Houston, where U.S. marshals found him at a relative's home. Tulsa police say he used the same gun to kill himself as was used in the two slayings.

Victoria Turcios was shot Wednesday afternoon in Tulsa and died at a hospital that evening. Police in Glenpool found Grummert dead in a residence at a mobile home park shortly after the first shooting.

Tulsa police said a relative drove from Houston to pick Turcios up in McAlester where his vehicle broke down. The McAlester News-Capital reported a newspaper carrier told police he gave a ride to a man meeting Turcios' description and dropped him off at a highway interchange where he was to get a ride.

Tipped by a family member, investigators checked the homes of Turcios' relatives in Houston until they found him. When U.S. marshals entered the home where Turcios was hiding, he pulled a gun and fatally shot himself, Tulsa police said.

Tulsa County authorities had charged Turcios with first-degree murder Thursday for his wife's death and he was suspected in Grummert's death.

Police offer gift cards to drivers

PROSPER (AP) — Some law-abiding motorists in one North Texas town have been getting a pleasant holiday surprise from police — gift cards in time for the holidays.

Prosper Assistant Police Chief Gary McHone said officers have been on the lookout this week for drivers found to be heeding traffic rules, especially in school zones.

McHone says officers who witnessed good drivers would approach them on foot and offer \$10 gift cards. He said police took care not to make the gesture seem like a traffic stop.

McHone said the \$600 spent on the program came from a community contribution fund.

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season filled with love and plenty of Christmas spirit. We feel so blessed to be a part of this caring community.

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THE BIG SPRING HERALD

News in brief

Defense Secretary Panetta becomes first U.S. defense chief to visit Libya

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta arrived in Tripoli Saturday, taking advantage of the ouster of Moammar Gadhafi in an eight-month civil war to become the first Pentagon chief to set foot on Libyan soil.

But Panetta has indicated that the U.S. will give more time to the Libyans to gain control of the militias that overthrew Gadhafi before determining how to help the fledgling government.

"The last thing you want to do is to try to impose something on a country that has just gone through what the Libyans have gone through," said Panetta on Friday before landing in Tripoli.

"They've earned the right to try to determine their future. They've earned the right to try to work their way through the issues that they're going to have to confront," he said.

Panetta's route into the city on Saturday took him past lush orange groves, carcasses of bombed buildings and the charred and graffiti-covered compound once occupied by Gadhafi. Flying from rooftops were the green, black and red flags, adorned with a star and a crescent, belonging to the new government. Amid the Arabic graffiti splashed across the walls of the compound was a short comment in English: "Thanx US/UK."

Payroll tax compromise set for vote in rare Saturday session

WASHINGTON (AP) — Racing for the exits after a year of bitter battling, senators are voting on compromise legislation to extend a Social Security payroll tax cut and jobless benefits for just two months, setting the table for more fighting in February.

Top Democratic and GOP leaders opted for just a short extension after failing to agree on spending reductions large enough to cover a full year renewal of the 2 percentage point tax cut for 160,000 workers and weekly jobless payments averaging about \$300 for millions of people who have been out of work for six months or more.

The legislation is a partial victory at best for President Barack Obama, who's being forced to accept Republican demands for a swift decision on the fate of a Canada-to-Texas oil pipeline that promises thousands of jobs.

Votes were slated for Saturday morning on the measure, along with a final tally to send a \$1 trillion-plus catchall spending measure setting the day-to-day budgets of 10 Cabinet agencies. The House cleared the spending bill Friday and will return early next week to vote on the payroll tax measure.

In a statement, White House communications director Dan Pfeiffer indicated Obama would sign the measure, saying it had met his test of "preventing a tax increase on 160 million hardworking Americans" and avoiding damage to the economy

recovery.

Egypt's military, protesters clash in Cairo for second consecutive day

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian soldiers clashed with hundreds of rock-throwing protesters in central Cairo for a second consecutive day on Saturday, hurling stones from rooftops and firing water from hoses in a crackdown that has left at least eight people dead.

The violence has brought to the fore the simmering tensions between security officers and activists demanding an end to military rule, and threatened to spark a new cycle of fighting after deadly clashes between youth revolutionaries and security forces in November that lasted for days and left more than 40 dead.

Early Saturday, hundreds of protesters hurled stones at security forces who have sealed off the streets around the country's parliament building with barbed wire and large concrete blocks. Soldiers on rooftops pelted the crowds below with stones, prompting many of the protesters to pick up helmets, satellite dishes or sheets of metal to try to protect themselves.

Stones, dirt and shattered glass covered the streets between the two sides, while flames came out of the windows of a two-story building set ablaze near parliament, sending thick plumes of black smoke into the sky.

Witnesses said soldiers wielding wooden sticks and dressed in riot gear chased protesters through the streets, forcing them to retreat to nearby Tahrir Square, which served as the epicenter of the uprising that toppled longtime leader Hosni Mubarak in February.

Tunisians remember town which sparked year of democracy revolts

SIDI BOUZID, Tunisia (AP) — It was in this hardscrabble town in Tunisia's arid interior that exactly one year ago the death knell sounded for the decades-old system of dictatorships across the Arab world.

With a desperate act of self-immolation, a 26-year-old fruit-seller in Sidi Bouzid unwittingly unleashed a year of turmoil that toppled at least three autocrats in a region once thought to be immune to democracy.

Tunisia's new leaders are part of a festival for the revolution in Sidi Bouzid starting Saturday, to honor the vendor and the protesters whose indignance snowballed into a nationwide and then region-wide phenomenon.

The changes in the Arab world over the past 12 months cannot be overstated. A region synonymous with stagnant authoritarian republics and monarchies is suddenly rife with change — for better or worse.

The biggest winners so far appear to be the long-repressed Islamist parties, which didn't always lead the revolts but in the subsequent elections in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco were the best organized and least tainted by the old regimes.

Pope heads into busy Christmas season tired, weak

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Benedict XVI seems worn out.

People who have spent time with him recently say they found him weaker than they'd ever seen him, seemingly too tired to engage with what they were saying. He no longer meets individually with visiting bishops. A few weeks ago he started using a moving platform to spare him the long walk down St. Peter's Basilica.

Benedict turns 85 in the new year, so a slowdown is only natural. Expected. And given his age and continued rigorous work schedule, it's remarkable he does as much as he does and is in such good health overall: Just this past week he confirmed he would travel to Mexico and Cuba next spring.

But a decline has been noted as Benedict prepares for next weekend's grueling Christmas celebrations, which kick off two weeks of intense public appearances. And that raises questions about the future of the papacy given that Benedict himself has said popes should resign if they can't do the job.

Vatican spokesman the Rev. Federico Lombardi has said no medical condition prompted the decision to use the moving platform in St. Peter's, and that it's merely designed to spare the pontiff the fatigue of the 100-meter (-yard) walk to and from the main altar.

Independents more than GOP conservatives may be critical to Huntsman's presidential bid

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Republican Jon Huntsman's presidential fortunes may have little to do with his party's conservatives.

If there is a path to success for the former Utah governor in the nomination race, it is likely lined with independents, a key voting bloc in New Hampshire and other early voting states that allow unaffiliated voters to help select the next Republican nominee.

The former Utah governor has bet big on New Hampshire, where he's devoted virtually all his time and energy in recent months. And polling suggests he may be on the rise, thanks largely to tens of thousands of independents likely to vote in New Hampshire's Jan. 10 Republican primary.

"I'm no longer the margin of error candidate, so we've got to start describing ourselves in different terms," Huntsman told The Associated Press last week after a Suffolk University survey put him in third place with 13 percent among likely New Hampshire GOP primary voters. "Maybe the surging candidate is more appropriate."

While the extent of any momentum is difficult to ascertain from one survey, pollsters note that Huntsman fares better than most of his rivals with independents, who represent about 40 percent of the New Hampshire electorate. Each state has its own rules, but unaffiliated voters are welcome to participate in New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation presidential primary and the subsequent South Carolina contest.

U.S. activist home for holidays after Peruvian court OKs travel

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Paroled U.S. activist Lori Berenson was headed for New York early Saturday after a Peruvian court ruled she and her toddler son could travel there for the holidays, airport security officials said.

Peru's ATV television showed video of Berenson and her 2 1/2-year-old son, Salvador at the airport in front of a ticket counter late Friday and said she was flying to New York.

Reached by cell phone, Berenson refused to comment.

But airport security officials told reporters she was flying directly to New York on an overnight flight.

A three-judge appeals court on Wednesday overturned a lower court judge's ruling denying Berenson permission to travel, said Guillermo Gonzalez, spokesman for Peru's judicial system.

Prosecution to present its case against young soldier accused of leaking nation's secrets

FORT MEADE, Md. (AP) — The prosecution is laying out its charges against the young soldier blamed for the largest leak of classified material in American history in a case that may hinge on whether the U.S. government overzealously stamped "secret" on material posing no national security risk.

The long-awaited military court case against Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, the accused source for the WikiLeaks website's trove of U.S. military and diplomatic secrets, is moving ahead. The defense requested that the presiding officer, Lt. Col. Paul Almanza, step aside because of alleged bias. Almanza, an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel and Justice Department prosecutor, rejected the request and refused to suspend the hearing pending an appeal.

Manning, a one-time intelligence analyst stationed in Baghdad, is accused of leaking hundreds of thousands of sensitive items including Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, State Department cables and a classified military video of a 2007 American heli-

copter attack in Iraq that killed 11 men, including a Reuters news photographer and his driver.

The Obama administration says the released information has threatened valuable military and diplomatic sources and strained America's relations with other governments.

Friday was Manning's first appearance in public after 19 months in detention. He appeared slight but serious in his Army camouflage fatigues and dark-rimmed glasses, taking notes during the proceedings and answering straightforwardly when called upon by Almanza.

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HERALD photo/Tony Claxton

LET'S SEE YOUR WAR FACE — Big Spring junior Tyler Graves fights through two defenders for a shot in Friday night's non-district game at Steer Gym.

Steers fight 5A Mustangs to the final quarter

By **ROBERT GRIFFIN**

Sports Editor

Division 5A's Coronado Mustangs may have beaten the Steers Friday night in Big Spring, but it took them the entire four quarters to get it done. The first two quarters went into the fourth quarter with Coronado ahead 37-36, before the visiting Mustangs widened the gap for a 63-53 win.

The Steers, led by juniors Tyler Graves and Chazzell Robinson with 12 points each, grabbed an 11-10 lead after the first quarter in a game which went back and forth for the first three quarters.

After both teams managed 14 points apiece in the second frame, the Steers took a 25-24 lead into the locker rooms, leaving the Mustangs wondering what they had stepped off into when they came to town.

Even after outscoring Big Spring 13-11 in the third period to gain a one-point advantage

heading into the final frame, they still knew they were in the middle of a great fight.

The final score may have shown a 10-point difference, but anyone who saw this one knew it was more evenly matched than the final tally might have suggested.

Big Spring got some great shots from Ty'ral Menefield and Marc Segundo, as the two each lit up the board for 10 points in the non-district clash. Richard Lewis added four more points to the stat sheet for the Steers, while Morgan Ausbie added three and Tavaris Walker contributed two.

The loss drops the Steers down to a 6-10 record in the non-district portion of their schedule. The Steers will take a break to enjoy the holidays before returning to the courts Dec. 28-29, when they will travel to Bridgeport for a little tournament action.

In JV action, Coronado topped Big Spring by a 44-37 score.

Lady Steers rout Westerners in non-district game

By **ROBERT GRIFFIN**

Sports Editor

The Lady Steers, now 14-3, added another impressive win to their near-flawless resume Friday night, defeating 5A's Lubbock High to the tune 74-25. The Westerners had only one player score over five points in the match, as Big Spring's defense was as potent as their offense, an offense which had two players score double digits and two more just missing the mark with nine points.

Bridgette Tuitt had a game-high 15 points for the Lady Steers and LaShaunte Anderson piled on 10 more in the rout. Meanwhile, Lubbock High never scored more than eight points in a quarter.

Big Spring had the game clearly in hand after a 19-3 first quarter and then added to the one-sided affair by outscoring the Westerners 25-8 in the sec-

ond frame. The 44-11 halftime score, impressive as it might have been, was just the beginning, as the girls added an additional 15 points in each of the remaining periods, holding Lubbock to six and eight, respectively.

Yaneria Tuitt and Mackenzie Stone each lit up the board for nine points each in the win, while Logan Yarbar was good for seven. Adding icing to the point-scoring outburst were Diamond Mayes, Ashten Galan, Dyrshae Vanderbilt and Ambra Hill. The four girls were each good for six points apiece for the Lady Steers.

Big Spring got three-pointers from Anderson (3), Stone and Hill (2 each) and Bridgette Tuitt.

After a holiday break, the Lady Steers will get back to the courts Wednesday, Dec. 29, when they compete in the Caprock Tournament in Lubbock.



HERALD photo/Tony Claxton

ICING ON THE CAKE — Lady Steer Yaneria Tuitt makes a tough shot in the lane looking easy in Friday night's win over the Lubbock High Westerners.

Lady Buffs down Coahoma

By **ROBERT GRIFFIN**

Sports Editor

COAHOMA — Forsan's Lady Buffs got off to a strong start in Coahoma Friday night, but before they could escape with the 41-34 win, the Bulldogettes fought back and made quite a game out of the affair.

When it was over, Forsan's Coach Robert Hillger had nothing but praise for the Bulldogettes.

"I have to give credit to Coach (Mitzi) Bell at Coahoma," he said. "She had them ready to play and they kept coming at us, giving it everything they had."

Forsan took off from the opening tip to grab an 11-4 lead after the first quarter. The second quarter showed Coahoma getting stronger, however, as they were only outscored by the Lady Buffs 13-9, sending

the two teams into the locker rooms with Forsan leading 24-13.

"We're proud of our kids. They really worked their tails off and we made a few more shots than normal," Coach Hillger said. "We had a tough third quarter, but I am still very proud of the way our defense played."

The tough quarter Coach Hillger mentioned was the only quarter where Coahoma outscored Forsan. The Bulldogettes came out of the locker room with a purpose in the third.

"This is our house," They seemed to be saying as they got the better of the Lady Buffs by a 15-8 margin in the quarter, going into the final frame down by five points to make it a much closer game.

They then held Forsan to nine points in the fourth, but

were only able to find six of their own in the game where both teams played with as much heart as they did talent.

Forsan improves to 9-6 on the season, with a 1-2 district record, while Coahoma is still looking for its first district win.

Forsan was lead by its guard play. Brittney Hergert had 13 points and six rebounds, while Jahnia Willard had eight points, four rebounds and one assist.

Raegan Haggard added six points, five rebounds and four assists for the Lady Buffs.

Ali Knight contributed an additional five points, but led everyone on the court with a game-high nine rebounds. Cheyenne Galloway had four points and three boards, while Kayla Tilley and Maria Ortiz added three and two points, respectively.

Bulldogs fall to Forsan

By **ROBERT GRIFFIN**

Sports Editor

COAHOMA — The Forsan Buffaloes got off to a District 3-2A-opening bang Friday night, traveling to Coahoma and defeating the Bulldogs 53-35.

Tanner Ruiz shot well in front of his home crowd, scoring 12 points, but Kade Fannin's 15 points and Dillon Bagnall's 14 were the difference in this one.

The Buffaloes got off to a quick start, taking a 10-8 lead after one quarter. It was to be as close as Coahoma could get in this one, however, as Forsan really got on track starting in the second period. The Buffaloes outscored the Bulldogs 16-9 in the second to take a 26-17 halftime lead.

The second half was a little closer, but the Buffaloes still put up higher numbers than the Bulldogs, outscoring them 11-7 and 16-11 in the third and final frames, respectively.

Marco Molina, Ruyan Reid and Jacob Echevarria each added six points for Coahoma in the match-up, while Aaraon Acevedo added three and Alex Hill was good for two.

For Forsan, Matthew Mims was good for seven points, Aric Hernandez hit for six, Trevor Burchett added five and Bryson Phillips padded the stat sheet with four more.

Area basketball scores:

GIRLS

No. 21 Garden City - 50
No. 24 Sterling City - 24

Sterling City 7 8 5 4 - 24
Garden City 14 13 16 7 - 50

Garden City (13-3, 2-0) - Lexie Schaefer 15, Hannah Halfmann 11, Kamie Halfmann 9, Taylor Hughes 9, Cassie Hirt 4, Holly Halfmann 2. Next game: Garden City vs. Wink at Grady Tournament, 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28.

Klondike - 57
Grady - 43

Grady 4 15 10 14 - 43
Klondike 13 9 18 17 - 57

Grady (7-9, 1-1) - Kristen Blocker 3, Ariel Arnold 3, Sarah Clay 11, Lupita Jimenez 2, Charmynee Arnold 12, M.J. Price 6, Laura Ramirez 6. Next game: Sands at Grady, 3:30 p.m. Tuesday.

BOYS

Garden City - 85
Westbrook - 21

Westbrook 2 7 7 5 - 21
Garden City 30 23 20 12 - 85

Garden City (8-6) - Corbin Davis 18, Michael Lopez 17, Sam Miller 12, Blayne Batla 8, Juan Bustos 8, Peyton Schaefer 4, Bryson Batla 3, Dillon Koenning 2, Reggie Halfman 2.

Next game: Garden City vs. Loraine at Grady Tournament, 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28

Grady - 72
Klondike - 52

Grady 19 14 23 16 - 72
Klondike 10 11 17 14 - 52

Grady (12-1, 2-0) - Brett Glaze 6, Zeke Clay 9, Branson Richards 29, Michael Jimenez 5, Taylor Polson 13, E.J. Rodriguez 2, Ivan San Juan 8.

Next game: Sands at Grady, 5 p.m. Tuesday

Barry Bonds gets house arrest

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Eight years of being investigated for steroid allegations ended for baseball home run king Barry Bonds on Friday with a 30-day sentence to be served at home. No more - and maybe less.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston immediately delayed imposing the sentence while Bonds appeals his obstruction of justice conviction. The former star was found guilty in April not of using steroids, but of misleading grand jurors.

Even without prison time, the case has left its mark on the seven-time National League MVP. His 762 career home runs, and 73 homers in 2001, may forever be seen as tainted records, and his ticket to baseball's Hall of Fame is in doubt.

Bonds declined to speak in court. Well-wishers hugged the 47-year-old in the hallway courtroom after the hearing was over, and a smattering of fans cheered him as he left the courthouse. It was a marked departure from his initial court appearance four years ago, when guards had to clear a path for Bonds to get through dozens of onlookers

to his SUV.

"Whatever he did or didn't do, we all lie," said Esther Picazo, a fan outside the courthouse. "We all make mistakes. But I don't think he should've gotten any kind of punishment at all."

Bonds was sentenced to two years of probation, 250 hours of community service, a \$4,000 fine and 30 days of home confinement. It will take time to determine whether he serves any of it; his appellate specialist, Dennis Riordan, estimated it would take nearly a year and a half for the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rule.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Parrella called the sentence a "slap on the wrist" and the fine "almost laughable" for a superstar athlete who made more than \$192 million for playing baseball.

Parrella had sought 15 months in prison and argued that home confinement wasn't punishment enough "for a man with a 15,000-square-foot (1,390-sq. meter) house with all the advantages." Bonds

See BONDS, Page 11A

Hurd: I never sold drugs to players

CHICAGO (AP) - The attorney for Sam Hurd said Friday that his client had never sold drugs to other NFL players, hoping to put any rumors to rest as the wide receiver without a team prepares to fight federal drug charges that could put him in jail for 40 years.

Less than an hour after Hurd was cut by the Chicago Bears, defense attorney Brett Greenfield told reporters that his client planned to fight the charges and wanted one thing made clear.

"Sam has asked me to address one point, with respect to the rumors that Sam has been supplying drugs to other members of the NFL, out of respect to the NFL, out of respect to teammates and out of respect to other players, he 100 percent denies that al-

legation," Greenfield said. "It is patently and totally false. It just didn't happen."

League spokesman Brian McCarthy said the NFL was closely monitoring the situation. Asked about a report that authorities have a list of NFL players with ties to the drug case, McCarthy said: "We are not aware of such a list."

U.S. Magistrate Young Kim ordered Hurd to surrender his passport and any firearms. Hurd is expected to be tried in Texas, where the criminal complaint was filed this week by the U.S. attorney.

Hurd, who appeared in court in an orange jumpsuit with his feet shackled, waived his right to a preliminary hearing, meaning the next step is for prosecu-

tors to take their case before a grand jury. Several members of Hurd's family, including his wife, mother and brother, attended the hearing but he didn't appear to look at them, even as he was led out of the room. He was later released after posting \$100,000 bond.

Hurd was arrested Wednesday night outside a Chicago steakhouse, according to the complaint. He allegedly told an undercover agent he was interested in buying five to 10 kilograms of cocaine and 1,000 pounds of marijuana per week to distribute in the Chicago area.

Hurd told the agent a "co-conspirator is in charge of doing the majority of the deals" while he

See HURD, Page 11A

Kobe Bryant's wife files for a divorce

ORANGE (AP) - Kobe Bryant's wife, who stood by her husband when he was charged with sexual assault in 2003, filed for divorce on Friday from the Los Angeles Lakers star, citing irreconcilable differences after a decade of marriage.

Vanessa Bryant signed the papers on Dec. 1. Kobe Bryant signed his response on Dec. 7 and it was filed Friday, according to the documents.

"The Bryants have resolved all issues incident to their divorce privately with the assistance of counsel and a judgment dissolving their marital status will be entered in 2012," according to a statement from a representative for the couple.

In the filing, Vanessa Bryant asked for joint legal and physical custody of the couple's two daughters, Natalia, 8, and Gianna, 5. Kobe Bryant asked for the same in his response. Vanessa Bryant also requested spousal support.

The Bryants "ask that in the interest of our young children and in light of the upcoming holiday season the public respect our privacy during this difficult time," according to the statement.

Bryant met his future wife in 1999 on a music video shoot when Vanessa Laine was 18 years old.

Six months later, she and the then-21-year-old Bryant became engaged. They married on April 18, 2001.

The Bryants have been through trying times together.

Vanessa Bryant appeared at a news conference with her husband when he was charged with sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman who worked at the exclusive Lodge & Spa at Cordillera near Vail, Colo., in 2003.

She held his hand and stroked it tenderly as the NBA star admitted he was guilty of adultery - but nothing else.

sudoku

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

Sudoku grid with numbers 7, 3, 5, 4, 8, 6, 2, 1, 9, 5, 1, 9, 3, 8, 6, 4, 2, 6, 5, 1, 7, 2, 2, 6, 9, 7

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker
That Old Black Magic

West dealer. East-West vulnerable. NORTH: K 5 4, Q 10 5, 7 3 2, A Q 5 4

WEST: Q 8 7, J 6 2, A K 9 4, K 10 3
EAST: A K 8 7 4 3, J 10 8 5, J 9 6

SOUTH: A J 10 9 6 3 2, 9, Q 6, 8 7 2

The bidding: West 1 NT, North Pass, East 3 hearts, South 3 spades. Dble. Opening lead - king of diamonds.

This well-played hand was sent by a reader. South got to four spades doubled after West had opened one notrump, showing 12 to 14 high-card points in the partnership methods.

West led the king of diamonds and shifted to the deuce of hearts. Declarer followed low from dummy, East winning with the king. East returned the jack of diamonds to West's ace, and a diamond continuation was ruffed by South.

Declarer had lost the first three

tricks and had to make the rest. This he proceeded to do, even though it seemed he would have to lose a club trick and go down one.

South made his first good play when he led the jack of trumps at trick five and took a first-round finesse. He did not play the ace first because, for his plan to work, it was necessary to be in the closed hand following the third round of trumps. After drawing West's trumps with the king and ace, declarer cashed one more trump to produce this position:

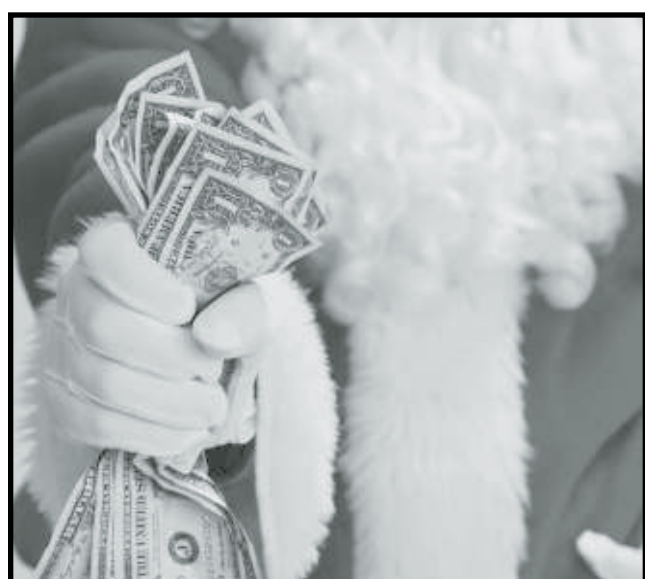
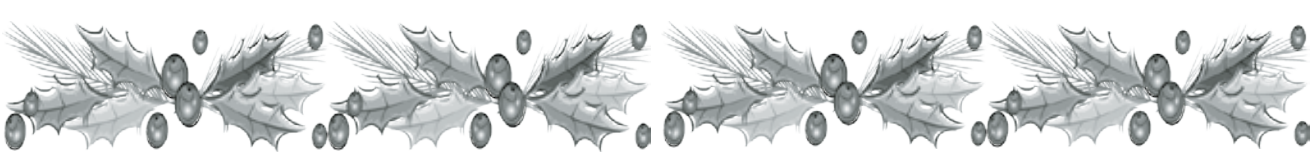
North: Q 10, A Q 5
West: J 6, K 10 3
East: A 8, J 9 6

South next played the six of trumps, and West - who could not spare a heart because it would allow declarer to establish a heart trick in dummy - discarded a club. Dummy also discarded a club, placing East in a position where he, too, could not spare a heart and had to discard a club.

South then finessed the queen of clubs, cashed the ace and scored the last two tricks with the three of trumps and eight of clubs to bring in his doubled game.

Tomorrow: Famous Hand. ©2011 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Short On Cash?



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HURD

From Page 10A

focused on "higher-end deals," the complaint said. He agreed to pay \$25,000 for each kilogram of cocaine and \$450 a pound for the marijuana, according to the charges, and then said he could pay for a kilo of cocaine — about 2.2 pounds — after "he gets out of practice." He walked out of the restaurant with the package and was arrested.

Hurd faces up to 40 years in prison and a \$2 million fine if convicted of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine, or half a kilogram.

Teammates said they were stunned by the allegations and general manager Jerry Angelo said he was, too, as he announced the team was cutting Hurd.

"There were no facts, there were no flags, that anybody could present tangibly to say we should have known otherwise, and I want to make that perfectly clear to the public, to our fans," Angelo said Friday. "We do our homework. We do our due diligence. We did everything you could possibly do given the information that we can allocate."

The 26-year-old Hurd was in his first year with the Bears and sixth year overall in the NFL after five years with the Cowboys. Angelo said the Bears performed an extensive background check on Hurd, a San Antonio native who played at Northern Illinois, before signing him in July to a three-year deal reportedly worth up to \$5.15 million, including a \$1.35 million signing bonus and base pay this season of \$685,000.

"We go back, we ask questions," Angelo said. "Is there something we could have done, something we should have done, in the process? Sometimes, there are glitches, but in this case, there are none. I could sit here and tell you with total transparency that we did everything we know to do in terms of our research, and there was nothing that we found that would create a flag or an alert or a real concern in Sam Hurd's case."

Asked how certain he was that other players on the Bears or around the league were not involved, Angelo said, "I can't talk about that."

"I'm certainly not going on any witch hunts about players," he added. "The one thing that we've done when there's been a wrong, we've acted. We don't justify wrongs. We've acted. We have a track record of doing that. Unfortunately, a situation arose that caught us off guard, but not to the point where we aren't going to do the

right thing."

The Bears announced their contract agreement with Hurd on July 29, one day after federal authorities say he had agreed to a "consensual interview" with Homeland Security investigators over \$88,000 in cash that had been seized in a car he owned in the Dallas area. The money was inside a canvas bag that authorities said was covered in a plant-like material that tested positive for "properties of marijuana."

Hurd said the money was his and that he had given the car to his acquaintance, a car shop employee, for maintenance and detail work, the complaint said.

"From my understanding, he wasn't the one that was pulled over," Angelo said. "His vehicle was pulled over. He was not the driver. That was never made public. So he was never charged with anything. There was never any record to our knowledge. And it was, from my understanding, a citation, but other than that, there was no other information that was presented to us."

Angelo would not say if the Bears would try to recoup some of the signing bonus. He also gave a terse answer when asked whether the case might affect his own future with the Bears, telling a reporter to "whistle Dixie." Angelo is under contract through 2013.

As for Hurd, receiver Earl Bennett described him as a "guy with high character who just loves to play the game of football, loves to have fun." Bennett also said he doesn't think other players are involved.

"I wouldn't think so," he said. "A lot of guys in this locker room are very high-character guys."

Coach Lovie Smith echoed that sentiment.

"We have a great group of guys," he said. "But sometimes when you're dealing with this many, it's hard to have all the players be a certain way. But you can't let that scar what else we're getting done here. It's always about the team. Every once in a while a guy will go outside what's best for the football team and there are consequences that you deal with. That's how life goes. There are life lessons that are being learned here by our football team."

Greenfield said he wasn't sure whether Hurd would try to get picked up by another team as he fights the drug case.

"Sam's a football player and he wants to play," he said. "Hopefully he'll be playing in the near future with another team."

If not, the attorney said, there are other options.

"Sam's a college grad, Sam's a scholar, Sam's a very, very smart individual," Greenfield said.

BONDS

From Page 10A

lives in a six-bedroom, 10-bath house with a gym and swimming pool.

"The defendant basically lived a double life for decades before this," Parrella said. He ripped Bonds not only over performance-enhancing drugs but over his personal life: "He had mistresses throughout his marriages."

Parrella said Bonds made lots of money due in part to his use of performance enhancers and that he has been "unrepentant" and "unapologetic" about it.

Illston said none of that had any bearing on Bonds' sentencing.

She said she agreed with a probation department report that called Bonds' conviction an "aberration" in his life. She said she received dozens of letters in support of Bonds, some discussing how he has given money and time "for decades" to charitable causes.

Bonds is the last — and highest-profile — defendant in the government's investigation of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, or BALCO, a steroids distribution ring. The ex-sluggo has long denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs.

Illston said she was compelled to give Bonds a sentence similar to the two she meted out to other figures con-

victed after trial of lying to the grand jury and federal investigators about their connection to steroids.

The case against Bonds after he testified before the grand jury Dec. 3, 2003. Prosecutors revised his original 2007 indictment several times and spent a year unsuccessfully appealing a key evidentiary ruling before jurors deadlocked in April on three of the four remaining charges related to his grand jury testimony.

On the final charge, the trial jury convicted Bonds of purposely answering questions about steroids with rambling non sequiturs in an attempt to mislead the grand jury.

"I think he probably got off a little easy," said Jessica Wolfram, one of the jurors who convicted Bonds of obstruction. "He was just so clearly guilty, so I actually am happy he got sentenced to something."

Wolfram said she researched the case after the trial and viewed evidence not presented then. After that, she felt even more comfortable that Bonds was guilty.

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The Big Spring High School chapter of the National Honor Society recently presented a check for \$450 to Tommy Sullivan, chief of the Howard County Volunteer Fire Department. The NHS raised the money by placing decorated boots around the school for students to fill with donations. Shown with Sullivan are Chapter President Lacy McMurtrey, center, and other NHS members.

Courtesy photo



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HERALD photo/Amanda Moreno

West Side Community Day Care Center children visited Canterbury North and provided a short Christmas program for the residents. They sang traditional Christmas songs such as "Silent Night" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

sudoku

ANSWERS

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

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10 YEARS

Shauna Jenkins
Tammy Pointon
Theresa Froman
Jess Colegrove
Gloria Phillips
Martha Moore
Derek Chapman
Maria Bilano

Lisa Parks
Becky Oliver
Stephanie Nelson
Azure Wilbert
Mandy Bingham
Shannon Galan
Margie Vaughn
Dr. Erich Bylerly

5 YEARS

Pilar Balisnomo
Jo Anne Arrellano
Barney Velasquez
Jayci Brock
Raul Perez
Lauren Hart
Talva Castillo
Nora Contreras
Joe Cavazos Jr.

Sheri Nichols
Rose Gang
Sandy Simpson
Jill McLeod
Kim Anderson
Vicenta Nieves
Amber Steen
Sandra Hernandez
Ryan Williams

Dr. Melencio Juan
Frances Muniz
Ferrol Voight
Freddy Olivarez
Rebecca Cavazos

20 YEARS

Connie Arguello
Jim Crenshaw
Viola Rodriguez
Kasi Walker

AWARD WINNER



**SCENIC MOUNTAIN
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FAMILY FEATURES

A festive party calls for a lively variety of delectable edibles. These recipes give you some sweet and savory choices that will help spread the holiday cheer.

Scrumptious bites start with simple, flavorful ingredients — golden Calimyrna and dark purple Mission figs from California and Jarlsberg cheese. They also make great house gifts, wrapped in a colorful box or presented on a pretty serving dish.

Sweet, mouthwatering figs are not only packed with great taste, they're full of fiber and essential nutrients, making them as good for you as they are good to eat.

The versatile taste and texture of Jarlsberg cheese is ideal for these appetizers. Jarlsberg's mild, nutty-sweet flavor and buttery creaminess makes it a perfect partner to figs and, along with its excellent melting properties, adaptable to many sweet or savory dishes.

You can combine both ingredients in one easy sure-to-please appetizer: Make a slit in a fig and stuff with a piece of Jarlsberg. Wrap with partially-cooked bacon (it should be a bit limp) and heat at 400°F just until bacon is crispy and cheese begins to melt.

Get more sweet and savory holiday recipes at www.ValleyFig.com and www.JarlsbergUSA.com.

Sweet and Savory Holiday Bites



Fig Cranberry Bars with Caramel Drizzle

Cut into 32 bars

- 1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 2 tablespoons plus 1/2 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 cups old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups chopped Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 3/4 cup chopped, toasted walnuts
- 1 cup caramel ice cream topping

In small bowl combine cranberries and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar; set aside.

In medium bowl stir together 2 cups flour, oats, brown sugar, remaining granulated sugar and baking soda. Stir in butter. Reserve 1 cup crumb mixture.

Press remaining crumb mixture in bottom of 13 x 9-inch baking pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 15 minutes.

Stir figs and walnuts into cranberries and sprinkle evenly over crust. Stir together caramel topping and remaining 1/3 cup flour; drizzle over fruits and nuts. Sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture.

Bake for additional 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool in pan on wire rack.

Chocolate-Dipped Stuffed Figs

Makes 15 figs

- 15 Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup brandy (or 1/2 cup water mixed with 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract)
- 15 to 30 small pieces candied ginger, toasted nuts or chocolate
- 5 to 6 ounces semisweet, bittersweet or premium white chocolate, chopped

With sharp knife, cut small slit in bottom of each fig.

In small saucepan, heat sugar and water over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Stir in brandy and figs. Bring to a boil over high heat then reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Drain figs, cool and dry thoroughly.

Stuff one or two pieces of ginger, nuts and/or chocolate into each fig.

Place chopped chocolate in 1-cup glass measuring cup or small microwave-safe bowl. Heat on medium/50 percent power until almost melted, stirring after every 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Remove from oven and stir until melted.

Hold stem of each fig and dip in melted chocolate. Place figs, stems up, on wax paper-lined tray until chocolate sets. Decorate with white chocolate or nuts, as desired.

Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

Savory Jarlsberg Thumbprints with Fig-Pepper Jelly

Makes 40 cookies

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 cups (12 ounces) shredded Jarlsberg cheese
- 1 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped, toasted pecans or unblanched almonds
- 3/4 cup finely chopped, stemmed Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 1/2 cup hot pepper jelly (red or green)

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place butter in large bowl. Beat with electric mixer on medium speed until creamy. Beat in egg yolks. On low speed, gradually beat in flour. Stir in Jarlsberg, Parmesan and nuts.

Divide dough into 4 equal portions. Wrap 3 in wax paper or plastic wrap and chill. On work surface, form remaining portion of dough into 10 (1 1/2-inch) balls.

Place balls, 1 1/2 inches apart, on ungreased baking sheet. With thumb or back of wooden spoon, make 1/2-inch indentation in center of each cookie. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until light golden brown. If needed, press back of teaspoon into cookies to re-form indentations. Remove cookies to wire rack to cool.

Repeat shaping and baking with remaining dough.

To serve, in small bowl, stir together figs and jelly. Fill each cookie with about 1 teaspoon fig-pepper jelly.

Make ahead note: Dough can be prepared 1 to 2 days ahead. Form dough into 1 1/2-inch cylinder, wrap airtight and chill or freeze for longer storage. Baked cookies can be stored unfilled, in airtight container for 2 days or frozen. To re-crisp, place on baking sheet in 350°F oven for 2 to 4 minutes. Cool. Fill with fig-pepper jelly as directed.



Jarlsberg, Ham and Herb Swirls

Makes about 26 swirls

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard (optional)
- 3 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion
- 1 tablespoon dried basil or thyme leaves
- 1 cup (4 ounces) finely shredded Jarlsberg cheese
- 4 ounces thinly sliced Black Forest or other lean ham

Unfold pastry onto lightly floured board; cut in half, lengthwise, to form two pieces. Brush beaten egg on entire surface of each piece.

Leaving a 1/2-inch border around each pastry, top with the following, dividing evenly: Dijon mustard, green onion, basil and Jarlsberg. Top each with sliced ham, cutting to fit in a single layer within border.

Starting at the long ends, carefully roll up each pastry. Gently pinch ends to seal pastry rolls. Wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill rolls, seam side down, for 2 hours or up to 2 days.

To serve, preheat oven to 400°F. Unwrap rolls and cut each roll crosswise into 1/2-inch slices. Place, 1 inch apart, on 2 greased baking sheets.

Bake one sheet at a time for 14 to 16 minutes or until golden. Place on wire rack to cool slightly. Serve warm.

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Wedding



Mrs. Jeremy Braxton

Krista Chesworth and Jeremy Braxton were united in marriage Saturday, July 9, 2011. The wedding took place at College Baptist Church. The Rev. Ken McMeans performed the double ring ceremony.

Krista is the daughter of Michael and Anita Chesworth of Big Spring and the granddaughter of the late Shirley Bell and the late Jim and Sylvia Chesworth.

Jeremy is the son of Lillie Shoup of Big Spring and James and Ann Braxton of Houston. He is the grandson of Charlie Martin and Bobbie Martin and the late James and Joan Braxton.

Leina Braxton, sister of the groom, greeted the guests at the registry table.

The table was covered with a light gray tablecloth and decorated with a bud vase holding two white car-

nations tied with a shiny teal blue bow and a picture of the couple.

Susie Wayland created hand-tied pew bows which decorated the church aisle. They were gathered clusters of teal blue lilies with small white and teal blue flowers. These flowers were tied with teal blue and silver ribbons and were nested in a background of silver sparkle tulle which also draped beneath the cluster of flowers to the floor.

An arch and two tables decorated the front of the church. The sweetheart arch was covered with greenery, white tulle and mini lights. Centering on each side of the arch were two large arrangements of silk flowers created by Susie Wayland. Each arrangement held white roses, white and teal blue baby's breath and large teal blue lilies. In the middle at the top of the arch was a huge bow tied with white tulle, silver dazzle drape and shiny teal blue ribbon. On each side of the arch were tables covered with white tablecloths and teal blue table runners. On the left side, the table was set with white roses which held the glass, oil filled unity candle. On the right, the table held a beautiful fresh flower arrangement of white hydrangeas, white carnations tipped with teal blue, large white lilies, white roses and white alstroemerias.

The elegant music was provided by Mrs. Elesha McMeans playing the organ, starting with the entrance music for the bridal party, "How Beautiful" by Twilia Paris. The bride walked down the aisle to the "Bridal Chorus" by Richard Wagner. After the bride was given away and stood with the groom, Gloria Garibay

exquisitely sang the song "Feels Like Home" by Chantal Kreviazuk to the couple. Later, also played by Mrs. Elesha McMeans was "Amazing Grace" by Isaac Watts for the unity candle ceremony and the "Wedding March" by Felix Mendelssohn as the bride and groom exited the ceremony.

Krista was escorted down the aisle by her father and given away by her parents. She wore a breath taking white chiffon, side draped, bodice style, A-line dress with a small brooch of flowers with silver décor and a lace up corset back with a sweep train. To complete the attire, Krista wore a silver beaded tiara headband with an enchanting white veil trimmed with white satin ribbon. She carried a phenomenal bouquet with two large white hydrangeas in the center surrounded with large teal blue dahlias and white roses. There were bright, shiny teal blue and silver ribbons along with strands of white beaded garland laced in and around the bouquet. The stems were wrapped with teal blue satin ribbon. This bouquet was also fashioned by Susie Wayland.

Jeremy wore an astonishing black tuxedo, shiny white vest and tie with a black long sleeve dress shirt. To finish his ensemble, he wore a small boutonniere made of white mini carnations.

Nicole Woodard of Big Spring, sister of the bride, was matron of honor. The bridesmaids were Meagan McDonald of Highland Village, cousin of the bride; Kayla Hogan of Odessa, friend of the bride; Lauren Barber and Jordan Chesworth of Big Spring, cousins of the bride. Emajin Braxton of Big Spring, niece of the

groom, served as flower girl. The matron of honor and bridesmaids wore a stylish, oasis teal blue, spaghetti strap, long chiffon dress with a sparkling, beaded bust at the empire. They carried beautiful bouquets of small white roses tied with silver and teal blue ribbon. These bouquets were also put together by Susie Wayland. The flower girl wore a white knee length, swiss dotted, chiffon dress with a black ribbon and bow at the waist. She wore silver sandals and carried a silk basket decorated with white lace, filled with teal and silver rose petals.

Jacob Braxton of Killeen, brother of the groom, served as best man. The groomsmen were Jason Partlow, Tyler Phillips and David Partlow, all of Big Spring, friends of the groom and Brian Chesworth of Big Spring, brother of the bride. The best man and groomsmen wore black dress slacks with oasis teal blue long sleeve dress shirts. Their ties were stripes of oasis teal blue, silver and black. Susie Wayland made small boutonnières of white Stephanotis flowers for all of the groomsmen.

The ushers were Brian Chesworth, brother of the bride, Jacob Braxton, brother of the groom and Matthew McDonald, cousin of the bride.

Following the ceremony there was a reception hosted by the bride's parents at Kokopelli's. There was a barbecue brisket dinner and dance with music provided by Mobile DJ of Big Spring. Les Montgomery and his family helped by cooking everything for the dinner, making the drinks and serving.

The bride's mother made the astonishing, square,

four-tiered wedding cake. The four tiers of the cake were two of vanilla, one of lemon and one of chocolate. They were all covered and decorated in sweet, white butter cream icing. Edible pearl beads were inset in stars of white icing on two tiers while teal blue flowers cascaded down each corner of the cake. Entwined silver hearts were centered on the front of the cake while a white dancing bride and groom cake topper adorned the top of the cake. Leina Braxton, sister of the groom and Sondra McDonald, aunt of the bride, served the cake.

The groom's cake was a single-layer chocolate cake decorated as a black and white tuxedo and set on a table decorated with a black cover and glistening silver and black star confetti. The tables and chairs were covered in white linens.

The centerpieces were cylinder glass vases filled with clear glass beads that held light teal blue and white stem items of beads and dangle rings. Teal LED lights were placed under the glass beads. There were also shallow glass bowls filled with water and clear glass beads to hold the floating heart shaped candles. There was small teal blue, heart shaped confetti sprinkled around the centerpieces. Vickie Bell, aunt of the bride, contributed a large amount of help setting up the reception area.

Krista is a 2010 graduate of the University of Texas at the Permian Basin and is employed with Clayton Williams Energy, Inc.

Jeremy served in the U.S. Army for three years and is going to school to obtain an associate of science degree in wind energy and is working for Re-Bath.

The newlyweds will reside in Midland.

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► **Menus**

Sands ISD
Monday: Breakfast: cinnamon roll, juice, milk.
Lunch: toasted ham and cheese sandwich, lettuce and tomatoes, baked chips, cookie, milk.
Tuesday: Breakfast: biscuit and gravy, juice, milk. Lunch: crispy tacos, lettuce, tomatoes, rice, pinto beans, fancy jell-o, milk.
Wednesday: Breakfast: cereal, yogurt, juice, milk. Lunch: peanut butter and jelly sandwich, cheese sticks, fruit cup, carrots/ranch, cookie, milk.
Thursday: *Holiday break*
Friday: *Holiday Break*
Note: There will be no menu since there is no school next week for Sands ISD due to the Christmas holiday.

Forsan ISD
Note: Forsan ISD is off for the Christmas holiday. School will not resume until Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2012.

Big Spring ISD
Note: Big Spring ISD is off for the Christmas holiday. School will not resume until after the New Year.

Senior Center
Monday: tamales with chili, salsa, tossed salad, wheat crackers, cinnamon applesauce, milk.
Tuesday: beef stew, cornbread, cottage cheese and pears, angel food cake, milk.
Wednesday: stuffed bell peppers, potatoes, okra and tomatoes, rolls, salad, brownie, milk.
Thursday: ham, butter beans, seasoned greens, cornbread, tropical fruit, milk.
Friday: *Closed for the Holiday!*

Coahoma BPA students fill shoe boxes
Students filled 25 boxes for Operation Christmas Child



COURTESY PHOTO
Members of the Coahoma High School chapter of the Business Professionals of America, from left front row, Brandie Phillips, Jessica Alvarado, Bailey LaRue, Wendy Andersen and Heather Hildebrand. Back row from left, Cole Sneed, McKenzie Moore, Dillon Quinn, Rikki Gilbert and Kief Black. The group met and packed 25 shoe boxes with gifts for Operation Christmas Child.

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COLORING CONTEST RULES
1. Contest open to children ages 2-12
2. Limit one contest submission per person
3. Contest entries may be completed using markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
4. Adults may assist in completing entry form information, but not in coloring pictures.
5. All entries must be received by the Big Spring Herald by 5 pm on Monday, Dec. 19, 2011
6. Winners will be notified by phone on Wednesday, December 21 2011
7. Decision of judges is final.
8. Employees of the Big Spring Herald and contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
9. All submissions become property of the Big Spring Herald and may be published accordingly.

SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER 2011 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR



Dee Franco, R.T.(R) (CT)(ARRT), C.N.M.T. (NMTCB) - 2011 Employee of the Year



Kaye Womack, RN, Director of Women's Services - 2011 Clinical Director of the Year



Gene Mills, Director of Information Technology - 2011 Non-Clinical Director of the Year

Energy Watch



Bhupen Agrawal is branch manager and a managing director — investments for the Wachovia Securities Midland office.

Bill Franks, AAMS, is a senior registered client associate and the senior associate to the branch manager.



Remember the big fat “zero” jobs reports back in August? The Pouting Pundits of Pessimism reported it as the end of the world. The U.S. was supposedly teetering on the brink of another recession, or maybe depression. Democrats wanted more government spending “stimulus.” Republicans said President Obama was the equivalent of a “zero.” With all this negative sentiment, the Dow fell 250 points that day.

But something happened on the way to the bank. One month later, that big fat zero was revised up to a +57,000, the next month it was revised up again to +104,000. All that recession talk in early September was highly misleading.

Private payrolls are up 157,000 per month in the past year and that's happening even though the “labor-intensive” construction industry is still in the doldrums.

Unemployment is now 8.6 percent, way down from 9.8 percent last November. Many are saying that the lower unemployment rate was caused by a 315,000 drop in the labor force (people looking for work). These pessimists say, “Everyone is discouraged, so falling unemployment rates are actually a bad thing.” But this is a Chicken Little view of the world.

In the past four months, civilian employment (calculated by canvassing households), has jumped by 1.28 million — an average of 321,000 new jobs each month. During the same four months, the labor force has expanded by an average of 164,000 new entrants per month. In other words, the labor market is getting better, on all fronts, not worse. We may see unemployment tick up next month, but this would be a correction for an exaggerated one month drop.

Meanwhile, reports on consumer spending and manufacturing production keep signaling growth. Auto sales — big-ticket items people shy away from when they anticipate recession — hit 13.6 million in November, the best pace since early 2008 (except for “cash for clunkers,” when the government was cutting checks of \$4,000 each to buy a vehicle). Industrial production is up 4.5 percent from a year ago.

Even the housing market is starting the long path back to normalcy. So far this year, multi-family builders have started 45 percent more homes than they did in the same time frame in 2010. And permits to build single-family homes are up 5 percent from a year ago.

And yet the stock market is more undervalued today than it was at the very bottom of the panic in March 2009.

We use a capitalized profits model to value stocks, dividing corporate profits by the 10-year Treasury yield. We compare the current level of this index to that from each quarter for the past 60 years to estimate an average fair-value. Not only are 10-year yields low (2.1 percent), but corporate profits are at a record high. As a result, the model says fair value for the Dow is currently 45,000.

But this result is largely due to artificially low interest rates. If we use a more realistic discount rate of 5 percent for the Treasury, we get a fair value of 19,500 on the Dow and 1,980 for the S&P 500.

As we've said before, there are many moving parts to this model. Interest rates could go higher than 5 percent, profits could fall or both could happen. Profits, for example, are now 13 percent of GDP, the highest in measured history (back to 1947) except for one quarter in 1950.

So what does our model say if profits revert to the historical mean of about 9.5 percent of GDP? Even in that scenario, and assuming a 5 percent yield on the 10-year Treasury, fair value is 14,200 for the Dow and 1450 for the S&P 500.

Back at the peak of the stock market in 2000, an ounce of gold could get an investor fewer than 4 shares of Intel (INTC). Today it is trading for about 70 shares. Meanwhile, Intel yields around 3.4 percent and gold yields zilch. Stocks are dirt cheap, relative to bonds and relative to gold.

Of course, it would be great to know the exact moment that all the bad news from Europe finally at long last blows over. But no one knows. Investors have a simple choice. Do they want to own stocks when they are dirt cheap, or will they wait and pay more when the fear disappears?

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. This article was written by Brian S. Wesbury, chief economist for First Trust Advisors L.P., on Dec. 5 and provided courtesy of Bhupen Agrawal, managing director - branch manager of Wells Fargo Advisors' Midland office. The report was prepared by First Trust Advisors L.P., and reflects the current opinion of the authors. It is based upon sources and data believed to be accurate and reliable. Opinions and forward-looking statements expressed are subject to change without notice.



HERALD photo/Amanda Moreno

Bealls, located in the Big Spring Mall, is donating \$1 from each bear purchase to Toys for Tots until Christmas. The bears have been in stock since November. Estee Lauder Counter Manager Michelle Barton shows off the bears available for purchase at \$6.98 each.

Beary Christmas, from your Bealls

By **AMANDA MORENO**

Staff Writer

What better way to help support Toys for Tots than purchasing a toy?

Bealls is taking part in a company wide program to offer support to the Toys for Tots program.

Each year, Bealls offers a holiday bear monogrammed with the year. This year, the purchases from those bears will go toward helping children have a better Christmas.

Bealls Big Spring Store Man-

ager Cody Sneed said that \$1 from each bear purchase will be donated to Toys for Tots until Christmas. The company has set a goal of \$150,000 to be donated to the program.

“Our goal is to be one of the best American small town retailers and getting involved in the community helps us do that,” Sneed said.

In addition to donations to Toys for Tots, Bealls is taking part in the Salvation Army Angel Tree program this year as well as serving as a dropoff location for the

Salvation Army and BSPA Coat Drive.

“We are trying to get more involved in the community,” Sneed said. “These are good programs to get on board with.”

To offer your support, stop in at Bealls, located in the Big Spring Mall on east FM 700, to purchase one of the holiday bears.

Contact Staff Writer Amanda Moreno at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at life@bigspringherald.com

Hangar 25 Air Museum operating under new hours

By **AMANDA MORENO**

Staff Writer

Hangar 25 Air Museum will be embracing the new year, but before that it will be embracing new hours.

Due to a recent lack of visits to the museum a decision was made by the board to change the hours. The new hours will be Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. From now until the end of February, however, the museum will be closed Saturdays.

“I have noticed in the time I've been here rarely do visitors show up before 10 a.m.,” Genevieve Stockburger, museum administrator, said. “The extra time will

allow me to work on exhibits during the week and do other things to maintain collections.”

The goal of the facility, as with any museum, is to serve the public through responsible stewardship of history. Stockburger said with the new hours, they will be able to better maintain the museum and the collections, which in turn will in turn better serve the public.

The new hours will be permanent, according to Stockburger, with the exception of the Saturday closure. At the end of February the museum will open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

“There have hardly been any visitors lately and the board decided it was best to conserve elec-

tricity,” Stockburger said.

Even though the museum will be operating under new hours, people can still call and make an appointment for a tour.

“I don't mind making time in my day to let someone come out if they want to,” Stockburger said.

As always, volunteers are needed to help work at the museum, and memberships are accepted.

To find out more information about the museum, call 264-1999. The museum is located at 1911 Apron Drive.

Contact Staff Writer Amanda Moreno at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at life@bigspringherald.com



Courtesy photo

Jesse and Virginia Bravo, of 1104 Johnson, were the recipients of the Keep Big Spring Beautiful Doing Your Part Award for the month of December. Pictured are Jesse and Virginia Bravo and Mayor Tommy Duncan.



Courtesy photo

Alon USA employees volunteered many hours this month, helping the Community Relations office and the Volunteer Services Council at Big Spring State Hospital prepare for the holidays. Christmas co-chairman Shelley Parker, along with Alon employees Anna Walker and Dianna Osburn are shown putting throws into Christmas bags along with a Christmas card and money from Alon. Each patient at the state hospital will receive several presents on Christmas morning, purchased by the Volunteer Services Council and raised through the Council's numerous fund-raisers, donations and sales from The Chalet Resale Shop.

Public Records

Howard County Justice of the Peace Outstanding IBC Warrants:

Gregory Aguilar Jr., 1508 Sunset Ave., Big Spring
Irene Lopez Alaniz, 774 E. Highway 80, Abilene
Brian Layton Allison, 1100 College Circle, Ranger
Demetrio Alva, 11520 Arrow Rock, El Paso
Terica Alvarado, 1100 E. 61st St., Odessa
Anthony G. Anderson, 3401 Cammella Dr., Temple
Daniel Antrim, 120 N. 22nd Pl., Lamesa
Nancy Ramirez Banuelos, 1515 A Sycamore, Big Spring
Christine Avalos Bara, of 1405 N. Sixth, Lamesa
Amy Barber, 2602 Ent, Big Spring
Samantha Ann Barrera, 606 Lamar, Sweetwater
Daniel B. Barron, 507 N. Ave. F, Lamesa
Tim Beck, 709 W. Seventh St., Big Spring
Amy Benavides, 3001 N. Midland Dr., Big Spring
Crystal Biles, 15885 S. Quartz, Odessa
Vern Black, 329 W. Tennessee, Floydada
Jeremy Bolton, 506 N. Ave. L, Lamesa
Edward Bourland, 229 Edgewood Dr., San Angelo
Alexis A. Bowie, 2811 Lawton, Amarillo
Dave Bracken, 2720 42nd St., Lubbock
Johnny William Brown, 507 E. Sixth, Big Spring
Wanda Heron Brown, 538 Westover Rd. Apt. 113, Big Spring
Melinda Burns, 2218 Carlton Way, San Angelo
Cristal Cabello, 1314 65th Drive Apt. C, Lubbock
Melissa Camargo, 2100 Ave. N, Tahoka
Latonya Campbell, 7549 Ash-

croft Circle, Fort Worth
Antonia Castillo, 206 Fuller St., Hereford
Donald Cervantes, 1211 Lloyd, Big Spring
Weldon Montague Cheatham, 4502 Denison, Snyder
Jared Kendero Coby, 901 S. High Street # 802, Longview
Vanessa Conatser, 3218 Fordham, Big Spring
Wesley Wayne Crow, 2400 Robb Lane, Big Spring
Stephen Cruz, 1501 Hilltop Rd., Big Spring
Ramona Davila, 2143 Texas Ave, San Antonio
Julie E. Davis, 5202 Bangor Ave. Apt. K301, Lubbock
Clarissa Dean, 2516 Gunter, Big Spring
Brandee A. Eberhardt, 197 Briarwood Lane, Big Spring
Constance A. Elledge, 1709 Scotland Ave., Azle
Kristi L. Elliot, 603 E. 12th St., Big Spring
Alfredo Flores Jr., PO Box 272, Laredo
Irene Paredez Flores, 1000 E. 20th St., Big Spring
Kenneth L. Freeman, 1401 San Andres, Odessa
Danny Frias, 207 W. 17th St., Georgetown
Hilda Fuentes, 502 S. Seventh, Lamesa
Carlos Garcia, 1211 S. Third St., Brownfield
James Randal Gardner, P.O. Box 1490, Lyons, Colo.
Joe Nick Garfias Jr., of 1309 Runnels, Big Spring
Claudet Garza, 3106 E. Elm No. 10, Laredo
Lareph Garza Jr., 17811 Vail No. 18, Dallas
Misty Goldston, 2429 20th St., Lubbock
Benito Oscar Gonzales, 101 S. Reynolds, Coahoma
James E. Gonzalez, 604 Neff St., Sweetwater
Jeffrey Grams, 224 Lelon Lane,

Springtown
Nora Gutierrez, 606 N. Eighth Street, Lamesa
Edna J. Hale, 510 Milton Ave., Brownwood
Sharon Marquis Hanson, 1201 E. Co. Rd. 34, Big Spring
Clifford Arvin Hart Jr., 3234 Drexel, Big Spring
Dana Havink, 600 Star Linda Ct., Arlington
Chris Henry, 3520 28th St., Lubbock
Isaul Hernandez, 523 W. Noble, Falfurrias
Veronica Cervantes Hernandez, 1005 N. 17th St., Lamesa
Gerald Hodges, 4312 Crane, Houston
Allen Hoey, 1401 N. Highway 87 No. 1502, Big Spring
Herman Hokes, 1303 Sycamore, Big Spring
Danny Holt, of 125 Farney Rd., Lorena
Bradley Ryan Horton, of Linda Lane, Big Spring
Shameka Houston, 1905 Wasson No. 49, Big Spring
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Paige Morgan Kenas, 1003-2 Lake County Rd. 175, Colorado City
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Jenny Marie Hamilton Lyon, 4201 W. Highway 80 Apt. 6, Big

Spring
Joshua David Mackenstein, 414 Hickory/3417 N. Midland Drive, Midland
Christopher Max Martinez, 2870 S. Highway, Snyder
Jarrod Martinez, 61 E. Eighth St., San Angelo
Sandy Martinez, P.O. Box 43, Stanton
Thomas M. McKellen, 2010 Sierra, Kenah
Ebaline Mendoza, P.O. Box 291, Mertzon
Daniel Mercado Jr., 5611 Lancaster, Houston
Chad K. Merrill, 3300 Manor Rd. Apt. 174, Austin
Alicia Morales, 606 Holbert, Big Spring
Anna Marie Moreno, 4656 St. Frances Ave., Dallas
Jose Munoz III, 1425 E. Sixth St. Apt. 7, Big Spring
Michael Todd McClinton, 1003 S. Midkiff, Midland
Ricky L. Nava, 707 Willa, Big Spring
William Leslie Neal, 2100 Alabama, Big Spring
Pernell Earl Parker, 400 N.E. 12th St., Big Spring
Benson Nelson Payne, 1117 Toby Lane, San Angelo
Katherine Hardin Perez, 4908 Parkway, Big Spring
Joshua Plaia, 1401 E. 18th, Big Spring
Lisa M. Portillo, 1200 Stanford Ave, Big Spring
Richard Wayne Rains, 4501 Parkway, Big Spring
Patricia Ramos, 538 Westover Road #226, Big Spring
Anna D. Rich, PO Box 1321, Denver City
Jerrall Ray Richardson, 1481 Highway 81, Bowie
Alfredo Riojas Jr., 255, S. 11th St., Lubbock
Roberta Garza Rodriguez, 1103 Stanford, Big Spring
Robert Rosamond, 801 Lancaster, Big Spring

Thomas Ross, 1206 Lela St., Jasper
Thomas Castillo Ruiz, 1306 W. Tennessee, Midland
Rudy Andrew Salazar, PO Box 1275, Stanton
Nancy Carolina Sauseda, 1707 N. 11th St., Lamesa
Monica Serbine, 304 E. 20th, Big Spring
Harl Bradford Shaffer, 5603 Gail Hwy., Big Spring
Curtis W. Shelton, 3714 Millbrook Road, Big Spring
Brian Paul Siverson, 589c Stoddard, Odessa
Donna Smith, P.O. Box 716, Coahoma
Lisa D. Smith, 2010 Sierra Dr., League City
Andrew Sommers, 3110 W. Kansas Ave., Midland
Janie Spurgeon, 1212 Wadley, Midland
Shawn Spurgeon, 106 N. Adams, Denver City
Mickey Jermain Starnes, 402 Holly Oak Dr., Tyler
Misty D. Sternadel, 457 Seventh St., Scotland TX
Andrew Bernard Taylor, 5651 Flamingo, Houston
Tonya D. Conner Taylor, 1111 Moseley Circle, Hobb, N.M.
Ashley Lauren Teagarden, 6002 103rd St., Big Spring
Molly E. Turner, 1905 Wasson Rd., Big Spring
Paula Valdez, 2220 S. First, Lamesa
Jimmy Vasquez, 4000 W. Illinois No. 16, Midland
Tyler Voss, Fannin Co. Rd. 4925, Leonard
Michael Wagner, P.O. Box 428, Denver City
Irshaad A. Walee, 1306 S. Detroit, Lamesa
Marie Wells, 2507 Rebecca, Big Spring
Candida Lynn Whitehead, 1405 Runnels, Big Spring
Tina Diane Whitlow, 1407.5 Settles, Big Spring

Denise L. Williams, 1715 Hwy. 350, Big Spring
Calvin Williams, 1313 Mulberry, Big Spring
Mandy Shae Wilson, 210 10th St., Sterling City
Brandi Woodard, 642 Westview Dr., Abilene
Jerry Lee Wrightsil, 2816 Ridge Rd., Fort Worth
Lorenzo Ferrera Yanez, 211 Channing St., Big Spring
Dennis Anthony Zaragoza, 4534 Sinclair, Big Spring

District Court Filings:

Edward D. Cole Jr. vs. Kendra Kay Cole, divorce.
American Express Centurion Bank vs. P. Burcham, accounts, notes and contracts.
First National Bank of Omaha vs. Katherine Cline, accounts, notes and contracts.
Tania M. Golding vs. Christopher W. Golding, divorce.
Green Tree Servicing LLC vs. William L. Wallace and Sharon Wallace, accounts, notes and contracts.
Aaron Hensley vs. Lisa Hensley, divorce.
In Re Nathan A. Nix, family.
In Re Orin C. Rivera, family.
Lilia I Sandate vs. Ivan Miguel Sandate, divorce.

Marriage Licenses:

Anthony Byron DeLeon, 22, and Kristina Felicidad Healy, 21, both of Big Spring.
Roy H. Ramirez, 54, and Virginia J. Diaz, 53, both of Midland.
Richard J. Leitgeh, 22, and Stacey R. Enriquez, 19, both of Big Spring.
Stephen Michael Shugrue, 55, of Big Spring, and Grace Marie Shugrue, 55, of Florida.

Drought takes cow numbers down by 600K

BETSY BLANEY

Associated Press
LUBBOCK — The worst drought in Texas' history has led to the largest-ever one-year decline in the leading cattle-state's cow herd, raising the likelihood of increased beef prices as the number of animals decline and demand remains strong.
Since Jan. 1, the number of cows in Texas has dropped by about 600,000, a 12 percent decline from the roughly 5 million cows the state had at the beginning of the year, said David Anderson, who monitors beef markets for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. That's likely the largest drop in the number of cows any state has ever seen, though Texas had a larger percentage decline from 1934 to 1935, when ranchers were reeling from the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, Anderson said.
Anderson said many cows were moved "somewhere there's grass," but lots of others were slaughtered. He said that in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana and Arkan-

sas, about 200,000 more cattle were slaughtered this year, a 20 percent increase over last year.
That extra supply could help meet increased demand from China and other countries, but the loss of cows likely will mean fewer cattle in future years.
"Consumers are going to pay more because we're going to have less beef," Anderson said. "Fewer cows, calves, less beef production and increasing exports."
The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that beef prices will increase up to 5.5 in 2012, in part because the number of cattle has declined. That follows a 9 percent increase in beef prices in the past year.
Oklahoma, the nation's second-largest cattle producer, also saw about a 12 percent drop in cows, Oklahoma State University agriculture economist Derrell Peel said.
Anderson said beef production nationally will be down 4 percent next year.
In Texas, the problem is primarily due to the worst single-year

drought in the state's history. From January through November the state got just 46 percent of its normal rainfall of about 26 inches.
The drought was the result of a La Nina weather pattern, which brings drier than normal conditions to the southwestern states. Forecasters have said La Nina is back, meaning another dry year for Texas, Oklahoma and other nearby states.
The lack of rain coupled with blistering summer heat caused pastures to wither, leaving rancher with the choice of buying feed for the cattle or selling them.
Betsy Ross, a 75-year-old rancher from the small central Texas community of Granger, said she sold all but 80 of the 225 grass-fed animals she had in January. With feed costs up 40 percent and her pasture parched, Ross said she didn't have any other option.
"It's not a profitable year, heavens no," she said. "If you can't keep them on grass when they're grass fed you're not going to make any

money."
About 200 miles north in Sulphur Springs, Texas, part-time rancher Dwyatt Bell said producers in his part of the state sold off up to half their herds. Bell said high prices for cattle have helped offset increases expenses, but many ranchers still are struggling to stay afloat.
"It's been a rough year," he said.
Across Texas, the drought has caused an

estimated \$5.2 billion in losses to farmers and livestock producers, and that figure is expected to rise.
Nationally, the number of cows has dropped by an estimated 617,000 this year, a 2 percent decline from the 30.9 million animals on Jan. 1. That number would be larger, but states in northern plains such as North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, increased their cow herd.

Anderson said it's unclear whether high beef prices would hurt U.S. sales or limit exports. The U.S. is the world's third largest consumer of beef per capita at 85.5 pounds per year. Uruguay is first at 137 pounds per capita.
"Exports have been the strongest part of beef demand all year and they're expected to remain so but higher prices should constrain their growth," he said.

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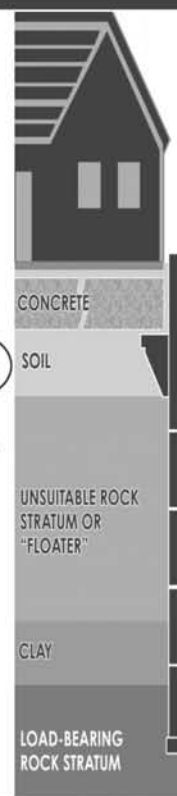
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Lee Lewis Construction, Inc. will receive proposals for Big Spring High School Phase 2. Proposals are due by 3:00pm, January 5, 2011.

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Newsday Crossword SATURDAY STUMPER by Lester Ruff Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com ACROSS 1 Being risked 8 Thunderstorm phenomena 15 Saint who named a city 16 Uproar 17 Halter alternative 18 Hair-raising stuff 19 Lapse 20 Leave alone 22 Robert Turner III 23 Barrel of laughs 25 Stockholm money 26 Beer progenitor 27 Pair of sixes 29 Pull at 30 Camp nickname 31 Money first issued in '48 33 Couldn't stand 35 Mapa lines 37 Ultimate cause 38 Subject of a Degas café painting 42 Thriving 46 Shindigs 47 E-File destination 49 Hombro 50 High-level Fed 51 Wolf catcher of classical music 53 Title bestowed on du Maurier 54 Life of the party, perhaps 55 Duplex 57 Make it all up 58 Came to 60 Unmistakable

Dear Molly: Is love conditional?

Molly,
I want to know if you think that love is conditional. My bf thinks that all love is conditional and nothing lasts forever. I believe love is unconditional. Can I be with someone who doesn't believe?
Signed Unconditional Love



MOLLY MASON

Dear Unconditional,
I think you are both right. As much as we all want to think love is not conditional, it is and should be. In my opinion conditions are another way of describing boundaries or deal breakers. Boundaries are healthy, they keep us safe and give us a standard by which to live. These boundaries are probably what your boyfriend is talking about. And he's right; if we break a boundary we can risk losing love, so then our relationship becomes conditional. Knowing what the boundaries are upfront is important and can actually help to make your relationship last. Everyone has different deal breakers or boundaries so I suggest talking about them. It's not a threat; it's just the things that are important enough for you both to walk away.

It's important to believe love can last and happiness can be achieved. Believing is in doing, and love is an action verb. But blind love can be risky and therefore some people just decide it's not worth the fall therefore losing hope. It's all fear based. You can allay the fear by knowing what the boundaries are. Let's face it even loving parents have to set boundaries with their children. We would like to say we love them unconditionally but when they start to abuse us by crossing boundaries there can be a time where someone has to leave. It doesn't mean you don't love them, it means there are ways to behave within a loving relationship.

If two people love each other and have made a commitment (except those things which can make us unsafe), then you have healthy conditional love, right? Boundaries do make a relationship conditional, but they also help to make it last forever by minimizing the fear. It's then that the trust comes with the faith in each other to do the right thing.

As for being with someone who doesn't believe that love can last; if you establish the conditions and each promise not to violate them, ask him if he thinks he can believe. I hope he believes in you both enough to know you're capable of not violating the boundaries. I understand where he's coming from, with a 60% divorce rate and many relationships taking the fall well before any real work is done, it can be a challenge to have faith. But it is possible with good communication, a few agreed on conditions combined with trust.

~Molly
Readers, how do you find hope when there is little? Will talking about deal breakers make it better? Is being with someone who says they don't believe a risk? Comment at <http://www.austin.com/letters/>

business professional with years of experience in finance, business development and management. Her lifelong passion and learning has been focused on the understanding and complexity of relationships as well as effective communication. Originally from Texas she has lived in many cities including St Louis and Portland finally settling in Boston where she raised her family and received her education in Business Administration. She is now living in Texas with her family and is excited to be home. Catch her daily relationship and advice column "Molly Mason-Let's Talk Love" on www.austin.com and "Straight

Talk" in print. You can contact Molly at mollymasonst@gmail.com.

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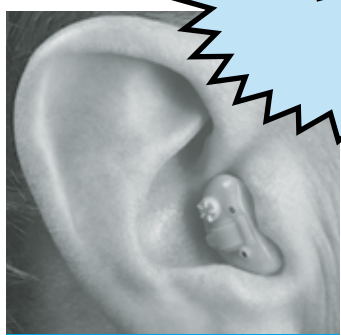
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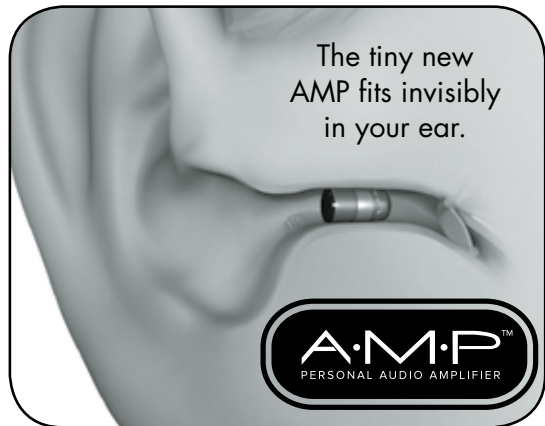


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in Big Spring

Christmas joy for all the boys and girls



HERALD photos/ Amanda Moreno and Thomas Jenkins

Christmas may still be a week away, but Christmas music and visits from Santa Claus have been making a mark on Big Spring since December started. The Heritage Museum hosted Breakfast with Santa, Elbow Elementary students visited Parkview Nursing Home and West Side Community Day Care kids sang carols to Canterbury residents. Big Spring Junior High sixth grade band students performed Friday evening for family and friends during a special Christmas show in the school's gymnasium, playing a selection of holiday songs.



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