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VOLUME 107, NUMBER 64

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Coming to a ballot box near you: Brown vs. Torres

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

When the Democratic primary polls open in April, longtime incumbent Howard County Precinct 1 Commissioner Emma Brown will take on challenger Larry Torres for the Democratic nomination to represent the seat on the ballot in November.

Assuming a Republican challenger doesn't file before the primaries, the fate of the seat could be decided in April, as the winner of the election would go unopposed in November.

Brown, an 18-year veteran of the commissioners court, filed to run for re-election ear-

lier this month, citing unfinished business — most specifically the construction of a \$2.7 million joint law enforcement center which will house both county and city law enforcement agencies under one roof — as her central reason for filing.

"It's often hard to boil it down to just one issue, but I think it's safe to say I feel like I have some business to finish," Brown said. "I'd like to stay and see this project, the joint law enforcement center, completed. The commission-



Brown



Torres

ers court has put a lot of time and effort in on this project."

Brown said she sees fiscal matters as the biggest challenge facing commissioners in the coming years, a challenge the court must face without taking advantage of taxpayers.

"The budget has always been a huge challenge for the commissioners court, and I really think it will remain the biggest challenge in the coming 10 years," she said.

See **PRIMARY**, Page 3



HERALD file photo

A statue of George H. O'Brien Jr. stands in front of the local VA Medical Center. The facility will be officially renamed after O'Brien during ceremonies planned for Jan.

From Christmas to compost, how to dispose of holiday tree

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

Smiles and warm feelings aren't the only things generated by the Christmas holiday, as officials with the city of Big Spring prepare for a major influx of something else this week: garbage.

Wrapping paper, bows, boxes and other holiday leftovers will likely fill sanitation containers across the Crossroads area. However, the city has placed additional trash containers throughout the city in an effort to accommodate the holiday load, according to Assistant City Manager Todd Darden.

"We've placed four large dumpsters at several different

sites around the city in an effort to deal with the large amount of trash generated by the holiday," Darden said. "Those dumpsters will remain in place until Wednesday, giving folks a chance to get rid of items — such as large boxes — in the meantime."

Darden said containers have been set up in the Coronado Plaza, at the Big Spring Mall, in the College Park Shopping Center and in the 700 block of N. Gregg Street.

One holiday item that won't be allowed in those containers, however, are live Christmas trees, which will be accepted only at the municipal

landfill and municipal compost facility.

And while most of the garbage generated by the holiday will end up in the local landfill, Darden said the Christmas trees will meet a different, more environmentally friendly fate.

"The compost facility will grind the trees up to be used in the compost," Darden said. "That way we're recycling them and not just throwing them in the landfill. The other reason we do this is to keep people from putting the trees in their dumpsters. When people put them in their dumpsters they get stuck and cause a serious problem for us."

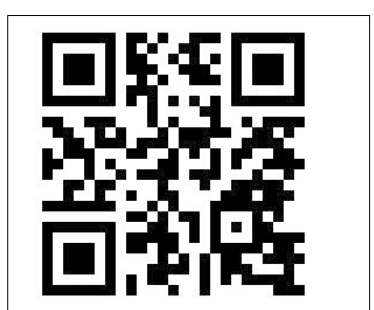
Trees can be delivered to the city's compost facility, which is located adjacent to the municipal landfill on FM 700. Darden said dropping your tree off is free of charge, and there are only a few, simple guidelines to follow.

"We need people to make

See **TRASH**, Page 3



Darden



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VA renaming slated Jan. 18

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

VA Medical Center officials have finalized plans to rename the facility after Big Spring's lone Medal of Honor recipient.

The hospital will be officially renamed the George H. O'Brien Jr. VA Medical Center during ceremonies scheduled for Jan. 18, said Iva Jo Hanslik, community relations director for the VAMC.

Legislation to rename the center after George H. O'Brien Jr. passed Congress earlier this year and was signed into law by President Obama in October, and local officials had planned to officially rename the facility on

Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

However, several dignitaries who planned on attending had scheduling conflicts this month, so the ceremony has been moved to January, Hanslik said.

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) has confirmed he will attend the ceremony, which will begin with a reception at 3:30 p.m. Jan. 18. The official renaming ceremony will be held 30 minutes later.

Also expected to attend are members of O'Brien's family and veterans who served with him.

O'Brien graduated from Big Spring High School and enlisted as a private in the

See **O'BRIEN**, Page 3



At approximately 11 a.m. Monday, this 18-wheeler traveling eastbound on the I-20 service road in front of Bowl-A-Rama lost control and went up the embankment before coming to a stop.

HERALD photo/Angela Pace

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Obituaries

Oliver Cofer Jr.



Oliver Cofer Jr., 87, passed away Friday, Dec. 23, 2011, in Fort Worth, Texas. He had resided in Big Spring from 1948 to 2001.

Oliver was born Oct. 7, 1924, to Janie and Oliver Cofer Sr. in Grand Saline, Texas. He graduated from Grand Saline High School in 1942. He studied journalism at North Texas State University in Denton.

Oliver took a job at the Alvin Sun newspaper as the youngest editor in Texas in 1946. He then accepted a job as circulation manager of the Terrell Tribune from 1947-1948. He came to work for the *Big Spring Herald* in 1948 and worked as advertising director until his retirement in 1981.

Oliver dedicated many years to his community. He was active in the Jaycees, Elks Lodge, Salvation Army Advisory Board, Rotary Club and served as a Chamber of Commerce Ambassador. In his professional field, Oliver served as president of the Texas Newspaper Advertising Manager's Association. He also taught courses at Howard College in the mid-1950s.

Oliver married his college sweetheart, Bonnie Marie Bureson in March 1946. They just celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. They have two children, Vicki and husband Wade Trostle of North Richland Hills, Texas, and Steve Cofer and wife Dana of Hurst. They have two grandchildren, David of Maumelle, Ark., and Katherine Trostle of North Richland Hills, Texas. Oliver and Bonnie relocated to North Richland Hills in November 2001 to be near their children.

The family requests in lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Salvation Army or the American Heart Association.

Graveside services will be held at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011.

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

Paid obituary

Ronnie Wales

Ronnie Wales, 66, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 24, 2011, in a local hospital. Private funeral services will be held at a later date.

Ronnie was born Feb. 3, 1945, in Oklahoma, an American Indian of the Choctaw Nation. He served his country in the United States Army and was a truck driver for most of his life. He married Betty Boykin on Feb. 5, 1983, in Las Vegas, Nev.

In addition to his wife, Ronnie is survived by a step daughter, Valerie Johnson of Benton, La.

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

Troy Brown

Troy Brown, 82, of Hale Center died Dec. 25, 2011, in Lubbock. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011, at 2 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Hale Center with the Rev. Carrol Green officiating. Burial will follow at Parklawn Memorial Gardens under the care of Kornerstone Funeral Directors of Plainview.

Visitation will be held Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the funeral home.

Troy was born Jan. 3, 1929, to Bayles and Bevie Brown in Loraine, Texas. He married Mildred Houchin Aug. 15, 1947, in Ackerly, Texas.

He is survived by his wife, Mildred Brown of Hale Center; two sons, Don Brown and wife Brenda of Hale Center and Dean Brown and wife Mickey of Canyon, Texas; one brother, Billy Brown and wife Gracie of Ackerly, Texas; one sister, Dovie Jo Batson and husband Gale of Ackerly, Texas; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

The family suggests memorials to First Baptist Church of Hale Center, P.O. Box 396, Hale Center 79041; or Hale County Farm and Ranch Museum, Box 384 Hale Center, 79041; or a charity of your choice.

Online condolences may be made at www.kornerstonefunerals.com.

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 9 a.m. Saturday and 7 a.m. today:

• JEREMY JOHN MILLER, 34, of 1425 E. Sixth St. Apt. 2, was arrested Friday on two warrants from other agencies and a charge of operating motor vehicle with wrong registration.

• JOHN MICHAEL WILKINSON, 26, of 2304 E. FM 700, was arrested Friday on two warrants from other agencies.

• DAVID C. GANDARA, 33, of 805 W. Seventh St., was arrested Friday on a charge of public intoxication.

• SALLY LEANNE HAIR, 32, of Post, was arrested Friday on charges of theft – shoplifting and possession of a controlled substance.

• JIMMY LEE SOLIZ, 24, of 109 E. 15th St., was arrested Saturday on warrants for failure to maintain financial responsibility and failure to use safety seat system with child.

• DANE EUGENE DELATOUR, 19, of Midland, was arrested Saturday on warrants for being in the park after hours and failure to appear.

• NAOMI TREVINO, 23, of 1009 E. 15th St., was arrested Saturday on a charge of public intoxication.

• CHELSEA LEE HOLMES, 29, of 1400 Park St., was arrested Sunday on charges of driving while intoxicated, evading arrest or detention using a vehicle or watercraft and duty on striking a fixture or landscaping.

• JIMMY J. NAJAR, 45, of 1312 Ridgeroad, was arrested Sunday on a charge of public intoxication.

• JOSE HILARIO MARTINEZ, 25, of 1505 E.

Cherokee, was arrested Sunday on a charge of assault – family violence.

• DANNY FRANK WILSON, 54, of 4119 Parkway, was arrested Sunday on a charge of harassment.

• DERRICK TODD DRAKE, 25, of 1515 Stadium, was arrested Sunday on a charge of assault – family violence.

• MIGUEL ENRIQUEZ JUAREZ, 23, of 1604 Settles, was arrested Sunday on charges of prohibited weapons – switchblade/knuckles and possession of drug paraphernalia and two warrants from other agencies.

• MICHAEL NEAL BIRMELIN, 31, of 502 Young, was arrested Friday on charges of public lewdness and public intoxication.

• ANGIE FAY BROOKS, 44, of 1712 E. 15th St., was arrested Friday on charges of public lewdness and public intoxication.

• JEREMY DALE BLEVINS, 27, of 607 W. 17th St., was arrested Saturday on warrants for failure to maintain financial responsibility and no parking brakes.

• JOSEPH MICHAEL GONZALES, 29, of 2110 N. Birdwell Lane, was arrested Saturday on a charge of assault – family violence.

• CHRISTOPHER SHAWN JONES, 31, of 1307 Mt. Vernon, was arrested Sunday on warrants for assault by contact and nuisance – animal repeatedly at large.

• CLAYTON WILLIAM WIGINGTON, 25, of 602 Highland Dr., was arrested Monday on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid – no insurance.

• THEFT was reported:
In the 1400 block of Princeton.

In the 2100 block of Grace.

In the 200 block of W. FM 700.

• CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported:

In the 1900 block of Martin Luther King Blvd.

In the 1500 block of Tucson.

In the 1500 block of W. Fourth Street.

In the 2600 block of S. Gregg Street.

• BURGLARY OF A BUILDING was reported in the 4500 block of S. Highway 87.

• BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported:

In the 300 block of E. Eighth Street.

In the 1100 block of W. Eighth Street.

• ASSAULT was reported in the 400 block of N. Scurry.

Sheriff

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

Note – Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 60 inmates at the time of this report.

• CODIE COY MAY, 32, was booked into the county jail Friday by the Martin County Sheriff's Office on a Martin County warrant for aggravated assault and a Kerr County warrant for bail jumping – failure to appear.

See **SHERIFF**, Page 3

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Tony Hernandez	Production Manager... Ext. 256

The *Big Spring Herald* is a member of The Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, Texas Press Association, West Texas Press Association, Texas Daily Newspaper Association, The Associated Press.

Published afternoons Mon. thru Fri. and Sunday mornings, except July 4, Memorial Day, Labor Day and Christmas Day, except if Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. All materials copyrighted.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, TX 79721. Periodicals postage paid at Big Spring, Texas.

USPS 1431-48 USPS 0055-940 ISSN 0746-6811
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SHERIFF

Continued from Page 2

- **ANGIE FAY BROOKS**, 44, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of public intoxication and public lewdness.
- **MICHAEL NEAL BIRMELIN**, 31, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of public intoxication and public lewdness.
- **JEREMY JOHN MILLER**, 34, was booked into the county jail Friday by the BSPD on Oklahoma warrants for possession of a firearm after conviction or during probation and reckless conduct with a firearm and a local charge of displaying wrong registration certificate.
- **JOHN MICHAEL WILKINSON**, 26, was booked into the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of theft by check and a Taylor County warrant for theft by check.
- **DAVID GANDARA**, 33, was booked into the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- **SALLY HAIR**, 32, was booked into the county jail Friday by the BSPD on charges of possession of a controlled substance and theft.
- **JIMMY LEE SOLIZ**, 24, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of failure to maintain financial responsibility and failure to use safety seat system for child.
- **DANE EUGENE DELATOUR**, 19, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on municipal warrants for in park after hours and failure to appear.
- **NAOMI TREVINO**, 23, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- **JEREMY DALE BLEVINS**, 27, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on

municipal warrants for failure to maintain financial responsibility and defective or no parking brakes.

- **JOSEPH MICHAEL GONZALES**, 29, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on a charge of assault – family violence.
- **JIMMY JOE NAJAR**, 45, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- **CHRISTOPHER SHAWN JONES**, 31, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on charges of assault – family violence and animal at large.
- **JOSE HILARIO MARTINEZ**, 25, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of assault by contact.
- **CHELSEA HOLMES**, 29, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of driving while intoxicated, duty on striking fixture or landscape and evading arrest with a vehicle.
- **DERRICK TODD DRAKE**, 25, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of assault by contact.
- **DANNY FRANK WILSON**, 54, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of harassment.
- **MIGUEL ENRIQUE JUAREZ**, 23, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of open container, violation of a promise to appear, a municipal warrant for possession of drug paraphernalia and prohibited weapons.
- **CLAYTON WILLIAM WIGINTON**, 25, was booked into the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.
- **MARK ANTHONY MOLINA**, 47, was booked into the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of assault – family violence.

PRIMARY

Continued from Page 1

“We have a really good court right now, one of the best we’ve had in years, at least since Bill Crooker left. However, we have to continue to work hard on the budget to keep it that way, and we have to do it without raising taxes. That’s going to be the real challenge in the coming years.

“We have to remember, we work for the people. We work for the voters and we have to do our very best to get the work done and keep taxes as low as we possibly can. There are always going to be other issues to tackle, but that one thing is always going to be at the center of it all.”

For Brown to serve another term, however, she will have to make it through the primary and past Torres, who works as a jailer at the county detention center.

Torres said he feels his job gives him a unique perspective on county government.

“I have a lot of frustration with the local government,” Torres

said. “There just doesn’t seem to be a lot of common sense. I think that’s what spurred me on and got me thinking about running for commissioner. I just want to try to make a difference. I feel like I can make a positive impact.

“I’ve been on the inside of things. What I’ve seen, being inside the jail situation with a couple of past sheriffs when they got elected was after they got elected, they said you didn’t want to go in on your first term and ask for a big line item, like the jail. Thinking like that, they were just compounding the problem. They didn’t want to tackle the big issues right off, and they were more worried about their own personal welfare than the welfare of the county and the problems just kept getting bigger and bigger.”

Torres said he sees the county’s drought situation as the biggest challenge facing the commissioners court in the coming years.

“I think the biggest problem facing us right now is water,” Torres said. “I believe if we don’t get water, not a whole lot else is going

to matter. That’s part of the frustration, that all of a sudden we’re out of water and the solution is not to use it. It’s like we’re just not thinking far enough ahead and that’s something we need to start doing. We need to look at the past to make better decisions for the future.

“It’s hard to say (what a long-term solution to the water issue is), but I don’t think we can rely on rain anymore. It’s just scary. We’ve concentrated on oil, it seems like. We have plenty of oil. But that’s just one issue. It’s an important issue. Looking at the budget and maybe putting it under a microscope and looking harder at where you might be able to cut back, or add money to (it), if necessary.”

The primaries are currently slated for April 3.

While the filing period to run for office in this year’s primaries came to a close Dec. 19, state officials have declared there will be one last chance for political hopefuls who want to toss their hats in the ring in 2012.

Unfortunately, no one knows when the secondary filing period will open, only that it will

close Feb. 1. State officials are expected to announce the opening date for the filing period sometime in January.

Seats up for election in the 2012 election include 118th Judicial District Attorney, held by Hardy Wilkerson; Howard County sheriff, held by Stan Parker; county attorney, held by Joshua Hamby; tax assessor collector, held by Kathy Sayles; Precinct 3 county commissioner, held by Jimmie Long; and Precinct 1 county commissioner, held by Brown.

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

Howard County Elections Administrator Sandra Bloom confirmed that local resident M.O. Horton has filed to run against Parker for the office of sheriff, however, repeated attempts to reach both Horton and Howard County Republican Party Chairman Craig Bailey have been unsuccessful.

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

TRASH

Continued from Page 1

sure all of the lights and ornaments are off the tree,” he explained. “We also can’t take it if it’s still wrapped in plastic

or anything like that. You also need to make sure the tree stand has been taken off. Once they drop it off, we’ll take it from there.”

For those who choose to dispose of their trees in dumpsters, City Code

Enforcement official Kenny Davis said the results could get serious — and expensive.

“If someone puts their tree in a dumpster or next to the dumpster, we won’t pick it up,” he said. “We’ll simply noti-

fy code enforcement and let them handle it.”

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

O’BRIEN

Continued from Page 1

U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in 1949. In 1951, he was ordered to active duty, completed officer training, and in 1952 was sent to Korea, where he joined the 1st Marine Division.

He received the Medal of Honor — the highest military decoration bestowed in the U.S. military — for “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity” in the Battle of

Triangle Hill on Oct. 27, 1952.

After leaving the military, he returned to West Texas, where he was an active volunteer at the Big Spring VAMC.

O’Brien died in Midland on March 11, 2005.

A statue of O’Brien, commissioned by his long-time friend Jerry Worthy, stands in front of the medical center.

“I am honored to have



O'Brien

represented this great American,” U.S. Rep. Randy Neugebauer said in a statement. “Renaming the Veterans Affairs medical center in Big Spring after Mr. O’Brien will keep his memory alive in Big Spring and the United States.

It will also help us to remember the courageous acts he achieved in service of his country and his brothers in the Corps.”

“We’re excited that this has become a reality and we will be hon-

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ored to recognize such a distinguished veteran who was raised in the Big Spring community,” Hanslik said.

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Contact the Herald at
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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

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'Cool' cities not necessarily warm

The soft economy has left lots of Americans in place, whether they want to be or not. That would include the most mobile group, young people. But to the extent that adults ages 25 to 34 are still moving, their preferred destinations seem to be "cool cities," according to U.S. Census Bureau figures. What are the so-called cool cities? Denver, Houston, Dallas, Seattle, Raleigh, Austin, Washington, D.C., and Portland, Ore., among others.



FROMA HARROP

And what makes them cool? I had to ask. They have a "certain vibe, a coffee house scene, a night scene," responded William Frey, a Brookings Institution demographer who follows such trends. "You know it when you see it."

That's what I would have said.

Most interesting, young people are headed to these places with or without a job. What are they thinking? They're thinking that if you're not going to have a job, you might as well not have one in a groovy place. "It's Only for Now" go the lyrics from "Avenue Q," a musical about recent college grads, unemployed in New York and learning they're not that special.

Speaking of college grads, the Census Bureau also reports

that more educated Americans are moving to places that are already home to many like them. The result has been a brain gain for some areas and a brain drain for others. The gainers include Boston, metro New York, Madison, Wis., and California's Silicon Valley. Educated cities tend to have colleges, high-tech industry and, if you look at the above lists, generally liberal-minded attitudes. As such, they share many characteristics of the cool cities.

Note that most of the cool and educated places don't have cheap housing and low taxes. Note that most aren't in warm climates, and some have downright nasty winters.

The Texas cities would be the exception.

And they're not necessarily proximate to glamorous ski or beach resorts. Omaha has enjoyed one of the strongest brain gains in the country, even as the rural Plains continue to lose educated people. During the last decade, the percentage of Omaha's adults with college degrees rose 6 points to 33 percent.

What does Omaha have? Another question for Frey. "Omaha has a river (the Missouri) and a close airport," he explains. It has nice amenities and offers face-to-face daily interaction with people who have a lot in common. Like other favorites, it is cosmopolitan.

The apparent allure of densely populated regions goes against another prediction of years ago: that the communica-

tions revolution would cause the educated to spread out from the crowded urban corridors. After all, one could work anywhere with an Internet connection. So why slog through the slush on the Mass Pike when you could do your job beside a powdery ski slope in Colorado or a balmy beach in Maui — and in your slippers?

A few years ago, messy winters up north supposedly helped feed escapees to such Sunbelt hot spots as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Orlando and Riverside, Calif. All those places are now working through the subsequent housing bust, and their influx of college grads has slowed to a trickle. Things will eventually turn around for them, Frey believes, "but it's never going to be as good again as in the middle of the last decade."

As for weather, "weather doesn't matter if you're in a place that has all kinds of connections for you socially and in terms of your job," he says.

Isolation, even splendid isolation, is apparently not the ideal life for the young and the educated. To quote from another musical — actually, to misquote — "People need people."

To find out more about Froma Harrop, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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Sometimes having caution can cause a bit of backfire

There seems to be a common line of demarcation separating two basic factions on the political right in the various skirmishes we have fought against Barack Obama, from their markedly different approaches to the budget battles to their differences in sizing up the GOP presidential candidates.

On one side we have the more moderate group, which is more cautious, less risk averse, less excitable, self-consciously pragmatic and more tolerant toward an establishment ruling class, even if not per se establishment itself. On the other side are those who perceive more urgency in our current national condition, are more adamant about adhering to conservative principles to reverse this catastrophe and reject the charge that they are recklessly purist.

Many from the first group have urged restraint and pragmatism in the budget negotiations, insisting it was too risky to force a government shutdown with Obama, that the big prize is 2012 and the best way to secure it is to avoid taking a hard line, which would hand Obama 2012 propaganda ammunition.

In each round of budget battles, with a spirit of defeatism and resignation, they warned against Republican brinkmanship, because they were convinced Obama would automatically win every PR victory. It was as though they had forgotten who'd won the 2010 congressional elections.

Obviously, they didn't believe Republicans could convince the electorate that they had the better argument, even though they were the ones drawing a line in the sand on spending, which was what caused the crisis. Also, they had no confidence that Republicans

could persuade voters that Democrats were lying when they said that the government would actually default on its major obligations.

The first group seemed less outraged that the entire ruling class, including our GOP guys, allowed mere reductions in spending increases to be called spending cuts. Nor were they as troubled when our guys, instead of saying, "Sorry, folks, this is the best we can do under a dishonest socialist president," came closer to saying, "Hey, we've achieved a pretty good deal here in real terms."

This group assured us it was holding its major firepower for the 2012 elections. Yet 2012 is here, and they still seem reluctant to bring out the heavy artillery. They are giving their full-throated support to Mr. Caution himself, Mitt Romney, once again saying we can't afford the risk of putting our support behind someone more conservative.

It appears they believe that national elections are a zero-sum game with a fixed number of voters in both the Democrat and Republican camps, and that whichever candidate attracts more independents (who are always presumed, in this static analysis, to constitute 20 percent of the electorate) will win.

This reasoning strikes me as flawed because: a) twice as many people self-identify as conservatives than as liberals (this is different from party ID, but still); b) history invalidates the theory — e.g., Reagan; c) no one really knows what the amorphous term "independent" means; d) with a president as extremist and destructive as Obama, independents are much less likely to fall his way, and more likely to be receptive to conservative ideas, because they represent the opposite of Obama's failed policies, and e) it discounts the various aspects of voter intensity: 1) certain candidates will energize their base more, 2) certain ones might alienate some in their base so badly they stay home, and 3) certain ones may scare

the otherwise apathetic independents and even members of the opposite party to vote for the other guy.

The first group, generally speaking, is falling into Romney's camp, arguing that he is the safest bet and that we can't afford any risks, given the enormity of the stakes.

I'm just not so sure. So many number-crunching Republican analysts said he was a shoe-in for the nomination in 2008, but their static analysis failed. Romney does not energize the base, especially the tea party, or anyone else for that matter. His appeal is not that he inspires, but that he supposedly doesn't repel. But in fact, to the contrary, he does repel a good number of conservatives, because they don't trust him in general and/or don't trust he's a conservative.

Ironically, many who've laid claim to sober, adult political analyses the past few years and have scolded others for their alleged harshness in attacking Obama are the very ones who have thrown caution overboard in their relentless, unmeasured scorched-earth savagery of Newt Gingrich.

Though recognizing his weaknesses, I prefer Newt Gingrich over Mitt, and Rick Santorum and maybe Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann over both. But without hesitation, I'll vote for Romney should he get the nomination. Can the Romney supporters say the same about Newt?

David Limbaugh is a writer, author and attorney. His latest book, "Crimes Against Liberty," was No. 1 on the New York Times best-seller list for non-fiction for its first two weeks. Follow him on Twitter @davidlimbaugh and his website at www.davidlimbaugh.com. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Kid Scoop Together: Be a Word Decoder!

Read the first sentence. One of the definitions in the Word Decoder Box is the definition of the word in **bold** type. Select the definition that makes the most sense and write the bold word above its definition.

Repeat for each sentence. Can you find the meaning of each word in bold type?

Mayan Calendars

The Maya had a series of calendar _____ that were complex.

The 260-day calendar, the **Sacred Round** or *tzolkin*, names some of the days after _____ gods. In this calendar, (shown at right) time moves in _____ that repeat. The calendar was used to name babies, _____ on dates for marriages and battles and also to predict destiny and future _____.

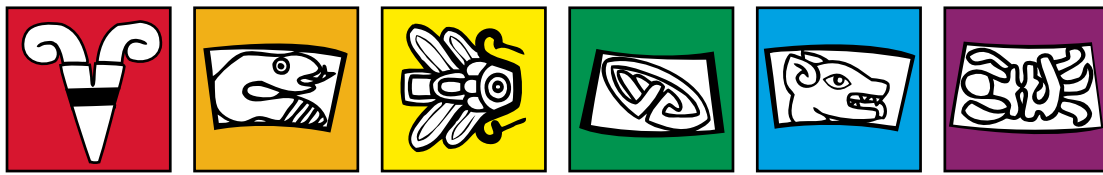
The 365-day **Vague Year** calendar or *haab*, is like our _____ but has 18 months of 20 days each. At the end of this there's a period of five days which was considered _____.

Used together, these two calendars presented a cycle of 52 solar years or about 18,980 days. At the end of this cycle, which is 2012 to us, it was thought that the _____ might come to an end.

Replace the missing words.

- ANIMAL DECIDE WORLD SYSTEMS
CALENDAR UNLUCKY EVENTS
CIRCLES

Find and circle each of these symbols in the above Mayan calendar.



Standards Links: History: Understand Mesoamerican civilizations.

2012: End of the World?

Hold this paragraph up to a mirror:

Some may say that the world will end in 2012. This is because of the Mayan calendar. The Mayan calendar is a complex system of calendars. It is made up of two calendars. One is a 260-day calendar called the Sacred Round. The other is a 365-day calendar called the Vague Year. Together, they create a cycle of 18,980 days. At the end of this cycle, the world might end.

A Mayan year lasted 19 months. You'd have to wait a long time for your birthday!

What is the name of the symbols used on the Mayan calendar?



CODE:

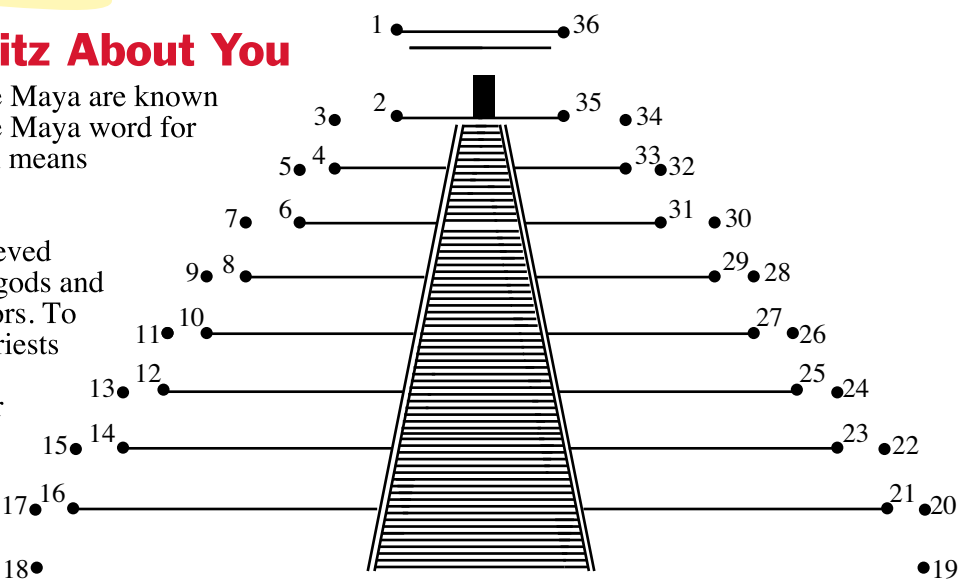
- = G
- = P
- = H
- = S
- = L
- = Y

Keep Your Witz About You

Like the Egyptians, the Maya are known for their pyramids. The Maya word for pyramid is **witz**, which means "mountain."

The ancient Maya believed mountains housed the gods and the souls of the ancestors. To be close to them, the priests placed the ceremonial altars at the top of their pyramids.

Connect the dots to draw a witz.



Standards Link: History: Students understand the major characteristics of ancient civilizations.

Extra! Extra! Dates, Dates, Dates

Look through the newspaper and find five dates. Cut these out and glue them onto a piece of paper, in order from earliest to latest.

Standards Links: Measurement: Understand time; ordered by least to greatest.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Mayan Mysteries

Use the code to discover what the Maya used as money and to make a drink that kids all over the world still enjoy today.

What was the form of money?



What is the much-loved drink we make with these today?



- = A
- = B
- = C
- = E
- = H
- = I
- = K
- = L
- = M
- = N
- = O
- = S
- = T

Standards Links: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.



Learn about the facts and fictions that say the world might soon come to an end. Go to: www.kidscoop.com/kids

Double Double Word Search

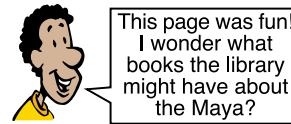
- ANCESTORS
- CALENDAR
- SYMBOLS
- PREDICT
- PYRAMID
- MAYANS
- SACRED
- CYCLE
- SOLAR
- VAGUE
- SOULS
- DRINK
- NAME
- YEAR
- DAYS

Find the words in the puzzle, then in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.



Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognized identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

What a Character! Curiosity is ...



This page was fun! I wonder what books the library might have about the Maya?

... learning about people who lived long ago.

Kid Scoop-doku

Complete the grid by using all the letters in the word YEAR in each vertical and horizontal row. Each letter should only be used once in each row. Some spaces have been filled in for you.

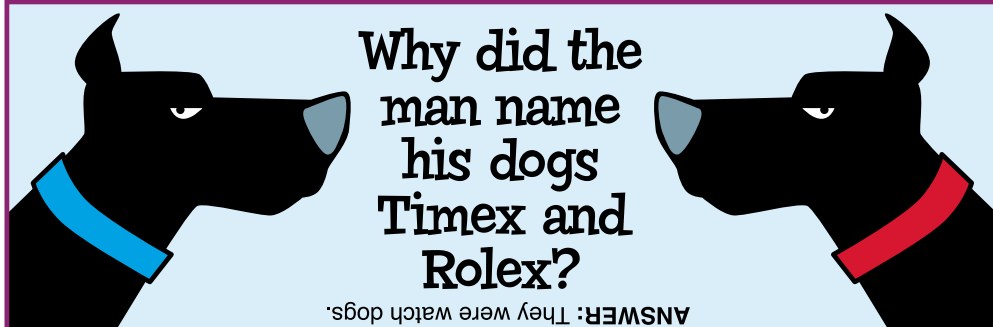


FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Put THAT on Your Calendar!

Look through the newspaper to find fun programs, events and activities coming up for kids. Write these down on a calendar. Discuss with your family the ones that interest you most of all. Can you attend?

Standards Links: Measurement: Understand calendar organization and how time is measured.



Why did the man name his dogs Timex and Rolex?

ANSWER: They were watch dogs.

Write On! My Favorite Month

What is your favorite month of the year? Why? Write a few paragraphs about your favorite month.

Dallas Mavericks start season 0-2



AP file photo

TIME TO KNUCKLE DOWN — Dirk Nowitzki and the Dallas Mavericks are already finding themselves in a hole, losing their first two games of a shortened season.

DALLAS (AP) — Ty Lawson and the Denver Nuggets opened their season with a performance that sent a clear message to the rest of the NBA.

Not about them. About the Dallas Mavericks.

The reigning champions have quickly become a team everyone wants to play. There's no telling which is worse right now, their offense or defense, their conditioning or chemistry, as they were drubbed for a second straight game, losing 115-93 to the Nuggets on Monday night.

Dallas gave up 20 straight points in the second quarter and had a stretch of 14 straight missed shots during a 9:52 drought between baskets. It was so bad that their player of the game, Sean Williams, threw up when he left the court.

Williams, the 13th and final guy off the bench, was so gassed from scoring 12 points in 11 energetic minutes that he vomited in front of the team's bench. Teammates and owner Mark Cuban laughed, and fans in the area gave a light-hearted standing ovation while an usher mopped

up the mess.

Williams wasn't sick, just not quite in game shape because of the lock-out. Of course, the way things are going, Dallas, plenty of jokes were made about that being an editorial statement about their performance.

"We look old and slow and out of shape — a bad combination," said Dirk Nowitzki, who scored 20 points and sat out the entire fourth quarter for a second straight game, yet another indication of how bad things are going. "I still think this team has a lot of potential. But we have to turn the corner."

The Mavs trailed by 33 in the third quarter, a day after being down by 35 in the third quarter against Miami. Counting a pair of preseason games against Oklahoma City, Dallas has been behind by at least 23 points in every game since being crowned champs.

There are plenty of reasons to choose from: an overhaul of their rotation, the shortened training camp and other teams being motivated to take them down.

"We're not comfortable

with each other on both ends of the floor," Shawn Marion said. "We're trying to get acclimated and you can tell it's not flowing the way it should be and there's going to be some bumps."

The challenge for coach Rick Carlisle is finding the right combination of players. He's trying to squeeze in Lamar Odom, Vince Carter and Delonte West to replace Tyson Chandler, J.J. Barea and others, all with little practice time. Carlisle already has seen a lack of trust on defense, and that's something else out of whack.

"We're going to recharge tomorrow, have a hell of a practice on Wednesday and then we've got to go up to Oklahoma City and we're going to have to play a lot better," Carlisle said. "I've got a lot of work to do."

The Nuggets hope this was an indication of what they can be like when they have everything clicking, regardless of the foe.

Lawson made 8 of 9 shots in the first half,

See **MAVS**, Page 7

Saints Brees past Falcons in record fashion Monday

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — After Drew Brees broke an NFL passing record that stood for nearly three decades, his teammates called on him to make a speech in the Saints' locker room.

"This record isn't about one person. There might be just one name that goes in ledger under the record, but it's really about the team," Brees told his teammates. "I want everyone to feel a huge part of this, that this record would not have been possible without them."

It was quite a night for Brees and the Saints — a record and a rout.

Brees set the NFL mark for yards passing in a season, breaking a record Dan Marino held for 27 years, and New Orleans wrapped up the NFC South title with a 45-16 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Monday night.

Brees nearly topped Marino three years ago, finishing with 5,069 yards passing. But that pursuit rang a little hollow because the Saints were 8-8.

This time, Brees' prolific passing has led New Orleans (12-3) to the playoffs and a legitimate shot at its second Super Bowl in three seasons.

"We all want this (record) very badly," Brees began, "but it's all about winning and we know if we just focus on that, all that other stuff will take care of itself."

Brees threw for 307 yards and four touchdowns, the last a 9-yard strike to Darren Sproles that set the record with 2:51 to go.

It was Brees' final pass of the game and it gave him 5,087 yards passing — with one game left. Marino finished with 5,084 yards for the Miami Dolphins in 1984.

Minutes after Brees

broke the record, Marino offered congratulations on Twitter.

"Great job by such a special player," Marino wrote.

As Sproles spiked the ball, Brees thrust his fist triumphantly in the air and started walking toward the sideline while the Superdome crowd went wild and his teammates chased him down. Offensive guard Carl Nicks was the first one to get there and tried to lift Brees onto his shoulder, but couldn't do it as teammates swarmed around.

"If I could have put him on my shoulders and paraded him around the whole stadium I would have done that. He deserves it," Nicks said. "It's like a movie, man. Just a movie ending. It's beautiful. ... You could tell by everyone's reaction after he did it how much people care about that guy. We all love him."

Brees pushed his touchdown total to 276, moving him ahead of Joe Montana (273) and Vinny Testaverde (275) for ninth on the career list. The former Purdue star is the first quarterback in NFL history to pass for more than 5,000 yards twice.

Brees' first scoring pass went for 8 yards to Marques Colston and the second for 9 yards to Jimmy Graham. Graham's TD catch was his 10th of the season, a franchise high for a tight end. In the third quarter, Brees hit Robert Meachem for a score from 24 yards to make it 28-10.

The Saints (12-3) also had 463 total yards, giving them 6,857 offensive yards for the season, breaking the 2008 club record of 6,571. New Orleans continues to close in on the NFL record of 7,075 offensive yards set by the 2000 St.

Louis Rams.

Brees might have broken the record in the third quarter if not for Sproles' 92-yard kickoff return, which set up John Kasay's 29-yard field goal. Brees also threw two interceptions, but New Orleans was still dominant enough to take a big lead.

The game became a romp when Julio Jones was stripped by Scott Shanle and Malcolm Jenkins returned it 30 yards for a score to make it 38-16 in the fourth quarter. The Superdome crowd was in full celebration by then, but the play also meant fans would have to wait until later in the fourth quarter before Brees finally got his chance to break the passing record.

The Saints can earn the No. 2 seed and a first-round playoff bye with a win Sunday over Carolina and a San Francisco loss at St. Louis, which is 2-13.

Atlanta (9-6) is headed to the playoffs as a wild card.

Uncharacteristically, Brees had only a yard passing during a span of a little more than 18 minutes in the second half. Fans howled, "Drewwww!" each time he took the field, and he finally gave them what they wanted after Atlanta failed on a fourth-down try at its own 33. That gave Brees, who needed only 30 yards for the record at that point, just enough space to work with.

The Saints didn't need another score, but Saints coach Sean Payton said he thought giving Brees a chance to go for the record was "appropriate."

Falcons coach Mike Smith diplomatically deflected questions about that, saying only, "It is our job to go out there and stop them. It doesn't matter if

See **BREES**, Page 7

Spurs find win to start their season

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Manu Ginobili never saw the Memphis Grizzlies play that badly in the playoffs, and is pretty sure he won't again.

But the San Antonio Spurs will take it.

Ginobili scored 24 points and San Antonio ran away from what barely resembled the up-and-coming Memphis team that stunned the 61-win Spurs in the first round last season, beating the Grizzlies 95-82 on Monday night.

San Antonio began what could be Tim Duncan's final season with a satisfying bit of payback but otherwise didn't read much into the victory. Take Zach Randolph and Marc Gasol, who utterly bullied the Spurs in that playoff series but combined for just

23 points this time.

"Zac was off. He didn't have of these games in the playoffs," Ginobili said. "That happens the first game of the season. We all need time to get back in shape."

Rudy Gay led Memphis with 19 points and 10 rebounds in his first game in nearly 10 months. Gay missed the end of last season with a bad left shoulder, including when Memphis knocked out the top-seeded Spurs.

Yet even with the full starting lineup that Memphis would've preferred in last year's playoffs, the Grizzlies still remained winless on opening night since the franchise left Vancouver in 2001.

See **SPURS**, Page 7

Stars fall to Blues 5-3

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Adam Cracknell was forced to put his Christmas celebration on hold when he got a surprise call telling him he was being recalled by the Blues.

It was worth it.

Cracknell put St. Louis ahead for good in the second period Monday night and the Blues scored two rare power-play goals in a 5-3 win over the Dallas Stars.

"I'll take that as a Christmas present any day," Cracknell said. "This is a dream come true. You can't ask for anything better than to play in the NHL."

Cracknell spent much of Sunday traveling to St. Louis after a late Christmas Eve call from the Blues.

Cracknell, who scored three goals in 24 games last season, skated with the team for the first time this season Monday morning and then made a big impact later in the evening.

He broke a 1-1 tie with the fourth goal of his career at 6:09 of the second period.

St. Louis, which won its sixth

successive home game, improved to 7-1-1 in its last nine. The Blues are 15-3-4 under coach Ken Hitchcock, who took over for the fired Davis Payne on Nov. 6.

Dallas lost for the third time in eight games. The Stars had won the previous five games against St. Louis.

Chris Stewart scored twice for St. Louis including an empty-net goal with 50 seconds left.

Evgeny Grachev and Jason Arnott also tallied for the Blues, who improved to 14-3-1 at home. They lead the NHL in home wins.

The Blues scored two power-play goals in a game for just the second time this season. They broke out of an 0-for-9 slump but still have a league-low 14 goals with the man advantage.

Arnott pushed the lead to 3-1 on a power-play goal with 1.1 seconds left in the second period. Arnott, who has eight goals, scored for the fourth time in the last five games after just four

See **STARS**, Page 7

MAVS

From Page 6

and finished with 27 points. Andre Miller and Al Harrington each scored 18 points off the bench, and Denver's deep, athletic roster scored on 19 of its 25 possessions in the second quarter.

"We've been jelling real quick," Lawson said. "I knew we'd come out strong. ... That's when we're good, when we get out and run. It's my job to make sure the tempo is fast and guys are running in those lanes."

Denver made only 12 baskets in the second half, but it hardly mattered. The Nuggets led by 27 at halftime, and stretched it during the third quarter.

"It's way too early to get crazy but it felt good," Nuggets coach George Karl said.

Danilo Gallinari had 15 points and seven rebounds, and Arron Afflalo scored 11.

Dallas was so out of sync that fans were booing before halftime. The jeers came when a turnover near midcourt turned into a three-on-none fast break for Denver. The Nuggets had enjoyed so many easy baskets at that point that they didn't even bother doing anything fancy, with

Gallinari softly tossing the ball to Harrington for a routine dunk that made it 65-41.

For Dallas, Jason Kidd scored 12 points, Carter scored 11 and Rodrigue Beaubois scored 10. Aside from Nowitzki and Kidd, the other three starters (Marion, Brendan Haywood and West) scored a combined 11 points.

Odom scored three points, making only 1 of 10 shots.

"We look like a team that's new," he said.

Williams played with as much intensity as he could muster because this is his second time in the NBA. After being told he wouldn't return, he's trying to prove he has staying power.

Leaving the way he did isn't the kind of mark he's trying to make.

Williams actually started losing it while on the court. He caught it in his mouth and hustled off with his cheeks full. He couldn't make it to the tunnel, or even a trash can.

"It was awkward, man, pretty awkward," he said. "It's never happened to me before — not ever, even in a practice."

NOTES: Dallas is 0-2 for the first time since 2006-07, which is also the last time the Mavericks were coming off a trip to the NBA finals.

SPURS

From Page 6

Not quite the start the NBA's breakout team of last season had in mind.

"We didn't play very well. We did turn the ball over alot, but we didn't guard," Memphis coach Lionel Hollins said.

"We didn't guard them in the pick in roll. We gave up transition points. It was not a very well-played game by us at all."

The Grizzlies committed 24 turnovers. Randolph had 10 points and six rebounds and Gasol had 13 and six. In the playoffs series against the Spurs, Randolph averaged 21.5 points.

It's not like the Spurs got any bigger to defend the Grizzlies' big front-line. DeJuan Blair, the 6-foot-7 center deemed too ineffective by coach Gregg Popovich to even play Games 5 and 6 against Memphis, was back in the starting lineup.

The Spurs have precious few alternatives: forward Antonio McDyeess officially retired in training camp, and they haven't added a big man to replace him. Yet San Antonio was helped by 7-footer Tiago Splitter, who didn't look as lost as he did as rookie against Memphis last season.

"He was really solid," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "He stayed in good position, he blocked shots and he rebounded. He was real special tonight."

Mike Conley had 11 points and seven assists for the Grizzlies. Memphis led by one at halftime but were blown out in the third quarter after shooting just 29 percent from the floor.

Despite the loss, Gay was satisfied with his return.

"It's kind of bittersweet we lost, but it good that I'm healthy and I can get out there and play," he said.

Richard Jefferson, once thought to be a goner in San Antonio under the NBA's new amnesty clause, added 14 points for the Spurs. Duncan had 10 points in 22 minutes as the challenge of rationing the 35-year-old's minutes in a compressed, grueling schedule began.

Duncan is playing in the final year of his contract but hasn't said whether this will be his last run for a fifth title.

If Duncan and the Spurs have one last championship run left in them, there was no better first test than Memphis.

The bigger and quicker Grizzlies gave the aging Spurs fits in the playoffs last April even without Gay, who had been Memphis' second-leading scorer.

For opening night, at least, San Antonio showed it can still keep up.

Leonard can take some credit for that. The 15th overall pick brought a jolt off the bench in the third quarter when the Spurs opened up a 19-point lead despite trailing at halftime. Leonard had six points during the stretch, including hitting a corner 3-pointer after catching a nifty behind-the-back pass from Ginobili.

Leonard is the centerpiece of what the Spurs are calling their youth movement — seven of their 13 players have fewer than three years of experience. But the face and fortunes of the franchise still firmly belong to Parker, Ginobili and Duncan, who started their 10th season together.

STARS

From Page 6

goals in his first 29 games.

Grachev scored his first career goal at 6:45 of the third period to push the lead to 4-1.

Dallas rallied with goals from Eric Nystrom and Michael Ryder. Ryder cut the deficit to 4-3 with his 14th goal of the season with 5:13 remaining.

But Stewart scored an empty-netter with 50 seconds left to push the lead to 5-3.

Hitchcock was pleased with his team's effort especially the season-best two-for-two performance on the power play.

"We played really hard and did a lot of good things," Hitchcock said. "We really dialed it up today. We were firing from everywhere."

Cracknell was recalled to replace center T.J. Oshie, who will miss at least two games with an injured left wrist. Cracknell whipped a wrist shot past Dallas goalie Richard Bachman from a sharp angle to give St. Louis the lead for good 2-1.

"I just moved my feet and tried to catch him off guard and it worked," Cracknell said. "I saw it trickling in. Once it crossed that goal line, I was very happy."

St. Louis winger David Perron, who added a pair of assists, was impressed with Cracknell's first-game contribution.

"Guys like him need to step up and he did a good job of doing just that," Perron said. "We've always got guys like him that can do the job."

St. Louis goalie Jaroslav Halak made 20 saves to improve to 7-7-4 after a 1-6 start to the season.

Patrik Berglund added two assists for St. Louis.

The Stars, who were outshot 38-23, fell to 12-3-1 when scoring in the final ten minutes of regulation.

Bachman dropped to 5-3. He let in a pair of goals from bad angles including Stewart's first-period tally that put the Blues in front 1-0.

"There's no question,

a couple of those goals, he would like to have back," Dallas coach Glen Gulutzan said. "But we just needed to put more pucks on the net."

Nystrom, who brought his team to 4-2 with his 12th goal of the season at 7:57 of the third period, said the Stars' poor special teams performance was the difference.

"We've been giving up too many goals on the PK (penalty kill) lately," Nystrom said. "We were coming back, but they played hard and they had that extra edge tonight."

The Stars' No. 1 goalie, Kari Lehtonen, is expected to return to the lineup this week. He has not played since injur-

ing his groin on Nov. 26.

"He's skated the last few days and he's very close," Gulutzan said. "I wouldn't be surprised to see him against Columbus (Thursday)."

NOTES: Oshie will not play Tuesday at Detroit but is expected back Friday against Nashville. ... The Blues have given up a league-low 19 goals in the first period. ... Hitchcock guided the Stars to the Stanley Cup in 1999. ... Dallas LW Loui Eriksson has three goals and three assists in his last six games against St. Louis. The Stars are 2-11 when trailing after two periods. ... Stewart had a game-high seven shots on goal.



By Steve Becker

The Life of an Expert

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ J 9 6 4
♥ K 9
♦ K 4
♣ A 10 8 7 3

WEST
♠ A K 5
♥ 6 3
♦ Q 10 8 7 3
♣ J 6 2

EAST
♠ Q 10 8 2
♥ J 5 2
♦ 9 2
♣ K 9 5 4

SOUTH
♠ 7 3
♥ A Q 10 8 7 4
♦ A J 6 5
♣ Q

The bidding:
South West North East
1♥ Pass 2♣ Pass
2♥ Pass 3♥ Pass
4♥

Opening lead — king of spades.
It is widely thought that the expert achieves his lofty status by overwhelming the opposition with an assortment of fancy bids and plays that render them helpless.
But nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that the single most distinguishing characteristic of the top players is that they rarely make an error. True, the expert is familiar with all the exotic bids and plays you can name, but the opportunity to employ these weapons does not occur nearly as often as the simple humdrum problems that arise in almost every deal.

Consider this case where declarer went down in four hearts. West led the K-A-5 of spades, South ruffing the third spade. Declarer saw that he had two diamond losers to take care of and that his best shot by far was to try to ruff them in dummy.
He therefore cashed the K-A of diamonds and ruffed the six of diamonds with dummy's nine. Unfortunately, East overruffed with the jack and returned a trump, and South later lost another diamond trick to go down one.
Declarer was unlucky to go down on this line of play, since East had to hold a doubleton diamond as well as the jack of hearts for this approach to fail. Nevertheless, the outcome was South's own fault.

He was right to try to ruff two diamonds in dummy, but to make sure nothing went awry, he should have ruffed the third diamond with the king, not the nine. This would have guaranteed the contract. He could next return to his hand by ruffing a club and ruff the jack of diamonds with dummy's nine. East could over-ruff, but South would have 10 tricks in the till.
It is easy enough to say that South's carelessness would not have cost him the contract in the great majority of deals, but excuses of this sort are not part of the expert's vocabulary.

Tomorrow: A perfect bull's-eye.
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BREES

From Page 6

they are running the ball or throwing the ball."

Matt Ryan had 373 yards passing and one TD, including an early 21-yard scoring strike to Jones.

"We didn't really play well enough in any phase of the game to give ourselves a chance," said Smith, whose team came in with a chance to stay in the hunt for the division title. "It's not the type of effort that you want to have with so much on the line with what the outcome could have meant to our team."

Pierre Thomas scored New Orleans' first touchdown on a 4-yard run, after which he pulled a bow from his uniform pants, put it on the football and offered it as a gift to a woman with a parasol in the front row behind the end zone.

The referees weren't cutting Thomas any slack on his Christmas-themed celebration, flagging him for a 15-

yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Notes: Brees has passed for 300 yards or more an NFL-record 12 times this season. ... New England quarterback Tom Brady could

also pass Marino next week — and maybe even Brees, too. Brady has thrown for 4,897 yards. ... The Saints are 7-0 at home and never have gone undefeated at home in a full season.

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.

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

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DECISIONS FOR
YOU.
VOTE!**

The Aquarius moon offers a small measure of peace, understanding and compassion to our endeavors. Sometimes it won't seem like enough, but try to see the glass as half-full and trust that the waterbearer will come back around to fill it up. Relationships will improve over the course of the day. Hearts grow lighter.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll be working in a group, throwing out ideas and trying to figure out how to go forward

together. When an idea is right, it's right. Everyone in the room knows it. People feel it. So don't settle for less than that feeling.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Working effectively toward a long-term goal means sometimes forgoing opportunities for pleasure and fun. However, chances are that the things you find truly pleasurable are very much in line with your goals today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll have

augmented powers of self-control. When you run into roadblocks, you'll be able to relax and come back to the issue at a later time. This beats getting upset.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't punish yourself just because you are not performing at an optimum rate. It's normal for your productivity to ebb and flow. You'll be most successful when you let it happen naturally.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll do things spontaneously when you

think of them. This is how you'll get a million things done in one day, quite literally, depending on the level of detail you account for.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There is some debate as to whether or not positive thinking really makes you healthier. Even if it doesn't, isn't life a lot more pleasant for the sunshiny effort? Your friends think so, and they appreciate your smile, too.



HOLIDAY
MATHIS

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Windows of opportunity are always opening and closing. You'll get more than one, but no two opportunities are ever the same. Knowing this, you'll be eager to take advantage of what appears to be a decent deal.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The fear of striking out will not keep you from stepping up to bat. You'll make your play, and if it doesn't work the first time, you'll try it again and again.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). As much as you'd like to sit back and relax today, a little bit of the right kind of stress will be undeniably positive for your life. You'll sparkle when there's some pressure on you to perform.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Visual clutter produces mental clutter. Don't let unimportant and unorganized things bog down your life. An hour of cleanup will be

worth three additional hours of productivity before the week is up.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll start and finish a project right on time. It's not because you are trying so hard to be punctual, but because you realize how much simpler life can be when everyone sticks to the agenda.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There may be something going on that makes your mental environment more interesting than your physical environment. You're no stranger to getting lost in dreams, and you'll find today's fantasies to be quite adventurous.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 27). Your structures and traditions may be transformed over the next three months. In April, you'll feel settled into your new groove. You'll look back in amazement at all you've accomplished in a matter of weeks. Computers, communication and writing figure into your financial gains in March. May is romantic. Pisces and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 20, 4, 17 and 50.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Paramore singer Hayley Williams knew who she was as an artist even as a teenager. When record labels wanted her to be a solo pop artist, she suggested she stick with her alternative rock band, and the rest is history. With her sun, Mercury, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune all in Capricorn, Williams is grounded, driven and focused. Blame her wild colored "mane" on an entertaining Leo moon.

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Legals

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS AND INTENT TO OBTAIN AIR PERMIT PROPOSED AIR QUALITY PERMIT NUMBER 99857

APPLICATION R2R and D, LLC, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for issuance of Air Quality Permit Number 99857, which would authorize construction of the Fiberglass Rod Manufacturing Plant located at 3408 East 11th Place, Big Spring, Howard County, Texas 79720. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For exact location, refer to application. <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/hb610/index.html?lat=32.252777&lng=101.431666&z=13&type=r>.

The facilities will emit the following air contaminants: hazardous air pollutants, organic compounds including but not limited to exempt solvents, and particulate matter including particulate matter with diameters of 10 microns or less and 2.5 microns or less.

The application was submitted to the TCEQ on December 1, 2011. The application will be available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ central office, the TCEQ Midland regional office, and the Howard County Public Library, 500 South Main Street, Big Spring, Texas, beginning the first day of publication of this notice. The facility's compliance file, if any exists, is available for public review in the Midland regional office of the TCEQ.

The executive director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application.

PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC MEETING You may submit public comments, a request for a public meeting, or request a contested case hearing to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below. The TCEQ will consider all public comments in developing a final decision on the applications. The deadline to submit public comments is 30 days after newspaper notice is published.

The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or ask questions about the application. A public meeting about the application will be held if the executive director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

If only comments are received on

the application, the response to comments, along with notice of the executive director's action on the application, will be mailed to everyone who submitted comments or is on the mailing list for this application.

The executive director will complete the technical review, issue a preliminary decision on the application, and a Notice of Application and Preliminary Decision will be published and mailed to those who are on the mailing list for this application. That notice will contain the final deadline for submitting public comments. If a hearing request is timely filed in Response to this Notice of Receipt of Application and Intent to Obtain Air Permit, the time period for requesting a contested case hearing will be extended to thirty days after the mailing of the executive director's response to comments.

After the final deadline for public comments following the Notice of Application and Preliminary Decision, the executive director will consider the comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. If comments are received, the response to comments, along with the executive director's decision on the application, will then be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments or is on a mailing list for these applications.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING You may request a contested case hearing. A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court. **Unless a written request for a contested case hearing is filed within 30 days from this notice, the executive director may approve the application.** A contested case hearing will only be granted based on disputed issues of fact that are relevant and material to the Commission's decisions on the application. Further, the Commission will only grant a hearing on issues raised by you or others during the public comment period and not withdrawn.

A person who may be affected by emissions of air contaminants from the facility is entitled to request a hearing. If requesting a contested case hearing, you must submit the following: (1) your name (or for a group or association, an official representative), mailing address, daytime phone number, and fax number, if any; (2) applicant's name and permit number; (3) the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing;" (4) a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the application and air emissions

from the facility in a way not common to the general public; (5) the location and distance of your property relative to the facility; and (6) a description of how you use the property which may be impacted by the facility. If the request is made by a group or an association, the one or more members who have standing to request a hearing and the interests which the group or association seeks to protect, must also be identified. You may also submit your proposed adjustments to the applications/permit which would satisfy your concerns.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the executive director will forward the application and any requests for contested case hearing to the Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting. If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact relating to relevant and material air quality concerns raised during the comment period. Issues such as property values, noise, traffic safety, and zoning are outside of the Commission's jurisdiction to address in this proceeding.

MAILING LIST In addition to submitting public comments, you may ask to be placed on a mailing list to receive future public notices for this specific applications mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk by sending a written request to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at

www.tceq.texas.gov/about/comments.html,

or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. If you communicate with the TCEQ electronically, please be aware that your email address, like your physical mailing address, will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the Public Education Program toll free at 1-800-687-4040. Si desea informacion en Espanol, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from R2R and D, LLC, 3408 East 11th Place Ext., Big Spring, Texas 79720-3522 or by calling Mr. Brandon Cravens, Source Environmental Sciences, Inc. at (713)621-4474. Notice Issuance Date: December 15, 2011 #7216 December 27, 2011

Legals

PRE-INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting General Contractor, supplier and subcontractor participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: Bid Package 7, Big Spring Pump Station's Below and Above Slab Construction for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project. Bid Deadline is January 19th, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer. #7213 December 21, 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28, 2011 and January 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 10, 2012

Legals

PRE-INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting General Contractor, supplier and subcontractor participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: Bid Package 6, Above Slab Construction for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project. Bid Deadline is February 23, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer. #7214 December 21, 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28, 2011 and January 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 10, 2012

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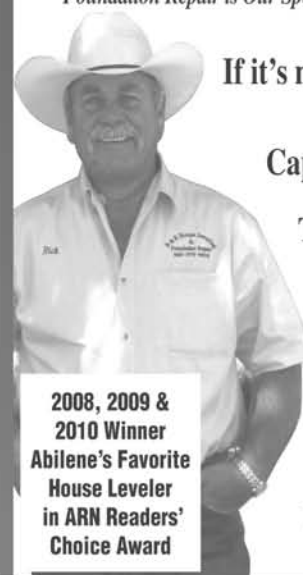
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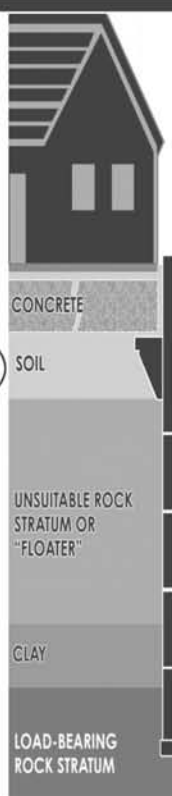
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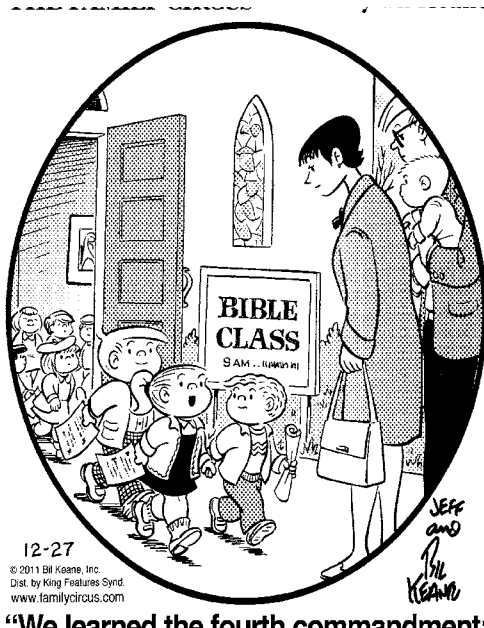
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5:PM	News ABC	Alma Notic.	Big Bang	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News News	King King	Scrivner Uri Harel	Charlie Rose	Til Death King	Dirty Jobs	Adams, Monica Potter	Auction	Bones	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Shake It Good	NFL32	sars Bowl -- Purdue vs. Western Michigan.
6:PM	Jeopardy! Wheel	Cuando Me	Two Men	News	Caso Cer-rado	News	Seinfeld	Mark Blitz	PBS News-Hour	Seinfeld	Dirty Jobs	Auction	Bones	Movie: Baby Boy, A.J. Johnson	Wizards	College Basketball		
7:PM	Last Man Middle	Una Familia con Suerte (SS)	Glee	Ent	NCIS (DVS)	The Biggest Loser	Big Bang	Upd	The Botany of Desire	Movie: Keith, James Applebury	The Best	Movie: The Polar Express, Nona Gaye	Auction	NBA Basketball: Boston Celtics at Miami Heat.	Wizards	College Basketball	College Football: Belk Bowl -- Louisville vs. North Carolina State.	
8:PM	Last Man Suburg.		New Girl	The 34th Annual Kennedy Center Honors	Flor Salvaje (SS)	Parenthood	Big Bang	Light of the Southwest	Lee Stetson: Voice	Cops	Swamp Log-gers	Movie: The Polar Express, Nona Gaye	Auction	NBA Basketball: Utah Jazz at Los Angeles Lakers.	Wizards	College Basketball	College Football: Belk Bowl -- Louisville vs. North Carolina State.	
9:PM	Body of Proof	Protagon. Ahora	Simpsons	How I Met	News	Noticias	Big Bang	Conan	Charlie Rose	King	Dirty Jobs	Movie: The Polar Express, Nona Gaye	Auction	NBA Basketball: Los Angeles Lakers.	Wizards	SportsNation	SportsCenter	
10:PM	News Nightline	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Big Bang	Conan	Charlie Rose	South Pk	Swamp Log-gers	Movie: The Sandlot, Patrick Renna	Auction	Inside the NBA	Wizards	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Hasta-Dinero	Law Order: CI	Late	Decisiones (SS)	Late Night	Big Bang	Conan	World T. Smiley (Off Air)	South Pk	Swamp Log-gers	Movie: The Sandlot, Patrick Renna	Auction	Falling Skies	Wizards	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
12:AM	Extra Paid	Mañana-Siempre	Raymond Fam. Guy	Insider	Pagado	News	Big Bang	Upd	Roseanne	The Best	The Best	Movie: Lean on Me, Beverly Todd	Auction	Inside the NBA	Wizards	NBA	SportsCenter	
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula Par Ases	American	TMZ	Paid	Paid	Big Bang	Light of the Southwest	Roseanne	The Best	The Best	Movie: Lean on Me, Beverly Todd	Auction	Falling Skies	Wizards	NBA	SportsCenter	

DENNIS THE MENACE



"I GOT MY WISH FOR A WHITE CHRISTMAS. NOW I'M GONNA WISH FOR A MUDDY NEW YEAR."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"We learned the fourth commandment: 'Humor thy father and thy mother.'"

HAGAR



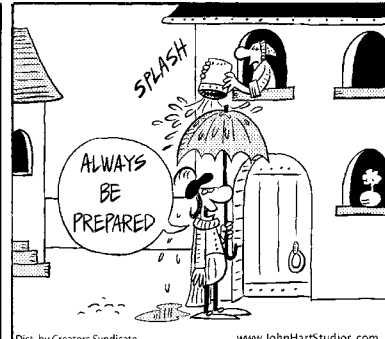
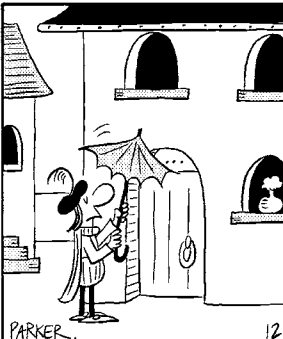
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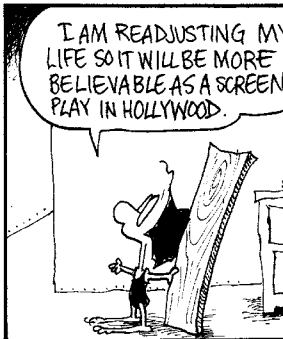
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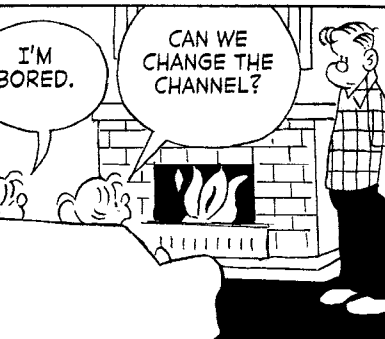
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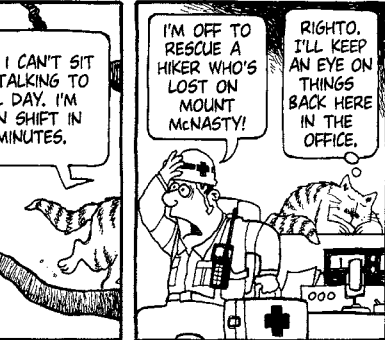
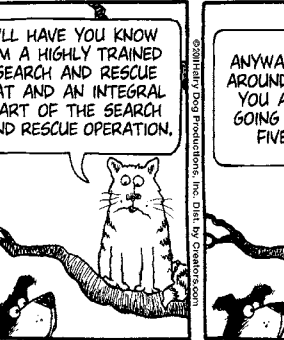
AGNES



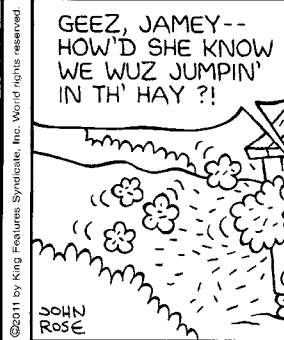
HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 27, the 361st day of 2011. There are four days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 27, 1968, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.

On this date:

In 1831, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle.

In 1904, James Barrie's play "Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up" opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London.

In 1927, the musical play "Show Boat," with music by Jerome Kern and libretto by Oscar Hammerstein II, opened at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York.

In 1932, Radio City Music Hall opened in New York City.

In 1945, 28 nations signed an agreement creating the World Bank.

In 1970, the musical play "Hello, Dolly!" closed on Broadway after a run of 2,844 performances.

In 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin (hah-FEE'-zoo-lah ah-MEEN'), who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.

In 1981, composer and band-leader Hoagy Carmichael ("Stardust") died in Rancho Mirage, Calif., at age 82.

In 1985, Palestinian guerrillas opened fire inside the Rome and Vienna airports; 19 victims were killed, plus four attackers who were slain by police and security personnel. American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death.

In 2007, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Pakistan by an attacker who shot her after a campaign rally and then blew himself up.

Today's Birthdays:

Rockabilly musician Scotty Moore is 80. Actor John Amos is 72. Actress Charmian Carr (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 69. ABC News correspondent

Cokie Roberts is 68. Rock musician Mick Jones (Foreigner) is 67. Singer Tracy Nelson is 67. Actor Gerard Depardieu is 63. Jazz singer-musician T.S. Monk is 62. Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff is 60. Actress Tovah Feldshuh is 59. Rock musician David Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 59. Journalist-turned-politician Arthur Kent is 58. Actress Maryann D'Abo is 51. Country musician Jeff Bryant is 49. Actor Ian Gomez is 47. Actress Theresa Randle is 47. Actress Eva LaRue is 45. Former professional wrestler and actor Bill Goldberg is 45. Actress Tracey Cherelle Jones is 42. Bluegrass singer-musician Darrin Vincent (Dailey & Vincent) is 42.

Answer to previous puzzle

SHAFT	PITY	TEEM
PABLO	ERIE	IDLE
OILER	COCA	NEST
TRETT	TRUCKS	KNEE
	EEL	ETTE
SEAN	LIFT	ARMED
TATA	AAA	URBANE
ATOP	CRISP	ERAS
YANKEE	TOT	LICK
STEIN	SHOO	LETS
	NEAT	TIS
AMER	FRUIT	PUNCH
MAUI	LIKE	OHARA
TURN	APES	RURAL
SLOG	TEST	THYME

Newsday Crossword

PARTY PLATTER by Gail Grabowski

- Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN | DOWN |
| 1 Clothing | 1 Large quantity | 1 Sandwich bread |
| 5 Late-blooming flower | 2 General vicinity | 10 Butcher-shop machines |
| 10 Minor quarrel | 3 Depend (on) | 11 Casino tokens |
| 14 Black-and-white cookie | 4 Bungles | 12 Opera song |
| 15 Aerosol output | 5 State with confidence | 13 Campsite shelter |
| 16 Apol discard | 6 Caught a glimpse of | 21 Female fowl |
| 17 Alternative to suspenders | 7 Lock of hair | 22 Tube-shaped pasta |
| 18 Kitchen strainer | 8 Roof overhang | 24 Pass out cards |
| 19 Similar (to) | | 25 Gelatin garnish |
| 20 Photographer's request | | 26 Taco topping |
| 22 Fabric fold | | 27 Gung-ho fans |
| 23 Groups of cattle | | 28 Prunes, as |
| 24 Doe or fawn | | 29 Sound from a broadcast |
| 25 Agree (to) | | 30 Unskilled laborers |
| 28 Camera accessory | | 32 Equipment |
| 31 Maple-syrup sources | | 33 Sales agent, briefly |
| 32 Moan and (complain) | | |
| 34 Shade of color | | |
| 35 Grp. once headed by Ararat | | |
| 36 Church topper | | |
| 38 Wedding words | | |
| 39 Jerusalem is its capital: Abbr. | | |
| 40 Goat hazards | | |
| 41 Neat as | | |
| 42 What a tabby sheds | | |
| 44 Sculpted figures | | |
| 46 Song for one person | | |
| 47 Natural talent | | |
| 49 Birchbark boat | | |
| 51 Ice-cream cone order | | |
| 55 Noisy | | |
| 56 Rural buildings | | |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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49	50							51			52	53	54
55								56			57		
58								59			60		
61								62			63		

The owl who came in from the cold

In spite of a caravan of sand trucks, deicing, and perseverance, Loop 250 and the Interstate were closed during the early morning hours. Seemingly paralyzed by a coating of ice that continued to thicken, few motorists dared to venture on to any thoroughfares.

Without tall buildings and trees to deflect the windborne moisture, the countryside glistened with crystals as the sunrise slowly reflected the extent of the storm.

Already resigned to staying at home, the man enjoyed his first cup of coffee and thoughts of an unplanned holiday from work.

Ready to chance a glance at the winter wonderland beyond the front porch, he slowly drew the drapes for a peek.

Exquisite in nature's frigid coating, mes-

quites, prickly pear cactus and chollas were striking in their accents of ice.

Burdened by the weight of such a seldom seen event, grasses that had once stood tall curved toward the ground.

As he started to close the window covering in a futile attempt to control the entry of cold air into his living room, he saw it standing at the end of the porch. Although he was afraid it might be frozen, he rushed to get his coat.

Quietly opening the door, he left the warmth of his house.

Slowly tiptoeing toward a bird, he was fortunate it faced in the opposite direction. With a few more steps, he could place a towel over it.

Before he could accomplish that, it moved. A sudden act of puffing itself up by ruffling its feathers seemed to settle many of them back in place. Then it tried to fly.

Laden with ice, the bird flapped its heavy wings to maintain enough height to reach a chain-link fence nearby.

Unable to clear the five-foot obstacle, it

used its talons to clutch the woven barrier mid-way between the ground and the top rail. Only then did the man realize his unexpected guest was a small owl.

Aware that even if it left the fence it would be confined to a limited space and subject to more ice, he approached the owl and covered it. With one hand holding the little raptor, he used the other to unclench its tiny talons from the mesh.

When our phone rang we had already seen the icy conditions surrounding our home. Although Christmas had been celebrated the previous week, the results of the ongoing storm presented a glistening wonderland that would have competed with any greeting card.

"I think I have a burrowing owl," said the caller. When asked where he lived, he replied, "Midland County."

Having already monitored our local TV and radio stations, and the weather channel, was to be aware the roads were closed. Also realizing that, the man asked for help identifying the owl. He also

wanted advice on what to do next.

Since he had seen what appeared to be prairie dog holes not far from his acreage, he wondered if the long-legged bird might have a home in that area. When he described its round head with no ear tufts, and large yellow eyes accented by white eyebrows, he also mentioned a black streak between its white throat and upper chest.

As for its wings and back, he thought they were close to the color of dirt. "Somewhere between tan and brown," he added.

On top, its feathers were spotted with white. Underneath, its creamy plumage was heavily barred with brown.

"Doesn't have much tail," he continued. "More like a stub."

Apparently, as one of the only small owls to live in open areas on the ground, the burrowing owl had been caught out in the storm during its nightly pursuit of prey.

With forecasts cautious as to the severity of the storm, most felt the worst had been unleashed on the Permian Basin. Hopeful they

were correct, the man and I agreed that once its feathers were free of ice, it could be released.

"Will it fly in the daytime?" was his next question.

"Definitely." Shortly after lunch, the man called again. When released, the raptor had flown to a large mesquite tree not far from his fence. "It's just sitting there," he continued.

Since the overcast sky appeared to be clearing, I felt the raptor was probably enjoying the radiant heat from the sun.

Later in the afternoon, the phone rang. "It's still there," he worried.

As night approached and feeling the owl might leave was to rely on nature and the raptor's instinct. In the country, if the conditions remained stable, it could return to its burrow and hunt the following afternoon and evening as conditions changed.

Unknown to the man, the bird, the forecasters, or us was a phenomenon that produced more freezing drizzle. Before sunrise, the man called to say the burrowing owl had spent the night in the tree and

was iced over again.

What the man had not considered was the insulating factor of the bird's icy coating. Numerous species survive a wintry blast because ice assists in retaining body heat.

As we talked, I also mentioned the possibility the distant holes might belong to rabbits or armadillos, since the owls would call home almost any abandoned hole. "We have both. Maybe one of these days I can tell for sure," he replied.

As early afternoon basked in warm sunlight and long icicles formed from the melting ice, an excited caller described the departure of the owl. "Those long wings looked like they were too big for its body. But, boy, could it fly!"

To the man, the successful departure of the burrowing owl was a memorable occasion. For us, some of our most notable rescues were the ones we never had to make.

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



BIRD POOP
BEBE
MCCASLAND

May your new year be a time for new beginnings

You have all heard the saying, "Every day is a new beginning," and since we are at the beginning

of a new year, I would like to change those words to say, "Every year is a new beginning."

The things of the

past are definitely the things of the past. We cannot change what has happened, but we can change our attitude for the future. 2012 is upon us and, as we enter a new year, we are starting a new beginning.

There is an old Indian legend I have heard which fits our lives. It goes like this: If anyone desires a wish to come true, they must first capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it, then release it. Since a butterfly can make no sound, the butterfly cannot reveal the wish to anyone but the Great Spirit, who hears and sees all. In gratitude

for giving the beautiful butterfly its freedom, the Great Spirit always grants the wish.

So, according to legend, by making a wish and giving the butterfly its freedom, the wish will be taken to the heavens and be granted.

If I could capture a butterfly and whisper a wish, I would wish we could all start a new year looking forward to the good things that will happen to us and the success we will be able to achieve.

I read something that I would like to share with you, but I would like to change some of it to reflect this thought: This is the beginning of a new year. I have been given this year to use it as I will. I can waste it, or use it for good.

But what I do is important, because I am exchanging a year of my life for it. When the next year comes, this year will be gone forever, leaving in its

place something that I've traded for it.

I want it to be gain, and not loss; good and not evil; success and not failure, in order that I won't regret the price I've paid for it. I will continue to try, for I can never fail until I stop trying.

Or, in the words of a poem by Jacqueline Leslie:

Every ending is a new beginning, a hope for things to come.

We can only hope tomorrow, will bring the things we long.

Every ending is a new beginning, a promise of things reborn.

A new day and much happier, than the life we had known.

Every ending is a new beginning, with a hope of friendship true.

Of love that's never ending, and happy days with you.

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



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sudoku

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