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MONDAY

JANUARY 9, 2012



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FISD looks ahead

*Money matters
top district's
agenda in 2012*

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

FORSAN — It's a new year, but many of the issues facing Forsan Independent School District in 2012 will be familiar ones.

Ask Superintendent Randy Johnson about what FISD is eyeing in 2012 and the first answer he will give you is the same that has concerned school districts the past few years — how to deal with shrinking state allocations.

"School finance continues to be a major issue for us," Johnson said. "In the 2012-2013 fiscal year, we'll have another 3.5 percent cut in state revenue ... and that's going to make things even tougher."

A 3.5 percent cut in state revenue will mean that Forsan will have to absorb an economic hit of between \$200,000 and \$300,000, Johnson estimated.

FISD dealt with the last round of state cuts, in part, by eliminating some staff posi-

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HERALD file photo

The Big Spring City Council will consider whether to call a special election when they meet Tuesday. The election will let voters decide whether to allow the city to divert economic development funds to finance renovations at the water treatment plant.

City to mull special election

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

True to his word, Big Spring Mayor Tommy Duncan is set Tuesday night to request a special election be held in May to use economic development funds for an \$11 million re-vamp of the city's water and wastewater facilities through a controversial 4B project.

During the Dec. 13 meeting of the council, Duncan said he planned to bring the project — which includes \$7.138 million in repairs and upgrades at the existing water treatment facility and \$3.738 in improvements at the waste water treatment facility — before the council in the form of a 4B project, which would require approval from Big Spring's voters before becoming a reality.

First reading of an ordinance calling for that election — as well as the ballot language to be used in the election — is set to be discussed during Tuesday's meeting.

According to the city council agenda,

"I have to question whether or not it's wise to use the EDC for all of the funding. My hope would be that we wouldn't take so much out of the EDC that we would cripple our economic development opportunities."

Terry Hansen,
District 6 city councilman

voters will have the chance to either cast their ballot for or against the following measure:

"Shall the Big Spring Economic Development Corporation, a Type 4A development corporation be authorized to use the sales and use tax imposed under Chapter 504 of the Development Corporation Act, including any amount previously authorized and collected, for the following projects or categories of projects that do not qualify under Chapter 504 but do qualify under Chapter 505 of the Act (4B Projects): to construct, ac-

quire, improve, renovate and equip improvements and facilities for the supply and conservation of water including the repair and rehabilitation of the city of Big Spring water and wastewater treatment plants and repair and replacement of water distribution lines located in the city?"

Duncan said the passage of such a 4B project would basically cut the Big Spring Economic Development Corporation's budget in half, providing be-

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It was a busy year for CVB

And 2012 promises more of the same, director says

By **AMANDA MORENO**
Staff Writer

There's never a dull moment in Big Spring, at least not for the Big Spring Convention and Visitors Bureau.

This past year, several projects were started and some saw completion. One of the major tourist events was the opening of the Family Aquatic Center, located in Comanche Trail Park.

The new facility includes a lazy river, splash area, water slides and a leisure pool, as well as pavilions which were able to be rented for parties.

"Our local citizens really enjoyed it, along with many visitors who traveled from

out of town just to visit the aquatic center," Convention and Visitors Bureau director Debbie Wegman said.

Wegman said several annual events continued with great success, such as the Comanche Warrior Triathlon — organized and sponsored by the CVB, Festival of Lights, the Powwow and Pops in the Park. One of the new events that seemed to show promise and could possibly lead to similar events in the future was West Fest.

"One goal I would really

like to see achieved is to have more groups utilize the amphitheater and produce events for the community," Wegman said.

Overall, she said she considers the past year a success and is expecting 2012 to continue along the same path especially with the anticipated opening of the Hotel Settles.

"The on-site meeting facilities and restaurant will be an ideal place to hold meetings and conventions. I hope to work with many organizations to recruit more meetings here. The CVB office has already scheduled one conference to be held at the hotel and is working on another

bid," Wegman said.

Another re-opening expected to take place is the Municipal Auditorium, which has been closed for several years.

"These two events will hopefully bring new growth and traffic to our downtown area. CVB will continue

See **CVB**, Page 3



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Obituaries

Joseph Steward Bentley



EULA – Joseph Steward Bentley, 92, died Jan. 6, 2012, at his home. Service will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012, at the Eula United Methodist Church with Bob Karlin officiating, assisted by Kerry Patton. Burial will follow in the Eula Cemetery under the direction of Bailey-Howard Funeral Home. Visitation will be from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Monday at the funeral home.

Joe was born Oct 23, 1919, to Steward and Bertha Reid Bentley in Loraine, Texas. He moved to Callahan County at an early age and attended school at Zion Hill and Deer Plains. He began working at a very young age by going with the family to Arizona and California to work in the fields during the Depression. A farmer by trade, he could do anything.

He was a member of the Eula UMC for 68 years and led singing for about 50 of those years. He taught Sunday School and was a youth leader. He volunteered as a church camp counselor for many years.

He was Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 256 for 28 years, making several trips to Canada with the boys, teaching them canoeing and innumerable life lessons. He worked as custodian at Eula Schools, touching many young lives.

He and his wife, Edna, were foster parents to more than a dozen children, one of whom is still part of the family and calls him "Grandpa."

Joe was a charter member of the Eula Lions Club. He was an honorary FFA Chapter Farmer and was active in the Cancer Society for several years, serving as president for some of those years. He was also active in the Abilene Parkinson's support group. He grew a huge garden annually and took produce to the Farmers Market, talking with everyone and spreading the love of Jesus.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents; three wives, Elizabeth (1945), Clarine (1957) and Edna (2002); a son, Darrel; grandchildren, John, David and Cheryl Slatton and Lyssa Knox; great-granddaughter, Kelly Tiner; and a brother, James Bentley.

He is survived by nine children, Dorothy Polca of Johnstown, Penn., Billie Knox of Kansas City, Mo., JoAnn Curnutt and Boyd of Port Lavaca, Jobeth Corwin and Tommy of Big Spring, Robbye Benfer and Larry of Abilene, Eileen Miller and Carrol of Eula, Joe Roy Bentley and Norma of Salado, Evelyn Pugh of Buda, and Jerry Bentley and Carol of Eula; and also his foster son, John of Mannheim, Germany; 27 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren; and 3 great-great-grandchildren; three sisters, Nell Madron of Fresno, Calif., Ferne Hutchins of Abilene, and Hamp Brown of Clyde; one brother, Armo Bentley of Glen Rose; and by a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He was small in stature but big in heart and will always be bigger than life to his children.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Eula United Methodist Church, 5810 FM 603, Clyde, Texas 79510; or to the American Cancer Society, 209 S. Danville, Ste B-107, Abilene, Texas.

Online condolences may be made at www.bailey-howardfuneralhome.com

Paid obituary

Lonnie Ferrell Anderson



Lonnie Ferrell Anderson, 70, of Coahoma died Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012, at his residence. Memorial services will be held at 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012, at the Coahoma Church of Christ with Eddy Pitchford officiating.

The family will receive friends following the services.

Lonnie was born March 9, 1941, in Big Spring to Luther and Vera (Neal) Anderson and married Mary

Kiser on Oct. 7, 1960, in Coahoma. Together, they owned and operated the Little Sooper Market in Coahoma. He was a member of Coahoma Church of Christ.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Anderson of Coahoma; two daughters, Shana Blagrove and husband Doug of Ackerly and Kelley Hankins and Jim Pearce of Big Spring; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one brother, James "Buddie" Anderson of Coahoma; and two sisters, Phyllis Scroggins of Big Spring and Wanda Davis of Cheyenne, Wyo.

Lonnie was preceded in death by his parents, Luther and Vera Dell Anderson; one brother, Wendell Joe Anderson; one sister, Linda Dell Anderson; and one grandson.

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

To subscribe,
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Mamie Lee Merrick



Our beloved mother, who was a devoted wife, grandmother and friend, Mamie Lee Merrick, 99, of Ackerly went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012, at 4:28 p.m. in Lubbock, Texas.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Bud Duggins officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity

Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012, at the funeral home.

She was born Dec. 19, 1912, in Waco, Texas, and was a long-time resident of Howard County. She married Robert A. Merrick on Oct. 21, 1933, in Big Spring, and he preceded in death March 30, 2008.

Mamie leaves many wonderful memories to those who loved her, especially her children, Jimmy Merrick and wife Joyce of Amarillo, Johnny Merrick of Ackerly, Jake Merrick and wife Kaylynn of Hinton, Okla., Jackie Merrick and wife Teresa of Ackerly, Joyce Turner and husband, Bill of Ropesville, Jo Nell Rowlett of North Richland Hills, and Julie Merrick of Lubbock; and her numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The love she had for her home and many community friends will be forever remembered in all the lives she touched.

In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by one son, Jerry Merrick.

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

Police blotter

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

- LYNDSEY RACHELLE KELLY, 23, OF ODESSA, was arrested Sunday on charges of use or possession of illegal smoking materials and possession of drug paraphernalia.

- STEPHEN BRETT SISSON, 22, of Stanton, was arrested Sunday on charges of use or possession of illegal smoking materials, prohibited weapons and possession of drug paraphernalia.

- SHANNON ROSE HALL, 24, of Odessa, was arrested Sunday on charges of use or possession of illegal smoking materials and possession of drug paraphernalia.

- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported in the 4200 block of Muir.

- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 4000 block of Connally.

- THEFT was reported: In the 2500 block of Chanute. In the 100 block of N.E. Broadway in Coahoma.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 71 inmates at the time of this report.

- CHRISTOPHER LEE MYRICK, 35, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on charges of theft of property, theft by check and possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

- RAFAEL JIMENEZ, 44, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of contempt of court – disobedience of a court order.

- JOSE LUIS OLIVAS, 39, was booked into the county jail Friday by the Martin County Sheriff's Office on a charge of burglary of a habitation.

- BRITTANY CASTILLO, 19, was booked into the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to appear.

- DAVID WHITE, 17, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on charges of no driver's license when unlicensed and expired registration.

- VANESSA ALVAREZ, 24, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of running a stop sign, violation of probation (three

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Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Wed 1/11	Thu 1/12	Fri 1/13	Sat 1/14	Sun 1/15
 50/30 Sunshine. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the low 30s.	 42/27 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 40s and lows in the upper 20s.	 51/29 Plenty of sun. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	 53/31 Sunshine. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the low 30s.	 60/35 Mostly sunny. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the mid 30s.
Sunrise: 7:48 AM Sunset: 6:00 PM	Sunrise: 7:48 AM Sunset: 6:01 PM	Sunrise: 7:48 AM Sunset: 6:02 PM	Sunrise: 7:48 AM Sunset: 6:03 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 6:03 PM

counts) and unrestrained child less than five years.

- DONALD JOE WREYFORD, 56, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

- REYES RAMIREZ III, 25, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of violation of a promise to appear, no liability insurance, speeding, motion to revoke probation – resisting arrest, search or transportation, driving while intoxicated, minor consuming alcohol and possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

- BENITA KAY PADRON SALAZAR, 38, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of assault – family violence.

- JULIAN JAY TORRES, 18, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a motion to revoke probation for deadly conduct.

- CHRISTOPHER L. JACKSON, 29, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of speeding in a school zone and driving while license invalid.

- JAMES EARL MAGERS, 50, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

- LEROY ZUBIATE, 27, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.

- RICARDO LOPEZ JR., 50, was booked into the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

- STEPHEN BRETT SISSON, 22, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession or use of illegal or prohibited weapon.

- LYNDSEY RACHELLE KELLY, 23, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession or use of illegal smoking material.

- SHANNON ROSE HALL, 24, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession or use of illegal smoking material.

- RALPH NEWTON HARWELL JR., 26, was booked into the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

- JENNIFER SUZANNE FOSTER, 33, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a Scurry County warrant for Theft of property – more than \$1,500 and less than \$20,000.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 6500 block of N. County Road. 23. One person was transported to SMMC.

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

- GRASS FIRE was reported near the intersection of Ninth Street and Owens.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 700 block of Abrams. One person was transported to SMMC.

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

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Take note

• An organizational meeting for Visual Awareness Support Group will be held at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 19 at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1001 Goliad St. VASG is a support group forming to provide help to individuals that have poor or deteriorating vision. The meeting is open to everyone but will focus on people who have significant vision problems, their family members, friends and care givers. It is the goal of this group to provide, through education, a sense of hope to people that have vision problems and help them and their care givers cope with vision loss. For more information, call 263-2501 or email eyeassocone@ccrom.net.

• Crossroads Friends of NRA Banquet will be held at 6 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Dora Roberts Community Center. Tickets are \$25. Funds raised at this and other FNRA events in West Texas support local youth shooting groups (Boy Scouts, 4-H, JROTC, etc.) law enforcement, education, safety and many other areas. Giveaways, games, and live and silent auctions will be held. For more information, call Melanie Gambrell at 432-270-7384.

• An account has been set up at T&P Credit Union for Herchel Lewis who is trying to rebuild his house at 904 E. 12th after a recent house fire claimed the house and the life of Doris Lewis. Lewis is asking for help to gather funds in order to rebuild the house, which his family has called home for more than 30 years. For more information, contact Lewis at 432-517-4308.

• 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 Sid-

ing at 264-8610. The account number is 7938527277.

• 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 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.

• 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.

FISD

Continued from Page 1

tions, but Johnson doubts the district will resort to that action again.

"Last time, we dropped 7.5 staff positions, mostly in maintenance," he said.

"This time, I really think we'll probably

pull some money from our (reserve funds) ... but that we'll be fine. I don't think we'll be recommending any personnel cuts," Johnson added.

Another issue FISD will keep a close eye on is whether to establish an Early College High School program.

The Early College High School program would allow students to take

college credit courses as early as their freshman year in high school. Students in the program could conceivably graduate high school with either an associate's degree in academics or vocational certification in workforce training.

School trustees discussed the idea at their December board meeting, but Johnson described those dis-

cussions and strictly informational in nature.

"We still have a lot of questions about the program," he said. "We don't even know if we would qualify for it ... If we didn't, we'd probably have to partner with one of the other school districts in our area, like Big Spring or Coahoma.

"But even if we don't qualify, I think we've seen enough in re-

searching the program ... that we can come up with some great ideas that would be positive for our students," Johnson added.

Finally, FISD and Technology Director Shaun McVickers are conducting a review of the district's computer policy with an eye toward allowing students greater access to portable devices such as lap-

tops or I-Pads.

"We're looking at those policies now ... and we will determine what would be the proper use of that technology that would best benefit our teachers and students."

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 235 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1

tween \$800,000 and \$800,500 a year for the water project's debt service and approximately \$800,000 to \$850,000 annually for the EDC to operate on.

And while the council was willing to offer its support for sending the issue before the voters in 2012, it wasn't without a fair dose of caution.

"I have to question whether or not it's wise to use the EDC for all of the funding," District 6 Councilman Terry Hansen said in December. "My hope would be that we wouldn't take so much out of the EDC that

we would cripple our economic development opportunities. Maybe we can do some of it from savings and some of it from other sources, if the voters should approve it. I think we have to keep in mind the EDC has either brought in our retained more than 500 jobs in the last three years, and I hope we don't cripple their efforts activities."

District 4 Councilwoman Gloria McDonald said during the previous meeting she'd like to see an effort on the city's part to secure state funding, possibly through grants, to help fund the project.

"Everybody is in a water crunch right now," McDonald said. "I'm

hearing more and more there may be some money out there in the form of grants. I think that's something we need to look into before we take all of the funding from one place. I don't want us to cripple any one institution because in two or three years something else will break and we'll have to find the money somewhere else. Eventually, we'll run out of places to take it from."

Duncan was adamant during the December meeting the city — which has been cited repeated by the Texas Department on Environmental Quality for failing to meet minimum water standards during the past year —

will have to make the repairs and upgrades, it's simply a question of how to pay for them.

"We have three options to pay for this. The first is to divert the money from sales tax," Duncan said. "With this, there's no cost increase to the citizens, and in these financial times I think that's important. The second option is to raise property taxes, and we would be looking at somewhere around 15 and 18 cents per \$100, which would take our tax rate up significantly. The third option is to raise water rates, and, as I think everyone recognizes, we just doubled the base rate on water for our citizens. There are people

who are really struggling to meet that, and for us to come back and ask to go up another \$7 on that, or, in my mind, to up any on that, is just too much."

Tuesday's meeting is expected to get under way at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, located at 307 E. Fourth Street. For more information call 264-2401. Also, a complete copy of the meeting agenda can be found online at www.mybigspring.com

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

CVB

Continued from Page 1

to encourage and support many organizations and events that take place in Big Spring," she said.

One more goal for 2012 is to expand the use of the Roy Anderson Sports Complex for a

variety of tournaments, she added.

"Youth sports tournaments draw lots of out of town traffic and are great generators of revenue for our tax base," Wegman said.

One challenge Wegman does predict will be the ability to provide hotel rooms for travelers. At this point, hotels are

being booked to capacity and it looks like the trend will continue into 2012.

To find out more about events in Big Spring, contact the CVB

at 263-8235.

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

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News in brief

Iran convicts American of working for CIA, sentences him to death

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — An Iranian court has convicted an American man of working for the CIA and sentenced him to death, state radio reported Monday, in a case adding to the accelerating tension between the United States and Iran.

Iran charges that as a former U.S. Marine, Amir Mirzaei Hekmati received special training and served at U.S. military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan before heading to Iran for his alleged intelligence mission. The radio report did not say when the verdict was issued. Under Iranian law, he has 20 days to appeal.

The 28-year-old former military translator was born in Arizona and graduated from high school in Michigan. His family is of Iranian origin. His father, a professor at a community college in Flint, Michigan, has said his son is not a CIA spy and was visiting his grandmothers in Iran when he was arrested.

His trial took place as the U.S. announced new, tougher sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, which Washington believes Tehran is using to develop a possible atomic weapons capability.

Iran, which says it only seeks nuclear reactors for energy and research, has sharply increased its threats and military posturing against stronger pressures, including the U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's Central Bank in attempts to complicate its ability to sell oil.

Recovering Rep. Giffords leads Tucson shooting remembrance

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — After a year of struggling to re-learn how to walk and speak, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords confidently climbed the steps on an outdoor stage on Sunday and led a crowd of hundreds in the Pledge of Allegiance, her words ringing out on a cold Tucson night just one year after she survived a gunshot to the head.

The remembrance at the University of Arizona culminated a day of events, some filled with sadness and regret, others with hope and joy.

Many wept at an afternoon event as two 10-year-olds remembered their best friend, Christina-Taylor Green, who was killed in the Jan. 8, 2011 shooting, along with five others.

Some danced in celebration after Giffords' husband, former astronaut Mark Kelly, told the crowd at the candlelight vigil that the 13 survivors who emerged from the shooting showed that "alongside human frailty there is also strength."

And they chanted — "Gabby! Gabby! — when Giffords limped to the podium, and, after months of intensive speech therapy, recited the pledge with the audience, head held high and a smile on her face as she punched each word.

Time running short to stop Romney in New Hampshire

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Time is running short for Mitt Romney's Republican presidential rivals to derail him — at least in New Hampshire.

On the final full day of campaigning before Tuesday's first-in-the-nation primary, the GOP front-runner's opponents — and fiercest critics — were to make final appeals to Republican voters unenthused with the idea of the former Massachusetts governor as the party's nominee.

The candidates were all but tripping over each other Monday, concentrating their appearances in the southern half of the state known for holding town-hall style meetings in real town halls. Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich and Jon Huntsman all planned to visit Nashua at some point during the day. Hudson, Bedford, Manchester, Dover, Salem and Concord also proved to be popular stops, with at least two candidates planning events in each.

Knocking Romney off his perch before Tuesday won't be easy.

He has spent the better part of two years essentially adopting the state as his own and now holds a comfortable lead in pre-primary polls as his rivals essentially battle for second place.

For Gingrich, a strategy of sharper attacks on Romney

SALEM, N.H. (AP) — Mitt Romney is a timid Massachusetts moderate, a flip-flopper on abortion and gun rights. As governor, he raised taxes and even tried to hike fees on the blind. Also, Romney is a liar full of "pious baloney" — according to Newt Gingrich.

The former House speaker left his nice-guy approach to presidential campaigning in the cornfields of Iowa, where Romney's allies smacked him with a series of negative ads that helped knock Gingrich out of contention in the state's leadoff caucuses.

Plowing through New Hampshire before Tuesday's primary, Gingrich is indulging an innate sharp edge that has won him attention — and enemies — from his days as a back-bencher in the House in the 1980s. Now as always, he risks nicking himself in the process.

"Gingrich is doing it the way you shouldn't, which is a mean, nasty, transparently negative attack on Mitt Romney," says Michael Dennehy, the political director for Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign four years ago. "It comes across to everyone now. It helps Mitt Romney's opponents. It's not going to help him."

Some New Hampshire voters are pushing back.

GOP voters ask about online piracy, states' rights, arrested citizens, jobs

WINDHAM, N.H. (AP) — Judging from the presidential forums being held all over New Hampshire ahead of Tuesday's Republican primary, the biggest threats to America appear to be online piracy, an insidious United Nations and "crony capitalism."

Rick Santorum, for instance, fielded questions for 48 minutes from a crowd of 600 in Windham on Thursday before anyone mentioned jobs, the issue that's supposed to dominate the 2012 elections. He got a dozen questions before that, including two about alleged U.N. subversion of U.S. sovereignty, one each about states' rights and Judeo-Christian values, and two about a treaty to "stop online piracy."

Iowa and New Hampshire — small, largely rural and overwhelmingly white — both have unemployment rates far below the national average of 8.5 percent. It may help explain their voters' interest in non-economic issues. And it may leave the states a bit out of touch with the anxieties afflicting so much of the country.

Many Iowa and New Hampshire residents care deeply about jobs, of course. And former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney tends to get economic-related questions more often than do the socially conservative Santorum and the libertarian-leaning Ron Paul, a congressman from Texas.

But particularly in New Hampshire — the "Live Free or Die" state, which has no income tax or sales tax — the Republican presidential debate is deeply colored by issues that would leave many financially strapped Americans scratching their heads. It might not matter much in the long run. But it conceivably could give President Barack Obama's allies a chance to paint the GOP as out of touch with average Americans.

Nigerians begin strike, paralyzing nation

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Normally bustling streets were empty as labor unions began a paralyzing national strike Monday in oil-rich Nigeria, angered by soaring fuel prices and decades of government corruption.

The strike's power became clear as the sun rose

Monday in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos, where typically clogged roads stood mostly empty as trade unions set up informal roadblocks. Local gang members attacked cars of those still driving in spite of the strike.

More than 1,000 protesters gathered at a public park ahead of planned mass demonstration, waving placards bearing an effigy of President Goodluck Jonathan with devil horns and fanged teeth and showing him pumping fuel at a gas station.

Gas prices have risen from \$1.70 per gallon (45 cents per liter) to at least \$3.50 per gallon (94 cents per liter) since a government fuel subsidy ended on Jan. 1 at the orders of Jonathan's administration. That spurred a spike in prices for food and transportation across a nation of more than 160 million people, most of whom live on less than \$2 a day.

While lawmakers on Sunday rebuked the president's decision, the unions said they would continue their strike.

Bus crashes on icy

Montana interstate, killing 2

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Eight people remained in serious or critical condition after their bus crashed on an icy interstate highway in southwestern Montana, killing two people and injuring the 32 others on board, officials said.

The westbound Rimrock Trailways bus crashed on Interstate 90 about a mile west of Clinton, 18 miles southeast of Missoula, shortly after 7 a.m. Sunday, Dan Ronan of the American Bus Association said.

Those suffering the worst injuries appeared to have been ejected when the bus slid on its side and bounced, breaking out the windows on the driver's side. Three people were pinned under the bus. Montana Highway Patrol Sgt. Scott Hoffman said the driver was among the seriously injured.

He said the estimated speed of the bus was 65 to 70 mph, and that it slid 150 feet when it entered the median, though it's unclear how long it might have been out of control before that.

"When it went on its side, because of the speed involved, it had a bouncing motion," Hoffman said. "And as it did people were ejected through those windows."

Crews demolish 20-story former Prudential Building in Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — It didn't take long — mere seconds, in fact — to create a new hole in the skyline of Houston's medical district.

Demolition crews used high explosives to implode the 20-story former Prudential Building that had been a landmark of the district landscape southwest of downtown Houston since 1952.

The crews had planned initially to touch off the explosives shortly before 8 a.m. Sunday, but dense fog delayed the series of blasts until 11:15 a.m.

The Prudential Insurance Co. of America built the 500,000-square-foot skyscraper to serve as its southwest regional headquarters. The M.D. Anderson Cancer Center bought the building in 1974 and made it the center's main building in 1980 before vacating and closing the building in April 2010.

Fox says negotiations to keep Seacrest on 'Idol' have been tough

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Both Fox and Ryan Seacrest say they want Seacrest to stay as host of "American Idol" after this year. Whether that will happen was unclear Sunday even as both sides promoted this month's launch of the 11th season of the country's most popular television show.

"It's a tough negotiation and one that will come to conclusion, I think, pretty quickly," Fox Entertainment President Kevin Reilly said.

Seacrest is not signed beyond this season and is also involved in talks with corporate owners of NBC Universal, where he has a contract at E! Entertainment.

Texas electoral maps at issue before Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal law says states and localities with a history of discrimination cannot change any voting procedures without first getting approval from the Justice Department or a federal

court in Washington. Yet Texas is asking the Supreme Court to allow the use of new, unapproved electoral districts in this year's voting for Congress and the state Legislature.

The outcome of the high court case, to be argued Monday afternoon, could be another blow to a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. In 2009, the justices raised doubts about whether Southern states still should need approval in advance of voting changes more than 40 years after the law was

enacted.

The case also might help determine the balance of power in the House of Representatives in 2013, with Republicans in a stronger position if the court allows Texas to use electoral districts drawn by the GOP-dominated Legislature.

The complicated legal fight over Texas' political maps arises from the state's population gain of more than 4 million people, most of them Latino or African-American, in the 2010 census, and involves federal

district courts in Texas and Washington, as well as the Supreme Court. It has come to a head now because Texas needs to be able to use some maps to hold elections this year.

The state has so far failed to persuade three judges in Washington, including two appointees of Republican President George W. Bush, to sign off on new political maps adopted by the Legislature. The justices jumped into the case at Texas' request after judges in San Antonio who are hearing a lawsuit filed by minority groups drew their own political lines for use in the 2012 elections.

Republican lawmakers in Austin, the Texas capital, did what majority parties in statehouses across the country do when given such an opportunity: They made the most of it.

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Texans win first ever playoff game

HOUSTON (AP) — Andre Johnson hugged his coach at the end of Houston's first playoff victory — a moment a decade in the making.

"This is something not just for me, but for the whole organization," the Texans star receiver said. "It's a very special feeling. That's probably the most I've smiled in a long time."

As well he should. Johnson, the face of this 10-year old franchise, scored on a 40-yard pass that powered the Texans to a 31-10 victory over the bungling Cincinnati Bengals on Saturday in an AFC wild-card game.

Johnson had plenty of help, too, from rookies J.J. Watt and T.J. Yates to run-

ning back Arian Foster's two touchdowns and 153 yards.

Watt came through with a leaping interception return for a touchdown late in the first half, Yates threw a pinpoint pass to Johnson in the third quarter and Foster followed with his second touchdown — a 42-yard run in the fourth quarter — to finish off the Bengals (9-8).

Houston will play at Baltimore (12-4) next Sunday, a rematch of a regular-season game won by the Ravens.

"I'm just very proud of all the guys, and the job they did," Texans coach Gary Kubiak said. "Hopefully, there are some more to come."

The Bengals were in the playoffs for the third time in

seven seasons, but haven't advanced since beating the Houston Oilers following the 1990 season. They were done in this time by mistakes and a lack of pass protection.

"We have to get beyond this," Bengals coach Marvin Lewis said. "We play in a very difficult division. We have to win games in the division, that is important and it sets up opportunities like this, all the time."

Watt returned the first of rookie Andy Dalton's three interceptions 29 yards for a score that broke a 10-all tie with 52 seconds left in the half. It sent the full house of 71,725 fans at Reliant Stadium into a frenzy, and the Texans into the locker room with all

the momentum.

"You can see that they were all so proud of their team," Houston owner Bob McNair said of the team's long-suffering fans. "We want to have a team everybody can be proud of and want to feel an attachment to. I think they have that."

Dalton was 24 of 42 for 257 yards, while Yates was 11 of 20 for 159 yards in the first playoff game in the Super Bowl era matching two rookie quarterbacks. Foster's first TD was an 8-yard run in the first quarter.

The Texans' second-ranked defense had its best performance in several weeks, forcing Dalton a season-high four times. Houston also forced

four turnovers.

"We got back to our type of football," Kubiak said, "and that was the key."

Houston used six draft picks on defensive players. The Texans took Watt with the 11th overall pick, a cornerstone for the reconstruction of the defense. He started all 16 games and led the team with 13 tackles for loss.

But he'd never picked off a pass.

Watt saw this one coming, measuring his jump when Dalton dropped back and snatching the ball with both hands. He sprinted to the end zone as the capacity crowd

See **TEXANS**, Page 10



AP file photo

Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints will face San Francisco in the second round of the NFL playoffs Saturday

Saints 'Brees' past Lions

METAIRIE (AP) — The New Orleans Saints are still undefeated at home and have lost just three times all season. So, it might be a bit of nitpicking to say the road could be a potential downfall.

"You win 13, 14 games now, and you're trying to find something," coach Sean Payton said Sunday. "When you start playing well on the road and home, you're probably a better team and we've been able to do that. This will be a good challenge for us. Not just playing on the road, but traveling west."

After beating Detroit 45-28 in the Superdome in the NFC wild-card round, the Saints will travel to No. 2 seed San Francisco for their game next Saturday. And of New Orleans' three road losses this season, two were on natural grass, the surface they'll play on at Candlestick Park, where

the 49ers went 7-1.

"I think the Tampa Bay and St. Louis losses really helped us prepare ourselves on the road," wide receiver Robert Meachem said.

The Saints, though, will have history against them.

Never has New Orleans won a road playoff game, the neutral-site 2010 Super Bowl notwithstanding. The Saints have lost twice at Chicago, at Minnesota and at Seattle, which came in last season's wild-card round.

As for the team's road struggles this season, they provide a cautionary tale.

They had to come from behind to beat Carolina 30-27 on Oct. 9. A week later, the Saints lost at Tampa Bay 26-20, failing to convert a scoring chance in the final minutes when quarterback Drew Brees threw an interception in the end zone.

Then on Oct. 30, the Saints

lost to then-winless Rams 31-21 in St. Louis.

New Orleans was twice forced to hold off late-surging opponents, winning 26-23 in overtime at Atlanta and 22-17 at Tennessee on a red-zone stand that ended with a sack at the Saints 8.

In all, the Saints' five lowest-scoring games have come on the road, three of the five coming outside.

Knowing that, Payton will change up the schedule this time. After normally traveling on Saturday for road games, the Saints will leave for San Francisco two days prior to the game, going on Thursday after practice and then participating in a Friday walk-through at Candlestick Park.

The idea is to give the players a day to acclimate to the two-hour time difference while also getting a feel for the field.

Tim Tebow leads Broncos to OT win

DENVER (AP) — One of the most storied NFL playoff teams ran into a rejuvenated Tim Tebow and the Denver Broncos.

Sorry, Pittsburgh Steelers.

The magic is back.

Tebow connected with Demaryius Thomas on an electrifying 80-yard touchdown pass on the first play of overtime and the Broncos defeated the stunned Steelers 29-23 in the AFC wild-card game on Sunday. Wild doesn't begin to describe it. The play took 11 seconds and was the quickest ending to an overtime in NFL history.

Thomas hauled in a high play-action pass at the Denver 38, stiff-armed Ike Taylor and then outraced Ryan Mundy to the end zone. Tebow, who looked as startled as everyone

else, headed for his own end zone and knelt on one knee — a gesture known far and wide these days as Tebowing. Then he pounded a fist in triumph and took a victory lap.

Behind Tebow's 316 yards passing, the Broncos (9-8) are heading to New England for a second-round game against the top-seeded Patriots on Saturday night.

The Steelers (12-5) lost despite Ben Roethlisberger rallying injury-depleted Pittsburgh from a two-touchdown halftime deficit with 10 points in the final 10 minutes.

Pittsburgh called tails for the overtime coin toss, and it came up heads. Tebow, who engineered five fourth-quarter comebacks and three OT wins in the regular season, wasted no time in finding

Thomas to end the game. Mundy was playing in place of Ryan Clark, the Steelers' leading tackler who sat this one out because of a blood condition that's exacerbated at altitude.

Clark was one of several Steelers sidelined or injured. Pro Bowl center Maurkice Pouncey was out, replaced by Doug Legursky, who had a bad snap right before halftime that moved Pittsburgh out of field goal range.

After Thomas raced down the Broncos sideline, sending the crowd, including Broncos executive vice president John Elway, into a frenzy at Sports Authority Field, which was rocking like the old Mile High Stadium back in the 1990s.

And Elway, the architect of so many those

magical moments at the old place, jumped for joy in his suite.

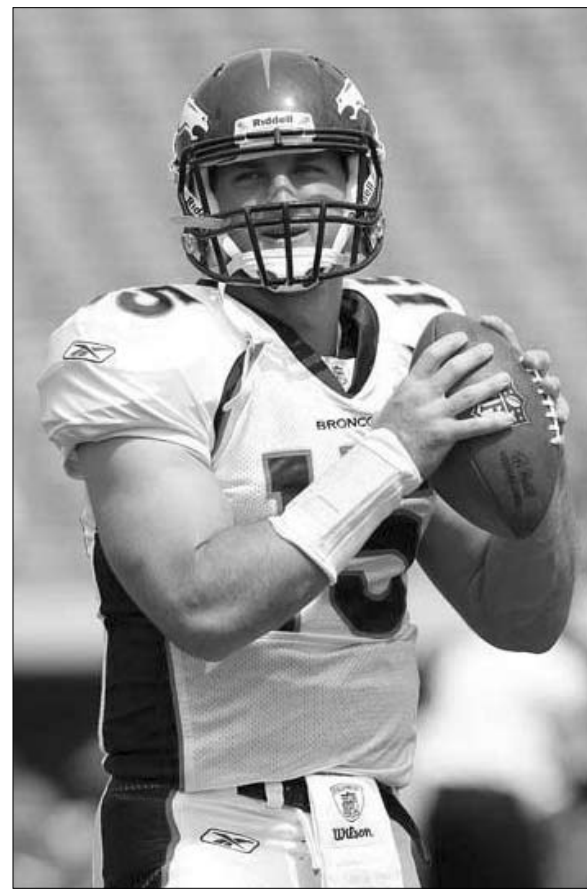
The Patriots walloped the Broncos 41-23 last month, sending Tebow into a funk that included seven turnovers and a 40 percent completion clip — and prompting Elway to implore him to "pull the trigger" in the playoffs.

Did he ever.

Tebow completed 10 of 21 passes but Thomas hauled in four of them for 204 yards after his top target, Eric Decker, was lost to a left knee injury on the first play of the second quarter when he was hit by linebacker James Harrison.

Tebow also ran 10 times for 50 yards and capped

See **TEBOW**, Page 10



AP file photo

Tim Tebow led the Denver Broncos to a 29-23 overtime victory over Pittsburgh in Denver Saturday.

Falcons fall hard as Giants dominate Sunday

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) — All the missing pieces — defense and a running game — are aligning at the right time for Eli Manning and the New York Giants. And just in time to play the Packers.

After routing the Atlanta Falcons 24-2 Sunday in the NFC wild-card game, the Giants head to Green Bay next weekend, a place where they will need all the help they can muster.

Manning carried the Giants (10-7) for much of the season, hoping the defense would get stingy, the pass rush would materialize and the running game would get on track. Now, all of that is happening.

"A great mix of run and pass and these guys have a great understanding of what our offense is," Manning said of the help he's receiving. "If we can get that run game going like we

did in the second half, that opens up a lot of windows."

And if the defense remains impenetrable, watch out.

"If we can play defense like that, we will continue to make ourselves heard in this tournament," coach Tom Coughlin said.

Manning punctuated his best pro season by throwing for three touchdowns and scrambling for a 14-yard gain

that woke up New York's offense in its first post-season victory since its Super Bowl upset of undefeated New England four years ago. Next up is as big a challenge: the defending champion Packers (15-1), who won here 38-35 in December.

"We know they are a good team," Manning said. "We played them tough here, did some good things here, we scored some points. We know offensively

we are going to have to play strong, score some points."

The team that couldn't run the ball will be sprinting there, bringing along a defense the Packers actually might fear. Not to mention the passing offense led by Manning, who hooked up on a 72-yard catch and run by Hakeem Nicks in the third quarter that put away the inept Falcons (10-7). Manning also connected on a

4-yard TD with Nicks in the second period, and a 27-yard TD throw to Mario Manningham in the fourth quarter that finished it off.

The Giants' last post-season trip to frigid Lambeau Field was a 23-20 overtime victory for the NFC championship two weeks before they upset the Patriots.

"Cold, I remember that. I remember coach

See **GIANTS**, Page 10

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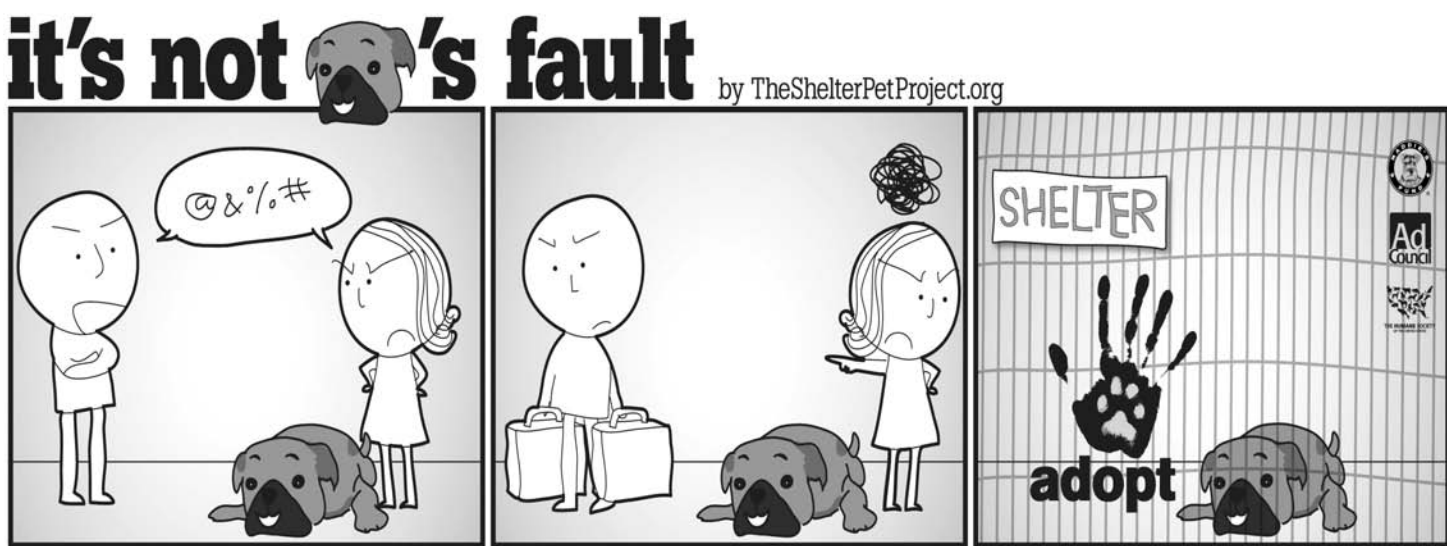
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Yesterday's square of Mercury in Capricorn and Uranus in Aries may have inspired territorial squabbles. The full moon in Cancer is a healer, her balm of choice being the salve of sweet emotions that flow from forgiveness. Even those who are unaware of emotional wounds will experience a new sense of calm that indicates all is well.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's a task that looks like fun, and yet you'll be a bit intimidated by the prospect of diving into it alone. Ask a friend to join you — ideally, a bold Capricorn, Leo or Sagittarius.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Take initiative. Someone has to make the first move. Your willingness to do so will show that you are confident, and it also will give you an edge on the



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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
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Legals

INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting General Contractor, Subcontractor and supplier participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: Bid Package 7 Big Spring Pump Station for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project. Bid Deadline is January 26th, 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
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#7223 January 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22 & 23, 2012

competition.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You won't be able to force things to unfold. Think of life as a flower bud, still closed and waiting for the sun. If you try to open it with your fingers, you'll only ruin it. Beauty comes from letting things open when they are ready.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Situations that should, in theory, work out will be thwarted instead. Leave the scene for a while. Let the energy of frustration lift from the picture. When you come back to this tomorrow, you'll have a breakthrough.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Once you know what you're supposed to do, you do it quickly and without a problem. Getting to that point may take the entire day. Have fun in the "research and development" phase. All's well that ends well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be inspired by learning about a variety of industries, cultures and subcultures. The lingo and ideas you pick up on will apply to your own business or personal life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your best solutions seem to come when

you're not actively trying to come up with them. When you're thinking of something else — or more likely, thinking of nothing in particular — the perfect fix pops to mind.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Never doubt that big things come from small steps. For instance, the small step of meeting someone new could change your entire future. Be ready to introduce yourself.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You like to give people the benefit of the doubt, and yet sometimes there just isn't any doubt. A person who seems to be judging you is, in fact, doing just that. But does it really matter what this person thinks of you?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Newton's First Law of Motion states that an object at rest tends to stay at rest — unless acted upon by an unbalanced force. You'll be that unbalanced force in someone else's life.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be monitoring your own performance, reflecting on what has worked in the past and evaluating all efforts in order to determine a future plan.

Take a moment to celebrate how far you've come.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your mind has been chaotic, and now it's ready to calm down. It will be as though life gently released your preoccupations into the ether and handed you a blank page upon which to start a new chapter of your story.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 9). You'll be a beacon for lost souls. You may save someone from loneliness or other peril. You'll certainly bring levity and fun, making life more worth living for those in your company. Stylish influences will contribute to your ever-evolving tastes and interests. Make financial deals, especially with big institutions, in May. Cancer and Virgo people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 1, 24, 15 and 40.

STRESS AND YOUR SIGN: Each sign is different when it comes to stress. What one sign considers taxing another finds exciting, and tension remedies vary from sign to sign, as well. How does your sign deal with the more unnerving aspects of life?

ARIES:

GOOD STRESS: The ram is invigorated by interpersonal dynamics and is not as afraid of conflict as some other signs are. Therefore, Aries will often thrive in a situation that requires Aries to fight for what is right or show loyalty to a person, creed or principle. Challenge can release new stores of energy and purpose for the warrior sign.

BAD STRESS: When Aries feels trapped, the anxiety levels rise. Aries is independent and requires a great deal of individual freedom in order to feel relaxed.

STRESS BUSTER: Sometimes life happens, and it feels as though there is no choice but to react in one way. But there is always more than one choice. Being aware of all available options helps Aries feel in control. There are almost always more options than are readily apparent, though one must be somewhat detached and unemotional to see them.

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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"Classic" Ann Landers®: Billing clerk job for doctor's office not a "moronic" position

Editor's Note: Hundreds of Ann Landers' loyal readers have requested that newspapers continue to publish her columns. These letters originally appeared in 1999.

Dear Ann Landers:

Your recent column, concerning the "moron" in the doctor's office who sent a bill with a smiley face to a patient who died, prompts this letter.

Obviously, you have no idea how medical billing is done, nor do you comprehend the present status of what used to be a respected profession.

Doctors who see patients in hospitals keep a list of those patients, and record the services performed with numerical codes. This is

required for billing to insurance companies.

These lists are then given to the billing clerk. The requirements for billing are so complex that it is virtually impossible without computerization.

The billing clerk sees only the patient's name and a numerical code. If the doctor has failed to note that the patient died, the clerk will not know about it.

If the doctor belongs to a group, the clerks enter billing data for hundreds of patients a day.

It is unfortunate that a smiley-face bill went to a family that had lost someone, but this doesn't mean the billing clerk was a moron, which is what you called her.

My husband is a physician. I work in his office, and I am NOT a moron.

The American medical establishment is the best and most innovative in the world. It is being

destroyed by government meddling and insurance companies that interfere with clinical determinations and discourage physicians from even touching patients.

Nobody does this solely out of altruism, and no industry gets the best and the brightest without paying for it.

No one bats an eye when sports figures, whose drug and sexual exploits are common knowledge, sign contracts for millions of dollars, yet people complain about the cost of medical care from doctors who spend more than a decade in training.

More people like my husband will decide that a medical career is not worth the sacrifice, and bright students coming up will send their applications to business schools instead. — *Nameless in Maine*

Dear Nameless: In my

opinion, no smiley face should appear on ANY bill. The recipient rarely views this touch as appropriate, and considering the possible consequences, it is best to keep all bills formal. Nevertheless, you've written a fine letter about the medical profession.

Planning a wedding? What's right? What's wrong? "The Ann Landers Guide for Brides" will relieve your anxiety. Send a self-addressed, long, business-sized envelope and a check or money order for \$3.75 (this includes postage and handling) to: Brides, c/o Ann Landers, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. To find out more about Ann Landers and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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LOAD-BEARING ROCK STRATUM



	KMID (3) Midland	UNI (4) Spanish	KPEJ (5) Odessa	KOSA (7) Odessa	KTLE (8) Telemundo	KWES (9) Midland	WTBS (11) Atlanta	KMLM (12) Odessa	KPBT (13) Odessa	KWWT (14) Odessa	DISC (20) Discovery	AMC (21) Classics	SPIKE (22) Spike TV	TNT (23) Atlanta	BET (26) Black Ent.	DISN (27) Disney	ESPN2 (28) Sports	ESPN (29) Sports
5:PM	News ABC	Alma Notic.	Big Bang	News CBS	Noticias	News	King	Schwarz	Charlie Rose	'Til Death	Behind Bars	CSI: Miami	Movie: Walk	Law & Order	106 & Park	Shake It	NFL32	College
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Una Familia	Two Men	News	Caso Car-	News	Seinfeld	Van Impe	PBS News-	Seinfeld	Almost, Away	CSI: Miami	McDonough	Law & Order	BET's Top 10	Vampire	College	GameDay
7:PM	The Bachelor	La Que No	How I Met	Ent	Millionaire	Still Standing	Fam. Guy	McGee	Antiques	Gossip Girl	Gang Wars:	Movie: Blaz-	Ways Die	The Mental-	Game	Random	Shake It	Pregame
8:PM	(01) Castle	Don Francis	Simpsons	Hawaii	La Casa de	Rock Center	Family Guy	Upd	Martin Luther	Cops	Mobster	Movie: Blaz-	Ways Die	The Closer	Game	ANT Farm	Unguarded	2012 Allstate
9:PM	News	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	House	Charlie Rose	King	First Week In	Ways Die	CSI: NY	Game	Good	SportsCtr	NFL Live	2012 Allstate
10:PM	Nightline	Noticiero	Raymond	Letterman	Sin Senos no	Jay Leno	Office	Andrew Gab-	World	T. Smiley	(Off Air)	Ways Die	CSI: NY	Wendy Willi-	Wizards	NBA	(08) SportsCenter	
11:PM	Jimmy Kim-	Hasta-Dinero	Law Order:	Late	Decisiones	Late Night	Office	Uri Harel	World	Roseanne	Mobster	Ways Die	CSI: NY	Wendy Willi-	Wizards	NBA	(08) SportsCenter	
12:AM	Extra	Mañana-Siempre	Raymond	Insider	Pagado	News	Conan	Upd	Roseanne	Gang Wars:	CSI: Miami	Ways Die	CSI: NY	Movie: House Party	Good	SportsNation	SportsCenter	
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula	American	Ent	Pagado	(06) Today	Seinfeld	Light of the	All World	Flipped: A	CSI: Miami	Ways Die	Franklin & Bash	Random	NBA	2012 Allstate		

DENNIS THE MENACE

"I TRADED ALL OF MY NEW CHRISTMAS TOYS FOR ALL OF JOEY'S BIRTHDAY PRESENTS!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

"I'm done till tomorrow. Do you wanna pay me when the whole path is shoveled or at the end of each day?"

HAGAR

WHAT LOUSY LUCK!
STUCK ON A SMALL ISLAND HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM CIVILIZATION...
BUT I SAY TOUGH GUYS DON'T COMPLAIN!
BESIDES, MAYBE MY CREW WILL CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND COME BACK AND GET ME

BC

I DECIDED TO GO ON THE ATKINS DIET.
WHAT WAS THAT?
POP
THE MEAT PACKING LOBBY JUST UNCORKED A BOTTLE OF CHARDONNAY.

BLONDIE

I JUST CAN'T DECIDE
DO WHAT I DO! CLOSE YOUR EYES AND POINT AT SOMETHING!
GREAT IDEA! I'LL DO IT!
HEY! I'M POINTING AT THE RESTAURANT ACROSS THE STREET!
THAT KEEPS HAPPENING TO ME, TOO

WIZARD OF ID

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE HUNTING... BRAVING THE COLD IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING... JUST YOU, THE WOODS AND THE PRIMAL PREDATORY INSTINCT

ANOTHER GLASS OF APPLE JUICE, PLEASE!

AGNES

I AM STARTING A NEW BLOG... "ASK LITTLE MISS SCIENCE."
YOU HATE SCIENCE.
ONLY OLD SCIENCE... I AM ADVOCATING A FRESH, NEW SCIENCE... MORE OPEN-MINDED AND FUN-ORIENTED... YOU KNOW, DANCE FRIENDLY.
DID YOU KNOW OLD SCIENCE ISN'T EVEN ON FACEBOOK?
I WONDER IF THEY STILL USE EMAIL?

HI AND LOIS

YOU REALLY ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR ME.
IT WAS EASIER THAN SHOVELING THE WALK.

THE OTHER COAST

BOB HAD THE FEELING THIS WHALE-WATCHING TRIP MIGHT END BADLY...
THE NAME'S AHAB, CAPTAIN AHAB.

SNUFFY SMITH

I GOT A POINTMENT WIF DOC PRITCHART-- WHO ARE YOU?
I'M DR. SHANK-- I'LL BE FILLIN' IN FER DOC THIS WEEK !!
IS HE AWRIGHT?
DOC'S FINE !! HE GOT CALLED IN FER AN EMERGENCY GOLF TOURNAMENT !!

BEEBLE BAILY

CAMP SWAMPY LOOKS ALMOST PICTURESQUE FROM UP HERE
ESPECIALLY WITH THE SUNLIGHT GLINTING OFF THE DRAINAGE DITCH BEHIND THE LATRINE
I SAID "ALMOST"!

This Date In History

Today is Monday, Jan. 9, the ninth day of 2012. There are 357 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Jan. 9, 1972, reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes, speaking by telephone from the Bahamas to reporters in Hollywood, said a purported autobiography of him by Clifford Irving was a fake.

On this date:
In 1788, Connecticut became the fifth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.
In 1793, Frenchman Jean Pierre Blanchard, using a hot-air balloon, flew between Philadelphia and Woodbury, N.J.
In 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the Union, the same day the Star of the West, a merchant vessel bringing reinforcements and supplies to Federal troops at Fort Sumter, S.C., retreated because of artillery fire.
In 1913, Richard Milhous

Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, was born in Yorba Linda, Calif.
In 1931, Bobbi Trout and Edna May Cooper broke an endurance record for female aviators as they returned to Mines Field in Los Angeles after flying a Curtiss Robin monoplane continuously for 122 hours and 50 minutes.
In 1945, during World War II, American forces began landing at Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines.
In 1951, United Nations headquarters in New York was officially opened.
In 1960, on his 47th birthday, Vice President Richard Nixon became a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination.
In 1968, the Surveyor 7 space probe made a soft landing on the moon, marking the end of the American series of unmanned explorations of the lunar surface.
In 1987, the White House released a Jan. 1986 memorandum prepared for President Ronald Reagan by Lt. Col. Oliver L. North showing a link between U.S. arms sales to Iran and the release of American hostages in Lebanon.

In 1995, in New York, the trial of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman and 11 other defendants accused of conspiring to wage holy war against the United States began. (All the defendants were convicted of seditious conspiracy, except for two who reached plea agreements with the government.)
In 1997, a Comair commuter plane crashed 18 miles short of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, killing all 29 people on board.

Today's Birthdays: Author Judith Krantz is 84. Football Hall-of-Famer Bart Starr is 78. Sportscaster Dick Enberg is 77. Actress K. Callan is 76. Folk singer Joan Baez is 71.

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Answer to previous puzzle

B	I	G	G	U	L	P	P	A	C	K	R	A	T		
O	C	E	A	N	I	A	C	R	A	Y	O	L	A		
W	I	N	S	L	E	T	S	T	C	R	O	I	X		
L	C	D	V	A	I	L	S	H	A	S	T	A	I		
E	L	E	M	B	O	O	G	I	E	T	A	B			
D	E	R	I	D	E	S	A	E	T	I	L	L			
F	U	D	G	E	B	R	O	B	R	O	N	I	E		
T	U	F	T	O	H	O	V	E	G	A					
C	A	S	E	Y	S	T	E	N	G	E	L				
O	K	E	D	E	T	A	I	N	V	E	S	T			
M	E	R	S	N	A	R	L	S	E	L	L	E			
P	A	N	C	H	O	T	O	E	S	M	E	N			
S	A	M	A	L	A	R	K	E	L	G	L	O	R	I	E
O	N	O	N	O	R	I	E	S							

Newsday Crossword

SIT TIGHT by Gail Grabowski
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Japanese martial art
5 Oregon or Oklahoma
10 Make, as tea
14 Digital music player
15 "Is everything all right?"
16 Go here and there
17 Solitary
18 Kitchen appliance
19 To ___ (perfectly)
20 Explosive letters
21 "Wait!"
23 Jumped
25 In plain sight
26 Unvarying
28 Helpful hints
30 Wipe, as a blackboard
31 Horses' gaits
32 Place a wager
35 Roof overhang
36 Competed in a marathon
37 Decorate anew
38 Sandwich bread
39 Bee's defense
41 Welcome words to a hitchhiker
42 California/ Nevada lake
43 Tell, as a story
44 Gleam
46 Gave out cards
47 "Wait!"
50 Mischievous kid
53 Home for a pet fish
54 Overcooked
55 Neutral or reverse
56 Suggest strongly

DOWN
1 Abandon at the altar
2 "Once ___ a time..."
3 "Wait!"
4 Verse of praise
5 Like molasses
6 Breakfast bread
7 Mom's sister
8 Ancient Roman garment
9 Barely makes, as a living
10 Prepares for a jolt
11 Helicopter blade
12 Important happening
13 Dandelion, for one
21 Green gemstone
22 Nights before holidays
24 Make simpler
26 Crystal-ball user
27 Highchair feature
28 Construction-site machine
29 Lasting quite a while
31 Duet plus one
32 "Wait!"
33 Fix up, as prose
34 Sound quality
37 Breadbasket item
39 Fell gradually
40 What preschoolers learn
41 Lettuce purchase
42 Box-office purchase
43 Tenant
44 Fixed gaze
45 Door attachment
46 "Beats me!"
47 Checkbook remnant
48 Regulation
49 "___ the other hand..." (alternatively)
51 Spouse
52 Make ready, for short
55 Hydrogen or neon

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TEBOW

From Page 5

his best day as a pro with the toss to Thomas.

These two teams had played the first ever regular season overtime game on Sept. 22, 1974, in Denver. Now, they played the first non-sudden death playoff game in history. The new rules called for both teams to get the ball in the extra period providing there wasn't a touchdown by

either the offense or defense. Tebow took care of that in a hurry. Making his first appearance in the playoffs after going 7-4 as Denver's starter. Tebow outdueled Rothlisberger, a two-time Super Bowl winner, who fell to 10-4 in the playoffs. The Broncos snapped a three-game losing streak that had many wondering if they were even worthy of their first playoff, and it kept the Steelers from their 34th playoff win.

Spurs Thunder-struck again

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Kevin Durant had 21 points and 10 rebounds, reserve James Harden scored 20 and the Oklahoma City Thunder became the first NBA team to win three games on consecutive nights this season by beating the San Antonio Spurs 108-96 Sunday.

Durant needed only three more assists to record his first career triple-double but instead sat out the entire fourth quarter with the rest of Oklahoma City's starters. The Thunder were able to coast to the finish for the second time in their back-to-back-to-back set after outscoring the

Spurs 37-21 in the third. Gary Neal scored 18 to lead the Spurs, who played without point guard Tony Parker after he came out of the game and walked to locker room midway through the third quarter.

He returned to the bench a few minutes later, and a team spokesman said Parker was fine and could have played. Parker left near the beginning of a 25-8 run that put the game away for Oklahoma City. Russell Westbrook hit a driving layup and then set up Serge Ibaka for a three-point play to start it, and rookie Reggie Jackson's 3-pointer with 7

seconds left in the third quarter stretched the lead to 91-67.

Durant kept busy by getting up to give pointers to his teammates, and Spurs star Tim Duncan didn't play in the last period either as the deficit remained in double digits.

Nick Collison added 12 points and 10 rebounds and Jackson had 11 points and four assists. Maynor sustained a season-ending knee injury in the Thunder's 98-95 win at Houston on Saturday night that allowed them to become the first to win the first two games of a back-to-back-to-back.

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.

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

TEXANS

From Page 5

erupted, and he raised both hands after reaching the end zone.

"I was really just trying to put my hands up and get in the way of the passing lane," the 6-foot-5 Watt said. "It happened to kind of stick. I realized I had the ball so I just ran to the end zone just trying not to fall down."

Watt became the sixth defensive lineman to return an interception for a touchdown in post-season history — excluding the Super Bowl — and the first rookie to do it.

"It changed the momentum of the game," Houston linebacker Brian Cushing said.

Dalton rolled his eyes and shook his head as he walked to the Cin-

cinnati bench and watched the replay on the giant scoreboard. It was just his second interception in his last seven games.

"We feel like we have a bright future," Dalton said. "It's still unfortunate that it ended this way."

The Bengals outplayed the Texans for most of the first half before that, holding down Houston's offense and controlling time of possession.

Late in the third quarter, Yates got away with a pass that safety Chris Crocker simply dropped. Three plays later, Johnson broke free from cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones and caught Yates' pass down the sideline to put Houston up 24-10.

"It was a touchdown if I would have caught it," Crocker said. "They made those big plays and

we didn't and that's why they're moving on."

As Johnson rested on the bench, Foster walked up to him and gave him a bow, the running back's customary celebration after a touchdown. Foster has said that the bow is a Hindu gesture of respect.

The Texans rallied past the Bengals on Dec. 11 in Cincinnati to earn their first playoff berth. But they didn't look like they'd last very long after dropping their last three regular-season games.

Johnson said the losing streak proved to be beneficial.

"Everybody was riding high, the city was going crazy, we were in the playoffs for the first time," Johnson said. "Over those last three weeks, that brought us back down to reality and let us know what we needed to do."

GIANTS

From Page 5

Coughlin's face. I remember (tackle) David Diehl sweating and it froze on his hair and he had icicles on his hair," defensive end Justin Tuck said. "And I remember us winning."

"Hopefully, we can go back there and do it again."

The tempo in the first playoff game at MetLife Stadium was set by New York's defense, which never allowed Atlanta to get going, and by the league's lowest-ranked rushing game, which ran for a season-high 172 yards, 92 by Brandon Jacobs and 63 by Ahmad Bradshaw. The Giants averaged 5.5 yards a carry, 2 yards more than in the regular season.

For all of Jacobs' and

Bradshaw's success, it was Manning's escape and 14-yard dash on third down in the second period that got the Giants rolling. Jacobs soon broke a 34-yard run, and Manning hit Nicks on a post pattern to put the Giants up 7-2.

"I don't think anyone is game-planning for me to run the ball," Manning said, "but obviously there were a couple of situations where you have to do it. I am not scared of running to get a few yards."

The Giants never really had to look back as the Falcons bumbled their way to their third straight playoff loss under coach Mike Smith and quarterback Matt Ryan.

"They did a great job of defending us, especially in the second half," veteran tight end

Tony Gonzalez said. "That shouldn't happen to a team like we have. We're a lot better than this."

New York was aided greatly by Atlanta's penchant for gambling on fourth downs — and failing. Twice the Giants stymied the Falcons on fourth-and-1 as Ryan's sneaks went nowhere. The defense also stopped Michael Turner, supposedly the most effective runner on the field, on a third-and-inches late in the third period.

"That really inspired everybody, to be honest with you," Coughlin said. "Those plays that our defense made really inspired everybody."

Atlanta missed on a fourth-down try in overtime that cost the Falcons a game against New Orleans during the season. While they negated New York's recently revitalized pass rush for much of the day, the Falcons couldn't gain any traction on the ground, being held to 64 yards rushing.

"Our defense played great, kept us in the lead," Manning said.

Other than some sporadic movement, Atlanta's offense was incompetent — particularly in short yardage.

"It's less than a yard, less than half of a yard. It's a play we go through all the time," Smith said. "I felt it was the right play both times, but we didn't execute. We should be able to move the ball there."

Both offenses sputtered in the first half with an assortment of penalties, drops and poor throws.

When the Falcons wheeled out the no-huddle offense, though, they marched from their 10 to a fourth-and 1 at the New York 24. On the first play of the second quarter, Ryan was stacked up on his sneak.

But it turned out positively for the Falcons anyway.

Giants guard Chris Snee was called for holding, and, from his 13, Manning was pressured back into the end zone by James Sanders. He threw the ball away to avoid the sack, resulting in a safety.

New York had its own fourth-and-inches run on its first touchdown drive. Jacobs ran over safety Thomas DeCoud on the play from the Atlanta 6.

Nicks caught his post pattern over Dominique Franks, the fill-in for injured cornerback Brent Grimes, to make it 7-2.

Notes: The Giants' most recent home playoff victory was a 41-0 rout of Minnesota for the 2000 NFC title.

Atlanta's last playoff win was in 2005 over St. Louis when Michael Vick still was the Falcons' quarterback.

Ryan was 24 for 41 for 199 yards and was sacked twice. ... There were no turnovers in the game. ... Giants CB Aaron Ross and RB D.J. Ware left with concussions. ... Gonzalez is 0-5 in playoff games in his 15-year career.

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker
Famous Hand

South dealer.
East-West vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ K J 10 4 2
♥ 9 7
♦ 10 6
♣ J 10 7 4
WEST
♠ Q 9 5
♥ A J 6 5 3
♦ Q J 3
♣ 3 2
EAST
♠ —
♥ Q 8 4 2
♦ K 9 8 5 4 2
♣ A K Q

muddy the waters for the opposition by leaping to four spades.

East could have taken any of several actions at this point, but chose the conservative course by passing, hoping her side had nothing big in the offing. The undoubled contract went down three for a score of plus 150 to the Dutch, but this scarcely made up for what happened at the other table, where the bidding went:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1 ♠!	Dble
Redble	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	5 ♥
Dble			

Here, with room to operate, the American East-West pair, Kitty Bethé and Margie Gwozdziński, were able to find their heart fit and determine that their side had the balance of power. Bethé had no trouble carrying on to five hearts after South bid four spades. South then doubled, no doubt thinking her side had the balance of strength.

With the trumps 2-2 and the heart king onside, Gwozdziński easily made the contract with an overtrick for a score of 1,050 points. The 900-point difference between the two tables gave the U.S. a 14-IMP pickup on the deal.

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 4 ♠

Opening lead — queen of diamonds.

One of the biggest swings of the 1989 Venice Cup final between the Netherlands and the United States occurred on this deal.

When Beth Palmer and Lynn Deas of the U.S. held the North-South hands, the bidding went as shown. Deas, South, consistent with the partnership style, opened a marginal one spade at favorable vulnerability. Palmer then did her part to

Tomorrow: A reward for good technique.

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sudoku

ANSWERS

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

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