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# BIG SPRING HERALD

**TUESDAY**  
**DECEMBER 4, 2012**



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VOLUME 108, NUMBER 43

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## Trial begins today

*Man charged with 4 counts of sexual assault of a child*

By **THOMAS JENKINS**  
 Staff Writer

Jury selection is expected to begin in 118<sup>th</sup> District Court this morning in the trial of a Big Spring man who is charged with four counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child.

Hector Manuel Gonzales Jr., 33, of 3730 Adams St., was indicted by a Howard County grand jury in mid-April on four counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child, all first-degree felonies.

Jury selection in the case — which was originally scheduled to be heard in late October but was postponed due to illness on the part of Gonzales' attorney, Don Richard — is slated to begin at 9 a.m., with testimony set to begin later in the afternoon.

See **TRIAL**, Page 3



HERALD photo / Thomas Jenkins

**Cards like these can be found on Salvation Army Angel Trees, located throughout the community, part of the charity's annual program to provide Christmas gifts to needy children and seniors this holiday season. Angel Trees are located at Blums Jewelers in the Big Spring Mall, Big Spring Herald, Higganbotham-Bartlett Hardware, Just Peachy Cafe, Bealls Department Store, Walmart SuperCenter, Howard County Library, Alon USA's Big Spring Refinery and the Scenic Mountain Medical Center lobby.**

## Help out an angel

*SA program delivers gifts to needy children, seniors in this area*

By **THOMAS JENKINS**  
 Staff Writer

Officials with the Big Spring Salvation Army Angel Tree program say the cards are being chosen from the charity-driven trees quickly this year, however, they have been a bit slow to be returned.

According to Ada Lafler, Angel Tree coordinator for the local charity, these first few weeks of the program — which provides Christmas gifts for area children and seniors of low income families — have been encouraging.

"Almost all of the angel cards have been placed on the trees, which is a very good sign," Lafler said. "I stopped by Walmart recently and checked on the Angel Tree there, and a lot of the cards have been chosen by area shoppers. That's a very good sign. The worst thing you can see at this point in the process is a majority of cards which haven't been chosen."

Each year, the staff at the Salvation Army spends more than a week taking applications from local residents hoping to utilize the program. The applicants go through a screening process where social workers examine their income, bills and other financial issues before approving them for the program.

See **ANGEL**, Page 3



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## 15 percent rule pushed back again

*Area educators hail decision, call on state to abolish requirement*

By **STEVE REAGAN**  
 Staff Writer

State officials have delayed implementation of a rule requiring state testing to count significantly toward a student's passing grade, and local officials are hopeful the moratorium will become permanent.

Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced he was deferring implementation of the 15



Johnson

percent grading requirement for this school year. Under the rule, a student's score on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end of course exams would account for 15 percent of the student's final grade in each tested subject area.

"Deferring the 15 percent rule for this school year re-



Jacobs

lieves some of the pressure being felt in Texas districts as we continue the transition to a more rigorous accountability system," Williams said last week. "This deferral also allows the Texas Legislature ample opportunity to address the various issues and concerns that have been expressed about

implementation of the new system."

This marks the second year in a row TEA has delayed implementation of the rule.

The news was welcomed by Forsan Independent School District Superintendent Randy Johnson.

"I think the 15 percent rule sounded really good on the surface," he said. "It was designed to give students mo-

See **RULE**, Page 3

## Mother charged with abandonment

By **THOMAS JENKINS**  
 Staff Writer

A Big Spring woman was arrested Monday afternoon and charged with abandoning/endangering a child — criminal negligence after law enforcement officials say her 4-year-old child was found wandering more than four blocks from her home.

Brenda Luna Valdivia, 32, of 1603



Valdivia

Wood, was arrested Monday on a charge of abandoning/endangering a child — criminal negligence. Valdivia was booked into the Howard County Detention Center, where she remained Tuesday morning, according

See **CHARGE**, Page 3

WHAT'S THE MATTER? I CAN'T SLEEP WHAT IF SANTA GOES ON SABBATICAL?

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## Obituaries

## Randell 'Wade' Compton



Randell "Wade" Compton, 50, of Dallas, formerly of Big Spring, died Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012, in a Plano hospital. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2012 at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel. Interment will follow at the Greenwood Baptist Church Cemetery, in Midland-Greenwood.

The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012, at the funeral home.

Wade was born May 29, 1962, in Lorraine, Texas. He grew up in Colorado City and then joined the U.S. Marine Corps. After serving his country, he took on several jobs all around the United States. While living back in Big Spring and working in the oilfield and also as a plumber, he met Kay Bryant. They were married Oct. 4, 2003. Just recently, they moved to Dallas.

He was known for his love of country, horses, and motorcycles.

Survivors include his wife, Kay Compton of Dallas; one daughter, Brandi Willis and husband, Justin of Stephenville; three step-sons, Justin Belcher of Midland, Kevin Belcher and Terrell Belcher and wife, Stephanie, all of Big Spring; one step-daughter, Kandice Belcher of San Angelo; former step-children, Christopher Ficus and Stacy Hines, both of Stephenville; his father, Jimmy Compton of Big Spring; his mother, Marsha Mann of Big Spring; one brother, Jerry Mann and wife, Katie of Coahoma; three sisters, Jan Sanders and husband, Jim, and Terri Pearson and husband, Bobby, both of Big Spring, and Tracy Toland of Plano; seven grandchildren, Tye, Hannah, Jaycob, Tristan, Aislyn, Sklyer and Hunter; his mother-in-law, Dolly Bryant of Greenwood; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Wade was preceded in death by one grandson, Jayce Randell William Collins; and his father-in-law, Billy Bryant.

The family suggests memorials be made to Patriot Guard Riders Inc., c/o Jon Tatum, 19220 E. Knightsbridge, Owasso, Okla. 74055.

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*

## Lajuana Carole Montgomery



Lajuana Carole Montgomery, 77, passed away Friday Nov. 30, 2012, at Parkview Nursing Home in Big Spring.

Lajuana was born Feb. 7, 1935, to Alton Thomas Jackson and Christine Ida Meil Jackson in Stamford, Texas. She was raised in Stamford with her sister, Devon and brother, Nickey. She married James Elwood Montgomery Sept. 26, 1955 in Stamford. They made Odessa their home, where she remained until July 2011 when she moved to Big Spring. Elwood preceded her in death Feb. 11, 1997. They raised two children whom she truly loved, Sharon Kay Thomas Fletcher and Leslie Neal Montgomery.

Lajuana was a cashier for Furr's Grocery in the late 1950s. Lajuana helped open Michael's Arts and Crafts in Odessa in 1984, where she worked as a cashier until 2007. She enjoyed her co-workers and customers. She was often referred to in town by her customers as the Michael's Lady.

Lajuana's favorite hobbies were playing bingo and the lottery. She was a true Elvis Presley fan. She saw Elvis in concert several times in West Texas. One of her favorite trips was when she toured Graceland with Sharon and her grandson, Richard.

Lajuana is preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Elwood; her sisters, Mae Mallory Jackson and Devon Jackson Haught; and her beloved granddaughter, Carol Fletcher.

Lajuana is survived by her daughter, Sharon Thomas Fletcher and her husband, Jim of Odessa; her son, Les Montgomery and his wife, Nova of Big Spring; her grandson, Richard Fletcher and his wife, Ingrid of Round Rock; her granddaughters, Shelbi and Austyn Montgomery; her great-granddaughters, Jules Fletcher and Peyton Fletcher; her great-grandson, Matthew Fletcher; her brother, Nickey Jackson and his wife, Audy of Forney; her sister at heart, Barbora Thorn Jackson; and several nieces and nephews.

Graveside services will be Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2012 at 3 p.m. at Sunset Memorial Gardens in Odessa. The family suggests, in lieu of flowers, please send a donation to your favorite charity.

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*

## Sharon Brummett

Sharon Brummett, 48, of Rhome, Texas, formerly of Big Spring died Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012. Her services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

## Martha Hunter Saunders

Martha Hunter Saunders, 91, of Big Spring, died Sunday, Dec. 2, 2012 at Marcy House. Her services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

## William 'Bill' Dickson



William "Bill" Dickson, 76, of Coahoma, died Friday, Nov. 30, 2012, at his residence. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2012, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Revs. Craig Wascom and Billy Guy officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012, at the funeral home.

He was born Oct. 30, 1936, in Fresno, Calif. and married Dana Reeves June 25, 1960 in Stockton, Calif.

Bill was raised in Coahoma and served in the U.S. Air Force in California, where he met and married his wife. He became an engineer and then moved into management for Pacific Bell Telephone. Bill and Dana moved back to Coahoma 12 years ago after retiring. He loved to read, play chess and work in his rose garden.

He was a member of First Assembly of God Church.

Survivors include his wife, Dana Dickson of Coahoma; two daughters, Deidrei Dickson of Big Spring and Dr. Loretta Dickson and husband, Dr. Joseph Calabrese of Lockhaven, Penn.; one son, Sgt. Major William Andrew Dickson and wife, Michelle of Fort Riley, Kan.; two granddaughters, Trista Leighanne Dickson and Elizabeth Hope Dickson; and numerous nieces & nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; an infant son, Jonathan David Dickson; two brothers, Charles Andrew Dickson Jr. and Edwin Earl Dickson; and one sister, Jo Ann Dickson.

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 7 a.m. Monday and 7 a.m. today:

- TERRENCE ALI YOUNG, 23, of 711 Abrams, was arrested Monday on charges of evading arrest or detention with a previous conviction and violation of a protective order.
- ROBERT RUBEN SANCHEZ, 48, of 1023 Stadium, was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.
- BRENDA LUNA VALDIVIA, 32, of 1603 Wood, was arrested Monday on a charge of abandoning/endangering a child – criminal negligence.
- DENNIS MICHAEL RICHARDSON II, 28, of 1708 S. Owens, was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.
- LYDIA MARIE HERNANDEZ, 19, of 1519 Wood, was arrested Monday on a charge of theft – more than \$500 and less than \$1,500.
- GEORGE JEFFERY WRIGHT, 21, of Bullhead City, Ariz., was arrested Monday on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- THEFT was reported:  
In the 1300 block of Wood.  
In the 200 block of W. FM 700.  
In the 3300 block of FM 700.  
In the 200 block of W. FM 700.  
In the 900 block of Willia.
- BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE was reported:  
In the 500 block of Edwards Blvd.  
In the 1800 block of Morrison.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION was reported in the 600 block of E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street.
- ASSAULT was reported:  
In the 1600 block of Martin Luther King Blvd.  
In the 3600 block of W. Highway 80.

## Sheriff

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

- Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 64 inmates at the time of this report.
- TERRENCE A. YOUNG, 23, was booked into the county detention center Monday by the BSPD on charges of evading arrest or detention and violation of bond/protective order.
  - LYDIA MARIE HERNANDEZ, 19, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft of property – more than \$500 and less than \$1,500.
  - ROBERT RUBIN SANCHEZ, 48, was booked into the county detention center Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
  - BRENDA LUNA VALDIVIA, 32, was booked into the county detention center Monday by the

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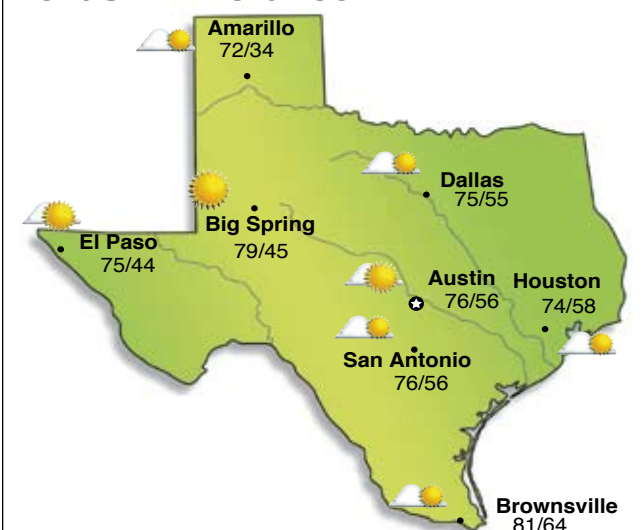
## Today's Weather

## Local 5-Day Forecast

Thu 12/6	Fri 12/7	Sat 12/8	Sun 12/9	Mon 12/10
<b>79/45</b> Sunny. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the mid 40s.	<b>78/48</b> A few clouds. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the upper 40s.	<b>77/49</b> Sunshine. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the upper 40s.	<b>77/35</b> Abundant sunshine. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the mid 30s.	<b>61/33</b> Morning clouds followed by afternoon sun.
<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:34 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:34 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:35 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:36 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:41 PM	<b>Sunrise:</b> 7:37 AM <b>Sunset:</b> 5:42 PM

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## Texas At A Glance



## Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	77	51	sunny	Kingsville	81	63	pt sunny
Amarillo	72	34	pt sunny	Livingston	74	55	pt sunny
Austin	76	56	mst sunny	Longview	71	54	pt sunny
Beaumont	72	57	pt sunny	Lubbock	78	39	mst sunny
Brownsville	81	64	pt sunny	Lufkin	75	55	pt sunny
Brownwood	79	52	sunny	Midland	80	47	sunny
Corpus Christi	77	64	pt sunny	Raymondville	81	63	pt sunny
Corsicana	75	54	pt sunny	Rosenberg	75	58	pt sunny
Dallas	75	55	pt sunny	San Antonio	76	56	pt sunny
Del Rio	79	56	sunny	San Marcos	76	56	mst sunny
El Paso	75	44	mst sunny	Sulphur Springs	72	54	mst sunny
Fort Stockton	84	53	sunny	Sweetwater	77	48	sunny
Gainesville	73	49	sunny	Tyler	74	55	pt sunny
Greenville	72	52	pt sunny	Weatherford	75	50	sunny
Houston	74	58	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	76	44	pt sunny

BSPD on a charge of abandoning/endangering a child – criminal negligence.

• DENNIS MICHAEL RICHARDSON, 28, was booked into the county detention center Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

• GEORGE JEFFERY WRIGHT JR., 21, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while license invalid.

## Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 2800 block of Goliad. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1400 block of Lancaster. Service refused.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 200 block of W. Marcy. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of Birdwell Lane. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2000 block of Rickabaugh. Service refused.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of FM 700 and S. Anderson Road. One person was air evacuated from the scene.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the area of Rock House Road. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 1800 block of Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 300 block of Veterans Blvd. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the area of S. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 1100 block of Lloyd. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 2300 block of Wasson. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of S. Lancaster. Service refused.

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# Take note

• Big Spring Independent School District will hold a Key Communicator meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday in the high school board room. Registration for the event is necessary — call Jar-jary Fulgham at 264-300 or email jfulgham@bsisd.esc18.net.

• There will be a Christmas Sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at My Redeemer Church, 1008 Birdwell Lane. A wide variety of gifts for people of all ages will be available, most for between \$1 and \$5.

• Big Spring State Hospital patients are in need of warm clothing. Clean items should be taken to the Community Relations Office near the south entrance of the hospital, 1901 N. U.S. Highway 87. Clothing that cannot be used by the patients will be taken to the hospital's Chalet Resale Shop for sale to raise money for patient needs. Men's clothing and larger-sized clothing are always in need. For more information, call Melissa Adams, BSSH program coordinator, at 432-268-7730.

• Whiting Oil and Gas Big Spring employees are organizing a food drive to help families in need throughout the community. The drive will be held through Dec. 20. Food donations (non-perishable) can be dropped off at the Whiting Big Spring Field Office, 5306 South Service Road. For more information, call the local office at 432-264-

0004 and ask for Cindy Klaus, Vickie Reynolds or Mark Strickland.

• An account for Bill Griffen has been established at the Big Spring Education Employees Federal Credit Union, 1110 Benton. Griffen, a Big Spring resident, recently passed away and the family is in need of funds for funeral arrangements.

• An account has been set up at Western Bank for Kristen Lasater and family, who lost their home to a house fire Monday afternoon. The account number, for those wanting to make a donation, is 1004597.

• An account has been set up at Citizen's Credit Union for Emma Leos, who was recently diagnosed with colon cancer.

• Jo Anna Bailey, an aide for many years at Washington Elementary School, has been diagnosed with cancer. A medical donation account has been established for her at the Big Spring Education Credit Union, located at 1110 Benton. Your generosity will enable her to have much-needed tests and treatment.

• Compass Hospice is in need of your help. If you would be interested in offering your love and God's comfort to those who are suffering, or to their families, contact Michelle Cou-

termarsh at 263-5999 or come by 602 S. Main. Volunteers are needed in many categories including patient care. You may give as much or as little time as you wish. Any amount of time is greatly appreciated. Training is offered free of charge.

• An account has been established at Big Spring Community Federal Credit Union in the name of Glenda Berger, who was recently diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Donations will be used to help defer medical costs and mounting bills. All donations are greatly appreciated. Call Big Spring Community Federal Credit Union at 800-299-6761.

• The Big Spring State Hospital Volunteer Services Council needs assistance in The Chalet Resale Shoppe, 115 East Second St. The Chalet Resale Shoppe is a fast-paced retail shop specializing in gently worn clothing and small household appliance. Volunteers are needed to sort, price, check out and stock donated items. Volunteer hours are flexible. The Chalet is open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, contact Jamey Stegall at james.stegall@dshs.state.tx.us or 432-268-7535.

• Every Friday night from 7:30 p.m. until 10 p.m. is dance night at the Senior Citizen Center. The cost is \$8 per

person.

• Mobile Meals is in need of volunteer delivery drivers. If you can donate one hour per week to help deliver meals to the elderly, call Macaria Cantu at 263-4016.

• Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St., has a brief, inspirational message before giving away food and clothing on Thursday mornings. Be there at 9 a.m.-11 a.m. and get two for one plus a rehab meeting.

• Home Hospice is seeking volunteers. 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.

• 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. For more information, contact Emma Bogard at 432-267-2963.

• The Salvation Army is sponsoring its annual fan 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.

## RULE

Continued from Page 1

...tivation to perform better in the classroom, but as with everything else, the devil is in the details and things descended into chaos."

One of the biggest objections educators had to the rule is that state

test results would not be known until months after exams were taken. Under that scenario, students could end the school year believing they had passed a course, only to learn during the summer they had failed the test, thus lowering their overall class grade.

"The logistics and

the timing were not accounted for when they rolled out this plan," Coahoma ISD Superintendent Amy Jacobs said.

Jacobs also noted students are required to pass the end of course exams anyway, so this added accountability requirement was unnecessary.

It is expected state legislators will consider a bill permanently doing away with the requirement when they convene in January. Both Johnson and Jacobs said they would support such a bill.

"(Removing the rule) would allow us to focus on students' classroom performance, without

having to be concerned with behind the scene stuff ... like trying to determine how it would impact student scores," Jacobs said.

Johnson said the rule will not be missed if it is eliminated.

"The general idea behind the rule was a good one. It just didn't work out," he said. "We con-

tinue to appreciate the Legislature's efforts to motivate students, but we're relieved this plan has been postponed and hope it will be put away permanently.

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

## CHARGE

Continued from Page 1

...to jail officials. Bond had not been set at press time.

According to Sgt. Tony Everett, public information officer for the Big Spring Police

Department, officers were dispatched to the 1700 block of Kentucky Way at approximately 3:34 p.m. after a citizen reported a small child wandering through the street.

"Officers made contact with the child, who knew her mother's first

name but didn't know her address," Everett said. "The child told officers she was going to meet her sister, who was getting out of school soon. The child was walking with two small dogs."

Everett said officers took the child to a se-

cure location and began searching for her mother.

"We were able to identify and locate the girl's mother shortly after that," Everett said. "We tracked the mother down to 1603 Wood. The woman told officers she had been drinking and

her child had only been missing 15 minutes. However, the child had been with officers for more than 45 minutes at that point, so there's really no way to know how long the child had been alone, walking the streets."

Everett said the child

suffered no injuries as a result of the incident.

Monday's altercation is the third report of abandoning/endangering a child — criminal negligence to be reported and result in an arrest in Howard County in less than a week.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232.

## TRIAL

Continued from Page 1

Jury selection was previously scheduled to take place Monday, however, illness struck again, according to Assistant District Attorney Robin Orr.

"Last time it was Mr. Richard who fell ill and this time it's the court reporter," Orr said. "However, if all goes well, we'll be able to choose the jury this morning and begin testimony shortly after that."

According to the in-

dictment, all four incidents happened in 2010 with the first occurring March 1 and the last happening on or about Nov. 24.

The case was investigated by the Big Spring Police Department, according to court records.

If convicted, Gonzales could face from five to 99 years or life in prison for each count, as well as a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

According to court records, Orr is expected to present the state's case, while Richard, a Big Spring attorney, will be

heading up the defense.

The jury was expected to be empaneled this morning with pretrial motions in the case presented to District Judge Timothy Yeats just after lunch.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232.

## ANGEL

Continued from Page 1

After the application process is completed, the names of the children approved for the program are placed on angel ornaments — paper cards currently adorning the Angel Trees set up throughout the community — along with the child's wish list for the Christmas holiday.

And while the program is off to a good start, Lafler said the local charity is far from out of the woods yet.

"It's always a good thing when the angel cards are picked up this quick, however, they aren't being turned back in very quickly," she said. "We really need the folks who have chosen angel cards to get them — along with the gift items — back in as quickly as possible. That way something important doesn't come

up in the meantime and they aren't able to get them back to us until the last minute."

Lafler said Angel Trees are located at Blums Jewelers in the Big Spring Mall, Big Spring Herald, Higanbotham-Bartlett Hardware, Just Peachy Cafe, Bealls Department Store, Walmart Super-Center, Howard County Library, Alon USA's Big Spring Refinery and the Scenic Mountain Medical Center lobby.

While the annual program provides local families a chance to be charitable during the holiday season — as well as teach their children,

by example, the importance of helping out the less fortunate — Lafler said it's very important to remember what a tremendous impact it can have on the recipients.

"Many of these children feel like society — and even life — have given up on them. That's a tough position to handle when you're only 10 or 11 years old," Lafler said. "This program, however, offers them a reminder that people still care."

"It shows them that even though most people are caught up in the everyday hustle and bustle of the world, especially during the holiday sea-

son, they are still taking time and money from of their own lives and giving them a reason to wake up Christmas morning with a smile. No child should ever have to wake up Christmas morning without a gift under the tree."

The deadline for donors to return their angel cards and gifts is Monday, Dec. 17, at 5 p.m. For more information on the program, call 432-267-8239 or stop by the Salvation Army office, located at 811 W Fifth Street.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232.

## sudoku

ANSWERS

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

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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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**Bill McClellan**  
Managing Editor

**Steve Reagan**  
Staff Writer

**Thomas Jenkins**  
Staff Writer

## OUR VIEW

# Sending out 'thank you's'

Another *Big Spring Herald* Community Christmas Parade — the 27th, to be exact — is in the books. We've received quite a few compliments on this year's edition, and several people have thanked us for staging the event.

Compliments and pats on the back, while certainly appreciated, aren't required. Believe us, it was our pleasure. Seeing so many people come together to celebrate the holiday was more than thanks enough.

While we're talking about thanks, however, there's a few we want to send to people who went above and beyond to help us make the parade a success:

- Texas Department of Transportation — It's no small thing to shut down a stretch of U.S. highway for any reason, much less a parade, but the good people at TxDOT came through for us, just as they always have.

- Chief Lonnie Smith and the Big Spring Police Department — Speaking of logistical nightmares, keeping traffic away from Gregg Street during the parade had to be difficult, to say the least. But Chief Smith and his officers did a superb job.

- Sheriff Stan Parker and the Howard County Sheriff's Office — What we just wrote about BSPD can also be applied to Sheriff Parker and his deputies, as well. And Deputies Jimmy Mayes and James Dunlap deserve thanks for making sure Santa and Mrs. Claus made it the parade on time.

- Assistant City Manager Todd Darden and his crews — We had to effectively shut down several blocks prior the start of the parade, and the job of rerouting traffic from those areas fell to city street crews. Working on a normal off day, the crews did a wonderful job.

- Parade Grand Marshal Dathan Jones and judges Sheila Abusaab, Tommy Duncan and Eddy Prince, for taking time away from their busy schedules to help us out.

- Radio station KBYG, for simulcasting the parade.

- Tommy Churchwell and 87 Auto Sales, for providing vehicles for the parade. Santa may just want to ditch his reindeer and use Churchwell's red Jaguar in the future.

What if they held a parade and nobody came? Fortunately, we didn't have to answer that question, thanks to the hundreds of people who participated and the even greater number who lined Gregg Street to share in the fun.

So, our biggest thanks go to the members of the community. It's a cliché, but it's still true — without you, none of this would have been possible.

Thanks to one and all, and here's to a very Merry Christmas.

# Exposing Obama's agenda

We can get back to discussing GOP minority constituent recruitment soon, but in the meantime, we have a fiscal cliff issue that beckons — the real fiscal cliff (America's imminent financial collapse), not the government shutdown molehill everyone is agonizing over.

Congressional Republicans should look at their party's loss in the presidential election as liberating. They surely now understand that the strategy of soft-pedaling Obama's record and agenda doesn't work. They surely grasp that its fear of calling President Obama out on his real intentions and the disastrous consequences of his destructive policies just plays into his hands and enables the advancement of his agenda.

So, how about some bold, straight language from our side? How about telling the American people exactly what Obama is up to? How about drawing a line in the sand right now — before the pseudo "fiscal cliff" negotiations even begin — and announcing there is no point to entering these farcical talks because they don't share the same goals? Republicans want to prevent a national financial collapse, and Obama wants to keep spending and prevent entitlement reform so that he can complete his task of fundamentally transforming America.

Obama is already engaging in doublespeak and deception about his goals in these negotiations, and Republicans, instead of permitting him to control the language and the narrative, should flush his true intentions into the open at the very outset.

Let's start with this fact: Obama doesn't want to raise "revenues." He wants to raise tax rates on the "wealthy," a group that includes tons of people who are not wealthy, and a policy that may well not raise

significant revenues anyway. Even if you assume tax hikes on those who provide the lion's share of American jobs won't further suppress economic growth and thus revenues, the amount of money they would generate won't make a dent in our annual deficits, much less our crushing national debt.

So Republicans must assert that Obama's uncompromising demand that we raise taxes on the "wealthy" is not about raising revenue, but redistributing wealth and punishing the rich.

Every honest, informed person knows we cannot bring our budget and debt into balance without major structural entitlement reform and real reductions in discretionary spending.

Here again, Obama has made it very clear he doesn't share the goals of reducing spending and reforming entitlements.

He not only refuses to restructure entitlements and seriously reduce discretionary spending (except military), but he's salivating over the prospect of spending (he calls it "investing") any "revenues" the tax hikes generate.

The naked reality is that Obama and his Democratic Party are entering these budget negotiations in bad faith.

Republicans must confront Obama, using plainspoken English words as defined in the dictionary. Either he doesn't believe spending and entitlement reforms are essential to balancing the budget and averting a financial collapse, which would make him more obtuse than any president in history, or he doesn't have any intention of addressing our deficit and debt problems. Either way, he has obstructed any serious spending and entitlement reform initiatives for four years and still hasn't put a plan on the table. It's imperative that we conclude he is going to use all his power to prevent such actions going forward.

On those rare occasions when Obama is forced to discuss entitlement reform, he demagogues and lies about alleged reductions in entitlement benefits to the

middle class and seniors that would occur under Republican plans. But we have no choice but to institute and manage a reform plan on our own terms, such as Paul Ryan's Path to Prosperity, which does in fact preserve benefits for the most vulnerable groups and causes as little pain to others as possible. Otherwise, our exploding expenditures are going to force reform upon us the hard way, with an ugly Grecian-style financial collapse that will make 2008 look like child's play and show us what real pain is.

If the GOP acts forcefully and boldly, it may still prevent this collapse. But if not, when we are hurtling toward the Earth together, we can do so knowing we did all we could to save this great nation for our children. Or we can reminisce about how the GOP again pulled its punches for fear of looking mean-spirited or because they, too, didn't believe their own rhetoric or possess the courage of their convictions.

Before Republicans reenter this process of what are sure to be futile negotiations, please let them put their case before the American people and force Obama to explain his actual intentions. It's time to have this out and to force a sober national assessment of where we are and where we're going.

Out in the open, perhaps we can discover whether a majority of Americans truly share Obama's goal of obstructing spending and entitlement reform and thus destroying America's future. The rest of us have a right to know.

*David Limbaugh is a writer, author and attorney. His latest book, "The Great Destroyer," reached No. 2 on the New York Times best-seller list for nonfiction. 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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# Elder lobby: Back off on Medicare

AARP's shot over the bow on the fiscal cliff talks is most unpleasant. Perhaps you've seen the ad on TV. As seniors go about their day, a stern female voice says of Medicare and Social Security, "We earned them." She goes on, "If Washington tries to cram decisions about the future of these programs into a last-minute budget deal, we'll all pay the price." She left out "down your throat."

Several unpleasanties here, in addition to the blatant threat. There's the return to the nastiness and half-truths that buried productive conversation during the debate over ObamaCare.

Unlike Social Security, Medicare is only a partly earned benefit.

The average two-earner couple retiring at 65 can expect about \$351,000 in benefits after paying \$116,000 in lifetime Medicare taxes.

Medicare should be subsidized by other taxpayers, but don't pretend it's not.

The AARP ad was a bit unexpected in that the lobbying group for older Americans supported the Affordable Care Act — Medicare savings and all. Why it's running this ad now is unclear.

Does anyone seriously believe that a cherished universal program like Medicare is going to be quickly chopped up just to get us past the fiscal cliff? Or is this about marketing? Anyhow, one wishes that the

elderly and those claiming to represent them would get over the idea — as AARP did during the ObamaCare brawl — that savings in Medicare spending automatically translate into benefit cuts.

The elderly lost not a splinter of benefits in the reforms. They actually gained some.

A more positive tone on the ways we can curb our rising health care costs is in order.

Think of replacing a 1975 refrigerator with a modern energy-efficient model.

The new one does the same thing — and perhaps new tricks, like making ice — but costs less to run. No one would see this as any kind of appliance come-down.

But something about health care hinders our accepting that savings can be found that don't impair quality of product.

Look at Canada. From 1980 through 2009, its medical spending on those 65 and older rose only 73 percent (after inflation), while American spending rose nearly 200 percent, according to a study in the Archives of Internal Medicine. Making this difference still more remarkable is that the Canadian system has not allowed deductibles and copayments since 1984.

Had America done what Canada did, it would have spent \$2.16 trillion less over these three decades.

And yes, medical outcomes for older Canadians were as good (or better) than those for their U.S. contemporaries.

Of course, Canada's simple single-payer system saves a good deal on paperwork and other administration costs.

Canada places hospitals under strict budgets, and controls

spending on new buildings and equipment.

By contrast, America's medical-industrial complex thrives on quantity of care. (Lots of studies find that overtreatment can actually hurt patients.)

Clearly, America is not going the single-payer route, nor should it.

Having the government pick up all medical bills creates its own problems. But we can do some of the same things within the context of our multipayer setup.

In Canada, the government negotiates better prices for drugs. Our Medicare drug benefit forbids that.

Canadians emphasize primary care, which means a family doctor — not an expensive otolaryngologist — gets first crack at a sore throat.

Another Canadian advantage is lower medical malpractice costs. American conservatives are right: We must curb litigation.

Like the \$10,000 handbag that's become a status symbol because it costs so damn much, America's extravagant medical system has been sold on the notion that the more you pay, the more you get. In health care, that's not necessarily so. In some cases, the opposite is true.

*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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DAVID  
LIMBAUGH



FROMA  
HARROP



# Bird Poop: A reluctant stop on '01' 80'

December had just begun when the arctic air blustered into town. Its flailing mesquite limbs against the uppermost part of our chimney interrupted the evening news. Relentlessly, it pounded against the north side of the house. We could just imagine the myriad piles of leaves left behind.



BEBE McCASLAND

When I opened the front door the next morning, leaves from neighborhood fruit trees and red oaks, as well as errant pine needles, covered the doorstep. A last, gasping gust of the norther ushered them past my slippers and into the entryway.

Late that afternoon, the phone rang. "Old Highway 80," said the excited caller. "In front of the motel," she continued.

"What did she say she had?" asked Art as he loaded a pole net, towel and carrier into our vehicle. "The woman didn't know what it was. She said it couldn't walk and wouldn't fly."

After turning west on to "Ol' 80," we neared the Coca Cola plant. Ahead, several people were standing near the edge of the pavement. A vintage motel was to their north.

As we pulled off the pavement and eased toward the group, a woman approached our SUV. Gesturing for us to follow her, we were curious as to what she had.

Resting on its belly with legs and feet splayed was a large gray bird. Not having ever handled such a creature, I was relieved when Art said, "It's a loon."

Having rescued vari-

ous grebes and coots, I immediately sensed what had happened. In approaching the sheen reflected from the pavement during the latter part of the day, the loon had anticipated the soft buoyancy of what it thought was water.

Unable to slow its momentum with its small wings, the bird was accustomed to hitting watery surfaces with its breast after a rapid descent. Once its heavy body had created a huge spray on either side, it would have settled into a lake or pond to feed and rest.

Smacking the asphalt surface of Ol' 80 instead, the loon had tumbled onto the punishing rocks and gravel adjacent to the pavement. Covered with dust, its disheveled feathers were an indication of an abrupt landing. Helpless on land, it could only push itself forward while trying to keep its balance. Because its legs and webbed feet were located near the back of its body, they were useless for walking.

In water, they would enable it to be an excellent diver and swimmer. To become airborne again, the loon required a lake or pond. Running on top of the water, it could obtain

forward momentum and air speed necessary for flight.

Trying to enfold the loon's wings against its body brought several jabs to the top of my hands from its long, sharp bill. As I lifted the eight to nine pound bird, its legs began to pedal madly as if on an imaginary bicycle.

Round and round its big feet churned the air. To witness the avian version of a "dog paddle" was to know it had proven its ability to ply the waters of any inland lake or deep reservoir.

Once the loon was in our carrier, I realized parts of my face and hands were numb from the cold wind that continued to blow. Although the bird was well insulated, the people who had discovered it and remained with it must have been very uncomfortable. By the time we ar-

rived in our driveway, the sun was setting. Wanting to make sure the loon was releasable, we took our time in examining the bird. A few minor abrasions on its feet and legs would not delay its continued travel the next day.

For its protection, nature had given the common loon a dull appearance of gray to gray-brown above, while under parts were white. This would be its non-breeding winter plumage until February or March.

Then its plumage would change. To accent a glossy black head and neck, vertical black and white streaks would adorn its throat. Its black back would be checkered with white squares, while white dots decorated its black wings, sides and flanks. Even its bill would be black. In breeding coloration it would fly northward to remote

lakes hidden in forests. After several phone calls to get permission to access private ponds, we decided to hold the bird overnight. Accepting that some releases do not go as planned, we did not want to be traipsing across private property or trying to net a loon in the dark.

The next morning I glanced inside its carrier.

Resting on a soft pile of old towels, the water bird had accomplished some preening during the night.

Over breakfast we learned that sleet had been forecast. After donning several layers of clothing in addition to coats, hats and gloves, we drove to the release site.

As he brought the carrier out of the vehicle, Art felt the first pellets of ice hit his face. Soon, the tempo of the falling sleet increased. Its drumming on the dried

grasses surrounding the water was complemented by its plunking entries into the mirrored surface.

With the touch of moisture, the loon's feet began to paddle. Eager to put some distance between us, it dove and reappeared some forty feet away.

Diving and resurfacing again and again, it surely found the minnows and aquatic life to its liking.

Our walk back to the vehicle and drive back to town were accompanied by a continuous pelting of ice, nature's reminder of the winter to come. However, the weather could not dampen our experience of having shared the presence of a unique creature.

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



Courtesy photo

Hard frosts in northern climes prompt the common loon to migrate southward. Rising out of the water, it will stand almost erect. Running as fast as it can on the surface, and with its wings flapping, the bird will become airborne. This specie has been rescued in Dawson, Howard, Midland, and Mitchell counties.

# Looking for — and finding — our center

I was listening to an old John Denver song recently,



DARRELL RYAN

"Looking For Space," and he made the comment "Then I looked to the center and suddenly everything's clear."

I pondered on that statement for a while and had to ask myself, where is my center and have I found my center?

As I pondered, I decided that being at the 'center' is being at the heart of a satisfying, productive and effective life.

It is that spot of calm and relaxation where inspiration begins to take over and we feel that we are on track and at a point where

we can think things through and reach satisfaction.

It's a lot like a carpenter's level, where the bubble lies at the center of being on the level or perfection.

This point can be reached in spite of apparent difficulties, stressful feelings, agitations and irritations.

I have read that this concept of 'center' is normally built into the human psyche much as

the ideal temperature is built into the body. When there is a problem of being off-center, the body naturally attempts to return to normal.

But we might ask: how's that's done?

One author states that paying close attention to our feelings and thoughts is the beginning.

When we feel ourselves beginning to become tense and stressed

we can feel ourselves losing our 'center,' so we must attempt to let go of the stressful, tense feelings and allow our mind to get us back on track.

Built into our 'center' is the wisdom we need to put all odds back into our favor. Staying close to our 'center' really does bring its rewards.

So it begins to make sense, as Denver states: Looking to the center and suddenly "every-

thing's clear and I'm lost in the sunshine and my dreams."

Looking to the center allows our natural wisdom to move into our thinking, clear our minds and help us plot the course we need to go.

Thanks for your wisdom, John.

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

# Gingerbread houses go pro in holiday displays

By BETH J. HARPAZ  
 AP Travel Editor

NEW YORK — Out of the kitchen and into the hotel lobby: Gingerbread houses have gone from being a homemade project done with mom to professional exhibits designed by pastry chefs and sometimes even ar-

chitects.

And never mind the humble miniature: Some displays are life-size, while others depict entire villages. A few extravaganzas raise money for charity, while some include contests for home bakers. Many are part of larger Christ-

mas celebrations at luxury hotels that also showcase decorated trees, Santa visits and holiday menus.

Susan Matheson, co-author of the book "The Gingerbread Architect: Recipes and Blueprints

See PRO, Page 6

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## PRO

Continued from Page 5

for Twelve Classic American Homes," says these types of professional gingerbread creations "are elaborately detailed, spellbinding constructions that must require an army of pastry chefs, historians, engineers and consulting experts. The results can elevate the craft to a high art form that transports the viewer into an ethereal miniature fairy world." But Matheson doesn't approve of glue

guns or other non-edible components: "It's 100 percent digestible or count me out."

For those who admire both homemade and high art gingerbread houses, here are details on a few extravagant displays around the country this holiday season.

For the fourth year, Le Parker Meridien hotel in midtown Manhattan is hosting a lobby display of gingerbread houses designed by New York City bakeries. The houses include replicas of landmarks like the Egyptian Sphinx, the

MexicantempleChichen Itza and the Lincoln Memorial. A gingerbread creation of the hotel's executive chef Emile Castillo was inspired by a recent real-life headline, depicting a crane left dangling by Hurricane Sandy from atop a building on 57th Street. Customers of the hotel restaurant, Norma's, can get a ticket to vote on their favorite house by adding \$1 to their checks; the money goes to City Harvest, a local food bank.

The Mohegan Sun casino and resort in Uncasville, Conn., hosts

a life-size gingerbread house that's 28 feet high (8.5 meters) and 20,000 pounds (9,000 kilos), made from 6,000 gingerbread bricks. Visitors can walk through the home to see tiny rooms decorated for Christmas with a holiday tree, chocolate stockings and cookies for Santa.

In Hawaii, a Waikiki hotel has a miniature global village in gingerbread. The display at the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani includes models of London's Tower Bridge, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, a pagoda from Yakushiji Temple in

the ancient Japanese capital of Nara, and Hawaii's own Iolani Palace. Executive Chef Ralf Bauer started the tradition years ago to recreate scenery from his native Germany.

At the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, N.C., a gingerbread contest that began as a local event 20 years ago is now a national competition with more than \$7,500 in cash and prizes.

This year's 182 entries — including some from teens and young children — were judged by a panel that included pastry chefs, cookbook

authors and a museum curator.

A prize was also awarded to the gingerbread chef from farthest away, which this year went to a cook from Massachusetts. The contest requires all entries to be completely edible.

In Philadelphia, a gingerbread display at The Shops at Liberty Place made by Philadelphia chefs was modeled after Fairmount Park historic sites.

The display, up until Dec. 9, serves as a preview event for the annual tour of Fairmount Park historic homes.

# Christmas Coloring Contest



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## COLORING CONTEST RULES

- Contest open to children ages 2-12
- Limit one contest submission per person
- Contest entries may be completed using markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
- Adults may assist in completing entry form information, but not in coloring pictures.
- All entries must be received by the Big Spring Herald by 5 pm on Friday, Dec. 7, 2012
- Winners will be notified by phone on Monday, December 10, 2012
- Decision of judges is final.
- Employees of the Big Spring Herald and contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
- All submissions become property of the Big Spring Herald and may be published accordingly.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE

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## REINDEER GAMES

Don't let your brain hibernate on winter break! Join in the Reindeer Games and see if you can solve these puzzles designed to boggle your mind!

### Change HOT Into TEA

Change the word **HOT** into the word **TEA** in just four steps. Change only one letter at a time. Need help? Look at how Randolph changed a **DOG** into a **CAT**.

Hint: Golfers use the word on line 4.

1	H	O	T
2			
3			
4			
5	T	E	A

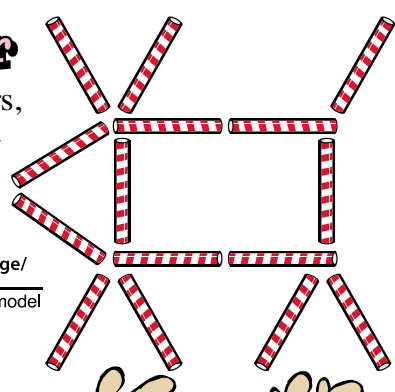
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### Peppermint Puzzler

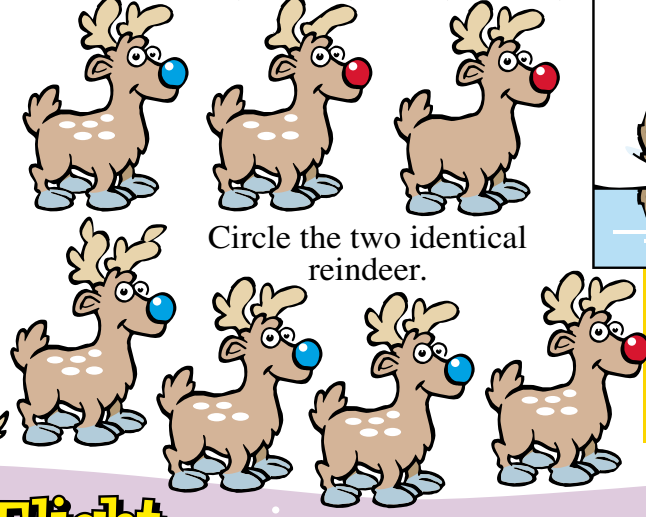
This reindeer has a head, antlers, a tail, legs and a body. Can you move just two peppermint sticks to make the reindeer look in the opposite direction?

Solution at [www.kidscoop.com/kids/answer\\_page/](http://www.kidscoop.com/kids/answer_page/)

Standards Link: Math/Problem Solving: Make a model to solve a problem.



Thinking this hard makes my antlers sore!



Circle the two identical reindeer.



How many differences can you find between the two pictures above?

Standards Link: Investigation: Identify similarities and differences in common objects.

### Extra! Extra! Headline Values

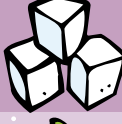

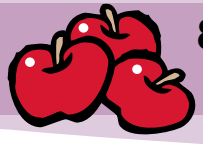
Pretend each letter of the alphabet could be exchanged for money. Imagine **A = \$1, B = \$2** and so forth until you get to **Z** which would equal **\$26**.

Find a headline and figure out what each letter in the headline is worth. Add up those numbers to figure out what the dollar value of the entire headline would be.

Standards Link: Math/Number Sense: Solve addition problems using money amounts.

### Food Flight

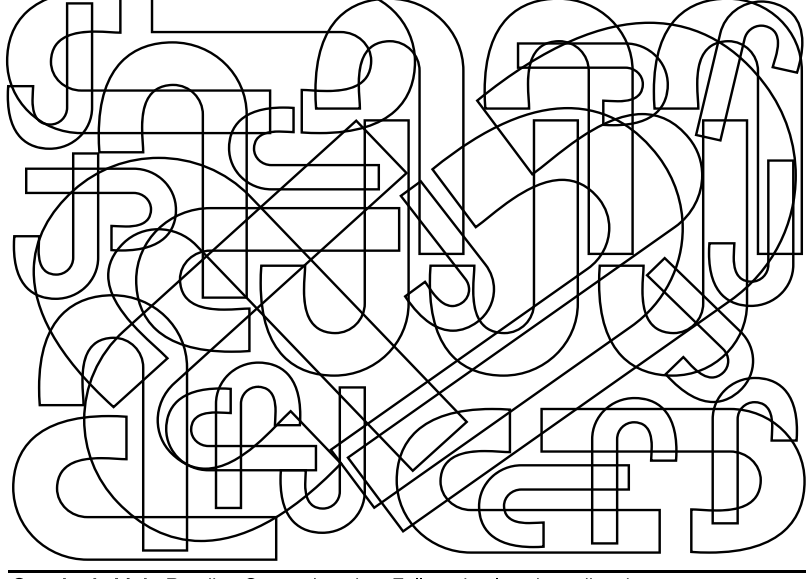
Rhoda is doing a little flight practice. Elmer Elf left her favorite treats: apples, carrots and sugar cubes. To help her get the treats, look at each math problem and the numbers next to each treat. Place a number in each empty box so that the problem equals the answer. Use each of these numbers only once. (There is more than one possible solution for each problem.)

<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> = 4		8 9 3 6
<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> = 7		5 2 8 4
<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> = 5		8 7 10 6

Standards Link: Math: Solve addition and subtraction problems.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

How many candy canes can you find in this box?



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Double Double Word Search

REINDEER PUZZLES TREATS CANDY GEOMETRIC HIBERNATE MONEY ANTLERS BRAIN LEGS BODY WINTER SOLVE HARD MIND

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

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

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

### Fill in the Blanks!

Ask a friend to come up with three nouns (person, place or thing) and three verbs (action words like swim and walk). Use them to fill in the blanks in this story. Read it aloud to share some holiday humor!

NOUN 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
NOUN 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
NOUN 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
VERB 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
VERB 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
VERB 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Ricky Reindeer wanted to get a special gift for his friend Sadie Squirrel. He walked deep into the forest, and was surprised to find a shiny, new \_\_\_\_\_ in the

\_\_\_\_\_ snow. He picked it up and started to \_\_\_\_\_ back home. He wrapped the gift in \_\_\_\_\_ and put a nice big \_\_\_\_\_ on top.

Sadie was thrilled with the gift. She was so happy, she began to \_\_\_\_\_ around in the snow. Ricky was happy, too. So he began to \_\_\_\_\_ merrily while jumping for joy.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Understand text from context clues.

### Chilly Challenge

Edith Elf wanted to measure the snowfall at the North Pole for one week. She started on Sunday, and stopped the next Saturday. It snowed every day that week. Each day the amount of snow in her bucket doubled. On Saturday, the bucket was full.

On what day of the week was Edith's bucket half full?

### Kid Scoop-doku








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

S	L	E	I	G	H
	I		S		
G		S		I	
	S				
				H	L
I	E		H		S

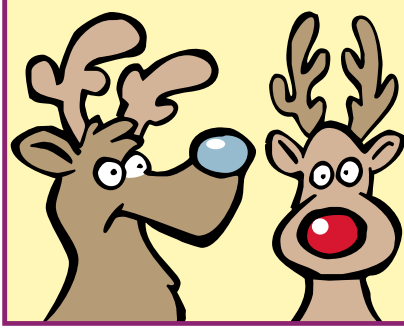
### BEYOND Kid Scoop

#### Get In Shape

Find examples of each of these geometric shapes in your newspaper.

-  pentagon
-  circle
-  square
-  trapezoid
-  triangle
-  rectangle
-  octagon

Standards Link: Math: Geometry: Identify basic geometric shapes.



### Which reindeer have trunks?

ANSWER: The ones going on vacation.

### Write On!

**Make a Brain Builder**  
Make up a holiday math problem that is a story problem. Include the answer. Be sure the holiday is a wintertime holiday.  
Example: There was 5 feet of snow on the ground. When the next snowstorm hit, the new storm dropped 3 feet of snow. How much snow is on the ground now? (Answer: 8 feet.)



## News in brief

### GOP plan would raise Medicare

### Age, lower Social Security COLAs, while raising \$800B in revenue

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans are proposing a “fiscal cliff” plan that revives ideas from failed budget talks with President Barack Obama last year, calling for raising the eligibility age for Medicare, lowering cost-of-living hikes for Social Security benefits and bringing in \$800 billion in higher tax revenue.

The counter to a White House plan last week relies more on politically sensitive spending cuts and would raise half the \$1.6 trillion in revenue proposed by Obama over the coming decade.

The 10-year, \$2.2 trillion proposal from House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, resembles a framework similar to what Boehner supported last year, but Obama is pressing for additional tax increases and appears to be balking at spending cuts discussed in those talks and since.

Administration officials from Obama on down say it’ll take money from raising tax rates on the rich — instead of GOP proposals to simply curb their deductions — to win Obama’s approval of any plan to avoid the “fiscal cliff.”

While intended to break a stalemate in place since the administration last week angered Republicans with a \$1.6 trillion plan that largely exempted Medicare and Social Security from budget cuts, Monday’s proposal sparked a predictable round of partisanship.

### Egypt’s independent papers suspend publication in latest protest against president

CAIRO (AP) — Several independent Egyptian newspapers suspended publication Tuesday as protesters prepared for marches amid mounting anger over the hurried drafting of the country’s new constitution adopted by an Islamist-led panel.

The media protest involved at least eight influential dailies and was part of a planned campaign of civil dis-

obedience that could bring in other industries and build on an ongoing strike by Egypt’s judges.

Meanwhile, opponents of President Mohammed Morsi planned a massive rally outside the presidential palace in Cairo later Tuesday — the latest against the draft constitution and decrees by the Islamist leader giving him nearly unrestricted powers. Morsi called for a nationwide referendum on the draft on Dec. 15.

The draft constitution has been criticized for not protecting the rights of women and minority groups, and many journalists see it as restricting freedom of expression. Critics also say it empowers Islamic religious clerics by giving them a say over legislation, while some articles were seen as tailored to get rid of Islamists’ enemies.

The country’s privately owned TV networks are planning their own protest Wednesday, when they will blacken their screens all day.

### Iran state TV: Revolutionary Guard captures another U.S. drone

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran’s state TV said Tuesday that the country’s Revolutionary Guard has captured a U.S. drone after it entered Iranian airspace over the Persian Gulf.

The report quoted the Guard’s navy chief, Gen. Ali Fadavi, as saying that the Iranian forces caught the “intruding” drone, which had apparently taken off from a U.S. aircraft carrier.

Fadavi said the unmanned ScanEagle aircraft was now in Iran’s possession.

“The U.S. drone, which was conducting a reconnaissance flight and gathering data over the Persian Gulf in the past few days, was captured by the Guard’s navy air defense unit as soon as it entered Iranian airspace,” Fadavi said. “Such drones usually take off from large warships.”

### Offices of Japan tunnel operator searched after deadly cave-in raises concerns

TOKYO (AP) — Police investigating an expressway-tunnel ceiling collapse

that killed nine people searched the offices of the tunnel operator Tuesday to see if there is any evidence that the company neglected safety.

Hundreds of concrete slabs collapsed Sunday deep inside the Sasebo Tunnel west of Tokyo, falling on three moving vehicles. The accident is raising calls for more spending on Japan’s aging infrastructure.

The tunnel, a major link between Tokyo and central Japan, opened in 1977 at about the peak of the country’s postwar road construction boom. Central Nippon Expressway Co., its government-owned operator, said it had no record of any repairs performed since then, but company official Satoshi Noguchi said an inspection of the tunnel’s roof in September found nothing amiss.

Authorities early Tuesday raided several of the company’s offices, including its headquarters in the central city of Nagoya. About a dozen uniformed police were shown on television entering the headquarters, totting cardboard and plastic boxes.

“Yes they are searching our offices here. We will be fully cooperating with them,” said Osamu Funahashi, another company official.

### After Sandy, NYC pins housing hope on repairs; program is novel, but can it be ‘rapid’?

NEW YORK (AP) — Facing Superstorm Sandy’s daunting toll of wreckage and displacement in the nation’s largest city, officials have put much of their hopes and hundreds of millions of dollars into jump-starting repairs to make homes livable.

Federal and city officials see the strategy — focusing on getting people back into their own homes, not temporary housing — as an innovative and nimble answer to the challenge of housing thousands of storm victims in a notoriously expensive and crowded area.

But with relatively few homes fixed so far, questions are emerging about whether the “rapid repairs” initiative can live up to its name.

More than 10,000 homeowners have signed up for NYC Rapid Repairs in the three weeks since Mayor Michael Bloomberg launched the initiative to bring in hundreds of contractors to restore power, heat and other essentials free of charge.

Contractors have done initial assessments of about 7,000 homes in the city and 2,000 in similar initiatives on

Long Island, but just about 400 projects have been completed so far.

### Coast Guardsman dies as suspected drug smugglers creep farther up coast from Mexico

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Drug smugglers from Mexico have been creeping farther north along the California coast in an attempt to evade authorities, and it appears the cat-and-mouse game was behind the death of a U.S. Coast Guardsman.

Two Mexican nationals — Jose Mejia Leyva and Manuel Beltran Higuera — were charged Monday in Los Angeles with killing a federal officer while the officer was on duty.

Chief Petty Officer Terrell Horne, 34, died Sunday after he was struck in the head by the suspects’ vessel, believed to be laden with drugs, near the Channel Islands, west of Los Angeles and about 180 miles northwest of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Horne is the first law enforcement official to die off California since a spike in illegal activity began several years ago, said Ralph DeSio, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman.

At least six people aboard suspected smuggling vessels have been killed since the 2010 fiscal year.

### William and Kate expecting first child, duchess hospitalized with morning sickness

LONDON (AP) — Britain doesn’t have to wait any longer: Prince William’s wife, Kate, is pregnant.

St. James’s Palace made the announcement Monday, saying that the Duchess of Cambridge — formerly Kate Middleton — has a severe form of morning sickness and is currently in a London hospital. William was at his wife’s side.

The news drew congratulations from around the world, with the hashtag “royalbaby” trending globally on Twitter.

The couple’s first child will be third in line to the throne — behind William and his father, Prince Charles — leapfrogging the gregarious Prince Harry and possibly setting up the first scenario in which a female heir could benefit from new gender rules about succession.

The palace would not say how far along the 30-year-old duchess is, only that she has not yet reached the 12-week mark.

## Expert shows school district funding disparities during trial

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Legislature’s decision to cut \$1.4 billion in grants to public schools disproportionately hurt poor districts, costing them \$253 per student a year compared with \$21 a year for rich districts, an expert testified Monday.

Albert Cortez, policy director at the Intercultural Development Research Association, also said that Texas’ poorest school districts charge higher local property taxes yet collect about a fourth less in revenue per student than the state’s wealthiest districts.

He said the poorest 10 percent of districts statewide levy an average of 11 cents more per \$100 valuation in local property taxes compared with the wealthiest 10 percent of districts. However, that translates to about \$1,430 less in funding per student — a 25 percent difference between the two groups.

The Republican-led Legislature cut funding for Texas public schools by \$5.4 billion last year, leading to larger class sizes, teacher layoffs

and the elimination of full-day pre-kindergarten in most schools districts.

A report compiled by Cortez for the trial found that “limited state efforts to improve school funding over the last few years have allowed major disparities in funding among Texas districts of varying wealth to persist over time.”

Legal fights over school financing are nothing new in Texas. The lawsuits at the center of the current trial are the sixth of their kind since 1984 — and Cortez has testified in all those trials. His San Antonio-based nonprofit works to strengthen public schools for all children.

Several groups of schools districts, responsible for educating three-quarters of the state’s more than 5 million students, have sued Texas over the funding cuts and other policies that they say hinder public education.


Texas does not have a statewide income or property tax, so it relies on local property taxes and other state revenue to fund schools.

As part of his report, Cortez examined tax efforts necessary to generate certain levels of revenue. He found that the poorest 10 percent of school districts statewide had to tax at \$1.38 to generate \$7,000 per student, while the wealthiest can bring in the same amount at just 94 cents.

The state caps tax rates at \$1.17, and Cortez said many of the poorest districts now cannot get to \$7,000 in funding per student without exceeding that limit.

Districts in rich and poor parts of Texas are largely on the same side of the case. The state’s funding system relies heavily on a “Robin Hood” recapture scheme where districts with high property values or abundant tax revenue from oil or natural gas resources turn over part of the money they raise for distribution to poorer districts.

Cortez also studied funding differences between those districts that turn money back over to the state as part of the Robin Hood system, and those that receive money as part of it.




# Letters to Santa!

*Deadline For Letters is*  
**Wednesday,  
December 12, 2012**

Letters will be published in  
the Letters to Santa Special on  
**Sunday,  
December 23, 2012**

**432-263-7331**  
**composing@bigspringherald.com**



235948



# Steers recognized by district

By **BRIAN MCCORMACK**  
Sports Editor

The only thing better than heading a team full of All-District athletes is knowing most of them will be back next season.

Several Big Spring football players who received District 4-3A honors are underclassmen expected to return to action. That is a good sign for Steer football, according to Head Coach Phillip Ritchey.

"We have quite a few juniors recognized by the district coaches," Ritchey said. "More so than any other class. That's certainly a good thing for next year."

Headlining the underclassmen are Junior Devin Roberson — who was chosen as first team wide receiver, defensive back and punter — as well as sophomore quarterback

Tobyn Tannehill, who picked up the Newcomer of the Year nod.

"It's a tribute to the season he had as a young player," Ritchey said of Tannehill. "He definitely got more comfortable with the offense and the speed of the game as the season went along. By the third or fourth game it wasn't a new thing for him anymore. He executed well and confidence grew in himself. If he didn't get hurt that seventh game, he would have had an even better year, especially running the ball."

Roberson was a playmaker on both sides of the ball. Ritchey is also excited to welcome back in 2013.

"(Roberson) is probably the best all-around player in the district," Ritchey said. "It was obvious to the coaches in the district he was one of the best."

Other selections from the junior class included Tate Kennedy, second

team WR; Tyler Wigington, second team LB; Drake Worthan, second team DB; Aric Rutledge (OL), Honorable Mention offense; Ronnie Bell (OLB), Honorable Mention defense, Shaiem Menefield (CB), Honorable Mention offense and Brett Brorman (S), Honorable Mention defense.

The Steers will be graduating valuable seniors.

Chris Nunez was selected for first team offensive line and first team defensive line and Max Pappajohn was picked on first team defense for his work as a linebacker.

"This is real good for (Nunez) and real good for us," Ritchey said. He was a great lineman. It's real good for Max, too. They were both leaders out there for us."

Isaac Garza was picked for second team defensive end and running back Michael Oliva — the hard-charging

running back — received an offensive honorable mention.

The Steers' season didn't end quite like Ritchey had hoped. Five straight district losses must have been tough to swallow after starting 5-0 on the heels of a winless season the year prior. But with the talent Ritchey has to manage, the improvement from .000 to .500 in the last year may be a precursor to an even better season ahead.

"We have a lot of good players coming back," Ritchey added. "Being in a tough district, we certainly have things to work on offensively, but we have some great kids coming back to work with."

Contact Sports Editor Brian McCormack at 263-7331 ext. 237 or by e-mail at sports@bigspringherald.com



Junior Devin Roberson: First Team wide receiver, defensive back and punter.



Senior Max Pappajohn: First Team defensive linebacker.



Senior Chris Nunez: First Team offensive line and First Team defensive line.



Sophomore Tobyn Tannehill: Newcomer of the Year (Quarterback).

## Chiefs had provided counseling for dead LB Belcher, girlfriend

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kansas City Chiefs officials knew that linebacker Jovan Belcher and his girlfriend were having relationship problems, and the team provided the couple with counseling in an effort to help, a police official said.

Belcher fatally shot Kasandra Perkins, 22, at their Kansas City home Saturday before shooting himself in the head in the Arrowhead Stadium parking lot in front of team of-

ficials who were trying to stop him, including general manager Scott Pioli and head coach Romeo Crennel.

Police Sgt. Richard Sharp told The Kansas City Star for a Tuesday story that the couple had been arguing over relationship and financial issues for months.

Sharp didn't specify how long the couple had been undergoing counseling.

When Belcher arrived at Arrowhead on Saturday, he encountered Pioli in the

parking lot and told him the assistance the team had offered hadn't fixed the couple's problems and now "it was too late," Sharp said.

Pioli tried to persuade Belcher to put down his gun as Crennel and linebackers coach Gary Gibbs arrived.

Belcher thanked the men for everything the team had done for him and asked if Pioli and team owner Clark Hunt would take care of his daughter, The Star reported.

## Heisman finalists: A&M's Manziel, ND's Te'o and K-State's Klein

NEW YORK (AP) — Johnny Manziel and Manti Te'o are in position to make Heisman Trophy history.

Manziel, the redshirt freshman quarterback from Texas A&M, and Te'o, Notre Dame's star linebacker, along with Kansas State quarterback Collin Klein, were invited Monday to attend the Heisman presentation ceremony.

Manziel is the favorite to win college football's most famous player of the year award on Saturday night in Manhattan. He would be the first freshman to win the Heisman and the first Texas A&M player since halfback John David Crow won the school's only Heisman in 1957.

"I'm overwhelmed by this tremendous honor of representing Texas A&M, the 12th Man and all my teammates in New York," Manziel said in a statement. "This is a dream come true for me, and I know it's a credit to all my coaches and teammates. I definitely wouldn't be a Heis-

man finalist without my teammates and coaches."

Three sophomores have won the award (Tim Tebow in 2007, Sam Bradford in 2008 and Mark Ingram in 2009), but the best a first-year player has ever done is second.

Adrian Peterson of Oklahoma finished second to Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart in 2004. Peterson was a true freshman. As a redshirt freshman, Manziel attended A&M last year and practiced with the team but did not play.

Michael Vick of Virginia Tech came in third in 1999 as a redshirt freshman and Herschel Walker was a true freshman for Georgia in 1980 when he finished third in the Heisman balloting.

Nicknamed Johnny Football, Manziel quickly became a national sensation this season, putting up huge numbers in first-year Texas A&M coach Kevin Sumlin's spread offense.

See **HEISMAN**, Page 15

## BSHS returns to action today



Herald file photo/Tony Claxton

Big Spring's Shaiem Menefield takes a shot during a recent game. The Steers will be back in action at home tonight against Lake View, whom BSBS defeated Saturday in the Doug McCutchen Memorial Basketball Tournament in San Angelo. The Lady Steers will host Pecos. Varsity games are slated for 7:30 p.m. Forsan hoopsters will be traveling to Post with games beginning at 5 p.m. and Coahoma will meet Grady in Lenora.

## NFC East wide open after Redskins top Giants 17-16

LANDOVER, Md. (AP) — There was the fumble by Robert Griffin III that turned into a Washington Redskins touchdown. There was the fumble by teammate Alfred Morris that led to a melee of leg-pulling followed by a kick to the midsection and something dangerously close to a stomp.

The quartet of flawed teams that make up the NFC East sure do make things interesting.

The division title that seemingly belonged to the New York Giants is up for grabs after their 17-16 loss Monday night to the Redskins, who

are back in the running thanks to a rookie quarterback and a three-game winning streak.

"We had an opportunity here today," New York coach Tom Coughlin said. "But now there's one team with seven and two teams with six wins. There's four games to go."

That about sums it up.

Now that the Giants (7-5) have lost three of four, the Redskins (6-6) and Cowboys (6-6) are squarely in the hunt despite mediocre records. Washington has dispatched each of its division rivals — Philadelphia, Dallas and now New

York — one by one over the last three weeks to recover from a 3-6 start that prompted coach Mike Shanahan to talk about evaluating players for future seasons.

"We know that our backs are against the wall," said Griffin, whose Redskins host Dallas in what they hope will be a meaningful season finale. "And even though we won tonight, our backs are still against the wall."

It'll be hard to count the Redskins out as long as Griffin is on the field. He completed 13 of 21

See **NFC EAST** Page 15



## BIG SPRING HERALD

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older on the date of hire
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- 3) Must have a bachelor's  
degree from accredited  
college university;
- 4) And have either:  
(A) One year of graduate  
study in criminology, correc-  
tions, counseling, law, social  
work, psychology, sociology, or  
other field of instruction  
approved by the state, or;  
(B) One year of work experi-  
ence in case work, counseling,  
community corrections, group  
work with offenders or other  
disadvantaged persons.
- 5) Must be able to pass a drug  
test and criminal history  
check
- 6) And must reside in Howard  
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relocate

Resume's May be Mailed to:  
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hcjpd@suddenlinkmail.com  
NO PHONE CALLS  
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All cleaners are drug tested &  
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NOW HIRING COOKS. MUST  
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### Tomorrow's Horoscope

#### Leo Moon Offers Permission for Selfishness

Selfishness often gets a bad rap. People can't function without some amount of self-service, care and awareness. Often, it's those who refuse to give themselves necessary attention who are the most difficult to be around. The Leo moon suggests that this is the perfect time to tend to No. 1 so you can later tend to others.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). The people who could help you may be unaware that you need it or unclear about exactly how they might assist you. Spell out what you want, though, and you'll have more support than you know what to do with.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). Sometimes hard work is a noble and necessary choice. Today it's a last resort. There really is a better solution. Look for the smart way, not the hard way.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Like a twin depending upon a sibling to set the mood, you may rely on environmental cues too heavily now. Get in the driver's seat of your

emotions. Be proactive instead of reactive.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). Though you may not technically be in a position to drop everything and get away on a moment's notice, you "feel" free, available and ready to travel — and that's half the battle. The rest is logistics.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). Continents drift; it's just what they do. Sometimes they pull apart; other times they crash together causing interesting new formations. Likewise, the landscape of your personal life is changing in a gradual, natural way.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Don't make or accept excuses, or you'll be compromising your excellent standards. Getting a little bit harder on yourself now will be crucial to the success of an endeavor.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You love some things someone has brought to your life, but not everything. Try to accept the whole picture, though. Without the bad, there would be no way to appreciate or even determine what's so good.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The urge to complain will be strong, but don't give into it. Doing so creates a weakness and a tendency to repeat the negativity. Channel your energy into coming up with a solution, and you'll be brilliant.

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**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are those who both admire and pity the fact that you have to labor so diligently. But if they only knew how much you enjoyed your work, they'd be jealous.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Criticism is valuable, but listening to it may be difficult. You're only human. But if you could consider feedback in small doses, you would develop faster than the rest and be better for the effort.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Tasks that would usually be rote seem to have a whole different meaning now. They may take longer, too, so give yourself time. You're heading for a breakthrough.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). If you have to organize yourself over and over, it could be a sign that the system you're

using isn't working so well. This is the perfect time to update tools and methods.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (Dec. 4). Your senses will develop in interesting ways. In the weeks to come, you'll solve many problems with your intuition. Distant family will travel to celebrate you now and in June. Your love life blossoms in January. A promotion comes in February. March is the perfect time for new procedures and technical upgrades. Virgo and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 2, 1, 24 and 13.

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# Handmade ornaments follow tree to nation's Capitol

JENNIFER FORKER

Associated Press

ARVADA, Colo. — Thousands of ornaments, many of them made by Colorado schoolchildren, have accompanied the majestic Engelmann spruce sent to Washington, D.C., to grace the lawn of the U.S. Capitol building this Christmas.

The 73-foot tree is from the White River National Forest in northwestern Colorado. After it's lit on Dec. 4, many of the ornaments will be on public view; others will adorn the nearly 70 smaller trees, also from Colorado, that will decorate government office buildings throughout Washington.

When Colorado residents were asked to craft ornaments for the trees, they responded enthusiastically: Nearly 10,000 ornaments poured into the U.S. Forest Service office in Meeker, where Mary Cunningham coordinated the campaign. She had needed only about half that number, but starting in early September, "it got crazy," she says. "For two weeks we were getting 20 to 30 huge boxes each day of ornaments."

Ornaments arrived from every corner of the state. The theme was "Celebrating Our Great Outdoors," and it inspired ornaments featuring skiing, hiking and fishing; mountain scenes and blue spruce trees; Western attire, from cowboy boots to moccasins; and bears, bison, wolves and moose.

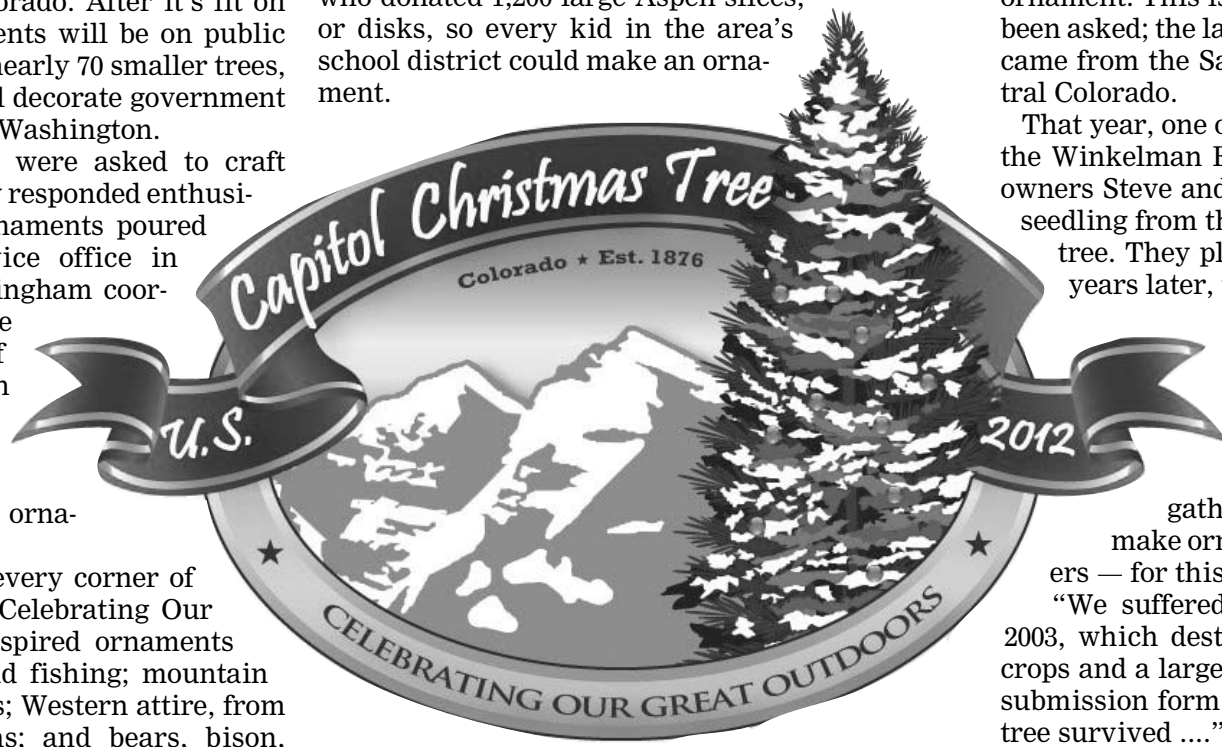
Liberty High School's Art Club and National Honor Society in Colorado Springs contributed 50 small clay pots and baskets crafted from area clay. Students at another Colorado Springs school, Discovery Canyon Campus, were challenged by teachers to use recycled materials, so they made an airplane out of a soda can, a hiking boot from soda pop tabs, and horses made from wine corks, among other ornaments.

From Mount Garfield Middle School in Clifton came more than 100 painted ornaments, including jumping trout, cut from plywood in a technical

education class. The teacher, Kevin Elisha, drove the ornaments nearly two hours from Clifton to Cunningham's home in Meeker.

"He kept pulling out individual ones and telling me about the kid," Cunningham remembers. "It was just really neat the time and thought they put into it."

She also tells of a Hamilton man, Ray Durham, who donated 1,200 large Aspen slices, or disks, so every kid in the area's school district could make an ornament.



While the bulk of ornaments came from schools and scouting groups, three Ute tribes — the Northern Utes, Southern Utes and Ute Mountain Utes — provided a combined 800 ornaments. Northern Ute elders created more than 100 small "cradleboards" — a traditional means of carrying swaddled babies — from fabric and poster board, then hand-stitched each one, says Pearleen Ridley, director of the tribe's Senior Citizen Program at Fort Duchesne, in northeastern Utah.

A small group of elders "were really dedicated," Ridley says. "They came in at 8:30 and didn't leave

until 4:00. They were here every day for two weeks."

The tribe's ancestors roamed the White River National Forest, says Ridley.

"We're very appreciative that we're representing who and where our people came from," she says.

In a tradition dating to 1970, the state from which the Capitol Christmas tree comes also donates the ornament. This is the third time that Colorado has been asked; the last time was in 2000, when the tree came from the San Isabel National Forest, in central Colorado.

That year, one of the companion trees came from the Winkelman Farm in Limon. The next spring, owners Steve and Kathy Winkelman were given a seedling from the millennium Capitol Christmas tree. They planted it, nurtured it and now, 12 years later, the tree is 6 feet tall.

Kathy Winkelman and her teaching partner, Cindy Stone, took their Limon Elementary School fourth-grade students to see the community's "millennium tree," as they call it, and gathered pine cones from nearby to make ornaments — skiers and snowboarders — for this year's Capitol trees.

"We suffered a severe hailstorm in June of 2003, which destroyed all of our wheat and feed crops and a large part of our tree farm," the class' submission form read. "But our little millennium tree survived ...."

The teachers and students tracked the progress of the Capitol Christmas tree online during its three-week road trip to the nation's capital, learning about geography, history and the federal government along the way.

"We're small-town USA," Stone says. "Many of these kids don't get out of Colorado, ever. The idea that something they made might be in the nation's capital, that's really cool."

Online: [capitolchristmastree2012.org](http://capitolchristmastree2012.org)  
[www.facebook.com/CapitolChristmasTree2012?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/CapitolChristmasTree2012?ref=ts)

## Annie's Mailbox



KATHY MITCHELL  
MARCY SUGAR

for themselves or for me. I fear this will never end. What happens when our still-single son gets married?

My boyfriend has no problem stepping aside, but I know his feelings are hurt.

I don't want this type of behavior to cause a rift with my kids. This is making me physically ill. Should I not go to the party? I don't want to play into my ex's control issues. — *Heartbroken Mom in Connecticut*

**Dear Connecticut:** Your children must call Dad's bluff, or he will continue to marginalize you and any partner you have. This is a power play to control all of you. Unfortunately, you cannot force your children to risk the relationship by showing backbone. Whether or not to attend these functions is up to you. A child's birthday party is not as big of a deal as a son's wedding. Pick your battles.

**Dear Annie:** I am 18 and a senior in high school. My ex-boyfriend and I dated on and off for about two years before we broke up 10 months ago. We are still close friends and have some feelings for each other, but there are reasons why we can't currently be together.

I am starting to like a guy who is three years younger and two grades below me. But I don't know if he likes me. Should I pursue him? What about my ex-boyfriend who is still my best friend? — *Conflicted and Confused in the Northwest*

**Dear Conflicted:** Are you planning to get back together with your ex at some point in the near future? If so, pursuing another guy may make that more difficult. But if the relationship with the ex is over, you are free to pursue anyone.

However, the new guy is 15. While he may be flattered by your interest, he's too young to become involved with a senior. And if there is sex, you could be in legal trouble. Please set your sights elsewhere.

**Dear Annie:** I think you missed an important possibility when answering "Frustrated Dad," whose college-graduate son plays video games all day.

If his son plays games the vast majority of the day, he could well be addicted. When addictions take over, work and relationships are all tossed by the wayside. He retreats from the real world because his reality is in his computer.

Dad should absolutely insist that he go to a therapist trained in addictions. Drive him there, or pay for his gas — whatever it takes. It is a long, hard road back, but it can be done. — *Happier Mom*

**Dear Annie:** I've been dating "Gary" for 11 years. He is in his early 50s and has never married. Neither of us has children. Gary and I travel together, go camping and attend major sporting events. We make each other laugh and have fun in the bedroom. We truly are best friends.

My problem is the lack of commitment. Although I'm welcome at Gary's home as an overnight guest, he refuses to take it to the next level. If I bring up moving in or getting married, I get silence in return. He doesn't give any explanation. He just refuses to discuss it.

Gary recently started a new career and is gone for three days every week. There is an excellent chance that he will relocate. We still hook up on weekends, and things are great, but I long for a commitment and cannot seem to get

it.

When filling out his new life insurance policy, Gary listed his elderly mother as his beneficiary. She is quite well off and doesn't need the money. I would be willing to share everything I own with him, but I guess it isn't reciprocal.

Maybe I already know the answer and just need to see it in black and white. Is it time to move on? — *Life Is Good*

**Dear Life Is Good:** Gary enjoys what he has right now. And to a large extent, so do you. Are you willing to give up the friendship and intimacy with Gary in order to pursue a committed relationship? Could you be content with what you have and not expect more? If Gary is ready to move away and hasn't suggested that you come along, it means you will not get a commitment from him. Period. Only you can decide whether that means the relationship is a waste of time.

**Dear Annie:** When my husband and I travel, we often spend a couple of days with friends or family. One night

during our stay, we usually go out to dinner. There always seems to be a small verbal battle over who is going to pay the bill.

My husband always insists on paying. He says we want to thank them for their hospitality. On the other hand, when friends or family come to our house and we go out to dinner, my husband still insists on paying, saying they are our guests.

When I was growing up, my father was the same way. Is there a rule about who should pick up the tab: the host or the guest? — *Tired of Always Footing the Bill*

**Dear Tired:** When staying at someone's home for a weekend or longer, it is good manners to treat your hosts to a meal to thank them for their hospitality. Your husband should allow your guests to do the same for him. However, if your guests are with you only for a night, it is equally proper for your husband to treat them. But really, since he's so stubborn about it, we suggest you let him do what he wants.

**Dear Annie:** You were wrong to tell "N.Y., N.Y." to visit her ailing grandmothers because it is "the right thing to do."

Having been through it with a grandmother and my own mother, I would have preferred to remember them as the loving people they once were instead of the nasty, angry human wreckage they became. When my grandchildren were younger, I spent lots of time making beautiful memories, and that's what I want them to remember. I've already given written instructions that should I follow the same course, none of my family is to visit. Let me preserve some dignity by not having my loved ones witness my decline. — *Realistic*

**Dear Realistic:** We don't believe unpleasant memories must crowd out the earlier loving ones. But if these are your wishes, they should be honored.

*Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to [anniesmailbox@comcast.net](mailto:anniesmailbox@comcast.net), or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 737 3rd Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. © 2012 CREATORS.COM*

EVERY MORNING MY HUMAN SHAVES OFF HIS FACE FUR, HE'S FUNNY LIKE THAT.

—TUCK adopted 05-04-11

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5:PM	News ABC	Casa Notic.	Two Men Big Bang	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News King	King A. Shelby	Justice King	Charlie Rose King	King King	Deadliest Catch	Running	Ink Master	The Mentalist	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Good	SportsNation	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy! Wheel	Un Refugio	Big Bang Ent	News CBS	Caso Cerro	News King	Seinfeld Dr. Diana	Dr. Diana Sala	PBS News-Hour	Rules Rules	Deadliest Catch	Movie: The Green Mile, Michael Clarke Duncan	Ink Master	The Mentalist		Jessie Good	College Basketball	College Basketball: Jimmy V Classic
7:PM	Shark Tank	Por Ella Soy Eva	Raising Ben-Kate	Rudolph, Red-Nosed	Rosa Diamante (SS)	The Voice	Big Bang Big Bang	Upd Alewine	American Masters	Hart of Dixie	Deadliest Catch		Ink Master	Rizzoli & Isles	Movie: Obsessed, Ali Larter	Dog Jessie	College Basketball	College Basketball: Jimmy V Classic
8:PM	Happy Apt. 23	Amores Verdaderos	New Girl Mindy	NCIS (DVS)	Corazon Valiente	Go On Normal	Big Bang Big Bang	Light of the Southwest		Emily Owens, M.D.	Deadliest Catch		Ink Master	Rizzoli & Isles		A.N.T. Farm	College Basketball	College Basketball: Jimmy V Classic
9:PM	Private Practice	Amor Bravo (SS)	Simpsons How I Met	Fashion Show	Escobar Rostro de	(:01) Parenthood	Big Bang Big Bang		Frontline	Seinfeld Seinfeld	Deadly Seas		Ink Master	Leverage	Family Fi. Vindi	Good Phineas		
10:PM	News Nightline	Impacto Noticiero	How I Met Letterman	News	Noticias Victorinos (SS)	News Jay Leno	Conan	Shepherd's Heart	Charlie Rose	Til Death Til Death	Deadliest Catch	Movie: The Green Mile, Michael Clarke Duncan	Tattoo	Rizzoli & Isles	Family Fi. Good	Shake It to Coast	NBA Coast to Coast	SportsCenter
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Al Diablo	Law Order: CI	Ferguson	Decisiones (SS)	Jimmy Fallon	Conan	Upd Chevalme	World T. Smiley (Off Air)	'70s '70s	Deadly Seas		Ink Master	Leverage	Wendy Williams	Wizards NBA	Baseball NFL Live	SportsCenter
12:AM	Extra Paid	Mar de Amor (SS)	Raymond Fam. Guy	Insider	Pagado	Daly	Conan	Upd Chevalme		Browns Browns	Deadliest Catch		Ink Master	Cold Case	Movie: Waist Deep, Larenz Tate	Deck Good	NFL Live	SportsCenter
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula Par Ases	TMZ	Paid	Paid	Paid	Earl	Light of the Southwest		Cops Gaither	Deadliest Catch		Tattoo Entourage	Falling Skies	Good	SportsNation	SportsCenter	

### DENNIS THE MENACE

12-4

### THE FAMILY CIRCUS

12-4

### HAGAR

12-4

12-4

### BC

12-4

12-4

### BLONDIE

12-4

12-4

### WIZARD OF ID

12-4

12-4

## This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 4, the 339th day of 2012. There are 27 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On Dec. 4, 1619, a group of settlers from Bristol, England, arrived at Berkeley Hundred in present-day Charles City County, Va., where they held a service thanking God for their safe arrival. (Some suggest this was the true first Thanksgiving in America, ahead of the Pilgrims' arrival in Massachusetts.)

**On this date:**

In 1619, settlers from Bristol, England, arrived at Berkeley Hundred in present-day Charles City County, Va.

In 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his Continental Army officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York.

In 1816, James Monroe of Virginia was elected the fifth president of the United States.

In 1912, Medal of Honor

recipient Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, the Marine Corps pilot who led the "Black Sheep Squadron" during World War II, was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson left Washington on a trip to France to attend the Versailles (vehr-SY') Peace Conference.

In 1942, U.S. bombers struck the Italian mainland for the first time in World War II. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the dismantling of the Works Progress Administration, which had been created to provide jobs during the Depression.

In 1965, the United States launched Gemini 7 with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Cmdr. James A. Lovell aboard.

In 1978, San Francisco got its first female mayor as City Supervisor Dianne Feinstein (FYN's-tyn) was named to replace the assassinated George Moscone (mahs-KOH'nee).

In 1984, a five-day hijack drama began as four armed men seized a Kuwaiti airliner en route to Pakistan and forced it to land in Tehran, where the hijackers killed American pas-

senger Charles Hegna.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush ordered American troops to lead a mercy mission to Somalia, threatening military action against warlords and gangs who were blocking food for starving millions.

In 1996, the Mars Pathfinder lifted off from Cape Canaveral and began speeding toward Mars on a 310 million-mile odyssey. (It arrived on Mars in July 1997.)

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress-singer Deanna Durbin is 91. Game show host Wink Martindale is 79. Pop singer Freddy Cannon is 76. Actor-producer Max Baer Jr. is 75. Actress Gemma Jones is 70.

© 2012 The Associated Press.

### AGNES

12-4

12-4

## Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Southern breakfast serving
  - 6 Apiece
  - 10 Smart-mouthed kid
  - 14 Fashionably nostalgic
  - 15 Honolulu feast
  - 16 Uncommon
  - 17 Way of speaking
  - 18 Cash dispensers: Abbr.
  - 19 Start the pot
  - 20 "Hold your horses!"
  - 23 Regrets
  - 24 That guy's
  - 25 Not as fresh
  - 29 Sing with lips closed
  - 30 Paper towel layer
  - 33 Pay tribute to
  - 34 "Right \_\_\_ way!"
  - 36 Three-person band
  - 37 Straight from the horse's mouth
  - 40 Smell bad
  - 41 Tops with frosting
  - 42 Wild West show
  - 43 Goof up
  - 44 Seek information
  - 45 Bus passengers
  - 46 Navy noncom: Abbr.
  - 47 Awestruck
  - 49 Dark horse
  - 56 Superhero accessory
  - 57 Measure of medicine
- DOWN**
- 1 Electrical network
  - 2 Make over
  - 3 Pack \_\_\_ (quit)
  - 4 Easy run
  - 5 Mexican hat
  - 6 Make happy
  - 7 Cars
  - 8 Soldier's disguise, for short
  - 9 Top secret
  - 10 Metal in tubas
  - 11 \_\_\_ and rave
  - 12 Overly stylized
  - 13 Golf peg
  - 21 Continent north of Afr.
  - 22 Goal
  - 25 Coastline
  - 26 Photocopier chemical
  - 27 Enrage
  - 28 "Get a load of that!"
  - 29 Top-10 songs
  - 30 Self-esteem
  - 31 Soft-drink size
  - 32 Toys on strings
  - 34 Bulletin board pin
  - 35 Tint
  - 36 Walked heavily
  - 38 Confusion
  - 39 Fresh and new
  - 44 Smartphone download
  - 45 Use oars
  - 46 Top of a wave
  - 47 Desirable quality
  - 48 Honking birds
  - 49 Place for valuables
  - 50 Atop
  - 51 Des Moines' state
  - 52 Space shuttle org.
  - 53 Little bites
  - 54 Nights before holidays
  - 55 City near Lake Tahoe
  - 56 Use scissors

## HORSING AROUND by Billie Truitt

Edited by Stanley Newman  
www.stanxwords.com

Answer to previous puzzle

CAPS	SHARP	SPAT
HURT	PALES	POLO
OREO	ISLET	ROOT
PAYPERIOD	BELTS	
SAINT	WRAP	
POPART	LAI	DLOW
AHAT	SNORT	ACE
RAP	SALOONS	YEAR
ERE	EXERT	TEAR
DARKRED	THORNS	
PIGS	STEEP	
FALSE	POWERPACK	
ALAS	SIREN	IRON
NOTE	ANTES	NILE
SEED	TESTY	GATE

### HI AND LOIS

12-4

12-4

### THE OTHER COAST

12-4

12-4

### SNUFFY SMITH

12-4

12-4

### BEEBLE BAILEY

12-4

12-4

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21				22			
				23				24				
25	26	27	28				29			30	31	32
33					34	35			36			
37					38				39			
40					41				42			
43				44					45			
			46				47	48				
49	50				51				52	53	54	55
56					57				58			
59					60				61			
62					63				64			



**NFC EAST**

Continued from Page 9

passes for 163 yards and a go-ahead, 8-yard touchdown to Pierre Garcon in the fourth quarter to finish with a 101.9 passer rating. He also ran for 72 yards to get to 714 for the season, breaking Cam Newton's NFL record for a rookie quarterback.

It was his sixth game with a 100-plus passer rating, his eighth without an interception — and his second in which one of his fumbles turned into a Redskins score.

On the way to the turf after a 12-yard run, Griffin was stripped by Stevie Brown — but the ball flew right to teammate Joshua Morgan 3 yards upfield. Morgan then ran 13 yards for a first-quarter touchdown

no one would ever diagram on a whiteboard.

"We didn't run it in practice because we wanted to save it for the game," Griffin said with a grin. "I knew he was going to be there for it. ... Joshua did a good job being in the spot where he was supposed to be."

The game's other fumble was just as chaotic — and a little scary. After Morris was stripped during a third-quarter run, New York defensive tackle Linval Joseph yanked at Redskins center Will Montgomery's leg while players were fighting for the ball in the pile.

Montgomery kicked out in response, a swipe that Joseph said hit him in the groin.

Joseph then stomped at Montgomery, appearing to pull back at the last second but still making contact.

"It took me everything not to kick him back because I didn't want hurt the team, and I didn't want to get fined and none of that," Joseph said. "I started, then I stopped."

Joseph and a Redskins player were whistled for offsetting unnecessary roughness penalties.

Morris finished with 124 yards, reaching 1,106 for the season to break Reggie Brooks' franchise rookie rushing record of 1,063, set in 1993. Garcon caught eight passes for 106 yards, showing no signs of the painful toe injury that forced him to miss six of the season's first nine games.

Eli Manning completed 20 of 33 passes for 280 yards and a touchdown, and Ahmad Bradshaw ran for 103 yards on 24 carries for the Giants. Victor Cruz, who caught

the game-winning score when the teams met in the Meadowlands in October, had five catches for 104 yards.

The Giants moved the ball well, but they only managed three field goals by Lawrence Tynes and one touchdown — Manning's 4-yard pass to Martellus Bennett late in the second quarter.

Tynes also missed a 43-yard field goal, and the Giants were uncharacteristically penalty-prone, getting flagged nine times for 73 yards. New York led 13-10 at the half, but scored only three more points.

"This is not real complicated. I don't know what happened in the second half," Coughlin said. "We certainly didn't come out and play. Penalties. Sloppy football."

**HEISMAN**

Continued from Page 9

He led the 10th-ranked Aggies to a 10-2 record in their first season in the Southeastern Conference.

With a knack for improvisation, Manziel racked up an SEC-record 4,600 yards of total offense, including 1,181 rushing to lead the conference. The 6-foot-1, 200-pound Manziel zoomed to the front of the Heisman race on Nov. 10, when he passed for 253 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 92 yards as the Aggies upset then-No. 1 Alabama 29-24 in Tuscaloosa.

Manziel and Texas A&M will play No. 12 Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl.

Te'o is trying to become the first defense-only player to win the Heisman. The Fighting Irish have seven Heisman winners, tied for the most with Ohio State and Southern California, but none since Tim Brown in 1987.

Te'o became the face of the No. 1 team in the country and leader of a defense that has been the toughest to score

upon in the nation. The senior intercepted seven passes, second-most in the country and tops for a linebacker. He also led the Fighting Irish with 103 tackles, and earlier Monday won the Butkus Award as country's best linebacker.

Te'o and the Irish face No. 2 Alabama in the BCS championship game on Jan. 7 in Miami.

Klein would be the first player from Kansas State to win the Heisman.

"I'm just honored with this opportunity that the Lord has provided me here at K-State," Klein said in a statement. "I'm so proud to represent K-State in this because I feel like my road is very synonymous and in line with the K-State way. It has been a process, it has been a journey. There have been a lot of ups and downs, as well as a lot of hard times and growing pains through it. I'm just very proud to represent the K-State family and our heart and spirit in this environment."

He seemed to be the front-runner for several weeks until Manziel's late push. When Klein threw three intercep-

tions in the Wildcats' late-season loss to Baylor, Manziel moved to the front of the race.

Klein is a multitalented quarterback like Manziel, but with a different approach. The 6-5, 226-pound senior is a bullish runner who scored 22 touchdowns and threw for 15 more,

while leading the seventh-ranked Wildcats (11-1) to the Big 12 title. Earlier in the day, Klein won the Johnny Unitas Award given to the top upperclassman quarterback in the nation.

Klein will finish his Kansas State career against No. 5 Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl.

**Rangers reach deal with Soria, keep Soto**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—While waiting to find out whether there will be more talks with Josh Hamilton, the Texas Rangers agreed to a two-year contract with free-agent reliever Joaquin Soria and reached a deal to keep catcher Geovany Soto.

Soria, a two-time All-Star with Kansas City, is recovering from elbow ligament-replacement surgery on April 3. The 28-year-old righthander also had the ligament replaced in 2003.

His agreement was revealed Monday by a person familiar with the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity because it had not been announced. The person said the contract includes an option for 2015.

Soria's agent, Oscar

Suarez, would say only "we're very close to a deal with the Texas Rangers."

Texas general manager Jon Daniels wouldn't confirm an agreement and wouldn't even say whether medical reports suggest Soria will recover by May or the All-Star game.

"I'm not going to comment on him at this time," Daniels said. "I've got to protect the organization."

On the day starting catcher Mike Napoli agreed to a \$39 million, three-year contract with Boston, a deal subject to a physical, Texas retained Soto for a \$2.75 million, one-year agreement. He can earn an additional \$250,000 in performance bonuses.

Soto, who turns 30

See DEAL, Page 16

**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.

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

[www.sudoku-puzzles.net](http://www.sudoku-puzzles.net)

**Contract Bridge**

By Steve Becker

**A Sophisticated Play**

East dealer.  
North-South vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ 8 3  
♥ A Q 6  
♦ A J 9 5 3  
♣ 7 5 2

**WEST**  
♠ J 9 7 6 2  
♥ 9 5 3  
♦ 7 6  
♣ 10 8 3

**EAST**  
♠ A Q 4  
♥ 8 7 4 2  
♦ Q 10 2  
♣ K J 9

**SOUTH**  
♠ K 10 5  
♥ K J 10  
♦ K 8 4  
♣ A Q 6 4

The bidding:  
East 1 NT    South Pass    West 3 NT    North 3 NT

Opening lead — six of spades.

**Point count** can frequently prove very useful to the defenders. For example, consider East's play to the first trick in this deal. Normally, East would play the ace on the opening lead. This would be in line with the general principle of third-hand high. He would then continue with the queen of spades, ducked by declarer, and the four, which South would win with the king.

**Observe the effect** of these plays. Declarer — after losing a diamond finesse to East's queen — winds up making three notrump, scoring one spade, three hearts, four diamonds and a club.

**But if East plays the queen** of spades at trick one, declarer will almost surely go down. South wins the queen with the king because he would naturally be afraid that West might hold the A-J-x-x-x, in which case the defenders would collect the first five spade tricks after a spade return by East.

**Once South wins** the opening lead with the king, he is fighting a losing battle. Sooner or later he has to lead diamonds, and when East gains the lead, he plays the ace and another spade to sink the contract.

**Why should East** vary from the usual procedure of third-hand high? Because he knows declarer has the king of spades and wants to encourage him to win the trick. South's opening notrump bid showed 15 to 17 points. Since East sees 11 points in dummy and 12 more in his own hand, there are only 17 points left for South and West to hold.

**It is therefore impossible** for West to have the king of spades, since this would mean that South had at most 14 points. But note that even if South had cheated by a point and lacked the king of spades, East's queen would win the first trick, and nothing would be lost.

**Indeed,** even in those cases where declarer's point count is not as precisely known, the queen would still be the play of choice for the very same reasons.

Tomorrow: Sylvia hits the jackpot.  
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A flood of growth opportunities in this economy is at the same time exciting and challenging. Which opportunities do you take—and how do you get the capital required to buy machinery or owner-occupied real estate in order to latch onto those opportunities?

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Here is an overview of how the process works: When the business owner or manager sees an expansion opportunity involving the purchase of owner-occupied real estate, capital equipment or a combination, they get cost estimates together, approach

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H-GALDC has strong partnerships with packaging contractors (those who put loan packages together) and closing attorneys.

Ask your banker to work with you on a 504 loan through H-GALDC and see how quickly you can get that expansion or refinance project going!

**Call Devin Hollum at H-GALDC toll-free at 1-855-364-2516.**



# Texas Tech bowl bound after missing last season

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Texas Tech is back in a bowl game, a year after the Red Raiders ended a streak of 11-straight postseason appearances.

Texas Tech travels to Houston to take on Minnesota of the Big Ten in the Meineke Car Care Bowl on Dec. 28. The Red Raiders beat the likes of West Virginia and TCU and doubled their Big 12 win total from last season.

"We're excited about being back in a bowl game," said coach Tommy Tuberville, who is without a winning Big 12 record since coming to Texas Tech in 2010. "Hopefully, we can play much better than we what we played at the end of the year."

Minnesota (6-6) and Texas Tech (7-5) played each other in the 2006 Insight Bowl in Tempe, Ariz., when the Gophers blew a 31-point lead and lost 44-41 in OT. It was the largest comeback in Division I-A bowl history.

The Red Raiders will need to stem a downward spiral — one that plagued them this year and last. This season, they lost four of their last five games by a combined score of 197-112, and needed two overtimes at home

to topple Big 12 cellar dweller Kansas in their lone win down the stretch.

Last season, after starting 5-2 and beating then-No. 3 Oklahoma in Norman to end the Sooners' 39-game home win streak, the Red Raiders dropped their final five games for Texas Tech's first losing season in 19 years. The defense was ragged last season, giving up a school-record 471 points. For a second-straight season the Red Raiders defense finished No. 114 in the nation. They were dead last in stopping the run.

That changed this season when the Red Raiders got their fourth defensive coordinator in as many years. Art Kaufman, a longtime friend of Tuberville who coached with him in the Southeastern Conference, took over a year after Chad Glasgow failed to produce.

The unit appeared mentally tougher and more cohesive, and for several weeks early on Texas Tech was ranked in the top five in the nation in total defense. The Red Raiders are currently 39th in the nation (367 yards per game) and 74th against the rush (171 ypg).

Like last season, injuries have

taken their toll, especially at receiver. The Red Raiders have played several games without Javon Bell, Bradley Marquez and Jace Amaro.

Before their injuries — specific information on Amaro's injury hasn't been released, Bell broke a foot in practice and Marquez hurt his knee — all were productive behind quarterback Seth Doege, who has thrown for 3,934 yards and 38 touchdowns this season.

He's leading the 12th best offense (501.42 ypg) in the country and averaged 328 passing yards.

"Hopefully, we'll get back one, maybe two," Tuberville said.

Though Minnesota lost three of its last four games and finished tied for last in the Legends Division with Iowa, reaching a bowl will give the rebuilding Gophers 15 extra practices to work in their younger players.

The Gophers will be seeking their first bowl win since they beat Alabama 20-16 in the 2004 Music City Bowl.

For Minnesota, a victory would be its seventh on the season — one more than it was able to rack up in 2010 and 2011 combined.

# McIlroy voted PGA Tour Player of the Year

LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP) — Rory McIlroy sure didn't feel like the PGA Tour player of the year when he arrived at Kiawah Island for the final major of the year. He had missed three cuts, had not contended in a major and had only one win.

The last two months changed everything.

McIlroy was announced Tuesday as player of the year, and while the tour does not disclose the vote of its players, this was the equivalent of a tap-in. McIlroy wound up with four wins, including his eight-shot victory in the PGA Championship, and made a clean sweep of the biggest awards by winning the money title and having the lowest adjusted scoring average.

"It's just a great way to end what has been a great year, my best season so far," McIlroy said.

The 23-year-old from Northern Ireland became the youngest player to win PGA Tour player of the year since Tiger Woods at age 21 in 1997. He also was the third European to win in the last five years, join-

ing Padraig Harrington on Ireland in 2008 and Luke Donald of England last year.

John Huh, who earned his card through Q-school, was voted PGA Tour rookie of the year in another race that was easy to predict. Huh won an opposite-field event in Mexico, but perhaps his greater achievement was becoming the only rookie to make it to the Tour Championship, a measure of good play all year. That gets Huh into the Masters next year for the first time.

He beat out Jonas Blixt and Charlie Beljan, who won in the Fall Series, Greenbrier winner Ted Potter Jr. and Bud Cauley, the only rookie who didn't win this year.

Also on the ballot for player of the year were Tiger Woods with three wins, Jason Dufner and his two wins in the spring, Masters champion Bubba Watson and Brandt Snedeker, whose second win this year at the Tour Championship allowed him to capture the FedEx Cup.

## DEAL

Continued from Page 15

next month, hit .196 with five homers

and 25 RBIs in 47 games last season. He was the NL Rookie of the Year in 2008 when he batted .285 with 23 homers and 86 RBIs for the Chicago Cubs.

"It was not a great catching market to begin with," Daniels said. "It's a tough position to fill in the game right now."

Texas allowed Soto to become a free agent when it failed to offer a contract by Friday's deadline. The move allowed the team to cut his salary, which was \$4.3 million this year, by

more than 20 percent.

"He's in an environment where he's comfortable," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "The key is that we make sure he'll be in the best physical and mental shape that he possibly can be and maybe we can get out of him what he did in his rookie year and the year after in Chicago. But the main thing is everyone loved throwing to him."

Texas decided not to guarantee three seasons for Napoli. He hit .320 with 30 homers and 75 RBIs as the Rangers won their second straight AL pennant in 2011, then slumped to a .227 average with 24 homers and 56 RBIs this year as he became a first-

time All-Star. His on-base percentage

dropped from .416 to .343. "They were very upfront with us throughout the process. So not a surprise," Daniels said. "I'm hesitant to use the word disappointment because ultimately we had a decision to make."

Hamilton, who hit 43 home runs with 128 RBIs for the Rangers last season, was in Nashville but not to speak with the Rangers.

"I saw Josh on the flight here Sunday by accident. Coincidence, I guess, is a better word than accident," Daniels said. "Chatted with him a little bit in the airport. I know he's here probably to meet with some other teams."

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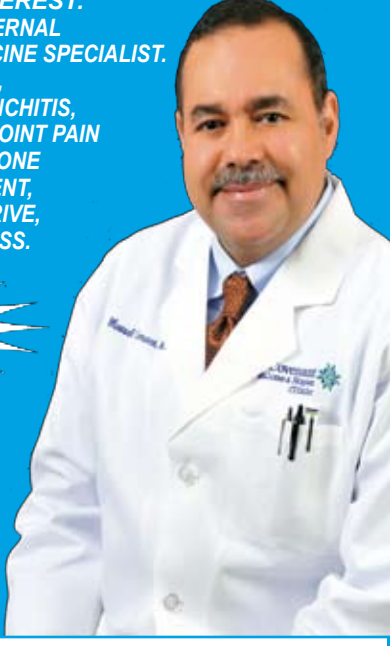


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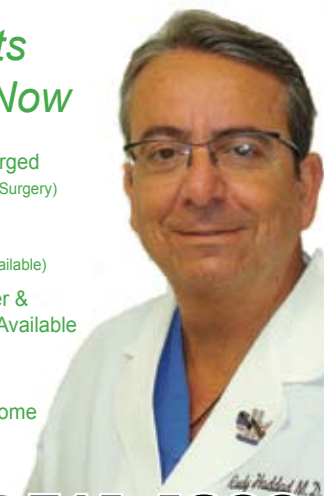
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