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WEDNESDAY
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Courtesy photo
 Residents look over plans for a relief route for U.S. Highway 87 during a meeting at the community center Tuesday evening.

Officials detail plans for U.S. 87 relief route

By **AMANDA DUFORAT**
 Special to the Herald
 Texas Department of Transportation employees hosted a public hearing Tuesday evening at the Dora Roberts Community Center regarding recent changes to the U.S. Highway 87 truck relief route in Howard County. Throughout the course of the evening, information was released regarding recent changes and the community was given the opportunity to view the schematics, environ-

mental assessment and a tentative construction schedule. Original design plans for the relief route proposed a controlled access highway, but after hearing public comments and conducting additional research, TxDOT changed the design to an uncontrolled access highway and added an extra 15 feet of right of way. "Due to the fact that we had originally said no access and now we are allowing some ac-

See **RELIEF**, Page 3

Arrest made in high school bomb threat

Police: Suspect confesses, gives no motive for action

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

A Big Spring man was arrested Tuesday afternoon and charged with making a terroristic threat in connection with the Monday morning bomb threat at the Big Spring High School.



Hamilton

Jordan Weston Hamilton, 24, of 1007 E. 15th St., was arrested and charged with terroristic threat – placing public in fear of serious bodily injury. As of the time of this report, Hamilton was being held in the custody of the Howard County Detention Center awaiting arraignment.

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

No bomb or device was found ... and students and school faculty were sent back to their classes after approximately 40 minutes.

confessed to making the call that caused the high school to be evacuated Monday. "Investigators with the BSPD Street Crimes Unit arrested Hamilton," Everett said. "The suspect confessed to the offense, however, as of this time he has not offered any motive." According to Everett, the bomb threat was received

See **THREAT**, Page 3



INDEX

Comics	15
Classified	11-14
Features	5
Obituaries	2
Opinion	4
Sports	10,16

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HC officials eye 2013 start to San Angelo project

By **STEVE REAGAN**
 Staff Writer

Details, details ... Howard College officials are waiting for final agreements to be signed before they proceed with plans to construct two new buildings at their San Angelo campus.

At Tuesday's trustee meeting, college administrators said the agreements between the junior college district and the city of San Angelo are necessary before work on the \$12 million project can begin.

The college plans to construct two buildings — one housing classrooms and the

other student services and a library — adjacent to the West Texas Training Center, where a majority of Howard's classes are held in San Angelo.



Hansen

The project will be funded by revenue bonds and donations; no taxpayer money would be used, College Vice President Terry Hansen said.

If all goes well, the agreement will be finalized in January, then the college will have to receive approv-

al from the Texas Attorney General's office before selling the revenue bonds. Construction work could begin in late spring or early summer 2013, Hansen said.

"I think we're very, very close," Hansen said. "We're in the process of working out one detail after another, after another. Once we get final approval ... we can finalize the plans for the project."

Officials hope to have the buildings open for students in August 2014.

In other business, trustees approved:

- Bids totaling almost

\$400,000 for improvements to the college's distance learning classrooms.

- An interlocal agreement between the college and city of Big Spring. Under the agreement, the college will purchase six retired patrol cars for \$500 apiece, while the city will purchase older computer equipment from the college.
- Catalog and handbook changes.

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

United Way nears campaign goal

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

With more than \$280,000 already socked away, the United Way of Big Spring and Howard County is on track to meet its \$300,000 fund-raising goal for the year, according to charity officials.

Since kicking off the campaign earlier this year, the local United Way has collected \$285,812, according to United Way

Director Sandy Stewart, putting the charity on track to reach its goal in the spring.

"We have three fund-raisers each year. We hold the kick off luncheon, the Empty Bowls event and then a golf tournament in the spring," Stewart said. "Having reached the amount we're at

See **GOAL**, Page 3

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Obituaries

John J. 'Jerry' White



John J. "Jerry" White, 92, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012, at Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home. His body will be in state at Myers & Smith Funeral Home Wednesday and Thursday. Graveside services with military honors will be at 2:15 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, at DFW National Cemetery in Dallas.

He was born April 26, 1920, in Sessor, Ill. He entered the Army Air Corps in 1937 and served in Europe during World War II. His service included Selfridge Air Base in Michigan, Port Field Air Base in the Philippines and Perrin Air Base in Sherman, Texas.

He came to Big Spring in July 1968, serving at Webb Air Force Base. He retired from the Air Force in 1970 and then worked for Civil Service at Webb as personnel service director. He married Hildred Mandrell, Jan. 2, 1940, and she preceded her in death June 26, 2005.

He is survived by two daughters, Nancy Penny of Hudson Oaks, Texas and Jerry Jo Shires of Denison, Texas; four grandchildren, Ashlyn Jo Shires, Skydra Redden, Zachary Terry and Trey Penny; and four great-grandchildren, Brayden and Cheyenne Redden, Gill and Carter Penny and Jayden Gutierrez.

In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ross White; one daughter, Cindi Moore; and three sisters and one brother.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Paid obituary

Frank 'Porky' Overton



Frank "Porky" Overton, 28, of Big Spring, died Thursday, Dec. 13, 2012, in Big Spring. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012, at Myers & Smith Chapel with the Rev. Derek Looney, pastor of Spring Creek Fellowship, officiating. Burial will follow in Mount Olive Memorial Park.

Frank was born Feb. 5, 1984, in Big Spring, Texas to Hassona and Donald Max Overton. He was a lifetime resident of Big Spring. He was a driller for Robinson Drilling at the time of his death.

He is survived by his "Old Lady," Catisha Cook of Big Spring; two step-children, Branne' Cook and Jeremy Minter, both of Big Spring; his baby girl, Stormy; his mother, Hassona Overton of Big Spring; six brothers, James Overton of Lubbock, and Jerry Overton, Tim Overton, Shawn Overton, John Overton and Jason Berger, all of Big Spring; three sisters, Shawna Overton, Danelle Overton and Jamela Overton, all of Big Spring; several aunts, uncles and cousins and 13 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Donald Overton; one nephew, Sergio Gonzalez, Jr.; and his grandparents, Smokey and Margaret Rigdon.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Paid obituary

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Police blotter

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

- ERIN CLEO STANSBURY, 30, of Lawton, Okla., was arrested Tuesday on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- ANTHONY DELAGARZA, 47, of 1605 State, was arrested Tuesday on charges of shoplifting – more than \$50 and less than \$500 and criminal trespass.
- JORDAN WESTON HAMILTON, 24, of 1007 E. 15th St., was arrested Tuesday on a charge of terroristic threat – placing public in fear of serious bodily injury.
- TEKIA WILLIAMS, 29, of 705 Wyoming, was arrested Tuesday on a warrant from another agency.
- SOPHIA CONCEPTION MARMOLEJO, 28, was arrested Tuesday on a warrant for possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- DENNIS MICHAEL RICHARDSON II, 28, of 1708 Owens, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of public intoxication.
- BURGLARY OF A BUILDING was reported in the 1900 block of Martin Luther King Blvd.
- THEFT was reported in the 200 block of W. FM 700.

Sheriff

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 65 inmates at the time of this report.

- SOPHIA CONCEPTION MARMOLEJO, 28, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- CURTIS THOMPSON, 53, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a judgment/sentence for possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- ANTHONY DELAGARZA, 47, was booked into the county detention center Tuesday by the BSPD on charges of criminal trespass and theft – more than \$50 and less than \$500.
- DENNIS MICHAEL RICHARDSON, 28, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.
- JORDAN WESTON HAMILTON, 24, was booked into the county detention center Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of terroristic threat to impair public/government service.
- TEKIA "KOKO" WILLIAMS, 29, was booked into the county detention center Tuesday by the BSPD on an Austin parole warrant.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of S. Aylesford. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 500 block of Lamesa Highway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 3500 block of E. Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- GAS LEAK was reported in the 1800 block of S. Scurry.

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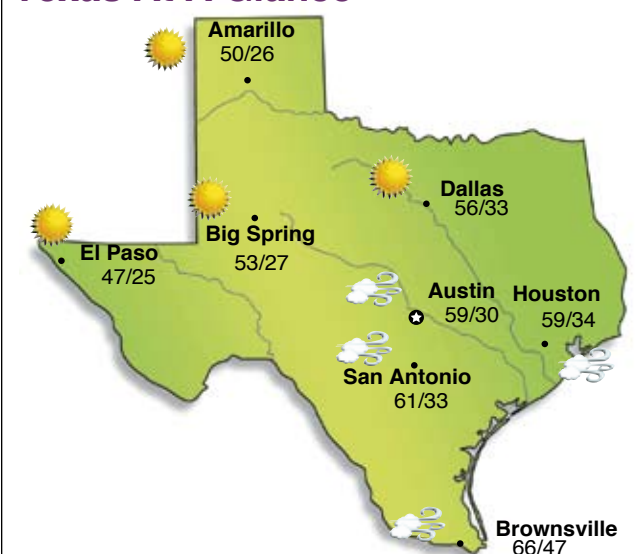
Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Fri 12/21	Sat 12/22	Sun 12/23	Mon 12/24	Tue 12/25
53/27 Sunny. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the upper 20s.	59/34 Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the mid 30s.	67/35 Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid 30s.	69/38 Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the upper 30s.	67/35 Sunshine. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid 30s.
Sunrise: 7:43 AM Sunset: 5:45 PM	Sunrise: 7:43 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM	Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM	Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM

American Profile
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Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Ablene	54	32	sunny	Kingsville	67	41	windy
Amarillo	50	26	sunny	Livingston	57	30	windy
Austin	59	30	windy	Longview	54	32	windy
Beaumont	58	34	windy	Lubbock	52	23	sunny
Brownsville	66	47	windy	Lufkin	57	32	windy
Brownwood	57	31	sunny	Midland	55	30	sunny
Corpus Christi	65	42	windy	Raymondville	66	45	windy
Corsicana	55	31	windy	Rosenberg	59	33	windy
Dallas	56	33	sunny	San Antonio	61	33	windy
Del Rio	59	36	windy	San Marcos	60	30	windy
El Paso	47	25	sunny	Sulphur Springs	53	32	windy
Fort Stockton	50	32	sunny	Sweetwater	53	30	sunny
Gainesville	53	28	sunny	Tyler	54	33	windy
Greenville	53	29	windy	Weatherford	54	28	sunny
Houston	59	34	windy	Wichita Falls	54	30	sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	61	31	rain	Minneapolis	22	8	sn shower
Boston	42	38	mst sunny	New York	45	45	pt sunny
Chicago	44	21	mixed	Phoenix	61	38	sunny
Dallas	56	33	sunny	San Francisco	58	54	rain
Denver	43	23	sunny	Seattle	41	35	rain
Houston	59	34	windy	St. Louis	44	25	mixed
Los Angeles	64	45	sunny	Washington, DC	51	41	cloudy
Miami	81	67	pt sunny				

Support Groups

WEDNESDAY

• RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; open 12 & 12 study meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

• Stepping Stone Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets at the Gold Rush Tobacco Shop, 800 E. Third Street. Open meeting at 7 p.m.

THURSDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, open discussion noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Non-smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

• Spring Tabernacle Ministries has a faith-based support group for those who need help finding and continuing to walk down the path God has for each of us. Meetings are at 11 a.m. until noon and again at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.. The classes take place at Spring Tabernacle Ministries, located at 1209 Wright St.

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

• Circle of Hope, a Celebrate Recovery group, meets at 6:30-8 p.m. at Spring Creek Fellowship, located in the College Park Shopping Center. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered recovery program dealing with life's hang-ups, hurts and habits, covering many areas. Circle of Hope group is a ministry of Spring Creek Fellowship. For further information, contact Dale at 432-270-8462.

• Visual Awareness Support Group (VASG) is open to the public but specifically aimed for people who suffer from vision problems and their caregivers. For more information, call 263-2501.

FRIDAY

• AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

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GOAL

Continued from Page 1

now, there's no reason we won't be able to meet our goal."

The local United Way supports 16 charities, including Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club, American Red Cross West Texas Chapter, Buffalo Trail Council Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) of West Texas, Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center, Emergency Services Chaplain Corp Services, Howard County Council on Aging/Meals on Wheels, Howard County Humane Society, Isaiah 58, Northside Commu-

nity Center, Salvation Army/Community and Emergency Services, Spring of Siloam Christian Women's Job Corp, Victim Services, Westside Community Day-care Center and YMCA of Big Spring.

"We are very fortunate to have personal and corporate charitable giving," Ann McClarty, campaign chair for the united Way, said. "The United Way of Big Spring and Howard County and its member agencies are extremely appreciative of the generosity of its donors."

Stewart said fluctuations in the West Texas economy have left a mark on this year's campaign; however, thanks to corporate donors willing to step up and fill in the gaps, this year's

campaign is expected to be a success.

"Our area didn't seem to be hit by the problems with the economy as bad as some areas, but we've certainly felt the push and pull," Stewart said. "Unfortunately, when the local economy takes a hit, that means there is an even greater need for charitable giving. We had a few corporate donors which had to back off a bit from what they normally donate, however, other companies were able to step in and more than fill the void that had been left. In the end, it kind of balanced out."

"The allocations committee made up of community representatives and United Way board members will meet Jan. 14-15 to hear from all 16

agencies," Stewart said. "This will allow a representative from each agency to present to the committee their goals and need for support. After the presentation, the committee will determine the amount allocated for each agency. The allocations will be handed out on Jan. 29 at our annual meeting."

Stewart said donations will still be accepted.

"If you would like to contribute to the United Way, visit www.unitedwaybshc.org or call 432-267-5201," Stewart said. "The money we raise through our annual fund-raisers pales in comparison to what is raised by our corporate and individual donors. They are the ones who make what we do possible."

Take note

• A fund has been established at Myers & Smith Funeral Home to help pay funeral expenses for local resident Joe Gomez, who passed away on Dec. 12. Donations can sent to Myers and Smith Funeral Home at P.O. Box 2760 in Big Spring.

• Don't forget to visit the Comanche Trail Festival of Lights in Big Spring, on display nightly from Saturday through Dec. 31. More displays, more lights, and more fun — and admission is free. However, donations are gratefully accepted. Questions? Call 263-4607.

• 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. 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 Thursday. Food donations (non-perishable) can be dropped off at the Whiting Big Spring Field Office, 5306 South Service Road. For more information, call 432-264-0004 and ask for Cindy Klaus.

RELIEF

Continued from Page 1

cess in places that are safe another meeting was required," Jesse Mendoza, P.E., Big Spring area engineer, said. "In addition to the allowed access, we added an extra 15 feet of right of way in some areas where it was tight. Those two changes required us to resubmit our environmental document and due to the resubmission we had to hold another meeting."

The route — which would include roadway from FM 700 north of Big Spring around the west side of town to FM 33 on the south side of Big Spring — is divided into three parts; the I-20 interchange, the southern part from I-20 to RM 33 and the final section which extends from I-20 to FM 700.

"Our meeting is focusing on the I-20 interchange and the southern portion not only due to recent changes in the project, but for the fact that both portions are funded and scheduled to go to contract in 2013," Paul Hoelscher, P.E. director of construction for TxDOT said.

According to Mendoza, the relief route project extends back to the 1980s when interest was originally expressed. Interest for the project was once again raised in 1994 when an I-27 expansion was made a possibility, but it wasn't until 1998 that the Ports to Plains project spurred movement in the plan. In 2000 a local focus group was formed and the project began to take shape.

"The overall plan was to have a focus group of community leaders and a few TxDOT representatives that would all have the same voice," Mendoza said. "More or less it was looking overall at how to approach the different type of proposals."

The focus group findings were presented in September of that same year and two public meetings were held to gather information from the citizens in August 2001. Since then a proclamation supporting the project was issued and a presentation was made

to the district engineer.

"The one (proposed plan) we have now wasn't the final product. It was, again, just a roughly 3,000 foot corridor and they looked at access to the airpark, disruptions to existing homes, existing highway intersections, geometric concerns, quality, safety, environmental concerns and quality of life," Mendoza said.

Wayne Ekdahl, R.P.L.S. District Surveyor, was on hand to give an update on the right of way process. According to his presentation, employees are almost 100 percent completed with all the surveys.

"The I-20 corridor has been mapped and the U.S. 87 corridor has all the monuments in the ground, but our consultants are working on the right of way map at this time," Ekdahl said. "At this point, almost everyone having property impacted by this should be able to see property points that have been set except for a few."

According to Right-of-Way Program Specialist Tommy Jones, the appraisal process or evaluation process of the property will begin once the right of way maps are in and property descriptions are finalized.

"We do have appraisers — three of them — as-

signed and ready to go. They will be performing the evaluations. Once they get started on the ground they will go through and talk with the people; they will kick the dirt with you," Jones said. "This is the time to share any thoughts, concerns or issues that may not be readily know. They will be able to get a good handle on appraising and placing a value on your piece of property. The more information you can give them the better it will benefit the land owner through the evaluation process."

The release of offers is expected to happen mid-February or mid-March according to Jones, which is when a contractor will be brought in.

"This is a large project to wrap our hands around and get accomplished in the time frame that we have been given," Jones said.

Jones also said letters will be sent out to land owners to notify them of the arrival and upcoming contact from these contractors so that there is no question about who they are. The contractors will also send out letters.

Once an offer has been extended to the property owner the negotiation process can begin. If an offer is unacceptable to

the land owner, there is a process that can be taken until an agreement can be reached. If need be a group of special commissioners will decide the value of property and issue a judgment of court which acts in lieu of a deed.

"There are multiple avenues for people who don't think they were treated fairly, but let me assure you we do everything we can to treat you fairly, but there are some times that we overlook things," Jones said. "It is those times that we need to talk about it, communicate about it. If we can't talk about it we can't resolve it."

Schematics, environmental assessment, tentative construction schedule and other information will be available for review and copying at the Big Spring Area Office, located at 1301 North SH 350 in Big Spring. Those who were unable to attend the meeting can still submit comment for an additional 10 days at the Big Spring location or at the Abilene District Office. All comments will be responded to by TxDOT.

THREAT

Continued from Page 1

Monday at 9:52 a.m. by local law enforcement dispatch.

"Dispatch received a 911 call from a male subject who claimed there was a bomb in the high school," Everett said. "School officials were immediately notified and the building was evacuated. Officers responded to the scene and conducted a search of the premises."

No bomb or device was found, according to Everett, and students and school faculty were sent back to their classes after approximately 40 minutes.

Everett said the call was made using a "dead" cell phone.

"A cell phone that is not activated or doesn't currently have service from the carrier can still dial 911," Everett said. "These pre-paid cell phones we toss in the trash can be dug out by someone, charged up and used to dial 911."

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

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Bill McClellan Managing Editor
Glenn Stifflemire Publisher
Steve Reagan Staff Writer
Brian McCormack Sports Editor
Thomas Jenkins Staff Writer

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• JOHN CORNYN

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20510-4305

Phone: 202-224-2934

• RANDY NEUGEBAUER

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Big Spring
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Texas 31st District
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BIG SPRING CITY COUNCIL

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- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail Managing Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

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- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to newsdesk@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

Lord, thank You for focusing on our projects and ideas as we focus on Your love and kindness. Amen

Keeping Christ in Christmas

It's just a few days until multiplied millions of God-fearing people all over the world will stop their social, educational and industrial worlds from spinning long enough to celebrate a holiday we call Christmas. Christmas is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon.

For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religious faith.

While Christmas is a centuries-old tradition, it was never an official American national holiday until 1870. Burton Chauncey Cook, House Representative from Illinois, introduced a bill to make Christmas a national holiday which passed both the House and Senate and President Ulysses S. Grant signed the bill which made Christmas a legal holiday June 28, 1870.

Celebrating Christmas has been controversial since its inception. Since numerous festivities found their roots in pagan practices, they were greatly frowned upon by conservatives within the Church. The feasting, gift-giving and frequent excesses presented a drastic contrast with the simplicity and spirituality of the Nativity, and many people throughout the centuries and into the present, condemn such practices as being contrary to the true spirit of Christmas.

The last few years have birthed endless protests from the non-Christian populace against the use of written or spoken religious expressions during the Christmas season. The President of American Atheists, David Silverman, has been extremely hateful in his brutally offensive attacks on Christianity during recent years.

Do not doubt my conviction

that people have the right to believe whatever they want to believe. But, I would also strongly advise against misjudging my conviction to stand my ground against anybody and everybody who believes they have more right to their beliefs than I do mine. There is a groundswell movement afoot by anti-Christian groups that is absolutely vile and I will not stand idly by and allow the faith I have in Jesus Christ to be slandered without a fight.

What must be exposed are the immeasurable differences in the actions and attitudes of the adherents to Christianity and movements like agnosticism, atheism and other anti-Christian belief systems. Christianity is founded upon love, acceptance, and forgiveness. There is anger, hatred, prejudice and violence prevalent in most other non-Christian organizations and groups. A case in point is Mr. Silverman's call to arms against the Christian faith that seems to have no boundaries.

This year, Silverman wanted to make a big splash, so he decided to draw blood. Spending \$25,000 to have a billboard on Times Square, he erected a sign with a picture of Santa Claus above another image of Jesus Christ on the cross which urges passersby to "Keep the Merry!" and "Dump the Myth!" It shows what he is made of.

He and his supporters do not want to be left alone — they want to inflame the passions of those with whom they disagree.

Unlike Christians, who, generally speaking and by principle, do not provoke, harass or otherwise mock atheists, Silverman and his ilk want nothing more than to stick it to Christians at Christmastime. It's who they are. They are angrily leaving a trail of contemptible actions all around the world and it's getting worse.

Persecution and opposition, in many forms and at different intensity levels, have been around as long as Christianity itself and most Christians bear it and grow stronger as a result of their commitment.

However, with the evolution and expansion of mass media, which is largely funded, populated, controlled and influenced

I COLUMN AS I SEE 'EM

by anti-Christian people, antagonism and attacks have greatly increased in recent years.

Christianity seems to have a bulls-eye painted squarely on the heart of the man that represents both the manger and the cross.

In fact, looking like Jesus turned out to be a cross to bear for Nathan Grindal, a 33-year old man whose resemblance to the King of Kings caused him to be kicked out of a darts tournament in Somerset, Great Britain just a few days ago.

I don't care what people, who say the United States of America wasn't founded on Judeo-Christian principles, think because they don't know their history very well, and what angers me the most is that other non-Christian religions are being given freedom and rights that are being stripped from Christians.

All across our nation expressions of faith in Jesus Christ are being suppressed while other religions are being promoted and given privileges that amount to nothing less than blasphemous discrimination.

In recent months there have been numerous documented attacks against Christians in America, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria, Malaysia, Syria, China, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and many more countries. Unbelievably, our government provides billions of our tax dollars in aid to many of our greatest enemies under the guise of humanitarian and political causes. It's disgraceful and humiliating to be sending billions of our dollars to people who burn our flag and wish death upon every American "infidel".

The bottom line for this Christian American is that I am going to declare my faith in Jesus loud and clear without intimidation.

I'll say Merry CHRISTmas anytime, anywhere, to anybody. And I'll shout it from the mountain tops that, as far as I am concerned, Jesus is the only reason for the season.

You may not agree with anything I've said, but I column as I see 'em.

Revising a bill that won't work

On Friday, a heavily armed young man walked into a Connecticut elementary school and murdered 20 first-graders and six adults before he killed himself. Even in a country injured to gun violence, this crime is too heinous to contemplate.

Now the question is: Does Washington pass a bad law just to do something, anything, even something that doesn't enhance public safety?

I write this as a former assault-weapons ban supporter, who observed that the 1994 federal assault-weapons ban, which expired in 2004, didn't reduce gun violence in America. Nor, apparently, did Connecticut's assault-weapons ban, passed in 1993 and still in force.

The New York Times reports that all three guns — a Glock and a Sig Sauer handgun and a .223 Bushmaster semiautomatic rifle — brought by the shooter to Sandy Hook Elementary School were "legally acquired and registered" by the shooter's mother, who was his first victim.

The Sandy Hook shooter used 30-round clips, which were illegal under the 1994 federal law — except that old large-capacity magazines were exempt. The Washington Post reports there were 24 million such magazines in private hands at the time the

It's been my experience that the more people support bans like the 1994 assault-weapons law, the less they know about guns.



DEBRA SAUNDERS

law passed.

A University of Pennsylvania study of the federal assault-weapons law found that while gun violence declined during its 10-year existence, "We cannot clearly credit the ban with any of the nation's recent drop in gun violence. And, indeed, there has been no discernible reduction in the lethality and injuriousness of gun violence."

It's been my experience that the more people support bans like the 1994 assault-weapons law, the less they know about guns.

They often use the term "semi-automatic" as if it were synonymous with "assault weapon." They couldn't pick out an "assault weapon" in a firearms line up.

They say they don't want to mess with the rights of gun owners, but if the gun-control lobby manages to pass laws that limit high-power weapons, it then will try to ban "junk guns" — or cheap guns.

Over the weekend, Sen. Dianne

Feinstein, D-Calif., the author of the 1994 federal ban, said that on the first day of the new Congress she will introduce an updated assault-weapons ban, which specifically would ban the .223 Bushmaster. A press release explained that her new bill would ban the "sale of more than 100 assault weapons" and limit clips to 10 rounds, while protecting "gun owners by exempting more than 900 specific hunting and sporting weapons."

The problem: No law can do both things well.

I'm all for limiting clip rounds to 10 bullets and closing background-check loopholes. But judging by the press release, Feinstein's new bill looks like another gun bill that has the potential to reduce the death toll in a mass shooting — obviously a good thing — but at a cost.

The cost is that law-abiding gun owners, and those who are not so law-abiding, are going to run out and buy guns and bullets, pronto. They see a bunch of politicians, who don't know guns, about to mess with their right to self-protection. And it doesn't make them feel safer. Me either.

Email Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@sfchronicle.com. To find out more about Debra J. Saunders and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Users hit 'like,' stores jump into action

By **CANDICE CHOI**
Associated Press
NEW YORK — Facebook isn't just for goofy pictures and silly chatter. Whether shoppers know it or not, their actions online help dictate what's in stores during this holiday season.

After polling customers on the social media site, Macy's decided to carry denim jeans in bright neon hues rather than pastels. Wal-Mart for the first time decided to let customers vote on which toys they want discounted. And to better plan orders for the decorative flags she sells, a small business owner in Mississippi is running a contest that encourages customers to chime in about how they're decorating their homes this winter.

The impact of social media on a company's bottom line is tough to quantify, with no hard data on how millions of Facebook fans and Twitter followers translate into sales for stores.

But during the holiday shopping season, a roughly two-month period when retailers can make up to 40 percent of their annual revenue, stores are uncovering a valuable use for all the seemingly useless online muttering: market research.

The result is that whenever folks press the "like" button to give their seal of approval for a particular company's page or make a com-

ment on how much they like the leather boots they just bought, they're helping everyone from independently-owned small shops to the nation's biggest retailers make decisions about what products to stock up on, what to play up on the sales floor and what promotions to offer online.

For the first time this year, one of Macy's Inc.'s apparel buyers suggested the company solicit feedback on Facebook on which colors it should stock for "Else" brand jeans in the fall ahead of the holiday shopping season. Several weeks later, with about 2,500 "likes" and 750 comments, "Very Vivid" colors in bright blue, orange and red were declared the victor over softer shades such as baby pink and baby blue.

The company, which has more than 9 million "likes" on Facebook, followed up with another poll in July on whether it should carry a "Kensie" brand dress in a bird or floral print.

About 4,000 people issued their verdicts within 48 hours, and the department store plans to carry the floral print this February.

Rather than simply using social media to tout promotions and new products, companies are just now realizing the value of making customers feel as though they're part of the deci-

sion making process, said Jennifer Kasper, who heads digital media at Macy's. In addition to making customers feel like insiders, she said it helps businesses better tailor their offers as well.

Matt Cronin, a founding partner of Web Liquid Group, a digital marketing agency, agreed that companies are still in the early stages of figuring out how to put their social media profiles to use. Until now, he noted that social media strategies have primarily been about capturing as many followers or fans as possible without really knowing where to go from there.

One hurdle for major retailers is that it's difficult to take the information they learn online and put it to use while the trends are still relevant, said Nicolas Franchet, head of retail e-commerce at Facebook.

That's one of the trickier aspects of Wal-Mart Store Inc.'s new "Toyland Tuesday" contest, which lets fans vote on which of two toys will be discounted on the following Tuesday. Once a winner is declared on Thursday, the retailer acts quickly to inform its 4,000 stores of how to adjust pricing and displays, says Wanda Young, senior director of social media for Wal-Mart, which has more than 25 million likes on Facebook.

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Although it's the first time Wal-Mart is letting shoppers have a direct say in what merchandise gets discounted, the retailer is learning to use social media in more discreet ways as well. Last year, Wal-Mart, based in Bentonville, Ark., acquired an analytics company called Kosmix that monitors online chatter to try and predict what products might suddenly become popular.

The unit, now called (at)Walmartlabs, suggested that the retailer give juicers prominent display for the holidays last year, after a movie about an obese man who lost weight on a juice diet started trending online. Wal-Mart declined to give examples of how it used online chatter this holiday season but said it's slowly playing a bigger role in product decisions.

That's critical because companies are realizing shopping behavior is often more influenced by what's happening in pop culture, rather than their own past shopping patterns, said Shernaz Daver, a spokeswoman for (at)Walmartlabs.

"Social media has enabled us to understand intent," she said.

Melinda Vitale Shaw, owner of the two-store McLinda's Fine Gifts in Picayune, Miss., is using the same concepts as the world's biggest retailer. Since setting up a Facebook page in

2010, she's used it as a sounding board for what to stock in her stores.

In the south, for example, it's common for people to change the decorative flags outside their homes depending on the season or the holiday. To get a better sense of what type of decorative flags might sell well next year, Vitale Shaw recently asked fans to post about the designs they were currently flying, or what they wished they were flying.

She was surprised to see several comments about snowman flags, since it doesn't snow much in the south. Even though Facebook sometimes proves her business instincts wrong, she called the site "a true retailer's friend."

In a more unusual case, the outdoor retailer Gander Mountain is handing the reins over to fans on social media. The chain, based in St. Paul, Minn., is running

a promotion that lets customers determine the price of its products.

Every Thursday during the holiday season, customers can push down the price on five selected items by sharing them on Facebook or Twitter. The more shares an item gets, the lower the price goes; discounts start at 10 percent but can go as high as 50 percent. Shoppers can jump in and buy the items at any point, or wait for a lower discount but risk that the store will run out of the items.

"The customer has to decide. Do I buy it at 25 percent off or do I risk that Gander runs out of the jacket?" said Steve Uline, executive vice president of marketing of Gander Mountain, which has more than 500,000 "likes" on Facebook. "It makes it interesting for the consumer."

Monks' fruitcakes support solitary living

AVA, Mo. (AP) — Once the bane of potluck parties, the fruitcake has been turned into a sought-after treat by Trappist monks secluded in the Missouri Ozarks who some say

bake cake that's nothing short of heavenly.

Between February and mid-December, monks at the Assumption Abbey in Ava, Mo., produce about 25,000 fruitcakes. The monks

have gained a national reputation for carefully controlling the production. They marinate the fruit, age the cakes and even package and ship the product from their foothills monastery.

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News in brief

Benghazi review board leaders to brief Congress on systematic State Dept. security failures

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaders of an independent panel that blamed systematic State Department management and leadership failures for gross security lapses in the deadly Sept. 11 attack on a U.S. diplomatic mission in Libya will explain their findings to Congress on Wednesday.

The two most senior members of the Accountability Review Board are set to testify behind closed doors before the House and Senate foreign affairs committees on the classified findings of their harshly critical report.

An unclassified version released late Tuesday said serious bureaucratic mismanagement was responsible for the inadequate security at the mission in Benghazi where the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans were killed.

"Systematic failures and leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels within two bureaus of the State Department resulted in a Special Mission security posture that was inadequate for Benghazi and grossly inadequate to deal with the attack that took place," the panel said.

Despite those deficiencies, the board determined that no individual officials ignored or violated their duties and recommended no disciplinary action. But it also said poor performance by senior managers should be grounds for disciplinary recommendations in the future.

Switzerland's UBS becomes second bank to settle rate-rigging probe

GENEVA (AP) — Switzerland's UBS AG agreed Wednesday to pay some \$1.5 billion in fines to international regulators following a probe into the rigging of a key global interest rate.

In admitting to fraud, Switzerland's largest bank became the second bank, after Britain's Barclays PLC, to settle over the rate-rigging scandal. The fine, which will be paid to authorities in the U.S., Britain and Switzerland, also comes just over a week after HSBC PLC agreed to pay nearly \$2 billion for alleged money laundering.

The settlement caps a tough year for UBS and the reputation of the global banking industry. As well as being ensnared in the industry-wide investigation into alleged manipulations of the benchmark LIBOR interest rate, short for London interbank offered rate, UBS has seen its reputation suffer in a London trial into a multibillion dollar trading scandal and ongoing tax evasion probes.

As a result of the fines, litigation, unwinding of real estate investments, restructuring and other costs, UBS said it expects to make a fourth quarter net loss of between 2 billion to 2.5 billion Swiss francs (\$2.2-2.7 billion). Nevertheless, the Zurich-based bank maintained that it "remains one of the best capitalized banks in the world."

Other banks are expected to be fined for their involvement in the LIBOR scandal. LIBOR, which is a self-policing system and relies on information that global banks submit to a British banking authority, is important because it is used to set the interest

rates on trillions of dollars in contracts around the world, including mortgages and credit cards.

Mourning and impatience form potent mix as Newtown buries dead in earnest; gun debate ramps up

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — Mourners overlapped at back-to-back services as funerals began in earnest in a Connecticut town that lost 20 of its children and seven adults to a gunman, with emotions and tempers in tatters amid a global crush of media attention to a community once known mostly for its bucolic atmosphere and sterling school system.

At St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Newtown, a service for first-grader James Mattioli had not concluded when mourners began arriving for the funeral of little Jessica Rekos, the first of eight to be held in the coming days at the church. Several more sets of funerals and visitation hours were set throughout town Wednesday.

Students went back to classes the day before, except for those at Sandy Hook Elementary, where a lone gunman armed with a military-style assault rifle slaughtered the children, six adults and himself by the time Friday's massacre ended. He also killed his mother at her home.

Pupils at Sandy Hook, which serves kindergarten through fourth grade, will resume classes in a formerly shuttered school in a neighboring community after the winter break, the Connecticut Post reported.

"It's definitely better than just sitting at home watching the news," sophomore Tate Schwab said outside Newtown High School. "It really hasn't sunk in yet. It feels to me like it hasn't happened."

New Syrian rebel commander afraid regime will use chemical weapons

ANTAKYA, Turkey (AP) — Syrian rebels are closely monitoring the regime's chemical weapons sites but don't have the means to seize and secure them, their newly elected military commander told The Associated Press.

Gen. Salim Idris, who defected from the Syrian army in July, said he is "very afraid" a cornered Syrian President Bashar Assad will unleash such weapons on his own people.

Syria is said to have one of the world's largest chemical arsenals. Earlier this week, Syria's U.N. ambassador said the regime would not use such weapons under any circumstances. However, recent U.S. intelligence reports indicated the regime may be readying chemical weapons and could be desperate enough to use them.

Idris, a 55-year-old German-trained electronics professor, was chosen earlier this month as chief of staff by several hundred commanders of rebel units meeting in Turkey.

With the election of Idris and a 30-member military command center, Syria's opposition hopes to transform largely autonomous groups of fighters into a unified force. The reorganization came after Syria's political opposition won international recognition this month as the sole representative of the Syrian people.

2 inmates who escaped Chicago high-rise jail using rope made from bed sheets still at large

CHICAGO (AP) — Employees at a high-rise jail in downtown Chicago knew something wasn't right when they arrived to work and saw a makeshift rope fashioned from bed sheets hanging from the bars of a cell window about 20 stories above the ground.

Inside the jail cell Tuesday morning, investigators found a broken window and bars inside a mattress, according to an FBI affidavit. Stuffed under blankets on two beds were clothing and sheets, shaped to resemble a body, the affidavit said.

Authorities believe it was the handiwork of two daring convicted bank robbers — the first inmates to escape from the federal facility in nearly two decades. They remained at large early Wednesday.

What's less clear is when Joseph "Jose" Banks and Kenneth Conley managed to flee, apparently by scaling down the roughly 20 stories from the cell they once shared.

The affidavit states both men were in their assigned area of the jail for a headcount around 10 p.m. Monday.

Obama offer to slow growth of Social Security benefits at odds with top Democrats in Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama's offer to slow the growth of Social Security benefits would force fellow Democrats in Congress to abandon promises to shield the massive retirement and disability program from cuts as part of negotiations to avoid the year-end fiscal cliff.

Both Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., pledged not to touch Social Security as part of deficit reduction talks. Now that Obama and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, have agreed to a new measure of inflation that would reduce annual cost-of-living adjustments, or COLAs, for Social Security and other government programs, Democrats are reluctant to call it a deal-breaker.

As Obama and Boehner continued to haggle over how much to raise taxes and cut spending, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney called the new inflation measure a technical adjustment designed to make inflation estimates more accurate, and he emphasized it's Republicans who want it.

"Let's be clear. This is something that the Republicans have asked for, and as part of an effort to find common ground with the Republicans, the president has agreed to put this in his proposal," Carney told reporters Tuesday. "The president has always said, as part of this process when we're talking about the spending cut side of this, that it would require tough choices by both sides."

Boehner proposed the change earlier this month in talks with Obama, and the president included it in a counteroffer this week.

Instagram says user photos won't appear in ads, plans to remove policy clause suggesting that

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Instagram, the popular mobile photo-sharing service now owned by Facebook, said Tuesday that it will remove language from its new terms of service suggesting that users' photos could appear in advertisements.

The language in question had appeared in updated policies announced Monday and scheduled to take effect Jan. 16. After an outcry on social media and privacy rights blogs, the company clarified that it has no plans to put users' photos in ads.

That said, Instagram maintains that it was created to become a business and would like to experiment with various forms of advertisements to make money. Instagram doesn't currently run any ads. As of now, the free service has no way to make money and brings in no revenue to Facebook.

"Our main goal is to avoid things like advertising banners you see in other apps that would hurt the Instagram user experience," Instagram co-founder Kevin Systrom wrote in a blog post Tuesday.

In Sunday's
Big Spring Herald



10...9...8...7...6...

Each Dec. 31, revelers across the nation celebrate as apples, balls, pickles, possums and other assorted objects are lowered to usher in the New Year.

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News in brief

Texas landowner faces

TransCanada in court hearing

HOUSTON (AP) — A Texas landowner and TransCanada Corp. are taking their argument over whether tar sands are crude oil before a judge. Nacogdoches County Court-at-Law Judge Jack Sinz will hear arguments Wednesday. Landowner Michael Bishop wants all pipeline work on his 20-acre property to stop until the judge rules on whether the product TransCanada plans to carry through it is crude oil.

TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline is meant to transport tar sands — or diluted bitumen — from Alberta to Texas refineries. The section of the pipeline that would cross the international border has not been approved. A shorter portion from Oklahoma to Texas is under construction.

The pipeline is to run across Bishop's land. Bishop says the company lied and that tar sands oil is not crude. TransCanada insists it is.

Texas homeowners pay highest U.S. insurance premiums

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — An industry group says Texas homeowners are paying the highest insurance premiums in the country.

The report was released Tuesday by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

The Dallas Morning News reports the study is based on premiums collected in 2010, the most recent year for available nationwide data.

The average annual cost of the most commonly sold policy in Texas was \$1,560, about 3.2 percent more than figures from a year earlier. The national average was \$909.

Rick Gentry of the Insurance Council of Texas says adverse weather creates losses. He says such losses — from catastrophes such as tornadoes, hailstorms and hurricanes — drive the price of insurance.

Body in burned Lubbock duplex possible homicide

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Investigators are trying to determine whether a woman found dead in a burning West Texas duplex was killed by her husband.

Lubbock police Sgt. Jonathan Stewart says officers arrived to find a blood-covered man outside the home Tuesday. Stewart says the man claims he killed his wife then set the duplex on fire.

Names of the pair haven't been released. Police say the man was taken to a Lubbock hospital for treatment of injuries mainly suffered from the fire.

Police did not immediately return a message Wednesday to provide additional details. No charges were immediately filed.

Superintendent out at West Texas school district

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A West Texas school board has reached a deal to oust its superintendent after an audit showed possible cheating attempts

on federal accountability standards.

Canutillo Independent School District trustees early Wednesday approved a separation agreement with Damon Murphy, who was suspended Dec. 6. Murphy is on paid leave until his resignation takes effect Feb. 1.

Murphy, who was hired in 2010, declined comment after the decision linked to an audit that found alleged evidence of tampering with student classifications. The Texas Education Agency on Friday launched a compliance review.

Murphy is a former associate superintendent in the neighboring El Paso Independent School District, where the TEA this month took more control.

Former EPISD superintendent Lorenzo Garcia pleaded guilty to fraud and must serve more than three years in prison.

Dewhurst, Patrick to lay out school reforms

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst is expected to call for more charter schools in Texas and bolstering classroom accountability on the eve of a new legislative session.

Dewhurst and Republican Sen. Dan Patrick of Houston are set to lay out their education priorities Wednesday at an Austin private school. Patrick is the new head of the influential Senate Education Committee and is a supporter of school vouchers.

Dewhurst has previously said education will be the "hallmark issue" confronting lawmakers when they reconvene next month in the Capitol.

The Legislature slashed more than \$5 billion from public schools to balance the budget in 2011. A better economy and likely surplus has education leaders calling for a reversal of those cuts.

Bushes' names added to Midland federal courthouse

MIDLAND, Texas (AP) — The U.S. Senate has voted to add the names of former presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush to the federal courthouse in Midland, where the Bushes once lived.

In a joint statement Tuesday, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway announced final passage of a House resolution renaming the building the "George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush United States Courthouse and George Mahon Federal Building."

Previously, the building's official name had been the "George Mahon Federal Building United States Courthouse" after a longtime Democratic congressman who once represented Midland.

Judge delays trial for BP rig employees until 2014

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Two BP rig supervisors charged with manslaughter in the death of 11 workers on the Deepwater Horizon will go on trial in 2014.

U.S. District Judge Stanwood Duval Jr. has put off the trial of Robert Kaluza and Donald Vidrine until Jan. 13, 2014. They're accused of disregarding high pressure readings that should have been indi-

cations of trouble before BP's well blowout.

Prosecutors said they expect to provide more than a million pages of information to the defense. Defense lawyers said they needed more time to prepare for the trial, which had been scheduled Feb. 5.

Dallas-area teacher confesses to sex with minors

DALLAS (AP) — A former Dallas-area high school teacher has admitted to making photos and videos of himself having sex with three underage female students from his school.

Former Garland High School teacher Willis Bassham pleaded guilty Tuesday to a child pornography possession charge in federal court in Dallas. He could be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison, fined \$250,000 and placed on supervised release for the rest of his life.

Bassham is in federal custody awaiting sentencing April 15.

New trial denied for mother who glued tot's hands

DALLAS (AP) — A Dallas mother who glued her toddler's hands to a wall during a brutal attack has been denied a new trial.

Elizabeth Escalona requested the new trial after drawing a 99-year prison sentence for her guilty plea to felony injury to a child. She argued that prosecutors had offered her a 45-year prison sentence for her guilty plea, an offer she says her trial attorney called "ridiculous."

The Dallas Morning News reports state District Judge Larry Mitchell denied the motion Tuesday after Escalona's trial attorney, Angie N'Duka, denied her contention.

Police say Escalona kicked 2-year-old Jocelyn Cerdillo, beat her, then glued her hands to an apartment wall. Jocelyn suffered bleeding in her brain, a fractured rib, bruises and bite marks.

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Tyler clinic owner guilty in attempted arson care

TYLER, Texas (AP) — The owner of an East Texas methadone clinic has pleaded guilty to trying to have a competitor's business torched and then seeking to have a co-defendant killed.

Prosecutors in Tyler say 43-year-old Edwards Jacobs on Tuesday pleaded guilty to attempted arson and murder-for-hire solicitation. No sentencing date was immediately set for Jacobs, who faces up to 20 years in prison on each count.

Investigators say Jacobs in March gave Daniel Kubisty about \$3,000 to burn a competitor's clinic. Officers arrested Kubisty and seized a gasoline can with a saturated wick.

Jacobs and Kubisty

were indicted in June on attempted arson and conspiracy to commit arson charges.

Authorities allege Jacobs then tried to hire

someone to kill Kubisty to block his testimony. That person was cooperating with investigators.

Kubisty awaits trial.

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Big Spring's Diamonique Mayes puts up a shot during Tuesday's game against San Angelo Lake View. Mayes contributed two points and three rebounds in the 50-31 win.

Lady Steers down Lake View, Steers stopped by Lamesa in OT

By **BRIAN MCCORMACK**
Sports Editor

Big Spring Girls

BIG SPRING — The Lady Steers improved to 10-7 Tuesday at Steer Gym with a convincing 50-31 victory over San Angelo Lake View.

SALV kept up with BSBS, only trailing by six until a 16-3 run during the fourth quarter put the game on ice for the Lady Steers.

"We got into some foul trouble early," BSBS Head Coach Mike Warren said. "Our tall girls had to sit a lot of the first and second quarters, so it took a while to get going. Our subs did a good job — we had four sophomores and a freshmen out there — I think our press wore them down. In the fourth quarter (Lake View) was turning the ball over."

Dyrshae Vanderbilt led Big Spring with 14 points, while Logan Yarbar and Julianna Rodriguez added 12 points apiece and Yaneira Tuitt put up eight points and snagged nine rebounds.

The Lady Steers will meet Tulia in the Lubbock Caprock Tournament opener Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at Lubbock Coronado.

"Those smaller panhandle teams are good," Warren added. "A lot of them don't have volley ball and they play year 'round. It'll be good for us."

Boys

LAMESA — The Steers have had good luck in overtime so far this season. They were the victors in two OT matches against San Angelo Lake View, then pulled out another with extra minutes on the clock over Stanton last Friday.

But Tuesday, the Steers' rally fell short against the Golden Tornados and they were defeated 68-57 after Lamesa executed a dominating 17-6 performance in OT.

BSHS (5-9) was led by Ty Sealy and Tyler Wigington with 11 points each. Tavaris Walker chipped in 10.

The Steers will host Seminole on Friday at 6 p.m. at Steer Gym.

Forsan Boys

COAHOMA — The Buffaloes of Forsan (5-2) traveled to Bulldog Country on Tuesday and went home the victors over their rivals, downing CHS 52-41.

Aric Hernandez scored a game-high 19 points and Kade Fannin put up 15 points and got 11 rebounds to lead Forsan.

Tanner Ruiz produced 16 points for the Bulldogs (8-6) and Alex Hill chipped in 9.

Forsan will play host to Colorado City on Friday. Coahoma will be participating in the Reagan County Tournament beginning

See **ROUNDUP**, page 16

Mayo, Kaman help Mavericks end three-game skid

DAVID JIMENEZ

Associated Press

DALLAS — O.J. Mayo and Chris Kaman didn't want to let another tight game slip away from the Dallas Mavericks.

Mayo scored 26 points, Kaman added 20 and the Mavericks snapped a three-game losing streak by beating the Philadelphia 76ers 107-100 Tuesday night.

Dallas was holding on to an 88-82 lead when Mayo and Kaman took over late. The duo scored 17 of the team's last 19 points to help Dallas win their seventh straight at home against the 76ers.

The Mavericks had included overtime losses to

Boston and Minnesota.

Mayo had nine points and three assists in the final 6:17. Kaman, who hasn't played in the fourth quarter or overtime in four of the past five games, had eight points in that stretch.

"It's the most important time of the game," Kaman said. "It's crunch time and I was glad I was out there to finish plays."

Mayo, who also finished with a season-high eight assists, hit a 22-footer and Kaman made three shots in a row in an 8-2 run that made it 96-84. After the 76ers scored the next six, the pair combined to hit three shots in a row to push the lead up to 11.

"We try to involve those

guys in a lot of things because they're both playing well," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said. "(Mayo's) aggression was really the key."

Dorell Wright scored 25 points and Spencer Hawes had 18 for the 76ers, who lost their fourth straight game. Philadelphia point guard Jrue Holiday, the team's leading scorer, missed his third straight game with a sprained left foot.

"I thought we had some guys play well and we've got to keep building on that," 76ers coach Doug Collins said. "We know we're undermanned, but nobody cares."

Dallas point guard Derek Fisher left the game with 6:50

remaining in the first quarter with a strained right knee and did not return. Fisher, who wasn't expected to play because of the flu, went down to the ground after having his shot blocked by Evan Turner. The 17th-year guard walked slowly to the locker room.

Carlisle said Fisher will have an MRI tomorrow to determine the severity of the injury.

Dallas' Shawn Marion scored 14 points and grabbed nine rebounds. The forward surpassed 16,000 points in his career, becoming the 95th player in NBA history to top the milestone.

Turner chipped in with 17 points for the 76ers and Thaddeus Young had 12.

Wright hit seven 3-pointers, including four in the final quarter to keep Philadelphia close.

Wright's consecutive 3s brought the 76ers to 96-90 with 2:50 left before Mayo and Kaman squashed the rally. Mayo drove past Hawes on consecutive layups and Kaman hit a bank shot to make it 102-91 with 1:36 remaining.

Wright made two more 3-pointers to make it 102-97 with 30.2 seconds left, but the Mavericks closed it out by hitting 5 of 6 free throws down the stretch.

The Mavericks face a rugged schedule the rest of the week with games against Miami, Memphis and San Antonio.

A&M's Manziel is AP Player of the Year

(AP) — Johnny Manziel ran for almost 1,700 yards and 30 touchdowns as a dual-threat quarterback his senior year of high school at Kerrville Tivy.

Who would have thought he'd be even more impressive at Texas A&M when pitted against the defenses of the Southeastern Conference?

On Tuesday, Manziel picked up another major award for his spectacular debut season. He was voted The Associated Press Player of the Year. As with the Heisman Trophy and Davey O'Brien Award that Manziel already won, the QB nicknamed Johnny Football is the first freshman to collect the AP award.

Manziel's 31 votes were more than twice that of second place finisher Manti Te'o, Notre Dame's

start linebacker. He is the third straight Heisman-winning quarterback to receive the honor, following Robert Griffin III and Cam Newton.

Manziel erased initial doubts about his ability when he ran for 60 yards and a score in his first game against Florida.

"I know I could run the ball, I did it a lot in high school," Manziel said in an interview with the AP. "It is just something that you don't get a chance to see in the spring. Quarterbacks aren't live in the spring. You don't get to tackle. You don't get to evade some of the sacks that you would in normal game situations. So I feel like when I was able to avoid getting tackled, it opened some people's eyes a little bit more."

The 6-foot-1 Manziel threw for

3,419 yards and 24 touchdowns and ran for 1,181 yards and 19 more scores to help the Aggies win 10 games for the first time since 1998 — and in their inaugural SEC year, too.

Ryan Tannehill, Manziel's predecessor now with the Dolphins after being drafted eighth overall this season, saw promise from the young quarterback last year when he was redshirted. But even he is surprised at how quickly things came together for Manziel.

"It's pretty wild. I always thought he had that playmaking ability, that something special where if somebody came free, he can make something exciting happen," Tannehill said. "I

See **MANZIEL**, Page 16

Broncos gallop into top spot in Ap Pro32

NEW YORK (AP) — A nine-game winning streak has Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos on top of the AP Pro32 NFL power rankings for the first time.

The latest win came on the road, 34-17 at Baltimore, and was impressive enough to lift the Broncos to No. 1 by three points over the San Francisco 49ers.

AFC West champion Denver (11-3) and play-off-bound San Francisco each received six first-place votes Tuesday in balloting by The

Associated Press' panel of 12 media members who regularly cover the league. The Broncos outpointed the 49ers for first, 375-372, in the closest voting of the season.

"The Broncos haven't lost since early October and won't lose the next two weeks," said CBSSports.com's Clark Judge.

Half the voters preferred the 49ers, who stormed to a 28-point lead over the Patriots on the road, then hung on for a 41-34 win to clinch a playoff berth.

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6	3	9	2	4	7	8	5	1
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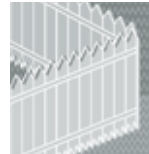
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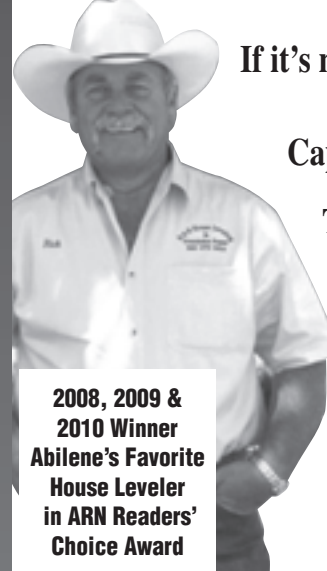
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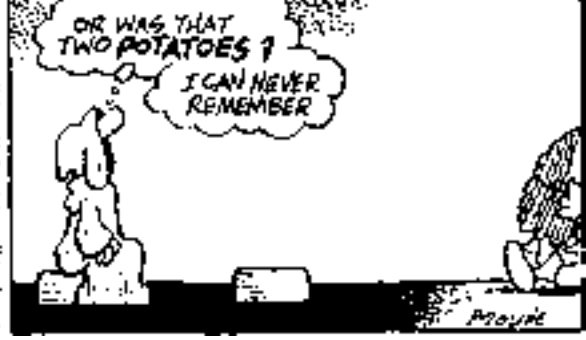
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5:PM	News ABC	Casa Notic.	Two Men	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News News	King King	Shepherd's Heart	Charlie Rose	King King	American Guns	CSI: Miami	Punisher, Will Patton	Castle	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Good	SportsNation	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Corona de Lágrimas	Big Bang	News Ent	Camino a la Corona	News Millionaire	Seinfeld	Mani Andrew	PBS News-Hour	Rules Rules	American Guns	CSI: Miami	Castle	Castle	Shake It Austin	College Basketball: Xavier at Cincinnati	NBA Basketball: Nets at New York Knicks.	
7:PM	Middle Neighbors	Por Ella Soy Eva	The X Factor	Home-Holidays	Miss Universo 2012 (SS)	The 2012 Miss Universe Competition	Fam. Guy Upd	Chevalme	Nature	Movie: Noel, Paul Walker	American Guns	Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	Movie: Kick-Ass, Mark Strong	Castle	Movie: Torque, Monet Mazur	Good Luck Charlie	College Basketball	NBA Basketball: Bucks at Grizzlies
8:PM	Mod Fam	Amores Verdaderos	Simpsons	CSI: Crime Scene	Escobar Rostro de	Chicago Fire	Big Bang	Big Bang	NOVA (DVS)	Seinfeld	Sons of Guns	(-45)	Movie: The Punisher, Will Patton	Castle	Vindi	Good Phineas		
9:PM	The Year With Katie Couric	Amor Bravo (SS)	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	Rik McDonald	Charlie Rose	'Til Death	American Guns	Movie: White Christmas, Rosemary Clooney	CSI: NY	Don't Sleep!	Austin Good	SportsCenter		
10:PM	Nightline	Noticiero	Raymond	Letterman	Victorios (SS)	Jay Leno	Office	Alewine	World	'Til Death	Sons of Guns	Movie: The Ghost and Mr. Chicken	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Wizards	NFL Live	SportsCenter	
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Al Diablo	Law Order: CI	Ferguson	Decisiones (SS)	Jimmy Fallon	Office	Upd	Conan	Browns	American Guns	Movie: Kick-Ass, Mark Strong	Cold Case	Movie: Waist Deep, Larenz Tate	Deck	NBA	SportsCenter	
12:AM	Extra	Mar de Amor (SS)	Raymond	Insider	Pagado	News	Light	Light	Light	Browns	American Guns	Movie: The Ghost and Mr. Chicken	Major Crimes	Deck	Good	Sup. Bowl	SportsCenter	
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula	American	Ent	Pagado	(:05) Today	Earl	Earl	Earl	Cops	American Guns	Movie: The Ghost and Mr. Chicken	Major Crimes	Deck	Good	Sup. Bowl	SportsCenter	

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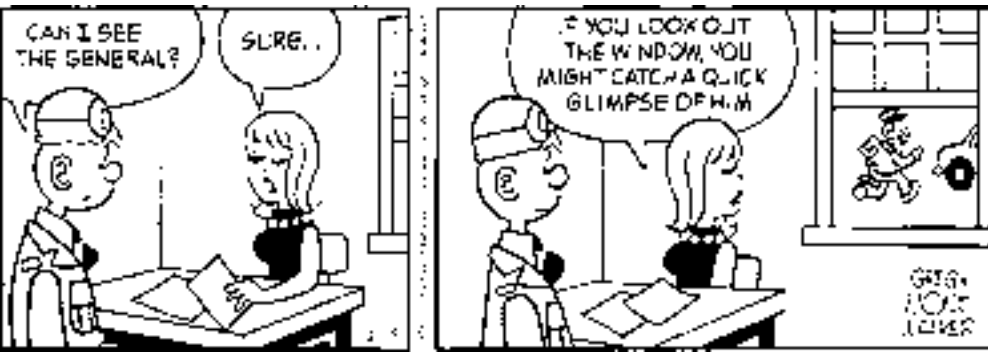
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This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 19, the 354th day of 2012. There are 12 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 19, 1972, Apollo 17 splashed down in the Pacific, winding up the Apollo program of manned lunar landings.

On this date:

In 1777, Gen. George Washington led his army of about 11,000 men to Valley Forge, Pa., to camp for the winter.

In 1813, British forces captured Fort Niagara during the War of 1812.

In 1843, "A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens, was first published in England.

In 1910, the artificial fiber rayon was first commercially produced by the American Viscose Co. of Marcus Hook, Pa.

In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corp. began transmitting overseas with its Empire Service to Australia.

In 1946, war broke out in Indochina as troops under Ho Chi Minh launched widespread attacks against the French.

In 1950, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was named commander of the military forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In 1961, former U.S. Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., 73, suffered a debilitating stroke while in Palm Beach, Fla.

In 1971, "A Clockwork Orange," Stanley Kubrick's controversial movie adaptation of the Anthony Burgess novel, had its world premiere in the U.S.

In 1984, a fire at the Wilberg Mine near Orangeville, Utah, killed 27 people. Britain and China signed an accord returning Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997.

In 1986, Lawrence E. Walsh was appointed independent counsel to investigate the Iran-Contra affair.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton was impeached by the Republican-controlled House for perjury and obstruction of justice (he was later acquitted by the Senate).

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Little Jimmy Dickens is 92. Actress Cicely Tyson is 79. Rhythm-and-blues singer-musician Maurice White (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 71. South Korean President Lee Myung-bak is 71. Actress Elaine Joyce is 69. Actor Tim Reid is 68. Paleontologist Richard E. Leakey is 68. Rock singer Alvin Lee (Ten Years After) is 68. Musician John McEuen is 67. Singer Janie Fricke is 65. Jazz musician Lenny White is 63. Actor Mike Lookinland is 52. Actress Jennifer Beals is 49. Actor Scott Cohen is 48. Actor Robert MacNaughton is 46. Magician Criss Angel is 45. Rock musician Klaus Eichstadt (Ugly Kid Joe) is 45. Rock musician Kevin Shepard is 44.

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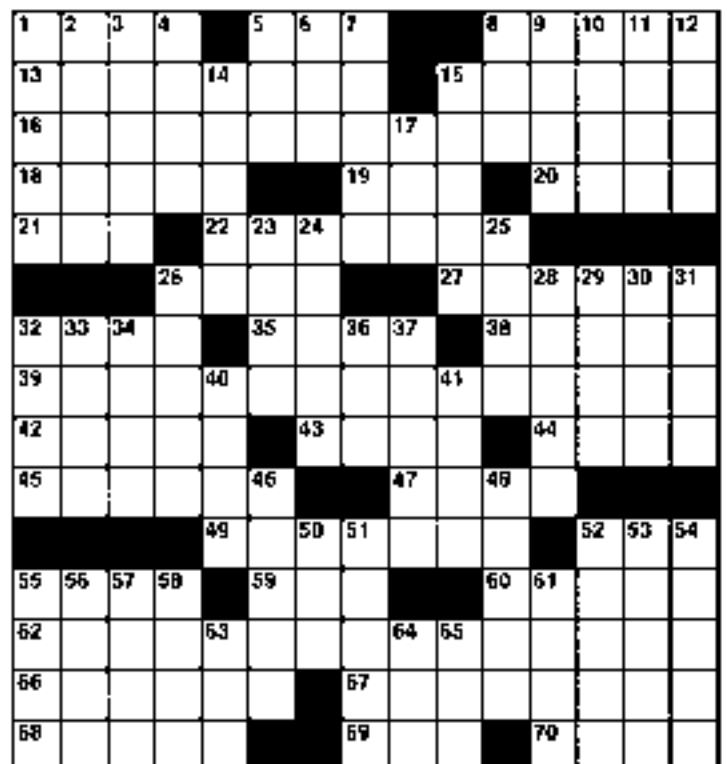
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LET'S MEET by Charles Slack
Edited by Stanley Newman
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- ACROSS**
- 1 The basics
 - 5 Yoga accessory
 - 8 Bank job
 - 13 Ingenuities
 - 15 Commencement award
 - 16 Where off colleagues meet
 - 18 Apra ser
 - 19 Colorless shirt
 - 20 Fit of pique
 - 21 Commercial
 - 22 Kings' (large amounts of money)
 - 26 Detective's job
 - 27 Mourned off to
 - 32 Soprano showcase
 - 35 Shaker contents
 - 38 No longer fresh
 - 39 Where de egales meet
 - 42 Nautical pal
 - 43 Tubular sandwich
 - 44 Hunt for
 - 45 Worn away
 - 47 St. Louis landmark
 - 49 Euro's Greek predecessor
 - 52 Elevator compartment
 - 55 The Sound of Music backdrop
 - 59 Basic cable network
 - 60 Egg size
 - 62 Where loca legislators meet
 - 66 Encroachment
 - 67 Siamese or setter
 - 68 Fol: hat

- DOWN**
- 1 Capital of Ghana
 - 2 Widely distributed
 - 3 Word on a nickel
 - 4 Ump's call
 - 5 Former Russian orbiter
 - 6 St. crosser
 - 7 Portable shelters
 - 8 That scoop
 - 9 Parts of psyches
 - 10 Wrinkle remover
 - 11 A-whine or
 - 12 Audition
 - 14 ___ colts (type of clay)
 - 15 Considers
 - 17 Boardroom bigwig
 - 23 Part of PGA
 - 24 Poof's "below"
 - 25 Cumberbund
 - 26 Knuckled under
 - 28 Squirrel away
 - 29 Mal event
 - 30 Model Macpherson
 - 31 Work statuer
 - 32 High point
 - 33 Surf sound
 - 34 Enthusiastic about
 - 36 I'd like it snl
 - 37 Synagogue
 - 40 Gave the once-over
 - 41 Benchmark
 - 46 Store change
 - 48 Quiets down
 - 50 L p-reading
 - 51 Secret store
 - 52 Fancy flapjack
 - 53 Come to terms
 - 54 Takes live
 - 55 Acltic for one
 - 56 Solitary
 - 57 Engine sound
 - 58 Cardascording
 - 61 Lincoln et: al
 - 63 Low island
 - 64 Ground-breaking
 - 65 Diving bird



ROUNDUP

Continued from Page 10

Thursday against TBA.

Girls

COAHOMA — The Bulldogettes (5-13) were also bested by Forsan on Tuesday as the Lady Buffs — led by Mary-Ashley McDaniels' 13 points and Brittney Hergert's 10 points — FHS put on a commanding performance to down CHS 45-20.

"We played really good defense," Forsan Head Coach Lindsey Schmidt said of the win. "It's been a group effort for most of the season. You never know who will step up and be the leading scorer, they have all done it. I think that will help us when district play starts."

Forsan will be without Jahnia Willard as they host Colorado City on Friday. Willard went down hard while chasing a ball during Tuesday's game.

"She hit her head pretty good," Schmidt added. "It looks like a concussion, so she will probably be out for at least two weeks. Luckily, we have the Christmas break to recuperate."

Coahoma will open against Sonora on Thursday at the Reagan County Tournament. Game time is set for 9 a.m.

Other scores:

• Grady (girls) (11-4) defeated Klondike, 59-19. Ellyn Avery, 20 points; Savannah Sawyer and Sarah Clay, 8 points; Cayley Opegard, 7 points. Next at O'Donnell, 6:30 p.m., Friday.

• Grady (boys) (8-3) defeated Klondike, 78-58, Brandon Lucas, 20 points; Taylor Polson, 18 points; Brett Glaze, 15 points; E.J. Rodriguez, 11 points. Next at O'Donnell, 8 p.m., Friday.

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

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MANZIEL

Continued from Page 10

wasn't really sure if, I don't think anyone was sure if he was going to be able to carry that

throughout an SEC season, and he's shocked the world and he did it."

After Manziel sat out as a redshirt in 2011, Texas A&M's scheduled season-opener

against Louisiana Tech this year was postponed because of Hurricane Isaac. That left him to get his first taste of live defense in almost two years against Florida.

He responded well, helping the Aggies race to a 17-7 lead early using both his arm and his feet.

The Gators shut down Manziel and A&M's offense in the second half and Texas A&M lost 20-17.

But Manziel's performance was enough for Texas A&M's coaching staff to realize that his scrambling ability was going to be a big part of what the Aggies could do this season.

"The first half really showed that I was a little bit more mobile than we had seen throughout the spring," Manziel said. "Me and (then-offensive coordinator) Kliff Kingsbury sat down and really

said: 'Hey we can do some things with my feet as well as throwing the ball.' And it added a little bit of a new dimension."

Manziel knew that the biggest adjustment from playing in high school to college would be the speed of the game. Exactly how quick players in the SEC were was still a jolt to the quarterback.

"The whole first drive I was just seeing how fast they really flew to the ball and I felt like they just moved a whole lot faster," he said of the Florida game. "It was different than what I was used to, different than what I was used to in high school. So it was just having to learn quick and adjust on the fly."

He did just that and started piling up highlight reel material by deftly avoiding would-be tacklers to help the Aggies run off five consecutive wins after that.

His storybook ride

hit a roadblock when he threw a season-high three interceptions in a 24-19 loss to LSU. But Manziel used it as a learning experience, taking to heart some advice he received from Kingsbury.

"He just told me to have a plan every time, before every snap," Manziel said. "Make sure you have a plan on what you want to do and where you want to go with the ball."

"I feel like as the year went on, I just learned the offense more and knew exactly where I wanted to go, instead of maybe evading the blitz and just taking off running for the first down instead of hitting a hot route or throwing it underneath to an open guy and doing things a lot simpler and cleaner."

The Aggies and Manziel rebounded from the loss to LSU by winning their last five games, highlighted by their stunning 29-24 upset of top-ranked Alabama on Nov. 10.

Circuit Riders Cowboy Church Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Monday, Dec. 24th @ 7:00 p.m. Regular Services Sunday's @ 10am Merry Christmas Ya'll! Located Nichols Rd. (Near Elbow School) 432-466-1697

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Santa Contest Winners

Grid of 8 photos of people wearing Santa hats, numbered 1 through 8. Names: Fayes Flowers, Walmart, Elrod's Furniture, Jake Witzel Gifts & Interiors, Higginbotham, Blum's Jewelers, My Favorite Place, Klassic Kleeners.

1st Place - Patsy Steen
2nd Place - Maria Ontiveros
3rd Place - Cindy Casper

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