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HERALD

BIG SPRING

FRIDAY

DECEMBER 21, 2012



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VOLUME 108, NUMBER 58

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

CHAMBER OPEN HOUSE

Baylee Howell, left, David Juarez and other members of the Big Spring High School choral group "Rhapsody" performed for guests at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce open house Thursday afternoon. The chamber building also houses the Big Spring Convention and Visitors Bureau, Big Spring Economic Development Corporation and the United Way of Big Spring and Howard County.

HERALD photo/Steve Reagan



'Angel Tree' program to reach hundreds

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

A late surge of giving has allowed the local Salvation Army to help almost as many "angels" as it did last Christmas. Around 400 area seniors and children and more than 100 needy families will receive holiday gifts through this year's Salvation Army Angel Tree program. That figure is slightly below 2011 to-

tals, Angel Tree Coordinator Ada Lafler said. During the program's run, trees were placed at several locations throughout Big Spring. On those trees were cards inscribed with a child's or senior's name and gift request. People then took the cards, purchased gifts for the "angel" and gave the items to Salvation Army personnel. Although totals from this season are slightly behind last year's, SA social worker Bessie Flores said a final tally isn't complete. "We still have a lot of angel cards out there," she

"No child should ever have to wake up Christmas morning without a gift under the tree."



—Ada Lafler, Angel Tree coordinator

said. "We're waiting to see if people will fill out the gift requests, so we're hoping we'll have some more gifts to give out."

Lafler said the program provides a tremendous boost to the spirits of those in need this season. "Many of these children feel like society — and even life — has 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 season, 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." Although the formal deadline for the program has passed, persons can still donate gifts this Christmas. For more information, call 432-267-8239 or stop by the Salvation Army office, located at 811 W Fifth St.

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

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Find us online at:
www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us:
Please call 263-7331. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call (432) 263-7335 before 6 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. Sunday.



City prepares for holiday aftermath

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

O' Christmas tree, o' Christmas tree — to compost you are heading? Not to sound all Scrooge-ish or anything, but as much as you enjoy looking at that Christmas tree and all those beautifully decorated packages in your living room, the simple fact is around this time next week, you'll be looking for ways to be rid of the things. As they do annually at this time of year, Big Spring city officials have announced plans for helping local residents dispose of all the extra trash that accumulates in Christmas season. The biggest of those soon-to-be trash items are live Christmas trees, and there's only one place you can take them — to the city's compost facility, adjacent to the landfill. There, they'll be ground

into compost and recycled. The service is free of charge, and all the city wants in return is for residents to follow a few guidelines:

- Do not put the trees in trash dumpsters. This will avoid potentially serious problems for city trash crews and potential fines for you.
- Make sure all the ornaments and lights are off the tree.
- Trees wrapped in plastic or other material won't be accepted.
- And make sure the tree stand has been removed as well.

As for all the other trash, particularly large boxes that will accumulate this season, the city will set large dumpsters at four locations beginning Saturday. Those sites are Coronado Plaza, Virginia and FM 700, College Park Shopping Center

and the 700 block of N. Gregg. Happy Hauling-day!

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



Dec. 21
4 shopping days to Christmas
Walmart
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Elrod's Christmas Countdown

Elrod's Furniture

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BBB

Obituaries

Arthur Vivian
Blassingame Jr.

Arthur Vivian Blassingame Jr., was born Sept. 22, 1922, in Fannin County. He died Dec. 19, 2012, at Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home in Big Spring, Texas.

Art served in the United States Air Force for four years in the South Pacific Theater during World War II. He farmed in Howard and Martin Counties after the end of the war. Later, Art sold cars at Pollard Chevrolet for 25 years and made many lifelong friends in the community. He had a wonderful sense of humor and loved to joke with his friends and family.

Art is survived by one brother, Robert Wayne Blassingame and wife Lil of Big Spring, Texas; three sisters, Marjorie Larsen of Memphis, Tenn., Betty Driver of Big Spring, Texas, and Bobbie Webb of San Angelo, Texas. He also had 11 nephews and nieces who were very special to him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur Vivian Blassingame Sr. (Dutch), and Daisy Bell Blassingame; and two brothers, W.C. Blassingame and Joe Blassingame.

Cremation will be at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home.

The family will host a visitation at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home on Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

The family asks for no flowers but would appreciate donations to your favorite charity or to Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home, 1809 N. Highway 87, Big Spring, Texas 79720, to honor Art Blassingame.

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

Paid obituary

Lillie Mae Anderson



Lillie Mae Anderson, 77, of Big Spring died Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. Friday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012, at Myers & Smith Chapel with the Rev. Derek Looney, pastor of Spring Creek Fellowship, officiating. Burial will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

Lillie was born Nov. 24, 1935, to Eva and Ezra Owen in Hot Springs, Ark. She married Robert Dee Anderson on Sept. 4, 1953, in Hot Springs, Ark. Following their marriage, they relocated to Big Spring.

Lillie was very active in her children's and grandchildren's activities. She loved to fish, cook, entertain and "liked to give advice." She was a dedicated mother, grandmother, sister, friend to all and a homemaker. She was a Baptist.

She is survived by one daughter, Paula Cowley of Dumas; two sons, Andy Anderson of Sand Springs and Sammy and Le Jean Anderson of Big Spring; 13 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; one brother, Monroe Owen of Atlanta, Ga.; and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents and her husband, she was preceded in death by one grandson, Justin David Anderson; a sister, Linda Maner; and a brother, Marvin Owen.

Pallbearers will be Chris Carlile, Dusty Carlile, Jason Bontke, Jason Anderson and Kason Anderson. Honorary pallbearer will be Brandon Anderson.

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

Paid obituary

Monica Rodriguez Chavez



Monica Rodriguez Chavez, 69, of Big Spring died Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, at the Hospice House of Odessa. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012, at Holy Trinity Catholic Parish. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

A vigil service will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel.

She was born May 4, 1943, in Big Spring, Texas, and married Andres Chavez on Jan. 2, 1971, in Big Spring.

A lifetime resident of Big Spring, Monica had owned the Circle of Beauty Salon and then began working at the Beauty Realm. She was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Parish.

Survivors include her husband, Andres Chavez of Big Spring; a son, Chris Chavez of Big Spring; a daughter, Stacey Chavez of Big Spring; two sisters, Leonor Sotelo of Big Spring and Alejandra Barrios of Lenorah; and two brothers, Ray Rodriguez of El Paso and Gavino Rodriguez Jr. of Big Spring.

She was preceded in death by her parents and one brother, Eulalo Rodriguez.

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

Police blotter

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

- JOSHUA STEVEN WALKER, 22, of 1105 Pickens, was arrested Thursday on charges of driving while license suspended/invalid – no insurance, failure to maintain financial responsibility, speeding in a school zone and driving while license invalid.

- TIFFANY ANN ELDER, 30, of 2600 Langley, was arrested Thursday on a charge of driving while license invalid.

- ALICE RIOS GUZMAN, 40, of 700 Douglas, was arrested Thursday on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid with a previous conviction.

- CHRISTENE MICHELLE BEAM, 32, of Cypress, Texas, was arrested Thursday on a warrant from another agency.

- PHILLIP RENE ALCANTAR, 24, of 500 N. Runnels, was arrested Thursday on a warrant from another agency.

- THEFT was reported in the 3600 block of W. Highway 80.

- SHOTS FIRED was reported in the 300 block of E. Davis.

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.

- ALICE GUZMAN, 40, was booked into the county detention center Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.

- PHILLIP RENE ALCANTAR, 24, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on a supplemental order of conditions of community supervision.

- CHRISTENE MICHELLE BEAM, 32, was booked into the county detention center Friday by the BSPD on a charge of bondsman off bond – kidnapping (parole warrant).

- FRANCISCO VALDEZ LICON, 26, was booked into the county detention center Friday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

Fire/EMS

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

- MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of E. 14th Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of Sixth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20. Service refused.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of W. Fifth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 2600 block of Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 2200 block of Runnels. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1300 block of Scurry. One person was transported to SMMC.

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.

- Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery program, is held at Cornerstone Covenant Church, 706 E. 12th St. at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call at 264-0015 or visit www.cccbigspring.org

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

SATURDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m. Covered dish supper at 7 p.m.

SUNDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous closed meeting from 11 a.m. to noon at 615 Settles. Open meeting 7 p.m. until 8 p.m.

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Service broadcast Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
over KBYG 1400 AM Evangelistic Service....6:00 p.m.
on your dial Wednesday Service.....7:00p.m.



**Randy Cotton
Pastor**

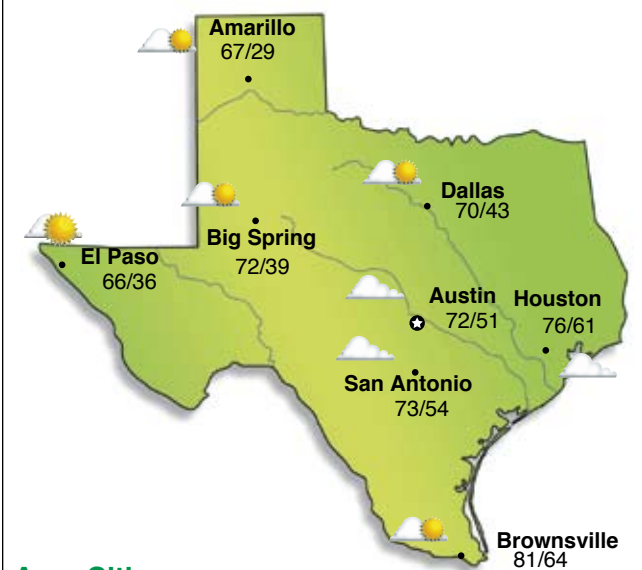
Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Sun 12/23	Mon 12/24	Tue 12/25	Wed 12/26	Thu 12/27
72/39 Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the upper 30s.	63/39 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the upper 30s.	51/21 Occasional showers possible. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the low 20s.	47/28 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the upper 20s.	57/36 Morning clouds followed by afternoon sun.
Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:49 PM

American Profile
We Celebrate Hometown Life
Stories for and about hometowns just like yours.
Look for us each week in this paper.

Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Ablene	73	42	pt sunny
Amarillo	67	29	pt sunny
Austin	72	51	cloudy
Beaumont	74	61	cloudy
Brownsville	81	64	pt sunny
Brownwood	76	44	cloudy
Corpus Christi	79	63	pt sunny
Corsicana	70	45	pt sunny
Dallas	70	43	pt sunny
Del Rio	75	48	cloudy
El Paso	66	36	mst sunny
Fort Stockton	76	44	pt sunny
Gainesville	65	35	pt sunny
Greenville	67	40	pt sunny
Houston	76	61	cloudy
Kingsville	83	62	pt sunny
Livingston	75	56	cloudy
Longview	70	52	cloudy
Lubbock	70	32	pt sunny
Lufkin	75	59	cloudy
Midland	73	41	pt sunny
Raymondville	83	62	pt sunny
Rosenberg	77	60	cloudy
San Antonio	73	54	cloudy
San Marcos	73	52	cloudy
Sulphur Springs	68	44	pt sunny
Sweetwater	72	41	pt sunny
Tyler	70	51	cloudy
Weatherford	69	37	pt sunny
Wichita Falls	64	33	mst sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	59	42	pt sunny
Boston	38	26	mst sunny
Chicago	35	28	pt sunny
Dallas	70	43	pt sunny
Denver	47	24	pt sunny
Houston	76	61	cloudy
Los Angeles	60	54	rain
Miami	76	58	pt sunny
Minneapolis	21	17	cloudy
New York	41	31	mst sunny
Phoenix	63	44	sunny
San Francisco	55	49	rain
Seattle	43	36	rain
St. Louis	47	35	sunny
Washington, DC	49	34	mst sunny

Moon Phases



UV Index

Sun 12/23	Mon 12/24	Tue 12/25	Wed 12/26	Thu 12/27
3	3	3	3	3
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

The UV Index is measured on a 0 - 11 number scale, 0 being the lowest and 11 the highest. A higher UV Index shows the need for greater skin protection.

Support Groups

MONDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, noon-1 p.m., 615 Settles.

- VA Alcoholics Anonymous support group, 7-8 p.m., Veterans Healing Center.

- Take Pounds Off Sensibly (TOPS) TX 0021 meets at First Christian Church at 10th and Goliad, in the dining hall on the east side of the building. Weigh-in starts at 5 p.m. and meeting starts at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 213-1342 or 263-6819.

- 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. Circle of Hope group is a ministry of Spring Creek Fellowship. For further information, contact Dale at 432-270-8462.

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Dec. 15-31
Festival of Lights
Comanche Trail Park
6pm-10pm Nightly
For more info contact
432-263-8234

Jan. 12
**Hangar 25 Museum
"Silver Wings Ball"**
Settles Hotel
For more info contact the
Hangar 25 Museum at
432-264-1999.

Jan. 24
**Healthy Woman
Anniversary Celebrating
Four Fabulous Years**
Settles Hotel Featuring guest
speaker Jane Jenkins Herlong
For more info contact
Amanda Duforat at
432-268-4842.

Big Spring
Convention & Visitors Bureau
215 W. 3rd St. (432) 263-8235
www.visitbigspring.com 240275

Hot spots draw believers, but not doomsday

VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

As the sun rose from time zone to time zone across the world on Friday, there was still no sign of the world's end — but that didn't stop those convinced that a 5,125-year Mayan calendar predicts the apocalypse from gathering at some of the world's purported survival hot spots.

Many of the esoterically inclined expected a new age of consciousness — others wanted a party. But, in some places said to offer salvation from the end, fewer people showed up than officials had predicted — much to the disappointment of vendors hoping to sell souvenirs.

Here are some key places being marked by the fascination over doomsday rumors:

MEXICO

In an area of Mexico that was once the ancient Mayan heartland, spiritualists gathered in the darkness before dawn on Friday to prepare white clothes, drums, conch shells and incense. They believed the sunrise would herald the birth of a new and better age as a vast cycle in the Mayan calendar comes to an end.

Many people who came to Yucatan for the occasion were already calling it "a new sun" and "a new era."

FRANCE

According to one rumor, a rocky mountain in the French Pyrenees will be the sole place on Earth to escape destruction. A giant UFO and aliens are said to be waiting under the mountain, ready to burst through and spirit those nearby to safety. But there is bad news for those seeking salvation: French gendarmes, some on horseback, blocked outsiders from reaching the Bugarach peak and its village of some 200 people.

Eric Freysselinard, head of local government, said the security forces had "partially stopped the new age enthusiasts as well as curious people from coming to the area."

Meanwhile, some Bugarach residents dressed up like aliens, with tinfoil costumes and funnels and fake antenna on their heads, strolling around their village Friday to make light of the rumored UFO prophecy.

RUSSIA

Doomsday rumors have prompted some people across Russia to stock up on candles, water, canned foods and other non-perishable foods. The apocalypse has proven a good business, with some shops selling survival aid packages that include soap and vodka.

In Moscow, salvation has also been promised in the underground bunker for the former Soviet dictator Josef Stalin — with a 50 percent refund if nothing happens. An underground stay was originally priced at 50,000 rubles (\$1,625) but dropped to 15,000 (\$490) a week ahead of the feared end.

The bunker, located 65 meters (210 feet) below ground, was designed to withstand a nuclear attack. Now home to a small museum, it has an independent electricity supply, water and food — but no more room, because the museum has already sold out all 1,000 tickets.

BRITAIN

Hundreds of people have converged on Stonehenge for an "End of the World" party that coincides with the Winter Solstice.

Arthur Uther Pendragon, Britain's best-known druid, said he was anticipating a much larger crowd than usual at Stonehenge this year. But he doesn't agree that the world is ending, noting that he and fellow druids believe that things happen in cycles.

"We're looking at it more as a new beginning than an end," he said. "We're looking at new hope."

Meanwhile, end-of-days parties will be held across London on Friday. One event billed as a "last supper club" is offering a three-course meal served inside an "ark."

SERBIA

Some Serbs are saying to forget that sacred mountain in the French Pyrenees. The place to be Friday is Mount Rtanj, a pyramid-shaped peak in Serbia already drawing cultists.

According to legend, the mountain once swallowed an evil sorcerer who will be released on doomsday in a ball of fire that will hit the mountain top. The inside of the mountain will then open up, becoming a safe place to hide as the sorcerer goes on to destroy the rest of the world. In the meantime, some old coal mine shafts have been opened up as safe rooms.

On Friday a New Age group called "The Spirit of Rtanj" was holding a conference there. Participants, however, said they expect not the end of time but the start of a new time cycle. Locals turned out to sell brandy and herbs.

"There will be no tragedy, no doomsday," said resident Dalibor Jovic. "It was supposed to happen at 12:12 and I think that time has passed. So, we can

now go on with our lives and be happy to be alive."

TURKEY

A small Turkish village known for its wines, Sirince, has also been touted as the only place after Bugarach that would escape the world's end. But on Friday journalists and security officials outnumbered cultists. This outcome disappointed local business people who had prepared a range of doomsday products to sell, including a specially labeled Doomsday wine and Turkish delight candy whose "best before" date was Dec. 21, 2012. One restaurant prepared a special "last meal" menu that included a "heaven kebab" and "forbidden fruit dessert."

ITALY

Another spot said to be spared: Cisternino, a beautiful small town in southern Italy in an area of trulli, traditional dry stone huts with conical roofs. The notion that Cisternino could be a safe haven at world's end derives from an Indian guru, Babaji, who said "Cisternino will become an island" at world's end. His followers built a community in Cisternino centered on an ashram built in 1979. Hotel bookings are up this weekend.

Mayor Donato Baccaro told the AP that the beauty of the place has inspired many foreigners to live there. "This confirms that this place has a special energy," he said.

CHINA

A fringe Christian group has been spreading rumors about the world's impending end, prompting Chinese authorities to detain more than 500 people this week and seize leaflets, video discs, books and other material.

Those detained are reported to be members of the group Almighty God, also called Eastern Lightning, which preaches that Jesus has reappeared as a woman in central China. Authorities in the province of Qinghai say they are waging a "severe crackdown" on the group, accusing it of attacking the Communist Party and the government.

U.S.

Dozens of Michigan schools canceled classes for thousands of students to cool off rumored threats of violence and problems related to doomsday. The fears were exacerbated by the recent shooting at a Connecticut elementary school, which "changed all of us," the school system in Genesee County said. "Canceling school is the right thing to do."

► Odds and Ends

Chinese toad in candlestick

comes to South Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — It's a real life Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

Animal rescue officials in South Africa say they found a toad from China hidden inside a porcelain candlestick.

The Star newspaper of South Africa quoted animal expert Brett Glasby in Cape Town saying that workers had to break the candlestick to get the toad out.

He said the toad, an Asian Common Toad, can slow its breathing and heart rate to survive times of drought, likely aiding it to survive the voyage.

Workers fed the hungry toad worms and crickets after freeing it.

The animal is not endangered. But because the toad is a possible invasive species for South Africa, workers will have to put the animal down.

\$500 million in checks left

at Jerusalem holy site

JERUSALEM (AP) — Worshipers usually leave notes to the Almighty at one of Judaism's holiest sites. But half a billion dollars?

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, who oversees Jerusalem's Western Wall, said a worshipper found an envelope at the site Wednesday with 507 checks in the amount of about \$1 million each. They were not addressed to anyone, and it's doubtful they can be cashed.

Rabinovitch said most are Nigerian. Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said some were from the United States, Europe and Asia.

Rabinovitch says he has found similar checks in Western Wall charity boxes before, but they all bounced. He says most of them were written by people from Africa.

The rabbi says he thinks the check writers "wanted to give all they had to the Creator of the

universe."

Job and a party as hospital

hires 1,000th employee

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Cake, applause, a red carpet — not a typical first day at work.

Well, it turns out that Ashley Wharton isn't your typical physician's assistant. A Grand Rapids hospital celebrated her arrival Monday because she's the 1,000th employee.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital has added 267 workers since summer 2011, a 36 percent increase, after deciding to remain independent and not merge with another hospital.

The Grand Rapids Press says Wharton was a bit overwhelmed by all the fuss. She will work in the admissions department, evaluating new patients and helping others leave the hospital.

Spokane robbery suspect

tackled, caught on tape

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Instead of letting a robber get away, a witness to a convenience store stickup in Spokane, Wash., caught the armed man

and held him for police.

The surveillance camera at the G&B Grocery shows a man wearing a ski mask, threatening the clerk and other people in the store, including three children. He grabs the money and is trying to run out of the store when one of the customers chases him.

KREM reports it was the clerk's brother.

He tackled the fleeing man Monday going out the door.

Officers arrived a few minutes later and arrested a 25-year-old man for investigation of robbery, assault and possession of a stolen

Contact the Herald at
newsdesk@bigspringherald.com

Last Minute Gift Ideas

Recliners.....	Starting at \$197.00
TV-STANDS 42".....	Only \$297.00
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VANITY STOOL Oak or Cherry.....	Only \$97.00
BEAN BAGS Choice of Colors.....	Only \$27.00
CHEVAL MIRROR Oak or Cherry.....	Only \$37.00
MICROFIBER SOFA.....	Starting at \$297.00
KIDDIE RECLINERS.....	Lots of Colors \$97.00
BAR STOOLS Lots of Styles... Starting at	Only \$47.00
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<p>Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Fri: 2:10 7:00 Digital 4:35 9:25 3D Sat: 2:10 7:00 Digital 4:35 9:25</p> <p>Rise of the Guardians (PG) Fri: 2:30 7:20 Digital 4:55 9:45 3D Sat: 2:30 7:20 Digital 4:55 9:45</p>	<p>Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey, The 3D (PG-13) Fri: 12:00 7:10 (Digital) 3:35 10:45 3D Sat: 12:00 7:10 (Digital) 3:35 10:45</p> <p>Playing For Keeps (Digital) PG-13 Fri: 2:25 5:00 7:35 10:10 Sat: 2:25 5:00 7:35 10:10 <small>TM&©</small></p>
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MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL
 24th & Johnson 267-8288

John J. "Jerry" White, 92, died Saturday. Graveside services with Military Honors will be at 2:15 p.m. today at DFW National Cemetery in Dallas.

Lillie Mae Anderson, 77, died Thursday. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. tonight at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m., Saturday, December 22, 2012 at Myers & Smith Chapel. Burial will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

Dragon China Buffet
 1300 Gregg 268-8888

\$1.00 Off Per Adult

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 (NOT FOR CARRYOUT)

EXP. 12/31/12

BIG SPRING HERALD

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EDITORIAL

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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

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

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

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- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
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- 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

May we put key ideas and business plans into Your hands for our success, Lord. Amen

Avoid driving through the Mexican gauntlet

If it was safe, you can bet a lot more Latinos would be taking long drives back to their homelands in Central and South America. But we know better. We know that in order to get there, we have to go through a gauntlet of crime and corruption known as Mexico. And so we fly home when we go back on vacation.

We've all heard the horror stories of all that can happen while traveling through Mexico, where you can be robbed, kidnapped, sold into slavery and even murdered, especially if you are traveling northbound while trying to reach the United States.

But on the way south, for American citizens, just trying to get through Mexico is a huge challenge. You have to go through a dangerous obstacle course of drug cartel wars and even corrupt cops looking for bribes.

On the Internet, travel advice sites are filled with tips and warnings about how you are to avoid driving at night, stopping in small towns, loading your car with valuable items, and looking like wealthy Americans. They tell you that if you drive an SUV, you have a much better chance of getting carjacked, and even better if your SUV is black.

It's crazy. In the 21st century, crossing Mexico is as dangerous as was crossing the American Wild West two centuries ago.

Most U.S. Latinos are aware of this danger, perhaps because we see it every day on the Spanish TV networks, and so we tent to avoid road trips through Mexico.

But many other Americans, perhaps unaware of the danger or perhaps seeking a little adventure, are finding out that driving through Mexico is indeed a dangerous journey.

Take the case of former U.S. Marine Jon Hammar, who has been held in a notoriously unsafe Mexican prison since August because he was honest enough to declare to Mexican customs officials that he was carrying an old hunting shotgun.

Hammar, 27, who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, was just about to start driving through Mexico, on his way to a hunting and surfing vacation in Costa Rica, when he was held in Matamoros and accused of carrying an illegal weapon. Ian McDonough, another Marine veteran who was traveling with him, was detained and released when Hammar admitted that he owned the gun. Since he was not concealing his grandfather's

In the wake of the Newtown, Conn., tragedy, every politician who has me on their email list — and there are many, on both sides of the aisle — has been filling my inbox. All of the messages begin with the requisite expression of shock and horror, the business of sending out our hearts and prayers to those who mourn. Then the gun control advocates insist that now is the time for congressional action, and the opponents caution that no legislation is going to stop people (not guns) from killing.

Conservative columnist Jonah Goldberg remembers that after he suffered painful losses in the past year, friends repeatedly cautioned that “it was no time to make big decisions.” I've heard the same advice. Were I speaking to one of the bereaved family members, I might well say the same thing.

But I'm not. I'm talking to political interest group leaders, to elected officials, to people like you and me, whatever side of the aisle we may find ourselves on.

Some years ago, I was booked to appear on one of those cross-fire-like shows with a senior NRA official. The booker, embarrassed, called to cancel me because the NRA official (the one they really wanted) refused to go on against me. Why? I'd never met the man, never called him names, never attacked him in a personal way. She didn't know and hung up quickly.

When I watched the segment later, it was perfectly clear. He didn't want to appear with someone like me: a realist, someone desperately in search of reasonable steps in the middle, actions that would not necessarily divide the nation between gun-lovers and gun-haters. He preferred the “whack ball on the left” who is a much easier target.

That is how the gun debate has unfolded in America.

After a weekend of shared pain, after brilliant words by the president, the Tuesday papers report that with the fiscal cliff looming and a commitment to seek bipartisan immigration reform, with polls showing the country favoring new legislation but only by margins of 54 percent to 43 percent, there are no specific proposals President Obama intends to push through Congress, and the NRA is not backing down.

As the days pass, as it becomes clear that one proposal or another would not necessarily have stopped Newtown (he didn't, after all, buy the gun at a gun show; it wasn't a flawed background check that allowed him to purchase it at a gun store), the danger is that what happened after the horrible movie shootings in Aurora, Colo., and after the tragic shooting of Gabby Giffords (and the murder of those unlucky enough to be outside the market with her) will happen here: paralysis.

Obama has a unique advantage that he didn't have two months ago or two years ago.

Yes, he needs to convince the Republican Congress to pass other important measures. But there are steps he can take without congressional action, like using government funds to improve databases that do not include information about mental instability. There are former opponents of gun control legislation, like Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, who are ready to lead a fight for tighter controls. And the president, in his second term, needs to worry about getting measures through Congress and not getting re-elected. It makes a difference.

We are never going to ban law-abiding, stable and well-trained citizens from owning guns. I have never understood why that is not enough for gun advocates, who always claim (and I have no reason to think otherwise) they are just that.

But why assault weapons? Who needs an assault weapon for self-defense? Police officials are almost uniformly against pri-



SUSAN
ESTRICH

Personal responsibility means never allowing a gun to get into the hands of a troubled person, and admitting your father or your son needs help and getting it for him. It means taking responsibility for your ownership of a dangerous weapon.

vate ownership of such weapons. If we can't get all the weapons on the street, why not regulate the sale of ammunition? People who have a right to own guns have nothing to fear from fulsome background checks. If you can't get a license to drive a car without proof that you know how to do so and understand the rules of the road, why a gun? There are moderate steps to be taken that need not divide us into warring camps.

At the end of the day, none of these steps may be enough to prevent the next Newtown, although they may help. At the end of the day, each of us needs to take personal responsibility, however difficult that may be. Personal responsibility means never allowing a gun to get into the hands of a troubled person, and admitting your father or your son needs help and getting it for him. It means taking responsibility for your ownership of a dangerous weapon.

In political debates, conservatives claim ownership of “personal responsibility.” Now is the time to show it.

To find out more about Susan Estrich and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.

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vintage Sears and Roebuck shotgun, and since he was responsible enough to declare it, since all he was missing was proper documentation to carry that gun in Mexico, you would think the worse that could happen is that he would get fined and have his gun impounded.

Yet for the past four months, Hammar has been chained to a bed in a prison where the inmate population is ruled by drug cartels and from where other inmates have even sought to extort money from Hammar's family in the United States. He is charged with illegally carrying a weapon that is use by the Mexican military, although it is an antique .410 gauge shotgun.

Frankly, I'm not a gun advocate. But if there were a place where I would want to be armed to protect myself, it would have to be driving through Mexico.

And yet, instead of seeking ways to reduce the crime and corruption that foreigners have to endure while traveling through the Mexican gauntlet, the Mexican government apparently feels it is fighting crime by having this young American chained to a bed.

It's disgraceful.

You would think they would be concentrating on the real criminals who are driving their country into a state anarchy. Yet Hammar's family and friends are now mounting a social media campaign to try to bring him home.

I just joined their Facebook group: www.facebook.com/FreeJonHammar

Ironically, while the unfair treatment of this young Marine finally is getting some justified media attention and exposing just one of the dangers of traveling through Mexico, there is a new State Department report explaining just how alarming the situation is for Americans thinking of trekking across Mexico — and it has received very little media attention.

In its latest travel warning on Mexico, issued on Nov. 20, the State Department first explains that, “millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day,” and that “Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations,” and that there is no evidence that crime organizations are targeting Americans. It notes that, “resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes.”

Frankly, I'm not a gun advocate. But if there were a place where I would want to be armed to protect myself, it would have to be driving through Mexico.

But then it proceeds to explain that Mexico is in the middle of drug war with a “violent struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity,” that crime and violence “can occur anywhere” at any time and in public places, and that, “the location and timing of future armed engagements is unpredictable.”

“Gun battles have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs,” the warning states. “During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area.”

It says that carjackers are bumping vehicles off the road at high speeds, and that U.S. citizens should cooperate with the rules of all road checkpoints, including some that are operated by crime cartels — where bandits have killed or abducted those who failed to stop.

The new Mexico travel warning, from the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs, says that 113 Americas were murdered in Mexico in 2011 and 32 others lost their lives in the first six month of 2012, and that some of them were victims of organized crime, “including homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, carjacking and highway robbery.”

Citing the Mexican government's own figures, the report notes that, “47,515 people were killed in narcotics-related violence in Mexico between Dec. 1, 2006 and Sept. 30, 2011, with 12,903 narcotics-related homicides in the first nine months of 2011 alone.”

It's simple: Unless you are a glutton for punishment, unless you want to endure the lawlessness of the Old West, you should avoid driving through the Mexican gauntlet.

To find out more about Miguel Perez and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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MIGUEL
PEREZ

Church News

Cornerstone Covenant Church

Cornerstone Covenant Church would like to invite you to join us Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for worship, followed by the Word. Last week, the title was "It Will Work Out!" taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24. Verse 14 tells us to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak and be patient toward all men." This week we look forward to hearing a special Christmas message.

Wednesday evenings from 5:50-6:50, CCC holds its Overcomers: Recovery & Restoration class, followed by Discipleship 101 Bible Study at 7. However, these classes will be canceled for Dec. 26 due to the holiday and will resume Wednesday, Jan. 2.

CCC will be hosting its annual Christmas Dinner on Sunday from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Big Spring High School cafeteria. We welcome one and all to join us for a wonderful holiday feast and amazing fellowship. If you would like to bring a side dish, or help with serving, contact us at the number below and we will get you in contact with our food service director. Thank you so much.

CCC offers ministries in the following areas: New Beginnings (Newborn to 18 months); Tiny Tots (19 months-kindergarten); Kovenant Kids (1st-6th grade); Chosen Generation (7th-12th grade); Covenant U - College Ministry (18-24 years.); Men's & Women's Ministries; and Marriage Enrichment.

CCC meets Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for Discipleship 101 Bible Study and Sundays at 10:30 a.m. for worship. (Sunday morning services are recorded, so if you'd like a free copy of a CD for those services, please see our Multimedia Dept.) Mother's Lounge and Children Church are offered for both mid-week and Sunday services.

CCC is located at 706 East 12th Street, (on the corner of 12th and Owens St.) For more information, contact us at 264-0015, visit us on the web at www.cccbigspring.org or check out Covenant Connect on Facebook, Twitter or Myspace.

First United Methodist Church

Last Sunday, our congregation received a real treat when members of the JAM children's choir came marching down the aisle. This delightful program, "Operation Christmas Child," tied in with our Christmas shoebox project. Once this group had both entertained and inspired, everyone was amazed to see costumed angels, shepherds and wise men coming down the aisle, accompanied by a flock of our youngest members all dressed up as lambs, carried in by their mothers, dressed as shepherds. Congratulations to all those who worked tirelessly to make their program a success.

Sunday, Pastor Bill wil continue his sermon series, Christmas in 3D. His sermon for both the 8:30 and 10:50 service will be "Let Them Return with Joy," with scripture readings from Micah 5:2-5.

Sunday school classes meet at 9:45 a.m.

Noon Bible Study and luncheon will not meet Dec. 26, or Jan. 2.

Real Life will also not be meeting on those dates. Every thing will be back on schedule during the second week of January. Joan Beil, worship chairperson, has asked for volunteers to take down the Christmas decorations Jan. 27, beginning at 10 a.m.

Beau and several adult sponsors have chosen families who need assistance. The EPIC youth are hard at work gathering food, toys and clothing in order that they may experience the joy of giving. Boxes for your contributions are located in the church office as well as the narthex.

As families come back home for the holidays, the Christmas Eve Candle-

What's so special about shepherds?

Shepherds? Aren't those the guys who show up for the Christmas pageants dressed in bathrobes and sandals? Don't they usually come on stage wearing towels on their heads and carrying crooks cut from plywood by some volunteer with a new jigsaw?



BONNIE WHEAT

Why are these ragtag men who look like they have slept in the field and probably smell like their sheep always a part of the Christmas scene? Wouldn't kings and religious leaders have been more suitable candidates to frame the picture of the humble Mary and the sweet baby Jesus sleeping in the hay?

Perhaps no one knows for sure why God announced the birth of His son first to the lowly shepherds watching their flocks at night in the fields around Bethlehem. Although sheep were essential to the economy, lifestyle, and sacrificial system of the Israelites at the time of Jesus' birth, shepherds were not held in high esteem. The job of watching the sheep, day and night, usually fell to younger sons, hired men, and slaves.

Yet for some reason, God chose to send a host of his heavenly angels to proclaim the good news to a bunch of dirty shepherds whose lives consisted of feeding, watering, and protecting herds of helpless sheep. God's birth announcement, the one proclaiming the birth of His only begotten son, was delivered to a group of itinerant shepherds who roamed the hillsides in search of better pastures for their sheep.

Why did God choose the shepherds to be the first to know about the birth of the baby in the stable in Bethlehem? Perhaps God knew that the baby in the manger would grow up to be a shepherd himself.

In the height of His ministry, Jesus asserted himself as the good shepherd whose sheep know His voice and follow Him. He didn't come to protect wooly ewes from wild animals with His rod. He didn't come to fetch willful rams back to safety with His staff when they fell over the edge of a cliff. He didn't come to cuddle soft, fuzzy lambs in his arms. Jesus came to earth to intercede on a cross for a more difficult flock — a flock of sinful humans with no shepherd.

In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of himself: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:14 NASB).

Perhaps the shepherds do deserve a place in the nativity scene. The tiny shepherd in the cradle came to become one of them.

Bonnie Wheat is an author and a minister's wife. She can be contacted at brwheat@suddenlink.net.

light service at First Methodist has become one of the most inspiring events of the year. This year, the service has been moved back to 5 p.m.

Last summer's intern, J.D. Newman, is slated to preach at the Dec. 30 services. J.D. is currently attending Truett Theological Seminary. Newman graduated last May from West Texas A&M with a degree in speech communication. Welcome back to Big Spring and First Methodist.

Everybody is invited to Sam's Annual New Year's Celebration. The Adult ministry is hosting the famous gourmet breakfast.

Sunday, Jan. 6, right after the second service, SAM is furnishing ham, blackeyed peas (for good luck) and cornbread. Side dishes and/or desserts would be welcome.

Bonnie Miller is heading our church's Relay For Life team and she urges folks to sign up and make a good showing at the event.

Right this minute we know we have three women from our church who are battling breast cancer and many others who continue treatment or are in remission. Let's join in the fun. It is an awesome experience.

And that's just a little about a whole lot of things going on at Fourth and Scurry First Methodist Church; in the heart of downtown Big Spring.

First Baptist Church

As we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, may we not forget to worship our Savior.

The community is invited to a candlelight celebration Christmas Eve at 6 p.m., Monday. Bring your family and participate in the Lord's Supper to sing praises, demonstrate His light to all the world and remember His broken body and shed blood that brings hope and peace.

Regular service will be held Sunday at 10:50 a.m. with Sunday school at 9:30.

First Christian Church

You are invited to attend First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at 911 Goliad. Each Sunday starts with

fellowship at 9:30 a.m. before Sunday school for all ages at 9:45. Church starts at 10:50 a.m. We celebrate Communion every week. The Lord's Table is the center of our worship each time we worship. We practice an open table, which means anyone who is a follower of Jesus is welcomed at the Communion table. Christ is remembered as we offer to one another the bread and cup of remembrance.

Sunday, which will be Fourth Sunday of Advent in the Christian Calendar — the Rev. Ken McIntosh's message will be A Chance to Hit the Reset

Button from Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

Elders will be John Scott and Shirley Beauchamp; deacons will be Shelane Roberts, Anna Scott, Mariah McIntosh and Eulaine McIntosh; worship leader will be Cynthia Scott; communion prep will be Eulaine McIntosh and Cynthia Scott; Children's Church will be Shelane Roberts; greeter will be Charlotte Meheut; homebound communion will be Shirley Beauchamp.

Each week Isaiah 58 is open at 4:30 p.m. Mondays and 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays. We also need help now working Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m.-11, sorting and cleaning items from Wal-Mart, Feed America Program.

There will be a board meeting held at 12:15 p.m.

Also, every Monday evening the TOPS Group will meet in the church fellowship hall at 5 p.m. for weigh-in and the meeting at 5:30.

Christmas Eve carols by Candlelight at 6:30 p.m. Monday.

There will be no choir Wednesday.

Samaritan Counseling takes place at our church Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. each week.

We believe the church is built by people worshipping together and we welcome you to visit at any time. For questions or further information, call the church office 432-517-4821 or view our website at www.fcbs125@yahoo.com or email to fcbs125@yahoo.com

First Presbyterian Church, Big Spring

The Lectionary Bible study, led by Craig Holstedt and Tom Koger, meets Wednesday at 5:17 p.m. in the church library. The Chancel Choir practices at 6.

The Boy Scouts meet in the entrance room of the Fellowship Hall at 6 p.m. Monday.

Susan McDaniel is in charge of this week's "Take Ten." Rip Patterson is liturgist for December.

The lectionary for the Fourth Sunday in Advent is Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 (46-55).

See CHURCH NEWS, Page 7

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(Psalm 103:11)

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CHURCH NEWS

Continued from Page 5

The Chancel Choir will present “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” as the anthem and “Arise, Shine, Jesus Has Come” by Becki Mayo as the offertory anthem. The Rev. Craig Holstedt will deliver the sermon.

The traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be at 6 p.m. Monday.

If you cannot attend worship, listen in on KBST 1490 AM., beginning at 11 a.m. If you wish to have a printed bulletin for Sunday services, call the office at 263-4211. You may also see what’s happening at the church by visiting our website: www.fpcbs.org. On our website, find a link that will enable you to listen to several recent sermons by the Rev. Holstedt.

Alive in Christ Lutheran Church LCMS

Our pastor is Lannon Martin. Our motto is “Celebrating and Sharing God’s Love and Grace in our lives.”

We are located at 2805 Lynn Drive in the Kentwood Subdivision in Big Spring. The church phone number is 432-264-7818. Our website is <http://www.m2ctexas.org/chweb/aliveinchrist/>. Our e-mail address is aliveinchrist@rc.com.

Please join us for our special services Monday at 6:30 p.m. when the children of Alive in Christ will lead our Christmas Eve Candlelight Family Service and our Christmas Day service at 10 a.m.

There will be no mid-week class this week to the Christmas holiday.

Bo Vizcaino will present the readings this week. This week’s sermon reference is “The presence of God.”

Tune in to KBYG every morning for a devotional sponsored in part by the Lutheran Hour. Tune in to 106.3 FM or 1400 AM between 6:45 and 6:50 each morning for these wonderful devotions: “Morning Meditation Thoughts.”

A new website offered by The Lutheran Hour Ministries is available. The site, www.jcplayzone.com, promises fun and Christian educational based games and videos. Fun for all ages and offered in several languages, this safe internet site is something to check out.

Forsan Baptist Church

We are continuing through a message series on Sunday mornings titled, “Who Is Jesus?” Join us as we explore the many wonderful aspects of our Lord. Wednesday and Sunday evenings at 6, we are continuing an in-depth study of the Book of Revelation.

We will have a candlelight service Monday at 6p.m. Please bring your family and join us as we celebrate the advent of our Lord and King. This is a great time for the entire extended family to join together in worship, something many of us do not often have the opportunity to do.

A complete remodel of our sanctuary is underway. Plans for this renovation phase will encompass the expansion of our stage area with the addition of a choir loft and moving the baptistery. We will also be raising the ceiling, installing a new sound system, replacing the carpet, dry-walling texturing the interior, replacing windows and giving the interior an overall facelift. Check out our Facebook page for pictures of the progress.

Our church is located at 201 Main in Forsan. Sunday school begins at 9:50, with worship services at 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Wednesday youth activities have resumed and will continue throughout the school year. We will provide a meal and refreshments for these activities.

Wednesday services begin at 6 p.m. Rides for all youth activities are available if arranged ahead of time. Call the church at 432-457-2342 or Pastor Darren Weaver at 432-213-2348.

Spring Creek Fellowship

A big thank you to all who participated in The Prison Ministry Angel Tree and the blood drive last weekend.

We would like to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year! We hope that as we all celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ and the birth of a new year, we remember those who will not be able to celebrate as they normally

Atheists hang solstice banner

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — A banner proclaiming religion a myth has joined a Nativity display and menorah in a northeastern Pennsylvania town square.

Two Wilkes-Barre men paid a \$50 fee to hang the banner supplied by the Freedom From Religion Foundation in the same public square that the town’s Christmas tree has been erected.

The banner reads, in part, “At this Season of the Winter Solstice, Let Reason Prevail.”

Justin Vacula and Rodney Collins paid the fee for the banner’s display. The NEPA Freethought Society members say the city is being coura-

geous to allow diverse viewpoints.

Vacula tells The Citizens’ Voice of Wilkes-Barre that atheists are entitled to share their views if religious displays are allowed on public land.

A city spokesman says Wilkes-Barre can’t discriminate and endorses no religious beliefs.

Group gathers to pray at school

CONROE, Texas — In light of the horrific events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut last Friday, more than 100 parents and students gathered Wednesday morning at Deretchin Elementary in an effort to make a statement that they will

would due to loss of a loved one or for other reasons. Please pray for peace and comfort for these hurting hearts.

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and “Cookie Share” are scheduled Monday at 6 p.m. The Cookie Giveaway is a yearly event where we, as members of Spring Creek Fellowship, deliver homemade cookies as we leave Candlelight to folks who have to work on Christmas Eve. If you know of someone who will be working Christmas Eve, let us know and we will bless them with some goodies.

The “Between the Lines” Women’s Ministry Cookbooks are available! The cost is \$15. Call the church office to get a copy or for more details. These cookbooks make great Christmas gifts.

New Sunday School classes/Connection Groups will begin again in January. Come check out classes with topic/subject-based studies ranging from six to nine weeks in length and relevant to today’s Christian adventure! Classes are available for all ages and meet from 9:15-10:15 a.m.

Big Spring Classical Academy is in session with classes for Pre-K and kindergarten. Visit <http://big-springclassical.org> for more information.

The Big Spring Homeschool Educational Co-operative is offering classes for high school and junior high homeschool students. New classes are being planned for the semester starting in January.

Classes to begin Jan. 7 are American Sign Language, Art, Junior and Senior High English, Math/Algebra, Drama, History of Christianity, Texas History, Music Theory, Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University for Teens, ACT Prep and Test and Human Anatomy & Physiology.

Weekly happenings:
Sunday- 9:15-10:15 am-Sunday School/Connection Groups; 10:15-10:45 a.m., “Holy Grounds Café” is open with snacks and fellowship; 10:45noon, worship service. Listen to sermons at www.springcreekfellowship.org; 5 p.m., Girls Bible Study.

Monday- 6:30-8:30 p.m., “Celebrate Recovery,” Women.

Tuesday- 1:45, Praying Effectively for the Lost; “Wings” Dance Academy meets for girls ages 4-12.

Wednesday- 5:30 p.m., Fellowship Meal; 6 p.m., Bible Study and youth and children’s activities; 6 p.m., Boy Scouts.

Thursday- 6:30-8:30 p.m., “Celebrate Recovery,” Men; 7 p.m., “Crazy Love” college age Bible study by Francis Chan.

Saturday- 7:30 a.m. Men’s Prayer Breakfast & Fellowship.

If you would like any further information regarding any of our ministries or events, please contact the church office.

Spring Creek Fellowship meets at the College Park Shopping Center at 501 Birdwell Lane in Big Spring. (Across from Denny’s). Contact us at (432)714-4584 or visit our website at www.springcreekfellowship.org

“Every Member a Minister”-1 Peter 4:10 NKJV

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church

St. Mary’s Holy Eucharist service begins at 10:30 a.m. Sunday. We will be decorating the church for Christmas after our morning service.

St. Mary’s Christmas Eve service will begin at 7:30 p.m. Monday. A reception will follow in the parish hall.

The Daily Grind with God — Coffee Hour and evening prayer will not meet Dec. 26 due to the holidays.

For more information about St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, call 267-8201. St. Mary’s is located at 1001 S. Goliad.

Holy Trinity Catholic Parish

Holy Trinity Catholic Parish, located at 1009 Hearn St., offers Mass three times each weekend: 5 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday. Msgr. Bernard Gully is available for confession Saturday afternoon from 3:30 to 4:45 and before weekday Masses. The weekday Mass is at 7 a.m. in the chapel.

The church office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays or can be reached by calling 432-714-4930.

Special Mass times in the next week are as follows:

Christmas Eve, Monday, Dec. 24 — 5 p.m. (Children’s Christmas Play) and 7 p.m. (bilingual)

Christmas Day, Tuesday, Dec. 25 — 10 a.m.

New Year’s Eve, Monday, Dec. 31 — 7 p.m.

New Year’s Day, Tuesday, Jan. 1 — 10 a.m.

pray in school.

During the 30-minute vigil outside the school, parents, teachers and students, many of them wearing yellow to signify light, joined hands and stood quietly as many people said prayers.

“It was so great to hear so many children praying today, asking God for his protection,” said Robyn Petty, a parent who organized the prayer vigil. “The events in Newtown scared them and I think it was a great way to show them — we are not helpless — we can pray and God is faithful.”

While this is not the first time the school has hosted a mass prayer, the recent events seemed to drive home the signif-

icance, Petty said. Parents and children need to know that praying in school is their right, she added.

“I think this was important because we are called to share God’s love, to be a light in a

Connecticut Christmas

Before last week a “Connecticut Christmas” would have conjured up Christmas card images: flocked evergreens, multicolored lights glistening on snow-covered streets, children sledding in the park, smoke curling from chimneys where families gather around the warm glow of the fireplace. But today, after the tragic slaughter of innocent children, a “Connecticut Christmas” leaves us chilled and confused.

As the news broke, I found myself not wanting to listen, not wanting to be disturbed by the painful images and stories. But the awful events seep their way into our consciousness. I found myself watching little children singing Christmas carols at church on Sunday and thinking about those who died in Newtown. I cannot stop thinking about the families with presents already wrapped underneath the tree and no little hands to unwrap them. I can’t help putting myself in the place of mothers and fathers whose pain is too deep for words. I find myself wanting to weep, wishing that this kind of evil were not present in the world, wishing that the innocent did not suffer, that injustice and violence did not exist. I found myself asking how God could let something like this happen.

As I thought about these things I was reminded that we have made Christmas into an escape filled with fantastic fairy tales complete with elves and flying reindeer. We have created a nativity filled with serenity and peace. But the actual birth of Jesus was anything but serene and peaceful. Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem to pay taxes, thrown into unfamiliar surroundings with no place to stay. The stable was a last resort. And evil was already stalking the baby that Mary bore. What we are feeling in the wake of Connecticut is not far removed from what was felt in Bethlehem.

The Magi who came seeking the newborn King unwittingly tipped Herod off to his birth. After they refused to report his birth, Herod sent his death squad to kill him. Matthew wrote, “When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:16-18).

Being warned in a dream that the child Jesus was in danger, Joseph fled with his Mary and the baby and went into hiding. But before he left the region, they visited Jerusalem where the prophet Simeon predicted what was to come. “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Luke 2:34-35).

The power of that first Christmas is found in the fact that God embraced the confusing cruelty of our world. It was in the midst of evil, pain and suffering that Jesus was born. It was precisely because of the senseless evil in this world that God sent His Son. He came to give His own innocent life as a ransom for our sins. He conquered death by His resurrection and one day He will remove the evil from this world by His return.

Bill Tinsley’s column reflects on current events and life experience from a faith perspective. He served as Associate Executive for Texas Baptists. Email bill@tinsleycenter.com



BILL
TINSLEY

geous to allow diverse viewpoints. Vacula tells The Citizens’ Voice of Wilkes-Barre that atheists are entitled to share their views if religious displays are allowed on public land. A city spokesman says Wilkes-Barre can’t discriminate and endorses no religious beliefs.

group gathers to pray at school CONROE, Texas — In light of the horrific events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut last Friday, more than 100 parents and students gathered Wednesday morning at Deretchin Elementary in an effort to make a statement that they will

pray in school. During the 30-minute vigil outside the school, parents, teachers and students, many of them wearing yellow to signify light, joined hands and stood quietly as many people said prayers. “It was so great to hear so many children praying today, asking God for his protection,” said Robyn Petty, a parent who organized the prayer vigil. “The events in Newtown scared them and I think it was a great way to show them — we are not helpless — we can pray and God is faithful.” While this is not the first time the school has hosted a mass prayer, the recent events seemed to drive home the signif-

icance, Petty said. Parents and children need to know that praying in school is their right, she added. “I think this was important because we are called to share God’s love, to be a light in a

dark world and we worry too much about being politically correct or offending someone when all we really want to do is invite God back into our lives and schools,” she said. “There has been so much talk about

gun control since the Newtown shooting and I just don’t think that will stop a mass gunman. Drugs are illegal but even kids have access to them. If someone wants a gun, no law is going to stop them.”



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'Sandy Claus' delivers toys to storm-stricken kids

MEGHAN BARR

Associated Press

NEW YORK — From his toy-cluttered Brooklyn apartment, the man in the red suit was making his list and checking it twice. But he made no distinction between naughty or nice: Every child on it would receive a gift from this Santa Claus.

For the children whose toys floated away during Superstorm Sandy, Michael Sciaraffo is playing the role of a real-life Saint Nick. Every afternoon and night, he stuffs his red sack to the brim with presents and heads out to storm-ravaged homes, personally delivering new toys to awestruck little kids whose play rooms were destroyed by floodwaters. And with less than a week before Christmas, his "Secret Sandy Claus Project" is keeping him very busy.

"Between the requests coming in for personal visits as well as the influx of donations, it's been a full-time job," said Sciaraffo, a 31-year-old political consultant. "And kudos to Santa, because I don't know

how he pulls it off every year."

There's hardly any room to sit in his tiny apartment, where boxes of toys are piled on tables and all over the floor. He spends most of the day keeping track of toy requests and donations that are pouring in by the hundred from people who know children affected by the storm. At first, Sciaraffo began jotting down the requests on Post-it notes, but as demand steadily grew he created a spreadsheet and taped it to the wall.

The list reads like an inventory for a toy store. A Playskool swing for 2-year-old Jacob. A Disney Fairies makeup set for 5-year-old Charlotte. Then there are countless robots and footballs and baby dolls arranged by age and gender, awaiting assignment to a specific child.

"The goal was to match up each child with a toy that they liked or asked Santa for for Christmas," Sciaraffo explained. "We basically tried to pair them up with toys I had in stock."

The charitable enterprise grew out of a Sandy donation out-



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

Michael Sciaraffo, as Santa Claus, arrives at the home of the Creamer family to deliver toys in the Belle Harbor neighborhood of the Queens borough of New York.

reach effort that Sciaraffo had been spearheading for weeks in the wake of the storm, drumming up donations of clothing and food through Facebook. As the holidays approached, he realized that lots of children would be without their toys this year.

And with their parents preoccupied with the drudgery of storm

repairs, many children probably might not even get to sit on Santa's lap. So he decided to fill that gap himself.

"When I was a kid, my toys were very important to me," Sciaraffo said. "That's their security blanket, so to speak. I couldn't sit home and do nothing."

Donations are coming by the truckload from all over the country,

fueled by his Facebook page. And Sciaraffo has received elf-like help from fellow New Yorkers like Sean Turk, a father of three from Queens who has raised more than \$2,000 from his community and has been filling toy requests at local stores.

"I started it with \$500 of my own," Turk said, "and then people just started contributing."

On a recent rainy afternoon, Sciaraffo pulled on his white wig and beard and drove out to weather-beaten Belle Harbor, a town on the Rockaway peninsula. His first stop: the darkened oceanfront home of Elizabeth Sampol, who was waiting upstairs with her 11-month-old daughter, Ella.

"Ho, ho, ho," he shouted. "Merry Christmas!"

Ella gazed up at him and smiled as Sciaraffo handed her a toy duck. Sandy struck just after her first birthday party and destroyed all of her new gifts when the basement flooded.

"As you can see from the outside of the house and the inside of the house, it's been a disaster," said Elizabeth Sampol, who has been living in a FEMA-funded hotel room for several weeks with her family while their home is repaired. "And we haven't had time to take

her to go see Santa Claus or to do anything that we would want to do for her first Christmas that actually matters."

Sampol said she was amazed when she learned about Sciaraffo's project.

"He contacted me and he told me how he's been going around giving out gifts," she said. "And I was so happy that someone would do this in his free time." A few blocks away, 4-year-old Sophie Creamer waited excitedly by the front door as she caught sight of Sciaraffo coming down the street. And when he handed her a brand-new Barbie doll, she clutched it to her chest and wouldn't let go.

"It's all gutted. We don't have a basement," said her mother, Lori Creamer. "So she lost all of her toys."

If all goes according to plan, Sciaraffo is hoping to deliver presents to nearly 1,000 children in the coming days.

As he hoisted his sack of toys over his shoulder, heading off to another delivery, the rain stopped and a rainbow cut a path across the sky.

He took it as a sign of good luck.

"You don't see that every day," he said, grinning as his beard slipped down his face a little. "Amazing."

sudoku

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

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

Stores brace for snow during final shopping days

NEW YORK (AP) — Midwesterners aren't the only ones who could get slammed by the storm that's expected to bring heavy snow, winds and rain to the middle of the country over the next couple of days. Stores could get hit too.

With sales during the holiday shopping season disappointing so far, the nation's retailers are depending even more on these final days leading up to Christmas for a boost in business. Retailers are hoping the storm won't change shoppers' plans.

Jon Adam, 22, said he's finished most of his holiday shopping. But Adam, who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., was planning to go out this weekend to buy \$80 perfume at a specialty store located 35 miles away for his girlfriend. The looming snowstorm, however, is making him rethink that.

"I don't know if things are going to freeze over," he said. "We're all used to snow. But we haven't had that big snow (storm) this year. So everyone is on edge."

The first big snowstorm of the season, which began in the Midwest on Thursday, is just the

latest challenge facing stores during this holiday shopping season. The period, which runs roughly from November through December, can account for 40 percent of a store's annual revenue. The Midwest accounts for about 18 percent of the nation's retail sales, according to MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse.

So far this season, sales have been lackluster as shoppers have held back their spending because of worries about the weak U.S. job market and the possibility that a stalemate between Congress and the White House over the U.S. budget could trigger tax increases and spending cuts known as the "fiscal cliff" next year. That would mean less money in shoppers' pockets.

ShopperTrak, which counts foot traffic and its own proprietary sales numbers from 40,000 retail outlets across the country, slashed its retail sales forecast for the season on Wednesday to an estimated 2.5 percent increase to \$257.7 billion. The company had previously predicted a rise of 3.3 percent for the season.

"This comes at a crucial weekend," said Ken Perkins, presi-

dent of RetailMetrics, a research firm. "This is the end game. These days are huge as sales have been soft in November and December. They need a strong finish to carry through."

Most major stores and malls said that local managers are keeping an eye on the weather. Kohl's closed its Beaver Dam, Wis. store late Thursday. And Dianna Gee, a spokeswoman at Wal-Mart Stores Inc., said that 15 of its nearly 4,000 stores were closed for a few hours Thursday because of the storm. But all but three stores in Kansas, Missouri and Iowa have reopened.

"There's been no major impact at this point," Gee said, noting that the affected stores have seen a spike in sales of snacks as shoppers prepared to stay home.

Target, which is watching 46 stores across Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, said it has "pre-positioned" inventory such as shovels and winter clothing to areas that are expected to get significant snow. The discounter said in a statement that all of its stores are open and that the "goal is to remain open for impacted communities to have access to winter storm essentials."

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Bidding Quiz

You deal and open One Heart with the following hand:
 ♠ 10 ♥ KQ974 ♦ KJ5 ♣ A1063

What would you bid next if partner responded:

- One spade.
- One notrump.
- Two clubs.
- Two diamonds.
- Two hearts.

- Two clubs.** This comes closer to describing your hand than a rebid of either one notrump or two hearts. It is true that one notrump would identify a hand of minimum opening strength, but it would at the same time imply balanced distribution, which you do not have. The two-club bid offers the advantage of allowing you to discover a club fit, while the chief disadvantage of two clubs is that it does not limit you to a hand of the minimum class. The advantages accorded by painting a more accurate picture of your distribution more than offset this defect.
- Two clubs.** You can't sensibly accept a notrump contract by passing, considering the danger implicit in your singleton spade. It is therefore best to bid two clubs, hoping to find a better landing place.
- Three clubs.** This is a straight value bid indicating a hand of minimum opening strength that contains support for clubs. Add a couple more high-card points and you would have enough for a jump-raise to four clubs.
- Three diamonds.** The only alternative — three clubs — would promise more in the way of high-card points. The simple raise, informing partner that you have a minimum opening with diamond support, provides the most accurate description of your hand.
- Three clubs.** The possible rebids are three hearts, three clubs and pass. If partner has a dead-minimum for his raise, the limit of the hand might be nine or even only eight tricks. At the same time, though, allowance must be made for the possibility of making 10 tricks if partner has the right hand, so passing two hearts is much too conservative. Three clubs is more informative than three hearts and is therefore the better choice. It tells partner that you have a second suit and allows him to bid three or four hearts, depending on how he re-evaluates his hand. If he has, say, ♠ 984 ♥ J1063 ♦ Q9 ♣ KQ82, he will bid four hearts, which is virtually laydown.

Tomorrow: A little slip.
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News in brief

Tiny dollar gap between Boehner, Obama on 'fiscal cliff' belies GOP's huge political headache

WASHINGTON (AP) — When it comes to resolving their "fiscal cliff" impasse, the dollar gap between President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner is tiny in federal terms. That masks a monumental political ravine the two men must try to bridge, with most of the burden on the now beleaguered Boehner.

Short of support from his own Republican Party, a chagrined speaker abruptly canceled a House vote Thursday night on his so-called Plan B. The measure would have prevented looming tax increases on everyone but people earning over \$1 million annually, but was opposed by rank-and-file Republican lawmakers unwilling to vote for any tax increases at all.

Now Boehner, R-Ohio, and Obama seem likely to bargain anew over a broad package of tax increases and spending cuts, with Thursday night's GOP retreat weakening Boehner's leverage. Ticking ever louder is the start of the new year, which by law will usher in hundreds of billions in tax increases and spending cuts — the "fiscal cliff" — unless the two men avert it by crafting a compromise deficit-cutting package that can get through the GOP-run House and Democratic-led Senate.

Despite the impassioned political clash that the "cliff" has prompted, weeks of intermittent bargaining between Obama and Boehner have left them facing relatively miniscule dollar differences by Washington standards.

Obama wants to raise taxes by about \$20 billion a year more than Boehner. The two men differ over spending cuts by roughly the same amount.

Obama vows to press ahead on fiscal cliff solution after House GOP leaders scrap vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama says he'll press ahead with Congress to prevent across-the-board tax increases set to strike taxpayers Jan. 1 after House GOP leaders unexpectedly put off a vote on legislation calling for higher rates on million-dollar earners was abruptly scrapped Thursday evening.

The measure "did not have sufficient support from our members to pass," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, conceded in a brief statement.

At the White House, Press Secretary Jay Carney said that Obama's "main priority is to ensure that taxes don't go up on 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses," citing statistics associated with Obama's campaign promise to increase top tax rates on household earning more than \$250,000 a year.

"The President will work with Congress to get this done and we are hopeful that we will be able to find a bipartisan solution quickly that protects the middle class and our economy," Carney said. Pointedly, the statement didn't say whether Obama would work with Boehner to revive stalled talks with Boehner or turn to the Democratic-controlled Senate to try to salvage the situation.

Boehner's attempt to tactically retreat from a longstanding promise to maintain Bush-era tax rates for all was designed to gain at least some leverage against Obama and Senate Democrats in the fiscal cliff endgame.

Thursday's drama was a major personal defeat for the Speaker, who retains the respect and affection of his tea party-infused conference, but sometimes has great difficulty in getting them to follow his leadership.

Federal crackdown on foreign HGH has led to record sales of the drug by Big Pharma

A federal crackdown on illicit foreign supplies of human growth hormone has failed to stop rampant misuse, and instead has driven record sales of the drug by some of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies, an Associated Press investigation shows.

The crackdown, which began in 2006, reduced the illegal flow of unregulated supplies from China, India and Mexico.

But since then, Big Pharma has been satisfying the steady desires of U.S. users and abusers, including many who take the drug in the false hope of delaying the effects of aging.

From 2005 to 2011, inflation-adjusted sales of HGH were up 69 percent, according to an AP analysis of pharmaceutical company data collected by the research firm IMS Health. Sales of the average prescription drug rose just 12 percent in that same period.

Gunman's mother is a reluctantly recognized victim of shooting that killed 26 at school

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — When people here speak of the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, they use the number 26: the ones killed after Adam Lanza blasted his way into the school.

When the bells of Newtown toll mournfully Friday morning to honor the victims of last week's shooting rampage, they'll do so 26 times, for each child and staff member killed.

Rarely do residents mention the first person police said Lanza killed that morning: his mother, Nancy, who was shot in the head four times while she lay in bed.

That makes 27. A private funeral was held Thursday in New Hampshire for Nancy Lanza, according to Donald Briggs, the police chief in Kinston, N.H., where her funeral was held. About 25 family members attended the ceremony.

Holiday travelers awaiting flights, safe roads hope to be on their way as snowstorm moves on

CHICAGO (AP) — Travelers facing canceled flights and closed roads were hoping to finally head to their holiday destinations as a widespread snowstorm that dumped more than a foot of snow in parts of the Midwest moved across the Great Lakes toward Canada.

The storm, part of a system that began in the Rockies earlier in the week, led airlines to cancel more than 1,000 flights and caused whiteout conditions that left roads dangerous to drive on. It was blamed for deaths in at least five states, with parts of Iowa and Wisconsin hit with more than a foot of snow.

While some people went to work on digging themselves out even as the storm continued Thursday, others had less control: They were stuck waiting for word of new flight times.

Most of the canceled flights were in Chicago, where aviation officials said more than 350 flights were called off at O'Hare International Airport and more than 150 at Midway International Airport.

Southwest Airlines, which canceled all of its flights out of its Midway hub after 4:30 p.m. Thursday, was anticipating normal operations Friday morning in Chicago. United Airlines also planned to operate a full schedule, though spokeswoman for both airlines cautioned travelers to check their flight status before heading to the airport.

North Korea says it has detained a U.S. citizen for unspecified 'crimes'

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday that it has detained an American citizen who has confessed to unspecified crimes.

State media said in a short dispatch that someone named Pae Jun Ho entered North Korea on Nov. 3 as a tourist but was detained because of crimes.

The North said the crimes were "proven through evidence" but didn't elaborate.

Pyeongyang has detained and eventually released several Americans in recent years. Some have been journalists and others Christians accused of religious proselytizing.

In 2009, two journalists were detained after crossing into the North from China while on a reporting trip. They were later released.

FBI: 1 of 2 bank robbers who escaped federal Chicago jail arrested after dayslong manhunt

CHICAGO (AP) — One of the two bank robbers who made a daring escape from a high-rise federal jail in Chicago was arrested after a dayslong manhunt, an FBI spokeswoman said early Friday.

Special Agent Joan Hyde said Joseph "Jose" Banks was captured without incident in Chicago, officials stated.

Agents and officers from the Chicago FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force, along with officers from the Chicago Police Department, arrested Banks about 11:30 p.m. Thursday, Hyde told The Associated Press in an email.

The search continued for Kenneth Conley, who fled the jail with Banks early Tuesday.

Banks, 37, and Conley, 38, somehow broke a large hole into the bottom of a 6-inch wide window of the Metropolitan Correctional Center, dropped a makeshift rope made of bed sheets out and climbed down about 20 stories to the ground.

The escape went unnoticed for hours, with surveillance video from a nearby street showing the two hop

into a cab shortly before 3 a.m. Tuesday. They had changed out of their orange jail-issued jumpsuits.

Awaiting sunrise, most in Mexico's Maya heartland expect 'cosmic dawn,' not end of world

MERIDA, Mexico (AP) — In the darkness before dawn Friday, spiritualists prepared white clothes, drums, conch shells and incense ahead of the sunrise they believe will herald the birth of a new and better age as a vast 5,125-year cycle in the Mayan calendar comes to an end.

No one was quite sure at what time the Mayas' 13th Baktun would officially end on this Dec. 21.

Some think it already ended at midnight Thursday. Others looked to Friday's dawn here in the Maya heartland. Some had later times in mind.

"Wait until the dawn on the 22nd; that is when we Maya will speak," Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchu said earlier in Guatemala, another Maya area.

Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History even suggested that historical calculations to synchronize the Mayan and Western calendars might be off a few days. It said the Mayan Long Count calendar cycle might not really end until Sunday.

Whatever the details, the chance to welcome a new time seemed to be the main concern among celebrants drawn to the Yucatan peninsula.

After report, Suzy Favor Hamilton tweets that she worked as an escort

Three-time Olympian Suzy Favor Hamilton says she coped with depression and a troubled marriage by turning to a life of prostitution.

In a series of posts to her Twitter account, Favor Hamilton acknowledged working as an escort following a report Thursday on The Smoking Gun website about her double life.

"I do not expect people to understand," Favor Hamilton tweeted. "But the reasons for doing this made sense to me at the time and were very much related to depression."

You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Forgotten Refugees

Why does nobody care about the Jewish refugees from Arab lands?

The world is greatly concerned about the Arabs who fled the nascent state of Israel in 1948. But no mention is ever made of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands. Their history is as compelling and arguably more so than that of the Arab refugees from Israel.

What are the facts?

Jews in Arab countries. Jews have lived since Biblical times in what are now Arab countries. After the Roman conquest, Jews were dispersed, mostly to what are now the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Many Jews migrated to the Iberian peninsula — Spain and Portugal. They were expelled from those countries at the end of the 15th century. They mostly migrated to the Arab countries, where, by now, they have been living for almost 500 years, many Jews for over 2,000 years.

There is a myth that Jews had an easy life in Muslim/Arab countries. The opposite is the case. Jews under Islam were treated as second-class citizens and worse. The relationship was governed by a system of discrimination, intended to reduce the Jews in those Arab countries to conditions of humiliation, segregation and violence. They were excluded from society, from government, and from most professions. They were barely tolerated and often, under the slightest pretext or no pretext at all, were victimized by vicious violence.

When Israel declared its statehood in 1948, pogroms broke out across the entire Arab/Muslim world. Thousands died in this violence. Their homes and businesses were destroyed, their women violated. The vast majority of those Jews fled from where they had lived for centuries. They had to leave everything behind. Most of those who were able to escape found their way to the just-created state of Israel.

Over 850,000 Jews were driven from Arab countries, most of them in 1948, at the birth of Israel. Most of the remainder were chased out during or immediately following the Six-Day War in 1967, when, in fury about the disastrous defeat, the "Arab street" erupted and subjected its Jewish population to bloody pogroms. Israel received every one of those Jewish refugees from Arab countries with brotherly open arms; it housed, fed, and quickly integrated them into Israeli society. They and their descendants now make up more than one-half of the country's population.

Jewish refugees from the Arab countries are the forgotten refugees. The world, and especially of course the Arabs, claim compensation from Israel for the Arab refugees and insist on their return to what has been Israel for over 60 years. The Jewish refugees from Arab countries, all Israelis now, have no desire to return to their ancient homelands, where they had been treated so shabbily and so brutally. But if there is to be any compensation, those forgotten Jewish refugees are certainly entitled to such compensation as much as the Arab refugees. Anything else would be an outrage and a great injustice.

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Gerardo Joffe, President

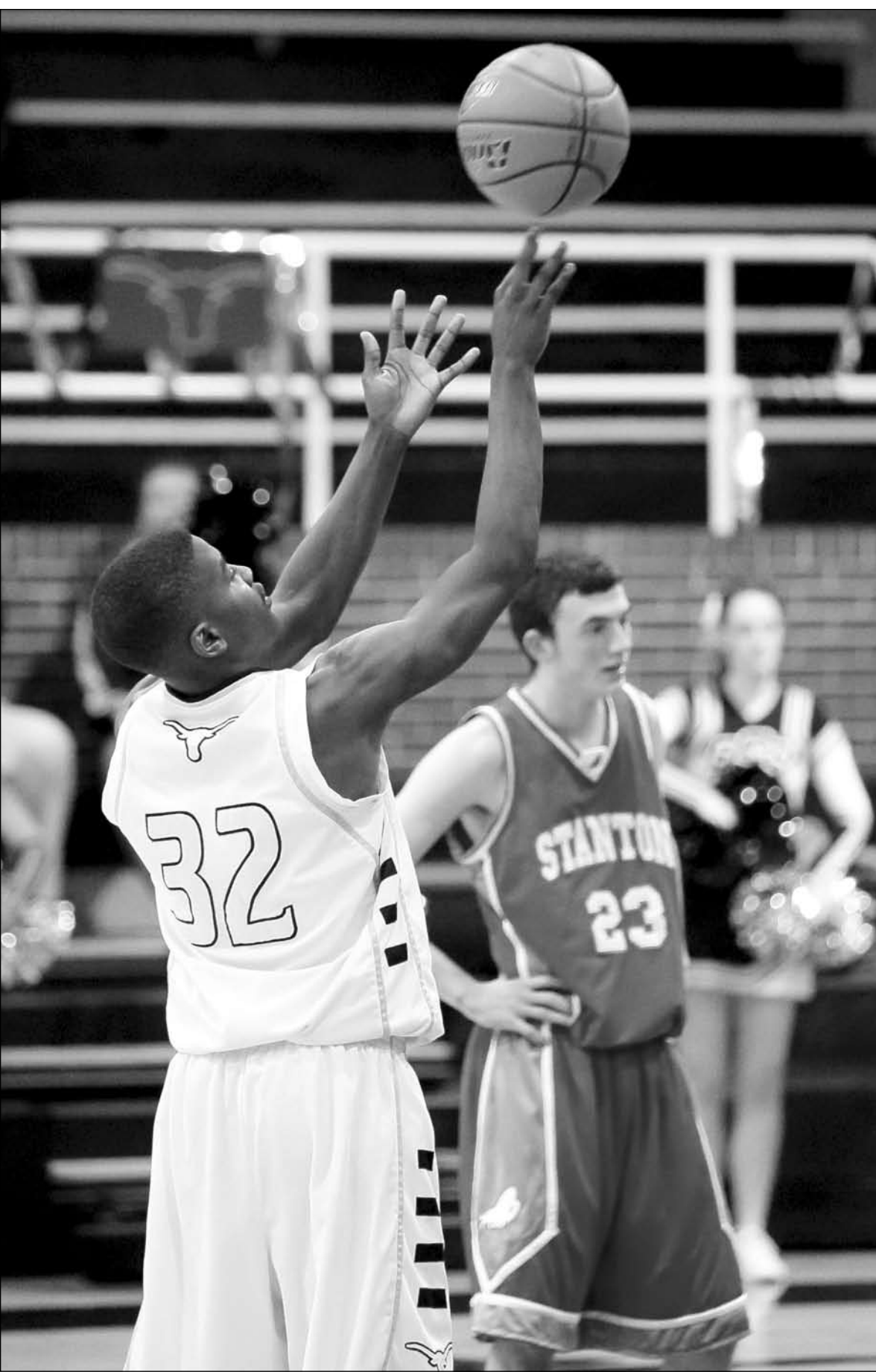
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sudoku

ANSWERS

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

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
from all of us
at the
Big Spring Herald



HERALD file photo

Big Spring's Thomas Young takes a free throw during last week's game against Stanton. The Steers (5-9) won 44-43 in OT. BSHS will be in action tonight as they host Seminole. Varsity begins at 7:30 p.m. at Steer Gym. The girls will resume play Thursday against Tulia to open the Lubbock Caprock Tournament.

Sports Calendar

TODAY

Boy's Basketball

- Seminole at Big Spring, 9th, 5 p.m.; J.V., 6:15 p.m., Varsity, 7:30 p.m.
- Grady at O'Donnell, 8 p.m.
- Colorado City at Forsan, J.V. 5 p.m., Varsity, 7:30 p.m.
- Veribest at Garden City, (varsity only), 8 p.m.

Girl's Basketball

- Grady at O'Donnell, 6:30 p.m.
- Colorado City at Forsan, J.V., 4 p.m.; Varsity, 6 p.m.
- Veribest at Garden City, (varsity only), 6:30 p.m.

To submit a calendar item, please call 263-7331, ext. 237, or e-mail sports@bigspringherald.com

LeBron leads Heat past Mavs

STEPHEN HAWKINS

AP Sports Writer

DALLAS — This was too easy for LeBron James and the Miami Heat against a Dallas team already missing Dirk Nowitzki when it was plagued by more injuries.

There was no semblance of their two NBA Finals matchups against each other.

James scored 24 points with some early baskets on nifty passes from Dwyane Wade, and the Heat rolled to a 110-95 victory Thursday night, a game in which Miami led by 36 points before James and Wade sat out entire fourth quarter.

"I'm just playing within the game," said Wade, who had 19 points and six assists. "My job is to do a little bit of everything right now."

Including getting the ball to James, who has scored at least 20 points in all 23 games,

the longest streak to start an NBA season since Karl Malone's 24 in a row opening the 1989-90 season.

"I'm just very comfortable and confident in my ability," James said. "I put a lot of work into my game. It's always good when you put in the work and implement that into a game situation."

Nowitzki, the Mavs' 11-time All-Star, hasn't started this season though he practiced for the first time this week since arthroscopic right knee surgery Oct. 19. Dallas is now without starting point guard Derek Fisher (right knee) and post player Elton Brand (right groin) and Brandan Wright (right ankle).

The Heat never trailed after James drove for a short floater 3 minutes into the game. They had their first

See **MAVS**, Page 16

Saints visit Cowboys with quieter Payton talk

SCHUYLER DIXON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The New Orleans Saints visit Cowboys Stadium for the first time Sunday, just a few miles from the home where suspended coach Sean Payton waits to return from a yearlong ban with a voided contract that sparked speculation about him replacing Jason Garrett in Dallas.

If these teams had played in early November, there wouldn't have been anything else worth discussing. The Cowboys changed that by winning five of six games to

regain control of their playoff hopes, and the Saints aren't totally done yet.

"Our mindset around here is that we always control our own destiny," Garrett said. "We put ourselves in a position right now that everything we want is still in front of us. But we're still focused on the task at hand and that is the New Orleans Saints."

Garrett dodged a few questions Wednesday about those November days when the Cowboys were 3-5 and a report surfaced that the league had scrapped Payton's contract because it objected to an out clause in the deal.

The buzz, while ignoring the obvious New Orleans reaction that it intended simply to resign Payton, was grounded in logic: If Payton's a free agent, then why wouldn't he want to return to a place where he was a highly regarded assistant and restore America's Team to greatness?

The week that story hit, the Cowboys started winning again, which is why most of the questions for Garrett in the days leading the Saints game have been about football. Like, how about that three-game winning streak?

"I ignored it all," Dallas offensive lineman Mackenzy

Bernadeau said of the Payton talk. "I don't think anybody was concerned about it, worried about it. We just focused on playing the next game."

The Cowboys had to focus on a whole new set of priorities after practice squad line-backer Jerry Brown died Dec. 8 in a one-car accident that led to intoxication manslaughter charges against teammate and close friend Josh Brent.

Suddenly, Dallas was trying to figure out how to just get through a game that kicked off in Cincinnati less than 24 hours after the players found out Brown was dead. The Cowboys won 20-19 on a field

goal by Dan Bailey as time expired, and Bailey ended the game on a kick again a week later in a 27-24 overtime win against Pittsburgh.

By finding ways to win, the Cowboys (8-6) are tied for first in the NFC East and will take the division if they beat the Saints and win their finale at Washington.

"I can only imagine what the organization has been through and certainly the team," Saints quarterback Drew Brees said. "I guess you can do one of two things. It can cause you to kind of go

See **COWBOYS**, Page 16

Foster and Johnson give Texans balanced attack

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston offensive coordinator Rick Dennison is thankful every day to be working for the Texans.

He's in charge of a unit that has both the AFC's leading receiver and leading rusher in Andre Johnson and Arian Foster. Johnson has 1,360 yards receiving, Foster 1,313 yards rushing.

"It makes the defense defend a lot," Dennison said.

"They put an extra guy down in the box to stop the run, we think we have the people to throw it well and a quarterback that dis-

tributes it well. They play back, we think we can do enough offensively running the ball ... that we can find some holes."

Foster and Johnson give the Texans a balanced attack they believe will be critical as they move closer to the playoffs.

Kubiak doesn't like it when he has to rely too much on one dimension of his offense. He loved the way the Texans played in Sunday's win over the Colts when they had 178 yards rushing and 239 yards passing.

"We want to be balanced," Kubiak said.

Swimmer Phelps voted AP male athlete of year

(AP) — Now that he's away from the pool, Michael Phelps can reflect — really reflect — on what he accomplished.

Pretty amazing stuff. "It's kind of nuts to think about everything I've gone through," Phelps said. "I've finally had time to myself, to sit back and say, '... that really happened?' It's kind of shocking at times."

Not that his career needed a caper, but Phelps added one more honor to his staggering list of accomplishments Thursday — The Associated Press male athlete of the year.

Phelps edged out LeBron James to win the award for the second time, not only a fitting payoff for another brilliant Olympics (four gold medals and two silvers in swimming at the London Games) but recognition for one of the greatest careers in any sport.

Phelps finished with 40 votes

in balloting by U.S. editors and broadcasters, while James was next with 37. Track star Usain Bolt, who won three gold medals in London, was third with 23.

Carl Lewis is the only other Olympic-related star to be named AP male athlete of the year more than once, taking the award for his track and field exploits in 1983 and '84. The only men honored more than twice are golf's Tiger Woods and cyclist Lance Armstrong (four times each), and basketball's Michael Jordan (three times).

"Obviously, it's a big accomplishment," Phelps said. "There's so many amazing male athletes all over the world and all over our country. To be able to win this is something that just sort of tops off my career."

Phelps retired at age 27 as soon as he finished his final race in London, having won more gold

medals (18) and overall medals (22) than any other Olympian.

No one else is even close.

"That's what I wanted to do," Phelps said. "Now that it's over, it's something I can look back on and say, 'That was a pretty amazing ride.'"

The current ride isn't so bad either.

Set for life financially, he has turned his fierce competitive drive to golf, working on his links game with renowned coach Hank Haney as part of a television series on the Golf Channel. In fact, after being informed of winning the AP award, Phelps called in from the famed El Dorado Golf & Beach Club in Los Cabos, Mexico, where he was heading out with Haney to play a few more holes before nightfall.

"I can't really complain,"

See **PHELPS**, Page 16

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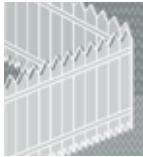
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Annie's Mailbox®

Dear Annie: I'm 27 and have lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease. My condition is usually under control, and I live a normal life. The problem is, I'm very sensitive to perfume, air fresheners and cigarette smoke, and with my medications, I can't drink alcohol.

A lot of my girlfriends throw candle parties and cosmetic parties or go out drinking, all of which involve things I react badly to.

I typically decline these invitations, suggest something else or go along and stay silent so I won't be a wet blanket. At a recent cosmetic party, I stupidly allowed a friend to smear makeup on me after being goaded into it.

Within seconds, my face and scalp were burning, and I jumped up and stuck my head under the faucet. Everybody laughed, except the hostess, who was "deeply offended." I haven't been invited to any parties since.

It upsets me that my friends, who have known me since we were children, don't seem to care that the majority of their plans include activities that will make me physically ill.

I have offered to host get-togethers at my home, but one of my friends told me my house "smells

funny." When I ask friends, family or co-workers to lay off the perfume or air freshener, I hear, "You're the only one who complains."

Even my sister douses herself in a perfume that gives me hives and then gets insulted that I don't want to hug her.

How do I explain to my friends that their idea of fun literally makes me sick? I'm starting to feel very left out because of my disease. — *Shouldn't Be Limited by Lupus*

Dear Not Limited: Your friends seem a bit immature, which makes them too focused on their own enjoyment and less sympathetic toward you.

Do they know you have lupus? (Saying that you can't drink or are sensitive to cologne might seem optional to them.) When you can participate without too much risk, you should make the effort, but otherwise, we recommend you start looking for better friends. For additional assistance and support, try the Lupus Foundation of America (lupus.org).

Dear Annie: A co-worker and her husband are expecting a baby in late December and decided to throw themselves an elaborate baby shower. They have plenty of

friends, relatives and colleagues who could have given them a shower. I have never heard of giving one for yourself. Isn't this rude? — *Flum-moxed in Florida*

Dear Florida: The idea of showers (bridal or baby) was for friends to help a new couple stock their home or prepare for the new child by voluntarily gifting them with things they would need. This sweet, helpful welcome has somehow morphed into the idea that people are entitled to demand gifts for every occasion. Throwing oneself a baby shower smacks of greed. It says, "I expect you to give me presents."

However, it's possible that none of their friends offered to help and they thought it would be OK to do it themselves. Whether to attend is up to you.

Dear Annie: "Old Enough" didn't want her parents to visit her in Europe during her son's spring break because he needed to study for his



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

SATs. That letter took the cake.

During the lifetime of one's parents, children should adjust their schedules to accommodate those who sacrificed so much for them.

What a lame excuse about the son wanting to study for SAT and AP exams. There are plenty of places he can go to study without interruptions. — *Parent*

Dear Parent: We disagree. Children should, of course, make accommodations for their parents whenever possible. But when Mom and Dad can visit at any time and deliberately choose to come on precisely those days that their daughter has asked them not to shows a lack of consideration and respect.

Parents who want to maintain a healthy relationship with their children should not stomp all over them.

Dear Annie: Back in May, our son and his wife invited us to a concert at the end of December to celebrate my husband's

milestone birthday.

They said it would be their treat, and we all agreed it would be a fun evening.

Over the next few months, we got together often, and no mention was made of the concert.

Yesterday, I sent a text saying we were excited about the concert and asked what time we should leave. Our son responded with a text saying they weren't going and that we should have checked with them sooner.

Regardless of the reason — whether illness, money, work schedule or whatever — shouldn't the people who extended the invitation let the guests know there is a change of plans?

We are so disappointed and — *Confused About Cancellation*

Dear Confused: Your son and his wife should not have issued the invitation unless they meant it and certainly should have notified you well in advance if the plans had changed.

However, it's also possible they simply forgot about it until it was too late to get the tickets, in which case, mentioning how excited you were about the upcoming concert in, say, August might have averted this family drama.

One should be diplomatic but not so reticent to speak that these things become an issue. Good

communication, especially between parents and children, can resolve or prevent a great many problems.

Dear Annie: I can relate to "Fran in Frisco," who moved halfway across the country to live near her husband's family. They had promised to do things with the grandchildren and spend lots of time with them. But when Fran and her husband finally moved there, the grandparents ignored them.

I had the same experience with my in-laws after moving 1,200 miles from my family. Fran, do yourself a favor and move back to your hometown while there's still time for your parents to enjoy their grandchildren. We never got that chance, and now it's too late. — *Still Homesick*

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, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 737 3rd Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2012 CREATORS.COM

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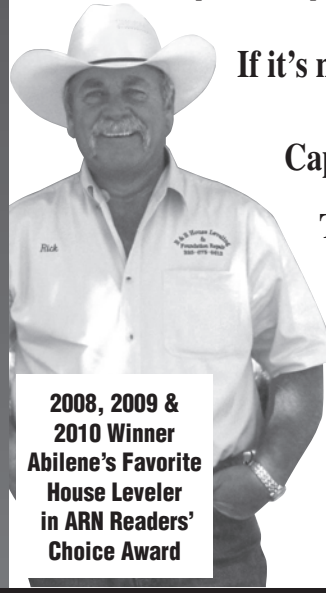
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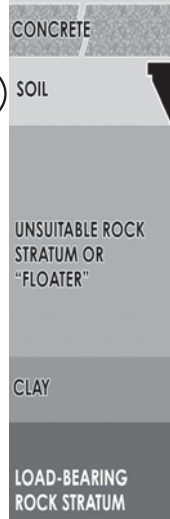
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Johnson library shows how presidency reverberates

By CHRIS TOMLINSON
Associated Press

AUSTIN — The United States is fighting a messy war alongside an unreliable ally in Asia, residents are deeply divided between conservatives and liberals, a new health care law just took effect and the nation is struggling with racial and ethnic divisions.

What's happening in the United States in 2012 could just as easily describe the nation in the 1960s: President Lyndon Baines Johnson escalating the war in Vietnam, defeating conservative Republican nominee Barry Goldwater, passing Medicare and pushing through landmark civil rights legislation.

An insider's look at how the Texan dealt with those challenges is on display at the newly remodeled LBJ Presidential Library in Austin, where the old 1970s-style exhibits now use 21st century technology to put visitors in Johnson's shoes.

Mark Updegrove, the library's director, said the reopening comes as historians take a fresh look at Johnson's efforts to fight poverty and improve the health of the nation by creating a Great Society.

"The election of 2012 was a referendum on the Great Society programs put into place by President Johnson," he

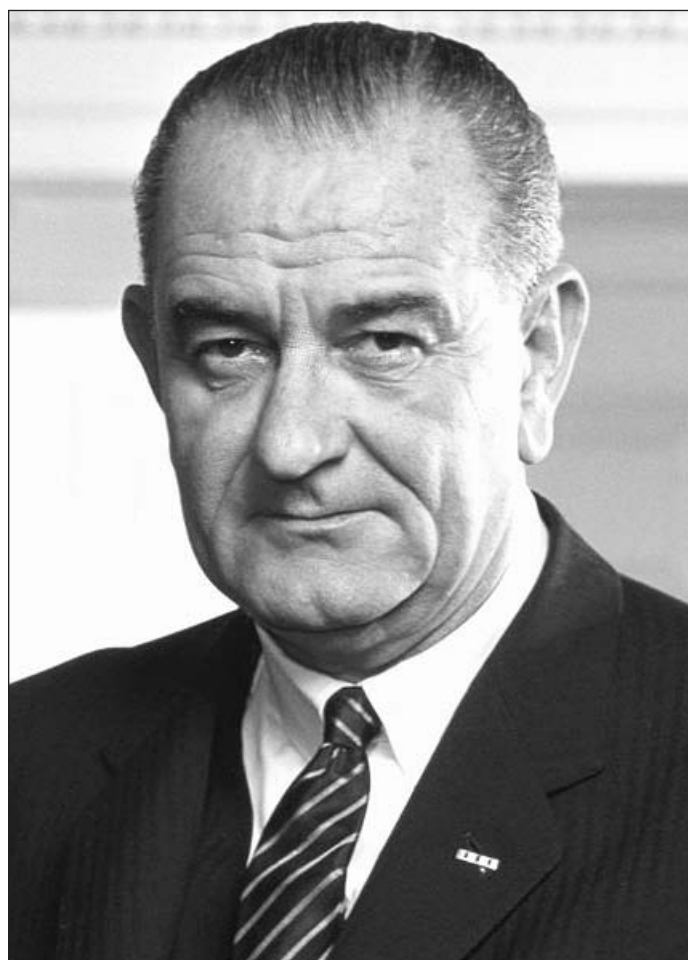
said. "If you look at what is happening in America today, the Great Society is so evident, in the Supreme Court taking a look at voting rights or racial quotas, and the Congress debating cuts to Medicare or PBS."

The new permanent exhibit takes advantage of the presidential archives, which includes 643 hours of recorded phone conversations between LBJ and dozens of people.

At one station, a display resembling an old telephone booth plays key conversations about civil rights with Martin Luther King Jr., FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and others. After a yearlong renovation, the library reopens Saturday in honor of first lady Lady Bird Johnson's 100th birthday.

The library also has a Vietnam "situation room" where an

LBJ PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY



he used his years of experience in Congress to push through some of the most iconic laws in the nation's history, including Medicare.

"Every social issue we're dealing with now, Johnson tried to tackle it," said historian Douglas Brinkley of Rice University in Houston. He added that "the season is right for a revisionist look" at Johnson, with a focus on his domestic achievements.

Updegrove, who this year authored "Indomitable Will: LBJ in the Presidency," said that when LBJ took over after President John F. Kennedy's assassination, the U.S. poverty rate was at about 20 percent. It plunged to 12 percent, by the time he left office. Poverty in the United States hit an all-time low of 11 percent just after LBJ left office, then went up to 15 percent under President Ronald Reagan, where it remains today.

Medicare was the Affordable Care Act of its time, providing federally administered health care to all people 65-years-old or older.

Reagan, a young conservative at the time, called Medicare a socialized medicine scheme that would bring an end to freedom in

America. More than 45 years later, the program is one of the most popular in the nation.

That year Congress also passed Medicaid, the joint state-federal health care program for the poor. President Barack Obama tried to expand Medicaid coverage through his health care overhaul, but a dozen Republican governors around the country have refused.

LBJ also passed major civil rights legislation that guaranteed people of all races the right to vote, access to public services and to equal opportunity. Yet LBJ's decision to expand the war in Vietnam remains his foremost legacy, something Updegrove believes is changing.

"We haven't properly honored Johnson's herculean domestic achievements," said Brinkley, the historian from Rice University. "It got overshadowed by the Vietnam War. Half a century later we can see that a lot of what Johnson did has stuck."

For now, though, Democrats rarely invoke LBJ's name, and Republicans use the phrase "Great Society" to ridicule social justice proposals. But Updegrove said politicians of all stripes could learn a lot from how Johnson forged consensus.

"The conversations are a primer in how to get things done in Washington," he said. "If you listen to those conversations you can hear how remarkably effective LBJ was at getting things done and they serve as an example of Washington can do."

Associated Press writer Jamie Stengle in Dallas contributed to this report.

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The display lets the visitor decide what they would do and then shows whether LBJ agreed. The computer screen then displays the consequences, with short videos of presidential historians explaining the significance of the decision.

LBJ's biggest accomplishments, though, are the Great Society programs that extended life expectancies, reduced poverty and banned discrimination.

An exhibit shows how

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"Merry" goes with "Christmas," "happy" goes with "New Year" and "good" goes with "night." After extensive surveying, the astrological consensus decided that "mighty fine" is a near perfect match for "solstice." And of course, by "extensive surveying" I mean I asked myself. And also a cat. So, let us be the first to wish you a mighty fine solstice!

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Even if you're basically happy where you are, you still think about the benefits of a career change. What's the harm in imagining? You'll realize what you love about your current position and what could be better.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be keenly aware of how your attention is like a miracle growth spray. What you focus on will thrive and blossom, and what you ignore will shrivel up and eventually return to the earth.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll strive to create harmonious relationships, but if it doesn't quite work out the way you want it to, don't worry. When people are connected by feuding, they are still connected.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll love the fast-paced, engaging action of the day if you get right into the flow. However, if you stand back and watch, you may get intimidated. So don't hesitate. Jump right in.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Are you antisocial? Or are you simply not as user-friendly as people want you to be? The truth is, you don't want "just anyone" for a friend, especially not the "user" type.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're a hard one to read today, and some will get it wrong. Most misinterpretations will have to do with what the other person really wishes about you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can't stand trying to converse with people who simply wait for their turn to talk. They miss the whole point of your communication, which is quite simply a pleasure for the worthy partner.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). A bit of silliness is just what the cosmic doctor is ordering for you now. Humor and levity will not only be fun in the moment; they will seal someone's love for you long-term.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your personal sense of timing clicks perfectly with your environment. It takes confidence to move quickly. For now, it's better to do too much too soon than too little too late.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll pay close attention to your return on investment, especially on an energetic level. The thing that seems like it would be fun to accomplish may be more effort than it's worth.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your cosmic gift of the day is objectivity, an essential and strongly beneficial quality for self-realization. So, if you really did live in a glass house, what would people see?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Beware of people who can't make the simplest of commitments, like deciding on a beverage or choosing a parking place. Surround yourself with people you can count on.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 21). It's your year for emotional fitness, and positive new associations and habits will form in the months to come. You'll change or hone your style in January. Friendship will open a professional door in February. March is your chance to get active in a new arena. June improves your domestic scene with a big change. Sagittarius and Taurus people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 25, 49, 6 and 28.

WEEKEND LOVE FORECAST: ARIES: You'll be torn between wanting to be with others and wanting time to yourself. TAURUS: A strange twist of fate puts you in

the path of love. GEMINI: Stop needing and wanting another person, and focus more on having a good time in the moment.

CANCER: Encourage another person to take ownership of the scene you share together. LEO: What seems to be a strictly platonic relationship is, upon closer observation, charged with a deeper layer of exciting chemistry.

VIRGO: You'll have revealing conversations that feature your wicked wit. LIBRA: Letting the other person take the driver's seat of a relationship will be fun for you. SCORPIO: You'll make an effort to be around warm, enthusiastic people, and you could fall in love with someone's killer smile. SAGITTARIUS: Catching up with an old friend will lead to new love or a renewal of love.

CAPRICORN: Simple logistics like standing versus sitting will impact a relationship. AQUARIUS: Those who truly accept themselves won't bother trying to impress you. PISCES: Passivity is a barrier between people. But you're so welcoming that others feel inclined to interact with and around you, eroding the barrier and dwindling it down to nothing.

COUPLE OF THE WEEKEND: The Capricorn sun and the Aries moon inspire a mutual attraction between these two signs. Capricorn is a powerful leader, and Aries, though headstrong, will follow the directives of a respected figure who knows the ropes. So if Capricorn comes up with a wonderful plan, Aries will climb aboard adding a zesty enthusiasm to the scene. Sunday will highlight tenderness and emotional nurturing.

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5:PM	News ABC	Casa Notic.	Two Men	News CBS	Noticias Noticiero	News News	King King	The King Dr. Denis	Charlie Rose	King King	Flying Wild Alaska	Miracle on 34th Street		The Mentalist	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Phineas Good	SportsNation	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Corona de Lágrimas	Big Bang	News Ent	Caso Cerado	News News	Seinfeld Seinfeld	Israel Upd	PBS News-Hour	Rules Rules	Flying Wild Alaska	Movie: Coming to America, John Amos		The Mentalist		Shake It Jessie	College Basketball	Football College Football: 'O' Brady's Bowl St. Petersburg
7:PM	Last Man Malibu	Por Ella Soy Eva	Kitchen Nightmares	Undercover Boss	Rosa Diamante (SS)	Michael Buble	Payne Payne	Door-Wisdom	Wash. Need	The Happy Elf	Deadliest Catch	Movie: Miracle on 34th Street, Dylan McDermott		Christmas 2012	Roots	Phineas Phineas		
8:PM	Back to the Beginning-Amanpour	Amores Verdaderos	Fringe	CSI: NY	Corazón Valiente	White House	Worse Worse	Best of Light of the Southwest		Choir Reindeer			Eddie Murphy: One Night Only	Movie: Four Christmases (DVS)	Good Dog	College Basketball: BYU at Baylor.		
9:PM	News	Amor Bravo (SS)	Simpsons How I Met	Blue Bloods	Escobar Rostro de	Dateline NBC	Movie: Hitch Kevin James (DVS)		Christmas-Bel	Seinfeld Seinfeld	Flying Wild Alaska	Movie: Miracle on 34th Street, Dylan McDermott		Christmas 2012	Roots	Good Dog	NFL Kickoff	SportsCenter
10:PM	Nightline	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias Titulares	News Jay Leno		Upd Alewine	Charlie Rose	'Til Death 'Til Death	Deadliest Catch		Movie: Coming to America, John Amos	Christmas 2012	Good Dog	Austin	NFL Live	SportsCenter
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	AI Diablo	Law Order: CI	Ferguson	Decisiones (SS)	Game	Movie: Foot's Gold	Sala	World (Off Air)	'70s			Movie: A Christmas Carol (DVS)	Ways Die	Good Dog	Austin	NFL Live	SportsCenter
12:AM	Extra	Mar de Amor (SS)	Raymond Fam. Guy	Insider	Pagado	Game	Mani Justice	Browns Browns		Flying Wild Alaska	Movie: Miracle on 34th Street		Ways Die	Christmas 2012	Wendy Williams	Phineas Jessie	NBA SportsNation	SportsCenter
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula	American	Ent	Pagado	(05) Today	Best of Light of the Southwest	Cops Passion		Flying Wild Alaska			Ways Die	Christmas 2012	Movie: Of Boys and Men	Ultimate	SportCtr	SportsCenter

DENNIS THE MENACE



"I'M GETTIN' SOME REALLY COOL CHRISTMAS GIFTS, 'CAUSE MY PARENTS HAVE BEEN WHISPERIN' A LOT."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"No, I'm just gonna TEXT him in a couple days."

HAGAR



BLONDIE



BC



WIZARD OF ID



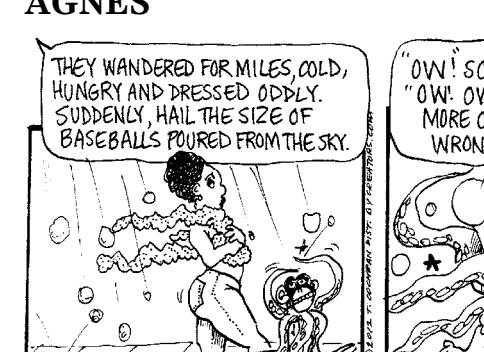
AGNES



HI AND LOIS



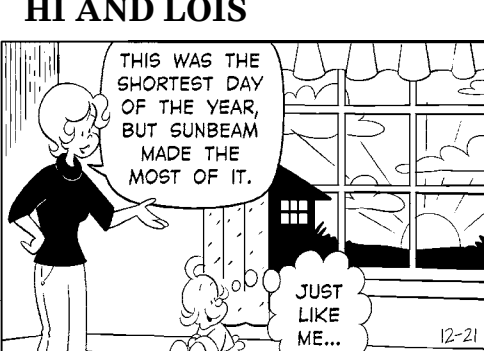
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



DEPARTMENT E-6



This Date In History

Today is Friday, Dec. 21, the 356th day of 2012. There are 10 days left in the year. Winter arrives at 6:12 a.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Dec. 21, 1937, Walt Disney's first feature-length animated cartoon, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," had its world premiere in Los Angeles.

On this date:
In 1620, Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower went ashore for the first time at present-day Plymouth, Mass.
In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed a congressional act authorizing the Navy Medal of Honor.
In 1879, the Henrik Ibsen play "A Doll's House" premiered at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen.
In 1910, 344 coal miners were killed in Britain's Pretoria Pit Disaster.
In 1942, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Williams v. North Carolina, ruled 6-2 that all states had to recognize divorces granted in Nevada.
In 1945, Gen. George S. Patton died in Heidelberg, Germany, of injuries from a car accident.
In 1948, the state of Eire, or Ireland, passed an act declaring itself a republic.
In 1958, Charles de Gaulle was elected to a seven-year term as the first president of the Fifth Republic of France.
In 1971, the U.N. Security Council chose Kurt Waldheim to succeed U Thant as Secretary-General.
In 1976, the Liberian-registered tanker Argo Merchant broke apart near Nantucket Island, off Massachusetts, almost a week after running aground, spilling 7.5 million gallons of oil into the North Atlantic.
In 1988, 270 people were killed when a terrorist bomb exploded aboard a Pam Am Boeing 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland.
In 1991, eleven of the 12 former Soviet republics proclaimed the birth of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the death of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Answer to previous puzzle

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Freddie Hart is 86. Actor Ed Nelson is 84. Talk show host Phil Donahue is 77. Movie director John Avildsen is 77. Actress Jane Fonda is 75. Actor Larry Bryggman is 74. Singer Carla Thomas is 70. Musician Albert Lee is 69. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas is 68. Actor Josh Mostel is 66. Actor Samuel L. Jackson is 64. Movie producer Jeffrey Katzenberg is 62. Singer Betty Wright is 59. International Tennis Hall-of-Famer Chris Evert is 58. Country singer Lee Roy Parnell is 56. Entertainer Jim Rose is 56. Actor-comedian Ray Romano is 55. Country singer Christy Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 50.

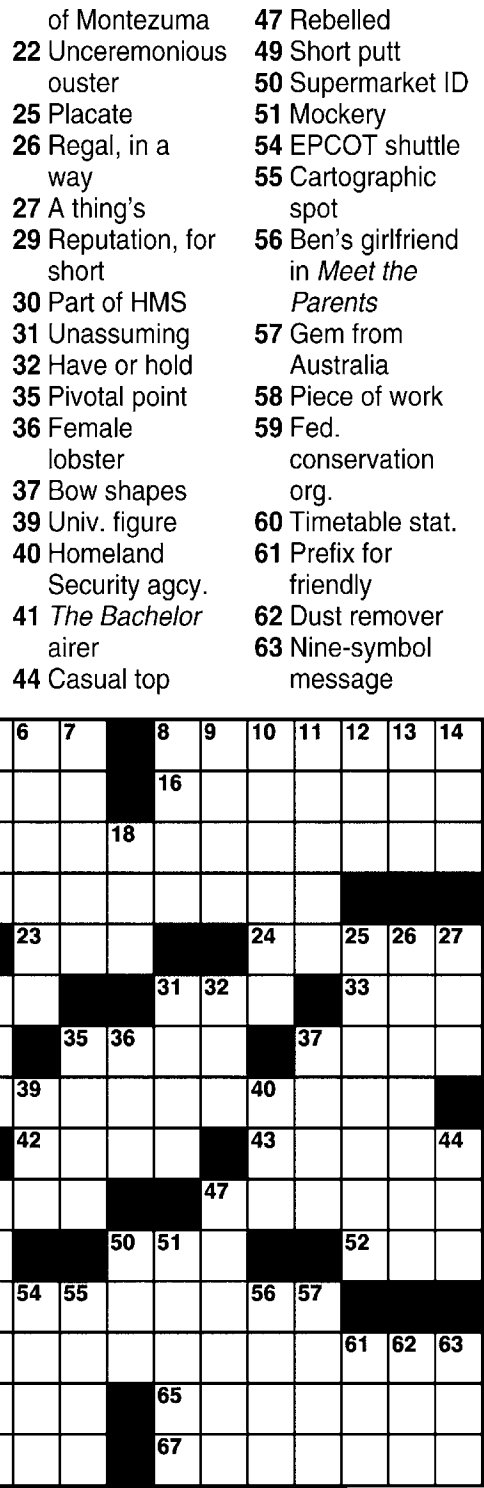
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Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Source of some seeds
 - 8 Instinctual urge
 - 15 Archbishop, e.g.
 - 16 Rolex competitor
 - 17 Job applicant's submission
 - 19 Endangered reptile
 - 20 Crying sound
 - 23 Gym surface
 - 24 Person from Basra
 - 28 People from Brno
 - 31 May honoree
 - 33 Defer, with "off"
 - 34 Fixed look
 - 35 Meditate (on)
 - 37 Takes after Juniper, for one
 - 41 Passed with flying colors
 - 42 Rock music genre
 - 43 Hardly enough
 - 45 Scroogean outburst
 - 46 Jazz instrument
 - 47 Grapple, in the backwoods
 - 48 Large bill
 - 50 Sci-fi staple
 - 52 Rope loop
 - 53 Ronestrone alternative
 - 58 Quaint cry of surprise
 - 64 Of vision
 - 65 Island near Venezuela
 - 66 Ignominy, so to speak
 - 67 Literary postscripts
- DOWN**
- 1 YMCA course
 - 2 Add up to
 - 3 Volleyball official
 - 4 "Pale" drinks
 - 5 It means "merchandise"
 - 6 Top squads
 - 7 Nosy one
 - 8 Bakery worker
 - 9 Brewer's ingredient
 - 10 Early match
 - 11 Unmitigated
 - 12 Humanities course, for short
 - 13 Visit
 - 14 Have a lapse
 - 18 Abridged
 - 20 London laws
 - 21 From the halls of Montezuma
 - 22 Unceremonious oyster
 - 25 Placate
 - 26 Regal, in a way
 - 27 A thing's reputation, for short
 - 30 Part of HMS
 - 31 Unassuming
 - 32 Have or hold
 - 35 Pivotal point
 - 36 Female lobster
 - 37 Bow shapes
 - 39 Univ. figure
 - 40 Homeland Security agcy.
 - 41 *The Bachelor* aier
 - 44 Casual top
 - 46 Roman orator
 - 47 Rebelled
 - 49 Short putt
 - 50 Supermarket ID
 - 51 Mockery
 - 54 EPCOT shuttle
 - 55 Cartographic spot
 - 56 Ben's girlfriend in *Meet the Parents*
 - 57 Gem from Australia
 - 58 Piece of work
 - 59 Fed. conservation org.
 - 60 Timetable stat.
 - 61 Prefix for friendly
 - 62 Dust remover
 - 63 Nine-symbol message

DEPARTMENT E-6 by S.N.

Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com



PHELPS

Continued from Page 10

Phelps quipped over the phone.

Certainly, he has no complaints about his swimming career, which helped turn a sport that most Americans only paid attention to every four years into more of a mainstream pursuit.

More kids took up swimming. More advertisers jumped on board. More viewers tuned in to watch.

While swimming is

unlikely to ever match the appeal of football or baseball, it has carved out a nice little niche for itself amid all the other athletic options in the United States — largely due to Phelps' amazing accomplishments and aw-shucks appeal.

Just the fact that he won over James shows just how much pull Phelps still has. James had an amazing year by any measure: The league MVP won his first NBA title with the Miami Heat, picking up finals MVP honors along the way, and then

starred on the gold medal-winning U.S. basketball team in London.

Phelps already had won the AP award in 2008 after his eight gold medals in Beijing, which broke Mark Spitz's record. Phelps got it again with a performance that didn't quite match up to the Great Haul of China, but was amazing in its own right.

After the embarrassment of being photographed taking a hit from a marijuana pipe and questioning whether he still had the desire to go on, Phelps returned

with a vengeance as the London Games approached. Never mind that he was already the winningest Olympian ever. Never mind that he could've eclipsed the record for overall medals just by swimming on the relays.

He wanted to be one of those rare athletes who went out on top.

"That's just who he is," said Bob Bowman, his longtime coach. "He just couldn't live with himself if knew he didn't go out there and give it good shot and really know he's competi-

He doesn't know anything else but to give that kind of effort and have those kind of expectations."

Phelps got off to a rocky start in London, finishing fourth in the 400-meter individual medley, blown out of the water by his friend and rival, Ryan Lochte. It was only the second time that Phelps had not at least finished in the top three of an Olympic race, the first coming way back in 2000 when he was fifth in his only event of the Sydney Games as a 15-year-old.

His 18 golds are twice as many as anyone else in Olympic history. His 22 medals are four clear of Larisa Latynina, a Soviet-era gymnast, and seven more than the next athlete on the list. Heck, if Phelps was a nation, he'd be 58th in the medal standings, just one behind India (population: 1.2 billion).

"When I'm flying all over the place, I write a lot in my journal," Phelps said. "I kind of relive all the memories, all the moments I had throughout my career. That's pretty special."

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COWBOYS

Continued from Page 10

backward or it can motivate you to move forward and kind of honor the memory of the person that you lost."

The Saints (6-8) probably didn't figure to have even slight playoff hopes when an 0-4 start followed a tumultuous offseason that included a yearlong suspension for linebacker Jonathan Vilma and shorter bans for other current and former players. Vilma appealed and remained eligible to play, although he missed the first five games with a knee injury.

Vilma returned during a stretch of five wins in six games that got New Orleans to .500, but another three-game skid left the

MAVS

Continued from Page 10

double-digit lead, 22-11, when James made a 3-pointer with 4½ minutes left in the first quarter.

"We don't want to give a team too much confidence at home. We understand this team was short-handed," Wade said. "We wanted to come out here on the road and make a state-

ment."

Chris Bosh added 17 points as the Heat played only their second road game since Nov. 17. They return home to play Utah on Saturday before an NBA Finals rematch against Oklahoma City on Christmas Day.

Rookie Jae Crowder had 15 points to lead six Dallas players in double figures. Dahntay Jones and Bernard James had 12 points each.

LeBron James' first 3 came in between two impressive passes from Wade, who didn't yet have James or Dallas native Bosh as teammates when the Heat clinched their first NBA title in the same building in June 2006.

Dallas is much

changed team since winning the 2011 NBA title over the Heat, in the star trio's first season together. Miami is now defending a championship this season.

"Much better team than we were. We know each other," James said. "We can close our eyes and where we're going to be offensively and defensively."

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle wholeheartedly agrees with that assessment, and is dealing with the opposite side of that since Nowitzki and Shawn Marion are the only current Dallas players who actually played in the NBA Finals only two seasons ago.

"They're so much better now since they've been together and there's

when he had five interceptions against Chicago and four more against the New York Giants during Dallas' 3-5 start.

Here's what happens when their stars don't make mistakes, though. Brees threw for four touchdowns without an interception in last week's blowout, and Romo has 12 touchdowns and three picks during the Cowboys' current 5-1 stretch. Dez Bryant has been a big part of Romo's recent roll, catching touchdowns in a career-best six straight games in his first 1,000-yard season.

"You keep plugging and stay aggressive and you know that things are going to turn for the positive," said Brees, whose 18 interceptions are four off his career high. "Hopefully they'll continue to turn for the positive."

a lot to be said about being together," Carlisle said. "Right now one of our struggles, we have a group that hasn't been together too much. ... And it's been challenging."

Bosh rebounded a missed 3-pointer by the Mavericks and got the ball to Wade, who had a perfect alley-oop pass to James, who caught the ball in midair near the rim and slammed it through with both hands.

After another missed 3 by Dallas later in the first quarter, Wade grabbed the rebound under the basket and then threw a football-like pass the length of the court to James. Even with Darren Collison and Vince Carter fronting him, James leaped and reached over to grab the ball, then finished with a layup to make it 27-13.

Dallas pulled to 36-33 after Dominique Jones had consecutive assists to rookies, a 3-pointer by Crowder and a reverse layup by Bernard James.

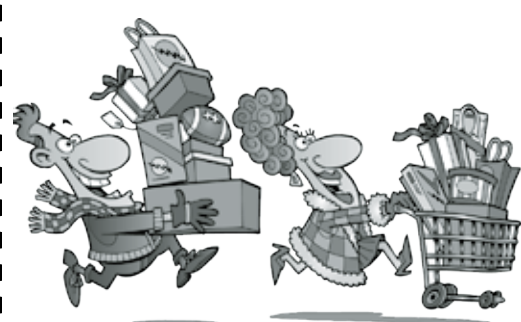
But Miami then responded with a 16-4 run.

Miami stretched the lead to 91-55, its largest of the season, when Shane Battier made a 3-pointer with 1:21 left in the third quarter.

Nowitzki practiced for the first time Wednesday, and had an individual workout Thursday. It's still unclear when he will make his season debut, but got a huge cheer when he was shown on the video screen during a timeout.

Collison, who lost the job as the starting point guard when the Mavericks signed Fisher on Nov. 29, was back in the starting lineup and had 11 points.

Fisher was hurt in the first quarter of a win over Philadelphia on Tuesday night. He will skip a two-game trip for games at Memphis on Friday night and San Antonio on Sunday. The team said there is no timetable for the 38-year-old Fisher's return and that he would be re-evaluated next week.



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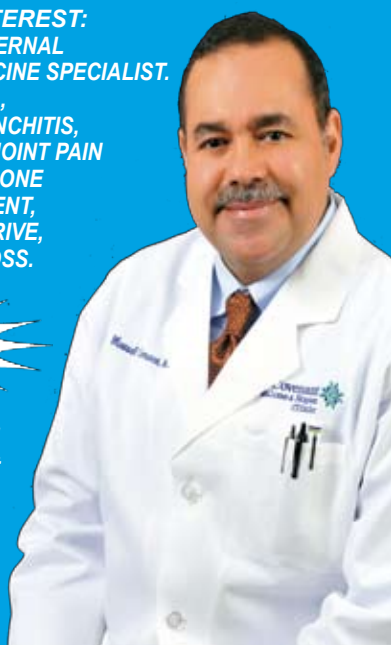
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