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THURSDAY
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CRMWD: Drought worries persist

By STEVE REAGAN
 Staff Writer

The situation isn't as dire as it was a year ago, but two of the three Colorado River Municipal Water District reservoirs remain at critically low levels, according to a CRMWD report released this week.

Lakes Thomas and Spence continue to be considered in "severe drought" status — Thomas is at less than 1 percent capacity, while Spence is a little more than 5 percent full.

Levels at Lake Thomas continue a year-long trend — this week's levels are down from the 1.36 percent full figure for late January 2012. For Lake Spence, however, the news could be — and has been — much worse. Last year at this time, the reservoir, which is located near Robert Lee, was less than one-half of 1 percent full.

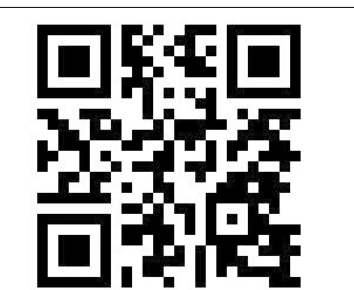


Grant

See CRMWD, Page 3



Boys and Girls Club Director Duane Shackelford, right, watches as Ernesto Olivas shows off his hula hoop skills at the club Wednesday. Shackelford, a Mississippi native and U.S. Air Force veteran, assumed director duties at the club in December.



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Cook-off raises \$11K for WTC fund

Special to the Herald

The Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie No. 3188 Saturday attracted 36 cooks and raised more than \$10,000 for the West Texas Centers Children-In-Need Fund during their 11th Annual Chili Cook-off.

The Children-In-Need Fund assists families and adolescents receiving mental health services, who need help with costs outside ordinary day-to-day living expenses. The



Smith

fund was established in 2001 and was dependent on community donations, West Texas Centers CEO Shelley Smith said.

"The Children-In-Need Fund did not have a steady, reliable source of funding until the Fraternal Order of Eagles stepped up to the plate," she said. "Eleven years ago, the organization approached

us and asked if they could host a yearly chili cook-off benefitting the Children-In-Need fund. Since then they have raised more than \$100,000 to help our children who are living with mental illness who need help with out-of-the-ordinary expenses not provided by the state."

The Children-In-Need Fund has assisted with graduation caps and gowns, soccer and baseball sign-ups, music lessons and theater camp. "Our

staff reviews each request and looks for all sources of funding before we tap into the Children-In-Need Fund. We are very prudent with the distribution of monies because the Eagles are very diligent with their fund-raising. The chili cook-off takes a great number of man hours and that's not lost on us when we allocate the money."

The West Texas Centers'

See FUND, Page 3

Ill. high school eyes 'stress relief' measures

By MARTHA IRVINE
 AP National Writer

MOUNT PROSPECT, Ill. — The four-legged member of the counseling team at the high school in suburban Chicago waits patiently, as a crush of students fills the hallways. Her tail wags with the first pat on the head, then another and another.

"Puppy! Ohhh, puppy dog!" one teenager croons, as he affectionately tousles the ears of the 18-month-old golden re-

triever. Junie began her role as a "therapy dog" at Prospect High School less than four months ago.

It's just one of a number of ways high schools across the country are trying to address what some call an epidemic of stressed-out, overwhelmed students.

Some schools now offer yoga classes or teach relaxation techniques in the classroom. Others, from California to Minnesota and New Jersey, are instituting homework-

free nights or are offering a bit of free time between classes — the equivalent of recess for teenagers.

In Maine, at least two high schools have converted classrooms into "wellness rooms" staffed by volunteer professionals who offer massage therapy and other stress-reducing treatments for students, with parental permission.

The idea is to help them slow down and cope with their problems in an over-

packed, 24-7 world, where many students stay up late to finish homework and fall asleep with their cellphones in their hands.

"Things cycle for them so quickly. So it's hard for them to be able to develop the patience, or the ability to think something through and to realize that it may take some time for it to get resolved," says Douglas Berg, a social worker at Prospect High,

See STRESS, Page 3

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Obituaries

Herminia 'Minnie' Martinez



Herminia "Minnie" Martinez, 74, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2013, at Medical Arts Hospital in Lamesa. Vigil service will be at 7 p.m. Friday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 2, 2013, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, with burial at Lamesa Cemetery.

She was born Aug. 9, 1938, in Corn City, Texas to Anita and Felix Hernandez. She moved to Big Spring in 1989 from Washington. She was a homemaker and a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

She is survived by eight sons, Charlie Martinez (Lidia) of Lamesa, and Richard Martinez (Irma),

Jerry Martinez (Irene), Albert Martinez, Jr. (Kristy), Eddie Alvarado (Mary Alvarez), Lee Alvarado (Rosa M. Flores), Ray Alvarado and Billy Alvarado, all of Big Spring.

She is survived by nine daughters, Herminia Martinez Fuentes (Cipriano) of Denver, Emma Martinez of San Angelo, Irma Martinez (Abel Flores) of Odessa, Marissa Alvarado of Washington, Maria Alfado (Daniel) and Margie Rodgers (Wayne) both of Lamesa, and Elisa Martinez (Val Garcia), Geneva Martinez (Eddie Rodriguez), Anita Hernandez (Sal Garcia) all of Big Spring. She is also survived by 95 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents she is preceded in death by two sons Albert Martinez, Sr. and Oscar Alvarado.

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

Dixie McClellan

Dixie McClellan, 69, of Big Spring died Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013, at her residence. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Maria D. Nieto

Maria D. Nieto, 80, of Big Spring died Wednesday, Jan. 30 2013. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Sheriff/EMS

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity (75 prisoners were reported in the county jail):

- VANESSA MONIQUE DESSELLE, 21, was jailed on a parole violation warrant.
- MICHAEL LEE LOPEZ, 25, was jailed on warrants for bail jumping and failure to appear.
- GUADALUPE TORRES TORRES, 67, was jailed on a charge of Class C assault.
- FRANK CASTILLO JR., 33, was jailed on a charge of Class C assault.
- BILLY LEE JOHNSON, 17, was jailed on charges of public intoxication and possession of drug paraphernalia.
- JESSICA FAYE BROOKS, 25, was jailed on a motion to revoke probation for delivery of marijuana.
- DANIEL DELEON JR., 32, was jailed on a motion to revoke probation for driving while license invalid.
- BLAKE MICHAEL GEE, 30, was jailed on charges of driving while license invalid, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.
- TYLER DEWAYNE PAYNE, 47, was jailed on a warrant for possession of a controlled substance.
- MICHAEL PAUL ONTIVEROS, 28, was jailed on a charge of assault/family violence and a motion to revoke probation for theft of property.

The Freaks of Nature car club and C&D Truck Accessories will be holding a car show Feb. 2 to benefit the Gonzales family at Sugars Bar — located at 3430 E. Interstate Highway 20 — from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. Sergio Gonzales was killed in a traffic accident on U.S. Highway 87 on Dec. 13. Proceeds from the benefit will go to benefit the family and offset costs. Entry fee for the show is \$10. Musical band Forgotten Road will perform from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. There is a \$5 admission. For more information, call 432-714-4311.

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

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

Compass Hospice is in need of your help. If you would be interested in offering your love and God's comfort to those who are suffering, or to their families, contact Michelle Coutermarsh at 263-5999 or come by 602 S. Main.

Volunteers are needed in many categories including patient care. You may give as much or as little time as you wish. Any amount of time is greatly appreciated. Training is offered free of charge.

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

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

Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St., has a brief, inspirational message before giving away food and clothing on Thursday mornings. It's a great way to work off community service and get

- LAUREN RACINE SMITH, 25, was jailed on charges of theft, possession of a controlled substance and assault/family violence.
- JACOB RAY ALBARADO, 20, was jailed on a charge of evading arrest/detention.

The Big Spring Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service reported the following activity Wednesday:

- TRAUMA was reported in the 3600 block of W. Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported at S. Highway 87 and Overton Road. Two people were transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported at FM 700 and Birdwell. Two people were transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported at Interstate 20 mile marker 173. One person was transported to SMMC.
- ELECTRICAL FIRE was reported at the 400 block of E. Third.
- RUBBISH FIRE was reported at the 1800 block of S. Scurry.

Take note

help, too. Be there at 9 a.m.-11 a.m. and get two for one plus a rehab meeting.

Home Hospice is seeking volunteers. Volunteers are needed for in office duties as well as sitters, deliveries and crafts. To find out more information or to volunteer contact Sherry Hodnett at Home Hospice by calling 264-7599.

Hangar 25 Air Museum needs your help. We are in need of volunteers to fill a variety of positions such as tour guides, front desk, clerical, events, and many others. Set your hours and days of the week you are available. Meet new people and enjoy a rewarding experience. For more information, contact Emma Bogard at 432-267-2963.

The Salvation Army is holding its annual heater drive and is in need of heaters. Community members can donate new or used heaters. Monetary donations are also welcomed. Donations can be made at the main office, located at 811 W. Fifth St., Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The Homeownership Preservation Foundation (HPF) is an independent national nonprofit dedicated to helping distressed homeowners navigate financial challenges and avoid mortgage foreclosure.

If you want to stop foreclosure and are in need of foreclosure help, the time to call 888-995-HOPE is now. The Homeowner's HOPE hotline is a counseling service provided by HPF to work with you to find a solution to your problem. HPF can provide counseling free of charge, in English and 170 other languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Free free foreclosure help, call the hotline.




The mission of CASA of West Texas is to promote and support quality volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court in an effort to find each child a safe, nurturing and permanent home. We need your help. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Sara Basaldua at 1-877-316-8346 or visit www.BecomeaCASA.org or www.casawtx.org.

Legal Aid of Northwest Texas is accepting appointments from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month.

Individuals seeking legal advice for matters concerning family law, divorce, custody and child support issues, social security cases, employment and housing may contact the office to schedule an appointment. Criminal cases are not accepted. Anyone recently served with legal documents should call the office immediately at 800-926-5630 or 432-686-0647.

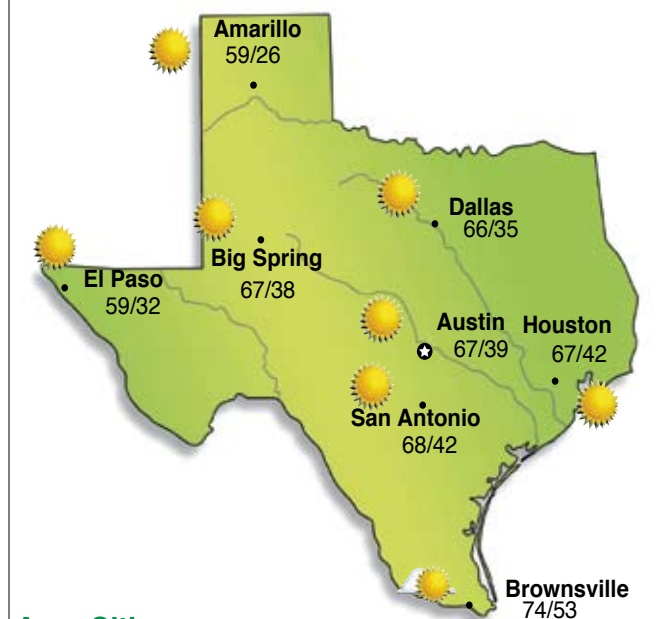
Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast

Fri 2/1	Sat 2/2	Sun 2/3
 67/38 Sunny skies. High 67F. Winds WNW at 10 to 20 mph.	 70/40 Mainly sunny. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the low 40s.	 64/37 Mix of sun and clouds. Highs in the mid 60s and lows in the upper 30s.
Sunrise: 7:40 AM Sunset: 6:19 PM	Sunrise: 7:40 AM Sunset: 6:20 PM	Sunrise: 7:39 AM Sunset: 6:21 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.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	66	35	sunny	Kingsville	75	50	sunny
Amarillo	59	26	sunny	Livingston	67	37	sunny
Austin	67	39	sunny	Longview	66	35	sunny
Beaumont	65	41	sunny	Lubbock	62	29	sunny
Brownsville	74	53	mst sunny	Lufkin	68	37	sunny
Brownwood	69	38	sunny	Midland	66	40	sunny
Corpus Christi	71	51	sunny	Raymondville	74	52	mst sunny
Corsicana	65	35	sunny	Rosenberg	68	41	sunny
Dallas	66	35	sunny	San Antonio	68	42	sunny
Del Rio	69	44	mst sunny	San Marcos	68	39	sunny
El Paso	59	32	sunny	Sulphur Springs	64	33	sunny
Fort Stockton	66	40	sunny	Sweetwater	66	36	sunny
Gainesville	62	28	sunny	Tyler	65	36	sunny
Greenville	63	31	sunny	Weatherford	64	31	sunny
Houston	67	42	sunny	Wichita Falls	63	28	sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	48	35	sunny	Minneapolis	4	-13	sn shower
Boston	56	27	rain	New York	51	29	rain
Chicago	15	1	flurries	Phoenix	67	44	sunny
Dallas	66	35	sunny	San Francisco	66	45	sunny
Denver	49	26	mst sunny	Seattle	49	43	rain
Houston	67	42	sunny	St. Louis	31	9	flurries
Los Angeles	74	50	sunny	Washington, DC	48	31	windy
Miami	74	54	rain				

Moon Phases



UV Index

Fri 2/1	Sat 2/2	Sun 2/3
5	4	4
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

The UV Index is measured on a 0 - 11 number scale, with a higher UV Index showing the need for greater skin protection.

Support groups

THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

Overcomer's: Recovery & Restoration (R&R), a Christ-centered recovery program is held at Cornerstone Covenant Church from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the "Green Room" of the East Wing. For more convenient access to the meeting room, park in the back of the church and enter through the metal door across from the fellowship hall. If you need more information, call 432-264-0015.

Guard allows vessels past leaking Miss. River barge

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The Coast Guard is letting vessels pass through a closed section of the Mississippi River at Vicksburg as it evaluates how traffic would affect efforts to remove and clean up oil from a leaking barge, a Guard spokesman said Wednesday.

Chief Petty Officer Paul Roszkowski told The Associated Press that a 16-mile stretch

of the river remained technically closed four days after two barges struck a railroad bridge, even though some barges are being allowed to pass.

Roszkowski said that during a test period Wednesday, southbound barges were allowed to pass first — “methodically and slowly” — so crews could assess the effects on cleanup operations. The

Coast Guard allowed the first northbound vessel to pass the oil spill Wednesday afternoon.

“We understand the huge impact this (closure) is making on vessel traffic on the Mississippi River,” Roszkowski said.

But, he added, “It’s critical that the vessels going through there don’t affect our operations.”

Following the test period Wednesday, Coast Guard officials approved a plan that allows for northbound vessels to move through the area from sunset to sunrise and southbound vessels to continue their journeys in daylight hours, Roszkowski said.

“We will space things out to minimize possible waking and will continue to monitor and control vessel traffic in

the area,” he said.

Roszkowski said the Coast Guard decided to halt the oil’s transfer to the new barge at night because it’s safer and easier to see if any oil is escaping during the day.

A Coast Guard “safety zone” extends the width of the river for 16 miles, which means it is effectively closed because barges must have permission to pass, he said.

STRESS

Continued from Page 1

where he and other staff are seeing more students hospitalized with anxiety and panic attacks related to stress.

Some might question whether a dog in the school corridors, or a 20-minute break, addresses the deeper issues at hand. But many school officials say they have to do what they can to alleviate the growing pressure to achieve. That pressure, they say, has only been heightened by the commonly held belief that it’s tougher than ever for a young person to make it in this economy.

More than ever, a college degree is seen as a must. So more students are taking college courses in high school, and even more are enrolling in rigorous “advanced placement,” or AP classes to try to earn college credit. Add year-round sports and after-school jobs and volunteering, as a way to bolster the college application, and many students say they have little time for anything else.

“There’s just too

much,” says Lexi Botts, a senior at Prospect High who sought comfort from Junie and, ultimately, school counselors after her grandfather’s death last fall.

The intensity of school has become so great, says one mom in Paoli, Pa., that she and her family have dubbed the senior year of high school “the crying year.”

“When does a child get to be a child anymore?” said Carol Meerschaert. “I fear how they will burn out when the pressure has been on them since elementary school.”

Abbie Kaplan, a junior at the Boston Latin School — a public high school that requires students to take an exam for entry — knows what she means.

On a scale of 1 to 10, she places her stress level at a pretty steady 9. She regularly has four hours of homework a night, some done before swim practice. She eats dinner around 9:30 p.m., then finishes the rest of her homework and generally goes to bed at 11:30. Then she’s up at 6 a.m. so she can be at school by 7:45.

She calls her hectic schedule “the new nor-

mal.”

“You keep telling yourself that it will prepare you for the future,” Kaplan says. “It’s just sort of how it is.”

She, too, has had anxiety attacks related to her workload, she says. And some parents say school shootings, including the recent massacre in Newtown, Conn., only worsen the stress.

“My son came home from school and said, ‘I’m really worried this could happen at our school,’” says Jane Robertson, a mother of a 16-year-old in Belfast, Maine. She’s also a chiropractor, who helped start one of the wellness rooms in her area. The first one opened in Camden, Maine, after a spate of suicides more than 10 years ago, she said.

Overall, a recent national survey of adolescent mental health found that about 8 to 10 percent of teens ages 13 to 18 have an anxiety disorder. And of those teens, only 18 percent received mental health care, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

School officials across the country, meanwhile, say they’re seeing a steady uptick in mental

health referrals, often stress-related. Timothy Dorway, a principal at a high school in Chanhassen, Minn., just outside Minneapolis, is among them. He says such referrals have doubled since his school opened in 2009.

“We’re asking these kids to do things that we don’t even ask adults to do,” Dorway says, noting sports and academic requirements that often leave them sleep-deprived.

Besides the mental health issues, he noted that students from his school have been in car accidents after falling asleep at the wheel — one of them on the way to school, at 7:45 a.m.

All of it led him and his school community to come up with a motto — “Balance, Perspective, Growth” — and to look for ways to put it into practice.

Now, Chanhassen High is among a small but growing number of schools that has homework-free nights scattered throughout the school year. Two days a week, students at Chanhassen also get a 20-minute “recess” break in the morning. Some play hackie sack or grab a

snack. They chat in the hallways, catch up on homework or rest.

The break is a time “to let all the information of the day settle in my mind,” says Zach Anderson, a junior at the school. “We need time to think.”

The changes at the school have not come without controversy. A few parents see the break as a waste of time that could be better used at the beginning of the school day.

“Let them sleep in, or get a better breakfast, or come to school at the usual time to talk to a teacher if they need to,” says Karrie Shroyer, a mom of a sophomore at Chanhassen High.

When it comes to homework, she says the school would better serve students by cutting back on what some view as an inordinate amount of “busy work,” repetitive work that students who’ve mastered the concepts may not need to do.

“Are we trying to hide the real problem with a simple fix?” Shroyer asks.

Raychelle Lohmann, a professional counselor and author based in South Carolina, says

any step schools take to reduce stress for students is a “step in the right direction.”

But she says parents, too, need to keep their own expectations in check, even for young children.

“We’re seeing parents who are putting their preschoolers in tutoring programs,” she says. “The intentions are good. But we’re missing the important point, to let them develop and play” — even in high school.

She says parents also have to model the behavior for their children.

“I’ll be honest. I’m guilty. I don’t take a day off,” she says. “But at some point, we just have to stop — and prioritize — and teach our children to do the same.”

“We have to give up this ‘go, go, go’ mentality.”

Lisa Lawrence, a mom in Austin, Texas, said she realized this when her daughter, now a sixth-grader, told her she felt like “nothing she did was ever good enough” for her mom.

“It sent chills down my spine,” Lawrence says. “I think I felt that way growing up.”

FUND

Continued from Page 1

Children-In-Need Fund 11th Annual Chili Cook-off attracted more than 200 people, including cooks and many tasters, said Landon Sturdivant, a member of the Eagles and West Texas Centers Chief Operating Officer.

“I don’t think any of our tasters went away disappointed,” Sturdivant said. “We had quite a selection ranging from spicy to savory

to mild, hot and burning hot. The weather cooperated and I really think that helped attendance as well. It has also grown during its run because it is well-organized, and it is always at the end of January so people expect it and we make sure everyone has a great time.”

Even though it is a fund-raiser and a fun event, the morning of cooking is competitive, Sturdivant said. “You can’t get a group of chili cooks together without

some healthy competition,” he said laughingly. “It’s the nature of the beast.”

First place went to the Bones & Co. team of Teresa Bynum; Second place, Glazed & Confused, Jeremy Grant; Third place, Glazed & Confused, Kelby Bailey; Fourth Place, Running Late Chili, Mike Lindsey; Fifth place, Red Green Chili, Guy White & Rodney Jones, Sixth place, Illegal Alien Chili, Bobby Cordova and Mike Calvio; Sev-

enth place, Uncle Si’s Nam Specialty Jack, Dee Lindsey; Eighth place, Kick Butt Chili #2, Tammy Luxton; Ninth place, Love Chili, Jack & Josh Love; and 10th Place, Kick Butt Chili, Billy Luxton. The Showmanship Award was presented to the American Legion; and the Horse’s Butt Award was presented to the Love Family.

The winner of the auction for a two-night stay at Inn of the Mountain God was Janey Kiker.

Sponsors were the Fraternal Order of Eagles; Glazer; Cain Electric; Johnny Deleon; Casey’s Campers; Cosack Motorcycle Club; Alon USA; Inn of the Mountain God, Ruidoso N.M., State National Bank and Wells Fargo Bank.

West Texas Centers is the state-designated center serving people and their families with mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities in rural West Texas.

CRMWD

Continued from Page 1

The district’s third reservoir, Lake Ivie, is in the best shape of the three; its 124,489 acre-feet of water put it at 22.46 percent capacity, an increase of almost 5 percent from this time in 2012.

A heavy rainfall, which brought more than six inches of precipitation to the area in October, is being credited with the higher lake levels. The rains raised Spence’s levels by 25 feet, while Ivie’s level increased by 15 feet.

Overall, the three lakes average out to a capacity of slightly more than 12 percent, an increase from the 8.12 percent figure of a year ago.

While increased lake capacity is a good thing, CRMWD officials were quick to stress that the drought is still very much with us and more rainfall is needed if the

reservoirs are to remain a viable source of water.

“When you look at the current levels ... it means we can continue to pump water out of Ivie and Spence until May or June of 2014 with no restrictions,” CRMWD General Manager John Grant said. “And the National Weather Service long-range outlook for this area is not good. We’re going to evaluate where we are, and we may have to go back and look at limited water deliveries this fall.”


CRMWD continues to work at adding to water

inventories.

Underground wells in Ward County should be online in the coming weeks, while work at

the raw water treatment plant in Big Spring should be completed sometime in March, Grant said.

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A Division of South Plains Rural Health Services, Inc.

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Expires 01-31-2013 235399

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL
24th & Johnson 267-8288

Gilbert Webb, 87, died Sunday. Funeral services with Military Honors will be at 2 p.m. Thursday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

Hermia Martinez, 74, died Tuesday. Vigil service will be at 7 p.m. Friday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church with burial at Lamesa Cemetery.

Meredith Kendall, 38, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

David Cortez Chavarria, 57, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Maria D. Nieto, 80, died Wednesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Dixie McClellan, 69, died Thursday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

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OTHER VIEWS

Mental health funding: We must do better

In the aftermath of devastating tragedies at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut and the multiplex theater in Aurora, Colo., our advice to state lawmakers struggling to find legislative solutions to deal with the horrific and inexplicable is simple: Be tough on crime, but thoughtful on mental health.

Our societal obligation to care for those with mental illness, those who cannot be accountable for their actions through no fault of their own, must override the seemingly robotic urge among state leaders to cut budgets. Those who struggle with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar and depression are the lost, last and least in the truest sense. We who are more richly blessed are called to care for them, even when their behaviors are unpredictable, frightening or offensive.

The results of prior state budget cuts have been particularly harmful to urban areas such as Houston. These cuts place additional burdens on local taxpayers, and land especially heavily on the resources of our mental health professionals and law enforcement.

The harm that has come to the Houston area from the state's lack of adequate funding for mental health issues goes back for decades. The impact is cumulative.

Dollars from the state to treat mental health have not come even close to matching our local population growth, much less the heavier needs for mental health services that are part and parcel of living in an urban environment.

The results often are in plain sight, from homelessness related to mental illness to acts of domestic and public violence by the untreated. But sometimes they are well disguised by a jacket, tie and job, or kids and a carpool. Something is very wrong when the Harris County Jail is the most used mental health facility in the state's most populous county.

A single statistic, shared in a recent editorial board meeting by Dr. Steven Schnee, head of the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County, speaks to the scope of the problem of mental illness. Nationally, 6 to 7 percent of the adult population suffers from one of the conditions mentioned above. That means with an adult population of 3 million, Harris County is home to at least 180,000 adults in need of treatment. And yet, says Schnee, we fund a system that only provides care for 8,500 adults in the county.

And we're thinking of cutting that back? Let's be serious, Texas. Let's be compassionate.

State Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, who has spent 24 years in Austin, has come up with a way forward for his legislative colleagues that we think is both pragmatic and solution-oriented. Turner is encouraging his colleagues in the Legislature to set aside the issue of guns — to agree to disagree on that hot button topic — and join together instead to focus on greater funding to treat the mentally ill.

This is sensible. As a state, we must stop outsourcing responsibility for dealing with the mentally ill to our law enforcement officers and jail workers. If this 83rd session of the Legislature is sincere about being pro-law enforcement, our lawmakers will recognize and deal with this most significant additional burden we put on them.

A good place to start would be to stop cutting mental health budgets while our population is growing. This is the definition of madness.

Next, what say we remove Texas from the bottom of the national heap for mental health funding? Dead last; 51st out of 51, including the District of Columbia. The national average for treatment of mental illness is \$109 per capita. Our state funding is a measly \$36 per capita. Let's at least commit to hit the national average.

Finally, as Sen. John Cornyn mentioned in an editorial board visit last Thursday, let's be sure that information from adjudicated cases involving mental illness is communicated fully to the federal data bank used for background checks for gun purchases.

Let's not allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good. Let's make progress, even if we can't achieve perfection. Misery will be eased and lives will be saved.

— *Houston Chronicle*

Deceptive Trade Practices Act

"Our remedy cures arthritis and cancer in seven days!"

"Resolve your outstanding debts! With our product, you'll only have to pay your creditors 30 percent of what you owe!"

When a vendor or salesman uses false statements, duress, exaggerations or misleading advertisements to win a Texan's business, he or she violates the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA).

Vendors may violate the DTPA by claiming their product does something it does not or cannot do. Companies also violate the DTPA when they take advantage of a customer's lack of knowledge or language comprehension.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) protects Texans by filing civil enforcement actions under the DTPA and other consumer-protection statutes.

Businesses must comply with the law when they interact with customers.

Complaints filed with the OAG may form the basis for a state investigation into a company's business practices.

In some cases, significant



GREG ABBOTT

numbers of complaints about a business may give rise to legal action to enforce state law and protect the public interest. The decision to investigate or take legal action is based on a number of factors.

Enforcement actions are filed on behalf of the State of Texas and the public good. The OAG cannot represent individual Texans, but some legal actions do produce restitution for the defendant's customers.

The DTPA covers the sale, lease and distribution of nearly all goods and services, with the exception of professional advice. Providers of professional advice would not be cited under the DTPA if opinions they give clients turn out to be "wrong."

For example, an attorney could not be sued for deceptive trade practices for advising a client to file a lawsuit that ultimately failed.

Consumer education is a vital part of the OAG's mission. The best consumer protection is widespread public awareness of consumer rights and common scams. Texans who believe they have been subject to deceptive trade practices should file a complaint with the OAG and retain as much evidence of wrongdoing as possible, including brochures, advertisements, records of related transactions and notes about conversations with company representatives.

ADDRESSES

U.S. Senator
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4305
Phone: 202-228-0462

• **JOHN CORNYN**
U.S. Senator
517 Hart Office Building

Texans who relied on a deceptive practice to their detriment also should make every effort to remedy the situation with the vendor. They should send a certified, return-receipt letter to the vendor outlining the problem and what the company should do to make the situation right. If that fails, Texans may also consider suing in small claims court or consulting an attorney about civil litigation.

To Recap

Examples of deceptive trade practices include:

- Price gouging in the wake of a disaster or catastrophe
- Lying about the need for repairs or parts
- Passing off used products as new ones
- Making false, negative accusations toward a competitor
- Making false statements about the manufacture or origin of a good or service
- False or misleading advertising
- Exaggerating or misrepresenting the benefits or endorsements of a product or service

The Office of the Attorney General may take legal action to enforce state consumer protection laws.

To file a complaint, contact:
Office of Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
Hotline 800-621-0508

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

• **BARACK OBAMA**
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

• **TED CRUZ**

Washington, D.C. 20510-4305
Phone: 202-224-2934

• **RANDY NEUGEBAUER**
U.S. Representative
19th Cong. District
1510 Scurry
Big Spring
Phone: (432) 264-0722

900-pound immigration Gorilla

A lot can get done if you don't care who gets the credit. That's an old saying. But not one Chuck Schumer has ever heard of.

And the White House is not happy about it.

Chuck Schumer is a Democratic senator from New York. He is not without honor. He does not stab people in the back. He stabs them in the front.

Schumer and seven other senators known as the Gang of Eight have been working on a bipartisan immigration reform bill for some time. But Congress has been diddling around on such a bill for a dozen years without any success.

Times have changed, however, and both Democrats and Republicans need to woo Hispanics to win elections.

Barack Obama pledged during his last campaign to bring up immigration reform immediately after his inauguration. But the Gang of Eight recently informed the White House that it was still some weeks away from any kind of agreement.

So last Friday, the White House announced Obama would go to Las Vegas on Tuesday to talk about immigration and release a set of proposals.

Lo and behold, on Sunday Schumer reportedly called the White House and said the Gang of Eight was pushing ahead with its own statement Monday. This would upstage the president by a full day and establish the Senate and not the White House as taking the lead on immigration reform.

Some in the White House were furious, but others saw it as Schumer just being Schumer. "Schumer wants to get a bill and be in the lead; he wants some credit," a Democratic source familiar with White House

thinking told me. "The president campaigned on this, and he took a lot of crap for not leading on this, but overall we are happy if we have a bipartisan bill in Congress.

And while on Tuesday Obama wryly praised the senators for coming up with proposals "very much in line with principles I proposed and campaigned on for the last two years," he also threatened them.

"If Congress is unable to move forward in a timely fashion," Obama said, "I will send up a bill based on my proposal and insist that they vote on it right away.

But even if the House were to embrace the Senate proposals, there would still be a hitch.

"There is a 900 pound gorilla in the Senate plan," my source warned me. "And it could be a huge problem."

Both the Senate plan and the Obama plan offer a way for the 11 million undocumented workers already in America to earn their citizenship.

But in order to get the Republicans on board, the Senate Democrats had to agree to a "commission" to determine if our border with Mexico is "truly secure."

If the commission says it is secure, the pathway to citizenship for the 11 million is open. But if the commission says it is not secure, the pathway may be blocked for years or forever.

"What the hell does it mean?" the source said. "The White House thinks it doesn't mean much. And if it is just a talking point, fine."

In other words, some Democrats want to believe the commission, to be made up of "governors, attorneys general, and community leaders living along the Southwest border," is just an olive branch to conservatives and has no true power.

Some Republicans, however, want to believe the commission will have veto power over citizenship until the border is "secure," though nobody knows what "secure" actually means

or even whether such a commission is constitutional.

No commission is mentioned in the president's proposal, and Democratic sources tell me that the White House wants no part of it.

"But the Senate has come a long way," the source familiar with White House thinking said. "And, overall, we are happy. But the path to citizenship for people already here cannot be dependent on 'securing the border.'"

The Republicans will push for this, but the Democrats have no real reason to give in. As I wrote in a column in November, the White House views immigration reform as a win-win situation.

If it passes, then the White House, Chuck Schumer and the Democratic Party will get most of the credit with Hispanic voters. If it fails, the Republicans will get most of the blame. So either way, the Democrats win.

Which has finally occurred to Chuck Schumer.

"This will be the year Congress finally gets it done," Schumer said Monday. "There's more political risk in opposing immigration reform than supporting it."

On Tuesday, President Obama said that undocumented immigrants are "woven into the fabric of our lives," but he also said "immigration has always been an issue that enflames passions."

"It's easy sometimes for the discussion to take on a feeling of 'us' versus 'them,'" he continued. "And when that happens, a lot of folks forget that most of 'us' used to be 'them.'"

There are 11 million people among us who want to be us, and Obama is determined this year that is going to happen. No matter who gets the credit.

To find out more about Roger Simon, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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ROGER SIMON

News in brief

Obama guns and immigration agenda finds itself competing with economic contraction

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just as President Barack Obama is pushing new initiatives on gun control and immigration, the gloomy old problem of a sluggish economy is elbowing its way back into prominence. Consumer confidence is falling, the economy is contracting and large automatic spending cuts are threatening to hit the Pentagon and other programs, with uncertain consequences.

These troubles arise as Obama's public approval is improving and as he begins to use his sway to promote the key features of his second-term agenda. The White House, the Federal Reserve and independent economists attributed the shrinkage in gross domestic product and the drop in consumer confidence to one-time events and said underlying economic factors were still showing encouraging signs.

But in politics, power resides in the moment. Any immediate economic setback — or the perception of one — could weaken Obama's clout or at least distract him as he carefully tries to put his imprint on initiatives dealing with immigration and gun violence.

At the White House, there was no evidence of a course alteration. And White House officials expressed confidence in consumption and investment trends that showed evidence of strength.

But the Commerce Department announcement Wednesday that the economy shrank at an annual rate of 0.1 percent came a day after the Conference Board reported a sharp decline in consumer confidence in January. That drop, together with one in December, erased consumer confidence that had built up in 2012.

Republican Hagel, Obama's pick for Pentagon, faces GOP critics at confirmation hearing

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Chuck Hagel, President Barack Obama's nominee for defense secretary, is facing GOP critics who have challenged his past comments on Israel, Iran and nuclear weapons.

The former two-term senator from Nebraska is the lone witness at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Thursday that could be crucial in determining whether he will win Senate confirmation to succeed Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in Obama's second-term national security team. Two former committee chairmen — Democrat Sam Nunn and Republican John Warner — will introduce the nominee.

If confirmed, Hagel, a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, would be the first enlisted man and first Vietnam veteran to serve as defense secretary.

Hagel has the announced backing of about a dozen Democrats and the tacit support of dozens more who are unlikely to embarrass the president by defeating his Cabinet pick. One Republican — Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi — has said he will vote for his former colleague.

Six Republicans, including four members of the Armed Services panel, have said they will oppose Hagel's nomination. Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, the top GOP lawmaker on the committee, has said he and Hagel are "too philosophically opposed" on issues such as defense spending, nuclear weapons and the Middle East.

Senate to clear debt limit increase for Obama as Washington moves on to new fights

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is poised to permit the government to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars more to meet its obligations, putting off one Washington showdown even as others loom in coming weeks.

The measure would suspend the \$16.4 trillion limit on federal borrowing through May 18, allowing about \$450 billion in new debt to be added to the federal ledger, according to an estimate by the Bipartisan Policy Center.

The Republican-controlled House passed the legislation last week. A successful Senate vote would send the measure to President Barack Obama, who is expected to sign it into law immediately.

Without the bill, the government would default on its obligations by as early as mid-February.

The short-term increase in the borrowing cap is the brainchild of House Republicans, who wanted to re-sequence a series of upcoming budget battles, taking the threat of a potentially devastating government default off the table and instead setting up a clash in March over automatic across-the-board spending cuts set to strike the Pentagon and many domestic programs.

Menendez says he reimbursed donor for 2 trips, denies having sex with Dominican prostitutes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Robert Menendez's office says he reimbursed a prominent Florida political donor \$58,500 for the full cost of two of three trips Menendez took on the donor's plane to the Dominican Republic in 2010.

There was no public disclosure.

"The senator paid for the two trips out of his personal account and no reporting requirements apply," said Menendez spokeswoman Tricia Enright.

Details of Menendez's trips emerged as his office said unsubstantiated allegations that the senator engaged in sex with prostitutes in the Dominican Republic are false.

The FBI searched the West Palm Beach, Fla., office of the donor — eye doctor Salomon Melgen — on Tuesday night and early Wednesday, but it was unclear if the raid was related to Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat.

Neighbors of Ala. man suspected of holding child in standoff say he was threatening, violent

MIDLAND CITY, Ala. (AP) — Jimmy Lee Dykes moved to a rural Alabama neighborhood on a rutted red clay road more than a year ago. It didn't take long before he had developed a frightening reputation as a volatile man with anti-government views who threatened his neighbors at gunpoint and was viciously violent to wandering pets.

Multiple neighbors said Dykes, a 65-year-old retired truck driver, was the man suspected of boarding a school bus near his home, killing the driver and taking a 5-year-old boy hostage to begin a standoff that entered its second full day Thursday.

The neighborhood near Midland City, population 2,300, remained under siege after the Tuesday shooting, with the suspect and child holed up in a bunker-type shelter on the man's property that was equipped with electricity, food and TV. Early Thursday, dozens of police cars and rental cars that had brought FBI agents to the site were gathered on the state highway at the clay road's entrance. Some police officers milled about, guns holstered.

Homes on the road had been evacuated after authorities found what they believed to be a bomb on the property. SWAT teams earlier had taken up positions around the gunman's property and police negotiators tried to win the kindergartener's safe release.

GOP dilemma: Lose support of immigrants or activists who rallied behind restrictive stance?

DENVER (AP) — Marty Lich is ready to bolt.

It's been a couple of years since the self-described conservative considered herself a Republican, but she still often votes for GOP candidates. That's partly because of their tough stands against illegal immigration, which the retired teacher's aide blames for ruining her Southern California hometown and fears could threaten the Colorado mountain community where she now lives.

But Lich and voters like her are watching with despair as more and more Republican politicians edge toward a bipartisan plan that includes a pathway to citizenship for many of the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. "If the GOP agrees on this amnesty, they're selling out their core values," Lich said. "They'd lose us. They'd lose the votes of people who support them, and they're not going to gain a lot of votes."

Demographics and election returns are pushing Republican leaders away from people like Lich. In 2007, a grass-roots rebellion led Republicans to reject then-President George W. Bush's immigration overhaul because it included a process in which otherwise law-abiding illegal immigrants could eventually become U.S. citizens. Activists derided the provision as an "amnesty." After tea party groups toppled various Republicans in primaries over their dovish immigration stands, the party's rhetoric and proposals became increasingly tough.

That's changed since the drubbing the GOP took last November. Mitt Romney received underwhelming support from voters in the two fastest-growing minority groups: 27 percent of Hispanic voters and an even smaller share from Asians, according to exit polls. In contrast, George W. Bush won an estimated 44 percent of the Hispanic vote in his 2004 re-election.

After massive storm system rakes Southeast, unleashing tornadoes, 2 dead, splintered debris

ADAIRSVILLE, Ga. (AP) — As rain pelted down, Kandi Cash trudged through the splintered debris of her grandparents' house, hoping to salvage photos and other prized family keepsakes after a day

of violent storms raked the Southeast, leaving two people dead.

The demolished home was one of many in the Georgia city of Adairsville splintered by a massive storm front that tore across several states Wednesday, unleashing tornadoes and dangerous winds that easily flipped cars and trucks and smashed homes and businesses.

On the lot where Cash's grandparents had their house also was a mobile home where her aunt lived. The property also had another small house her cousin was fixing up to move into after a planned May wedding. All three homes were demolished: toys, Christmas ornaments, children's clothing, household items and just about everything else that makes up a home were strewn about.

"I'm just picking up pictures," the 28-year-old Cash said. "I've found the most important ones, like when my cousin was born and her late daddy, the ones that matter most."

Cash, who lives in nearby Cartersville, rode out the violent weather in a neighbor's basement. Once the worst had passed, she called her family in Adairsville and was relieved to hear they'd all made it to a cinderblock storm shelter under her grandparents' home.

Desperate Cypriots turn to traditional songbird trapping to make ends meet — defying law

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — It's just before first light and the bird-catcher strings nets among the orange, pomegranate, fig and carob trees in his orchard. The sound of chirping emanates from inside a massive carob — a trick sent from speakers to attract tiny songbirds. By mid-morning, the man disentangles about a half-dozen blackcaps, snaps their necks with his teeth and drops them in a bucket.

For centuries, the migratory songbirds have been a prized delicacy among Cypriots. They are also an illegal one, as entry into the European Union forced Cyprus to ban the tradition of catching the creatures, some endangered, in nets or on sticks slathered with a glue-like substance.

Now economic crisis is luring many out-of-work Cypriots back into the centuries-old trade. They risk stiff fines and even jail time by supplying an underground market for the tiny songbirds illicitly served up in the country's tavernas — but they say it's their only way to make ends meet.

Served whole either boiled or pickled, the fatty birds are such an ugly sight on a plate that outsiders find it hard to fathom how there could be any profit to be made from them. For many Cypriots, however, the tangy-sweet taste of the birds is pure bliss.

Supporters of trapping 'ambelopoulia,' as the blackcaps, robins and other warblers are known locally, ruefully reminisce about how until recently the practice was widely considered an ingrained part of local culture, one so lucrative that it sustained entire livelihoods and put countless kids through college.

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www.crossroadsauctionco.com
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Garage Sales

DOWN SIZING Sale: 2413 South Anderson Rd., Friday and Saturday 9:00-5:00. Windberg prints, saddles, horse clocks, oak furniture, Montarray western ware, Fred Roberts china, misc. items. Call (432)267-3547.

GARAGE SALE Saturday, 8am-1pm. 604 Bucknell. Lots of miscellaneous.

Help Wanted

Assistant Manager/Collector Security Finance is now taking applications. We offer benefits, competitive pay, and advancement opportunities. Apply in person at 501 E. 3rd.

BIG SPRING Country Club is looking for Line Cook/Sauté person, 1 year experience preferred. Apply in person. No phone call.

CAT CONSTRUCTION now hiring Roustabout Pushers, Hands and Dozer Operators. Top Pay. Apply in person 600 S. E. Broadway, Coahoma.

CHEMICAL PRODUCTION Company accepting applications for Truck Treating Driver and Truck Treating Driver Trainee. Individual will be responsible for delivering chemical to customer locations and other duties, as needed. Oilfield knowledge preferred. This position is based in Big Spring, TX. We offer a \$5,000 sign on bonus, competitive Salary, 401(K), Medical, Dental, and Vision, paid vacation and holidays. Submit resume c/o P.O. Box 1431/ Blind Box 226, Big Spring, TX 79721-1431.

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Please contact 1-888-527-7221

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IMMEDIATE OPENING for part-time Laundry attendant. Work 14 days- 7 days off. Good people skills a must. Apply 1208 Gregg Street.

Help Wanted

CROSSROADS HOSPICE is hiring for the position of social worker pt/ft. Candidate will provide care to hospice patients in the Howard and surrounding counties. Bi-lingual candidate preferred. Candidate must meet DADS/MC requirements for a hospice social worker. Interested candidates should fax resume to 432-263-5304 attention Debbie Read.

DAY'S INN needs Front Desk and Housekeeping person. Apply at Front Office @ 2701 South Gregg Street.

DRIVERS NEEDED

Professional Transportation, Inc. is seeking local drivers for passenger vans in the Big Spring, TX area. Drug screen, driving record, and criminal background check required. 1-800-471-2440
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EOE

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INGRAM CONCRETE, a family-oriented concrete manufacturing company, is currently seeking Fleet Mechanics. These are full-time and permanent positions in Midland, Abilene, San Angelo, Sweetwater, and Big Spring, Texas. Compensation based on experience. Paid weekly. Home daily. No waiting period on medical insurance. Full benefits/401k. Please call 325-646-6518 for additional information. EOE M/F/D/V



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KODA SERVICES is looking for a pipe hand. Must have a Class A CDL, be available to work some weekends. Welding experience is helpful. Good Pay. For information and application call Richard 432-853-5998.

LAQUINTA INN & SUITES-- Hiring Full-time Housekeeping. Must be able to work weekends. Apply at 1102 West I-20. No phone calls please.

LARGE STORE Sales Rep. Must be 18, able to work independently and have reliable transportation. Salary includes Base, Commission, OT and mileage reimbursement. Apply at www.pepsibeveragesjobs.com.

LOCAL SALVAGE Yard accepting applications and hiring for a parts puller and a dismantler. Must have own tools. Fill out application at Westex Auto Parts, 1511 Hwy 350 in Big Spring.

MANAGER/ TRAINEE person needed for local Furniture and Appliance Store. Bilingual and outgoing personality a plus. All inquiries are to be made in person at 1611 South Gregg, Big Spring.

MARTIN COUNTY Home Health is now taking applications for a Full Time Marketer/Office Clerk. Monday through Friday 8:30 to 5:00. Excellent Benefits with competitive pay and mileage. Also looking for PRN/Weekend RN. Call Allison Roy RN/DON At 432-607-3249 or fax resume to 432-607-3299.

MIDWEST FINANCE CORP now hiring Part-time/Temporary CSR. Apply in person, 600 S. Gregg. No Phone Calls!

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For more detailed information and to apply, log on to <http://ba.utpb.edu/human-resources/employment-opportunities/> The University of Texas of the Permian Basin in an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Employer.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

Libra Moon Paints the Sky

The Libra moon is a lover, a poet and an artist. Her aesthetic is flawless; her communication style, honey glazed. As she positions herself to the Aquarius sun in an air trine that augments the good fortune of Jupiter's newly direct status, the sky adopts an optimistic shade, and the light dances playfully over the landscape.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Why do the actions of your loved ones affect your self-image? Because your identity is entangled in your various roles. But who you are is really bigger than how they see you — food for thought.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are fortunate, and you know that. Now, if you could only stop yourself from being so critical of all the bounty around you. Well, someone has to be the minister of quality control.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A secret burns on your tongue, and your social environment provides just the lightness and comfort level that may inspire you to spill it, no big deal. But tomorrow, the skies will change. So resist telling with all your might!

CANCER (June 22-July 22). When you didn't know the rules, you did whatever you wanted, and it all worked out fine, more or less. Now you know the rules, and things seem suddenly difficult. Chill out. Don't think about it so much. Take a break.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your loved ones may not seem to appreciate you, but the contribution you make to their lives matters more than you know. Do a private accounting of it, because that will make you feel good about yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's difficult to pinpoint exactly what makes you fall in love with someone. The recipe for romance is as complex as a chocolate

souffle, and all of the elements have to work together for the thing to take delicious form.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). There is whimsy even in the most conservative aspects of your life. With the moon highlighting your artistic influence on others, you'll be surprised at how some people act to impress you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Carried by the conviction of your dreams, you'll be tempted to take on huge endeavors with only a few crude tools. Truly, you can do better. Put the word out. You need a team!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You used to have playtime every day when you were a child. Now it seems rather limited, but it's every bit as important. Fight for your right to recreate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Venus will leave your sign tomorrow, taking someone's expectations with her. Focused on your own desire to succeed, succeed you will, regardless of what anyone wants from you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The moon in your fellow air sign poses a question about your personal life: Should you seize the day and the love it offers, or hold out for the love you really want?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You may feel lost in a sea of options. You usually prefer to feel your way through difficult problems instead of weighing your opportunities on the scale of intellect. Tomorrow brings clarity.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 31). When you know why you are doing something, the rest is a no-brainer. This year you answer the "why" question in many areas of your life, starting with your central relationships. You'll seal a deal in February. There's family healing and collective victory in the spring. Someone rich helps you take a professional leap in May. Aries and Sagittarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 16, 1, 13, 5 and 9.

VENUS IN CAPRICORN WRAP-UP: This is the

last day of the current Venus transit in Capricorn. The love planet entered the realm of the seagoat on January 8, promising to enlighten us as to the power structures in our personal lives. Is there someone you continually give your power to, often unknowingly? Chances are, you have a better awareness of that now, though you may have no idea how to stop it. Maybe there's even some secret benefit you get from your submission to this person, and that's not necessarily a negative thing. For instance, you may be learning from this person, and learning always requires some degree of submission. You can't, after all, believe your own way and be open to another person's way at the same time. Also, you can't stand in ignorance and be curious at the same time. The student must surrender to some degree to the teacher.

These are the types of relationship dynamics that Venus has been helping us sort out over the past month. With tomorrow's transit into Aquarius, she offers a cool objectivity to matters. Her intellectual approach may not yield passionate interaction, but it has value. Like an arranged marriage, the reasonable factors imposed on the union often do add up to a truly brilliant match.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Newlywed Justin Timberlake threw a posh yet rustic Italian wedding to the tune of millions of dollars to celebrate his union with Pisces Jessica Biel. Aquarius and Pisces people are zodiac neighbors who can get as comfy as siblings if they are not careful. But with Aquarius' intelligent imagination and Pisces' craving for magic and ethereal truth, the bond can be sublimely creative and exciting, too.

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HOLIDAY MATHIS

Annie's Mailbox



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

himself. He shows a great interest in knives and guns, has very few friends, and has been moved from multiple schools because "he didn't fit in." Does this make him a potential risk? And if so, what do I do?

You hear interviews with neighbors and friends who say, "He was a quiet kid. I never thought he would do something like this." Well, I wouldn't be able to say that. — K.

Dear K.: The problem with stopping such behavior in advance is that there is no way to reliably predict who will commit such a crime. Signs can include depression, anger, drug or alcohol abuse, lack of empathy and hurting others.

The angry kid who likes to torture dogs and pull the wings off of butterflies is more likely to harm a human being than the child who is socially awkward, but it still doesn't predict mass murder. And easy access to guns can create an opportunity for tragedy that would otherwise defuse in a less disastrous way.

If you are in regular contact with this child, the best thing you can do is help him develop empathy for others and learn impulse control. We also hope you can be his friend.

Dear Annie: My husband and I communicate with our grandchildren regularly by phone, text and email. We have one adult grandchild who lives in another state. Through the years, we have helped her emotionally, as well as

financially. But she never returns our calls or emails. We send gifts and never hear from her.

We simply want to know how she's doing and be a part of her life. When I complain to her mother, she makes excuses and says her daughter is too busy. She also says grandparents aren't as important to young people these days.

I find these excuses difficult to swallow, especially when I hear other grandparents talk about their grandkids. Are we expecting too much? — *Disappointed Grandparents*

Dear Disappointed: It is absolutely not true that grandparents are less important to this generation. But young adults have been known to take their family members for granted.

Please continue to stay in touch regardless of the lack of response. We think she'll come around eventually. However, there is no excuse for not acknowledging a gift.

If it happens again, tell your granddaughter that her silence

indicates she isn't interested in receiving any more presents. Feel free to stop sending them.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "RH," whose dog, "Buster," died and he wants an identical dog with the same name.

I am a veterinarian and have seen many people experience a profound grief for the loss of their beloved pet. Many veterinary schools offer free pet loss hotlines. I also recommend he write an obituary for "Buster," describing his wonderful life, and share it with those friends and family who will understand. When he is ready, he can honor Buster's memory by forming a relationship with a new dog who has a different name. — *Massachusetts*

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. © 2013 CREATORS.COM

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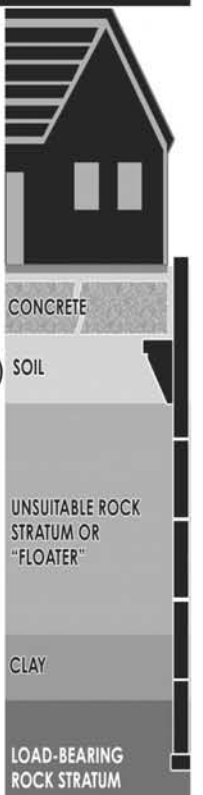
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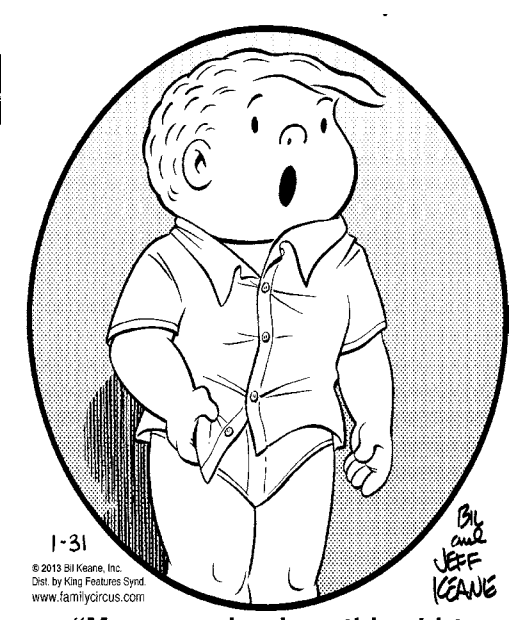
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5:PM	News ABC	Casa Notic.	Two Men CBS	News	Noticias Noticiero	News	King Seinfeld	Yohanán House	Charlie Rose	King '70s	Property Moonshiners	Max Beyond Thunderdome	Tattoo	The Mentalist	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Good Jessie	SportsNation	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy! Wheel	Corona de Lágrimas	Big Bang	News	Caso Cer-rado	News	Seinfeld	Swallow R. Shap	PBS News-Hour	Seinfeld Rules	Moonshiners		Tattoo	The Mentalist		Austin Shake It Good	College Basketball: Teams TBA.	College Basketball: Teams TBA.
7:PM	Shark Tank	Por Ella Soy Eva	American Idol	Big Bang	Pasión Prohibida	30 Rock	Seinfeld	Upd Fam. Guy	Daytrip Parks	The Vampire Diaries	Moonshiners	Movie: The Transporter	Tattoo	NBA Basketball: Grizzlies at Thunder	Movie: Doing Hard Time	Princess Protection Program	College Basketball: Teams TBA.	College Basketball: Teams TBA.
8:PM	Grey's Anatomy	Amores Verdaderos	Glee (DVS)	Person of Interest	La Patrona (SS)	Office 1600	Big Bang	Light of the Southwest	Space Shuttle	Beauty & Beast	Property				Movie: All About the Benjamins, Eva Mendes	Jessie Good	College Basketball: Teams TBA.	College Basketball: Teams TBA.
9:PM	(:02) Scandal	Amor Bravo! (SS)	Simpsons	(:01) El-ementary	Escobar Rostro de	(:01) Do No Harm	King of the Nerds		NOVA (DVS)	Cops	Property	(:01) Movie: Starship Troopers, Denise Richards	Bellator MMA Live	NBA Basketball: Mavericks at Warriors	Wendy Williams	Jessie Good	College Basketball	SportsCenter
10:PM	News	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	McGee	Charlie Rose	Rules	Property					Austin Jessie	College Basketball	SportsCenter
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Al Diablo	Law Order: CI	Ferguson	Decisiones (SS)	Jimmy Fallon	King of the Nerds	A. Shelby Justice	World (Off Air)	'Til Death	Property		Bellator MMA Live			Wizards Wizards		SportsCenter
12:AM	Extra Super	Mar de Amor (SS)	Raymond Fam. Guy	Insider	Pagado	News	Conan	Upd R. Shap		'Til Death	Moonshiners	Movie: Around the World in 80 Days	Bellator 360	Inside the NBA	Movie: Doing Hard Time	Deck Good	Basket NFL Live	SportsCenter
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula	American Par Ases	Ent	Paid	Paid	Movie: Never Back	Light of the Southwest		Browns	Moonshiners					Good	SportsCenter	SportsCenter

DENNIS THE MENACE



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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

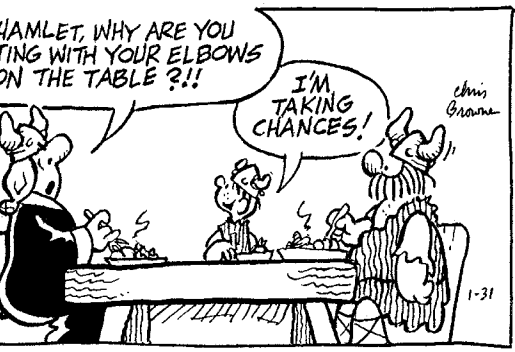


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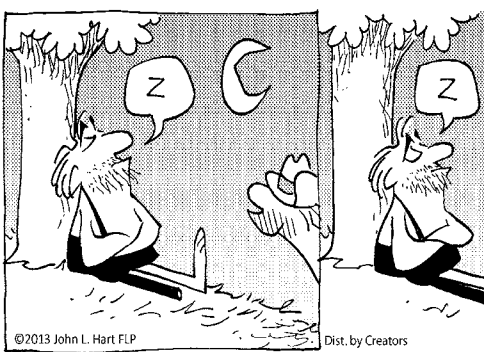
HAGAR



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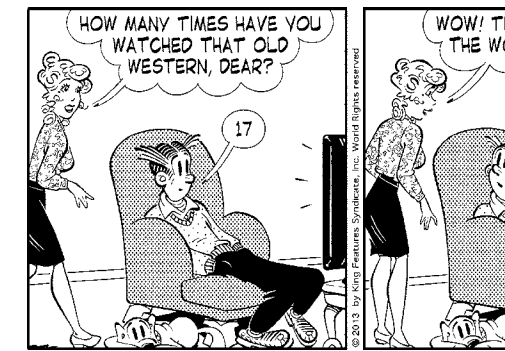
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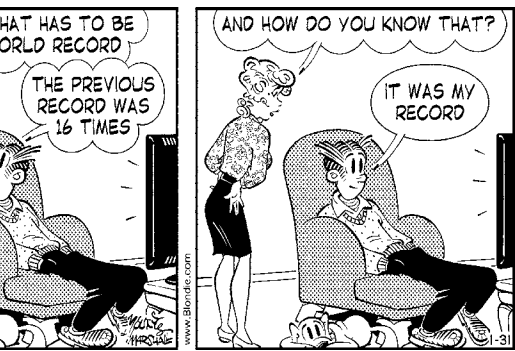
WIZARD OF ID



BLONDIE



BLONDIE



AGNES



AGNES



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 31, the 31st day of 2013. There are 334 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 31, 1963, during the Civil War, the First South Carolina Volunteers, an all-black Union regiment composed of former slaves, was mustered into federal service at Beaufort, S.C.

On this date:

In 1606, Guy Fawkes, convicted of treason for his part in the "Gunpowder Plot" against the English Parliament and King James I, was executed.

In 1797, composer Franz Schubert was born in Vienna.

In 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee was named general-in-chief of all the Confederate armies.

In 1917, during World War I, Germany served notice it was beginning a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare.

In 1929, revolutionary Leon Trotsky and his family were expelled from the Soviet Union.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. forces began a successful invasion of Kwajalein Atoll and other parts of the Japanese-held Marshall Islands.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman announced he had ordered development of the hydrogen bomb.

In 1958, the United States entered the Space Age with its first successful launch of a satellite into orbit, Explorer I.

In 1961, NASA launched Ham the Chimp aboard a Mercury-Redstone rocket from Cape Canaveral; Ham was recovered safely from the Atlantic Ocean following his 16-minute sub-orbital flight.

In 1971, astronauts Alan Shepard, Edgar Mitchell and Stuart Roosa blasted off aboard Apollo 14 on a mission to the moon.

In 1990, McDonald's Corp. opened its first fast-food restaurant in Moscow.

In 2000, an Alaska Airlines jet crashed into the Pacific Ocean off Port Hueneme, Calif., killing all 88 people aboard.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Carol Channing is 92. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Ernie Banks is 82. Composer Philip Glass is 76.

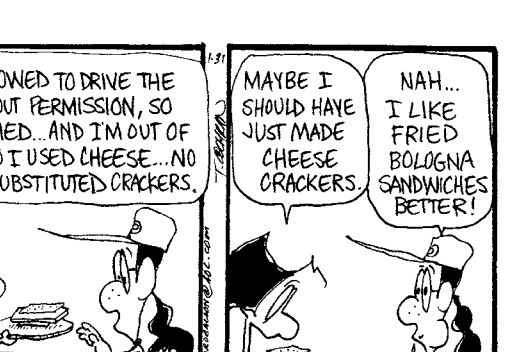
Former Interior Secretary James Watt is 75. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands is 75. Actor Stuart Margolin is 73. Actress Jessica Walter is 72. Former U.S. Rep. Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., is 72. Blues singer-musician Charlie Musselwhite is 69. Actor Glynn Turman is 67. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Nolan Ryan is 66. Singer-musician Harry Wayne Casey (KC and the Sunshine Band) is 62. Rock singer Johnny Rotten is 57. Actress Kelly Lynch is 54. Singer-musician Lloyd Cole is 52. Rock musician Jeff Hanneman (Slayer) is 49. Rock musician Al Jaworski (Jesus Jones) is 47. Actress Minnie Driver is 43. Actress Portia de Rossi is 40.

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HI AND LOIS



HI AND LOIS



Newsday Crossword

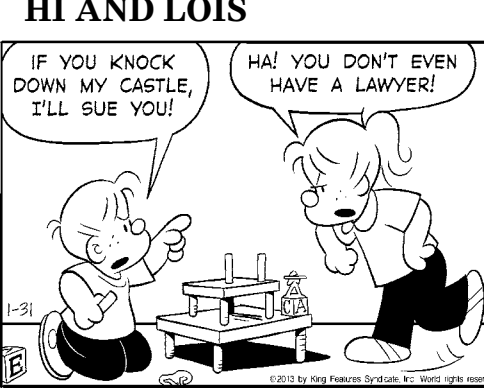
- ACROSS**
- 1 Does a number
 - 6 L.A. Sparks' league
 - 10 Performs a part
 - 14 Nimble
 - 15 Woodland creature
 - 16 Punxsutawney groundhog
 - 17 Onions partner
 - 18 Exotic utopia
 - 20 Put into balance
 - 22 He's sorry now
 - 23 Allow
 - 24 Beatles tune from Abbey Road
 - 27 Discern
 - 28 Langley-based org.
 - 31 Norway's patron saint
 - 35 Julius Caesar conquest
 - 38 Maytag alternative
 - 39 '95 activists' gathering in DC
 - 42 "Restrictive approach" parent
 - 43 "Ciao!"
 - 44 Baby food veggies
 - 45 Consecutively
 - 47 Longoria of Desperate Housewives
 - 49 Infomercial come-on, maybe
 - 56 Sound heard in a herd
 - 58 Biblical shepherd
 - 59 Likely to change
 - 60 Digital lock input
- DOWN**
- 1 Western capital
 - 2 "Uncle!"
 - 3 Olay competitor
 - 4 First American orbiter
 - 5 Medical fluids
 - 6 OED listings
 - 7 Gandhi associate
 - 8 Boyfriends
 - 9 Will of Up All Night
 - 10 National Humor Mo.
 - 11 Dr. Spock specialty
 - 12 Mosaic piece
 - 13 Window shutter section
 - 19 South Carolina senator
 - 21 You're welcome, in Pisa
 - 25 Intended
 - 26 Plan again, as strategy
 - 29 Machu Picchu builder
 - 30 Sounds of contentment
 - 31 Prefix for present
 - 32 Zodiac beast
 - 33 School song
 - 34 Plant life
 - 36 Thurman of Pulp Fiction
 - 37 In a little while
 - 40 "Don't worry about me"
 - 41 Orange variety
 - 46 Computer accessory
 - 48 Filled with wonder
 - 50 Cat calls
 - 51 Like a big sister
 - 52 44th President
 - 53 37th President
 - 54 Cream of the crop
 - 55 Approvals
 - 56 Cream of the crop
 - 57 Initial stake
 - 61 Tach letters
 - 62 Paranormal gift

DELICIOUS! by Ki Lee Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Answer to previous puzzle

DRAG	ALEG	SCIFI
REFI	MAXI	POSED
ATON	EVER	RINDS
FROZEN	ACCOUNTS	
TOTAL	ARC	
	FLOW	BEAMED
ALI	AAHS	UNAGI
FROSTY	RECEPTION	
AISLE	STOP	ELS
BASEST	SWAT	
	TRY	HEART
GLACIAL	BOULDER	
KOALA	ROCK	CORE
GAME	DONE	IRAN
BLASE	SPED	DENT

THE OTHER COAST



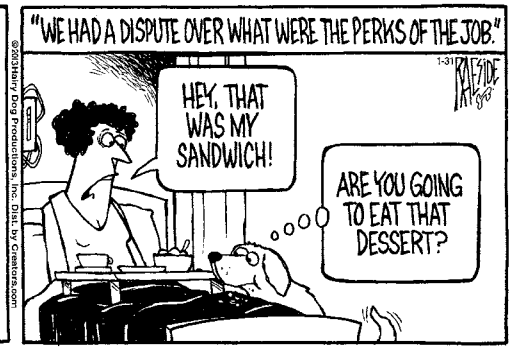
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



BEEBLE BAILEY



Ray Lewis says he's 'agitated', not angry about story

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Ray Lewis is "agitated." Not because the Baltimore Ravens linebacker thinks the magazine report linking him to a company that purports to make performance-enhancers will affect his play or that of his teammates against the San Francisco 49ers in the Super Bowl — the final game of a 17-year NFL career that most assume will earn him a spot in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Rather, Lewis did not want to spend time discussing the subject in private with his head coach or in public with the media, as he did Wednesday, when his forceful denials — and attacks on the owner of the supplement company — meant the matter intruded for a second consecutive day on his retirement send-off.

"It's so funny of a story, because I never, ever took what he says or whatever I was supposed to do. And it's just sad, once again, that someone can have this much attention on a stage this big, where the dreams are really real," Lewis said, wearing his white No. 52 Ravens jersey, gray sweat pants and a black hat with the team's purple logo. "I don't need it. My teammates don't need it. The 49ers don't need it. Nobody needs it."

He smiled widely when the first question at his media session was about the topic — surely, he figured it was coming — then chuckled later while addressing it. Known for his frequent references to God and faith, Lewis called the whole episode a "joke" and a "trick of the devil," adding that he told teammates: "Don't let people from the outside ever come and try to disturb what's inside."

Sports Illustrated reported Tuesday that Lewis sought help from a company called Sports With Alternatives To Steroids (SWATS), which says its deer-antler spray and pills contain a

naturally occurring banned product connected to human growth hormone. The 37-year-old Lewis, the MVP of the 2001 Super Bowl, is the leading tackler in the NFL postseason after returning from a torn right triceps that sidelined him for 10 games.

SI reported that company owner Mitch Ross recorded a call with Lewis hours after the player hurt his arm in an October game against Dallas. According to the report, Lewis asked Ross to send him deer-antler spray and pills, along with other items made by the company.

On Wednesday, Lewis called Ross a coward and said he "has no credibility."

Ross declined an interview request from The Associated Press but emailed a statement reading: "It is the view of SWATS and Mitch Ross that the timing of information was unfortunate and misleading and was in no way intended to harm any athlete. We have always been about aiding athletes to heal faster and participate at an optimum level of play in a lawful and healthy manner. We never encourage the use of harmful supplements and/or dangerous drugs."

Told by a reporter that he seemed angry, Lewis replied: "Me? Never angry. I'm too blessed to be stressed. Nah. You're not angry. You can use a different word. You can use the word 'agitated,' because I'm here to win the Super Bowl. I'm not here to entertain somebody that does not affect that one way or another."

Christopher Key, a co-owner of SWATS, said in a telephone interview that the company removed NFL players' endorsements from its website because "all the players were given letters by the NFL two years ago saying they had to cease and desist and could not continue to do business with us anymore."

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello confirmed that but did not respond to other requests for comment about SWATS or Lewis' involvement.

Teammates uniformly pushed the same message as Lewis and Ravens head coach John Harbaugh — "Everybody heard about it, but we're not worried about it," is the way rookie running back Bernard Pierce put it — and several said NFL players often are offered products to aid in muscle-building or recovery.

"You've got to be real careful. You've got to think there's a reason they're giving you this product," Pierce said. "If someone has success, another person wants to be mentioned in that — like, 'Oh, I'm the reason for that.' If anybody tries to give me anything or tries to sell me on their stuff, I say, 'Go right to my agent.'"

Wary of using something that has no real benefit — or, worse, that would result in a positive drug test administered by the league — players seek approval first from the NFL, the union, or a team trainer or doctor.

"I've been approached," Baltimore nose tackle Ma'ake Kemoatu said. "They'll come to me and they tell me, 'This will help you with recovery and all that.' I say, 'OK. I appreciate it.' And then I will call the NFL."

Another athlete mentioned in the SI story, three-time golf major champion Vijay Singh, released a statement Wednesday at the Phoenix Open, acknowledging he used deer-antler spray and saying he wasn't aware that it may contain a substance banned by the PGA Tour.

Sports Illustrated reported that when it spoke to Lewis for its story, he acknowledged asking Ross for "some more of the regular stuff" on the night of the injury and that he has been associated with the company "for a couple years."

Lewis' stance was different Wednesday.

"He told me there's nothing to it. ... He's told us in the past, he's told us now, that he's never taken any of that stuff, ever," Harbaugh said. "And I believe Ray. I trust Ray completely. We have a relationship. I know this man. And I know what he's all about. It's just too bad it has to be something that gets so much play."

While Lewis did face a handful of questions about SWATS, plus some on-field topics, he never had to deal Wednesday with a single reference to a dark chapter in his life: He pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice in connection with the stabbing deaths of two men after a Super Bowl party at an Atlanta nightclub in 2000.

"We all in here have a past. You know? But how many people actually dwell into it? You know? Nah, it ain't about your past. It's about your future," Lewis said in response to a question about keeping focused on Sunday's game.

"And for me and my teammates, I promise you, we have a strong group of men that we don't bend too much, and we keep pushing forward. So it's not a distraction at all for us," he said, raising a clenched fist.

"The trick of the devil is to kill, steal and destroy. That's what he comes to do. He comes to distract you from everything you're trying to do. There's no man ever trained as hard as our team has trained. There's no man that's went through what we went through," Lewis said.

"So to give somebody credit that doesn't deserve credit, that would be a slap in the face for everything we went through."

Asked about deer-antler spray, 49ers tight end Vernon Davis' take was, "I don't think Ray would take any substance."

SPURS

Continued from Page 6

and four turnovers in an 8-2 run.

The Bobcats pulled within 25-23 at the close of the first quarter on Walker's 19-foot jumper, but Manu Ginobili sparked the Spurs in the second.

Ginobili had four points, two rebounds and an assist on Leonard's 3 in the opening 2 minutes of the second quarter as San Antonio extended its lead to 32-23. Ginobili finished with nine points, six assists and five rebounds in 21 minutes.

Parker had seven points and five assists in the third quarter as San Antonio raised its

home record to 21-2 this season.

"He's really playing at an All-Star level for us," Green said. "We need that especially with the guys we have out. With Tim being out, him and Manu have done a great job of carrying us, putting us on their back."

The Bobcats were able

to cut the lead to 11 early in the fourth, but could get no closer as the Spurs' lead swelled to 24 in the final quarter.

Charlotte was 30 for 73 overall from the field (41 percent) while committing 23 turnovers.

"They took care of business," Gordon said.

"In the second half, they just put us away. They were real sharp with everything they did. They capitalized on all our mistakes."

Leading by double digits throughout the second half, the Spurs spent much of the second half trying to set up

the newest Spurs, Australian Aron Baynes. After playing 42 seconds in his NBA debut Friday at Dallas, Baynes had seven points and nine rebounds in 19 minutes against Charlotte. He was 3 for 7, missing a couple of tip-in follows. "Baynes was good,"

Parker said. "It's not easy to come in the middle of the season. We're rolling and playing good and he came out with a lot of energy; banging, rebounding and setting some good picks."

The Bobcats bench did outscore San Antonio's 44-22.

sudoku

ANSWERS

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

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Latest A-Rod troubles have Yankees frustrated

NEW YORK (AP) — Alex Rodriguez was speaking on a conference call.

"A huge debacle," he said. "Distasteful."

That was on Dec. 13, 2007, when he re-signed with the New York Yankees and was discussing his decision 1½ months earlier to become a free agent.

Now those words describe how some in the team's front office feel about A-Rod's \$275 million, 10-year contract.

Once considered a player who could shatter the career home run record, Rodriguez has transformed from All-Star to annoyance for some in the Yankees organization. He hasn't played a full season

since he was voted his third AL MVP award in 2007, he's out for at least the first half of this year following hip surgery on Jan. 16 and now he's been accused of again receiving performance-enhancing drugs — an allegation he denies.

Even before the charges were published Tuesday by the alternative weekly Miami New Times along with accusations against Melky Cabrera, Nelson Cruz, Gio Gonzalez, Bartolo Colon and Yasmani Grandal, some Yankees executives were wishing Rodriguez would just go away. Speaking on condition of anonymity because the team isn't publicly commenting on A-Rod's latest

troubles, they revealed their frustration with the slugger.

And they have a big incentive for A-Rod to disappear. If he doesn't play again due to a career-ending injury, about 85 percent of the \$114 million he's owed by the team would be covered by insurance, according to one of the executives who spoke on condition of anonymity.

New York also might be able to free itself from having the \$27.5 million average annual value of Rodriguez's contract count in its luxury tax payroll in each of the next five seasons, a key factor as the Yankees try to get under the \$189 million threshold in 2014.

If Rodriguez is on the disabled list, his con-

tract is included. But if he's on the voluntary retired list, it would not be part of the total.

And if the Yankees fall under that \$189 million benchmark, their luxury tax rate would drop from its current 50 percent to 17.5 percent for 2015. That would give them far more flexibility to pursue pitchers Clayton Kershaw, Felix Hernandez and Justin Verlander if they become free agents following the 2014 season.

New York is not likely to be able to void A-Rod's deal. Baseball's drug agreement between management and the players' association specifies the commissioner's office has all disciplinary authority for violations.

A-Rod's poor health, however, may provide

the path to savings for the team.

While Rodriguez rebounded from right hip surgery in March 2009 to help the Yankees to their first World Series title since 2000, Dr. Bryan Kelly said recovery from his operation on A-Rod's left hip this month will be more complex if for no other reason than it receives more stress because Rodriguez is a right-handed hitter.

Even before the latest kerfuffle, A-Rod seemed to have worn out his welcome.

Yankees management tired of spotting him on the gossip pages with Madonna, Kate Hudson, Cameron Diaz and Torrie Wilson. They bristled when he was seen with a stripper in Toronto, at a swingers' club in Dallas and at an illegal poker club in New York.

They made their displeasure public in 2010 when they said they never authorized Rodriguez to be treated by Dr. Anthony Galea, who said he prescribed anti-inflammatories to A-Rod following the first hip operation. Indicted in part for illegal possession of human growth hormone with intent to distribute, the Canadian doctor pleaded guilty in 2011 to one count of introducing misbrand-

ed drugs into interstate commerce with the intent to mislead a U.S. agency.

Then came last year's playoffs, when Rodriguez was benched in three of nine games and pinch hit for in three others. He flirted with girls in the stands after he was removed from the AL championship series opener against Detroit.

Rodriguez's 647 home runs are 115 shy of tying Barry Bonds' career record but he has totaled just 34 the last two seasons and his 38th birthday is in late July. He has averaged 119 games, 21 homers and 81 RBIs over the last three years.

Before and after most games, when media is allowed to enter the Yankees' clubhouse, Rodriguez spends little time at his locker in the back left of the oval room, not too far from the entrance to the inner sanctum that contains the players' lounge, steam room, sauna, rubdown room, weight room, trainer's room and swimming pool.

He doesn't have one of the prestige locations flanking the back entrance, held by Derek Jeter and Robinson Cano, who took over the spot when Jorge Posada retired.

sudoku

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

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

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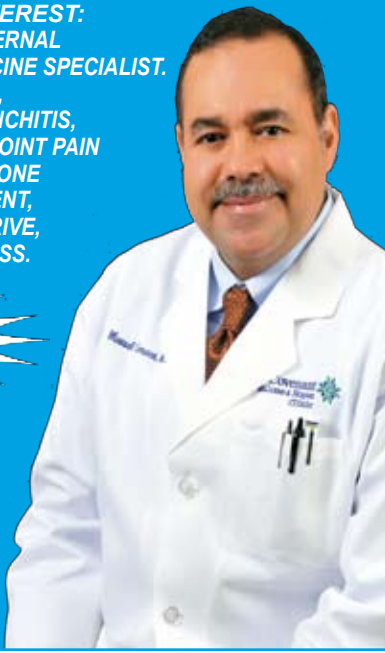
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TITLE

Continued from Page 6

10 members because conference members are receiving high payouts per school and pleased with their access to the postseason.

"We are unconvinced at this point that larger is better," Bowsby said.

While the league is not currently considering expansion, Bowsby said it was looking at working with other conferences for partnerships on such things as strengthening nonconference schedules in football and men's basketball.

"One of the things we know is that the months of October and Novem-

ber in the football season are about as good of sports as you're going to get. Every game is important and every weekend is something exciting. The month of September is not necessarily that way," he said. "It gives us a way to fortify our nonconference schedule in some important ways, too."

He said that could also mean more marquee nonconference games outside of the first month of the football season.

"We, as a rule, haven't played very many nonconference games after the first of October," Bowsby said. "And so, the thought of choreographing games into the later portion of the season is pretty interesting from a TV standpoint, too."

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Bridge Is a Partnership Game

South dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ J 8 3
♥ K Q 9 5
♦ J 9 2
♣ Q 8 4

WEST
♠ 4
♥ 7 6 3
♦ Q 7 6 3
♣ K 9 6 5 2

EAST
♠ A K 9 2
♥ 4
♦ K 10 8 5
♣ J 10 7 3

SOUTH
♠ Q 10 7 6 5
♥ A J 10 8 2
♦ A 4
♣ A

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥			

Opening lead — four of spades.

Assume you're West, defending against four hearts. Choosing which suit to lead is far from clear, but let's say you decide that the best chance of stopping the contract lies in leading your singleton spade, even though South bid the suit.

This proves to be a lucky shot — you find partner with four to the A-K. He wins the spade with the king and recognizes your four as a singleton. But if, in his exuberance, he con-

tinues with the ace and another spade, he undoes all the good done by your opening lead.

You would ruff the third spade, but that would be the last trick for your side. Declarer would win whatever you return, draw trumps, discard two diamonds from dummy on the Q-10 of spades and so make the contract.

But if East is firing on all cylinders, he returns the spade nine, not the ace, at trick two, thereby retaining control of the spades while he gives you your ruff. This allows you to shift to a low diamond at trick three to force out the ace and establish the setting trick.

East's return of the nine of spades, rather than the deuce, is a suit-preference signal. By returning the highest card he can spare in a ruffing situation, East is asking you to return the higher-ranking of the two side suits — which are, in this case, diamonds and clubs.

It takes excellent defense to set the contract on this deal. West must find the spade lead at trick one, East must give him a spade ruff at trick two, and West must lead a diamond at trick three. If East-West surmount these three hurdles, they have every right to congratulate themselves on a noteworthy accomplishment.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.

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