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The Christmas Story

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and

See **STORY**, Page 3



Mission to Zambia

Shawn and Lauren Hart ditched the American dream to spread the gospel in south-central Africa

— by Julie Bass

Shawn and Lauren Hart were working and living the American dream with a comfortable house, a dog, kids, and successful jobs.

Then they made a decision that changed their family's lives forever.

At church one Sunday in April of 2013, a mission conference was held at their church.

"We had talked about becoming missionaries before, but it was for someday when the kids were older and the timing was right," said Lauren. "By the end of it (the con-

ference), we knew we were going now."

With their very young daughter, Charlie Jo, and their 5 month old son, Jack, the Hart family began the process to become missionaries.

"We started by going to Advanced Mission Training, which is a three month long training program in Africa. They teach you about how to be a disciple and make disciples of others. They teach you how to preach, how to conduct bible studies, how to be missionaries," said Shawn.

After the training, the Harts came

back home to Big Spring. Being a full time missionary required money. Money to take care of the bills for their home in Big Spring while they were gone, money to travel to Africa, and money to live off of while in Africa.

"We do fundraising, but it is more than fundraising. The individuals, organizations, and churches that support us are more than just a money supply, they are our partners," said Lauren. "They give us

See **MISSION**, Page 3



An A-to-Z Christmas tree

BSHS library features tree comprised of reference books

— by Lyndel Moody

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas tree! Thy pages are so unchanging.

A Christmas Tree display constructed from red and green reference books and topped with a copy of the Holy Bible at the Big Spring High School library has been bringing in a number of visitors lately.

Irene Richardson, who took over as the high school's librarian this year after the retirement of Peggy Skiles, is quick to point out the idea is

See **TREE**, Page 2

HERALD photo/Lyndel Moody

Irene Richardson, the Big Spring High School librarian, stands before the "Tree of Knowledge," a Christmas tree display created from 300 of the school's reference books and topped with a copy of the Holy Bible.

It's a Christmas moon!

Pine trees, festive lights, and Rudolph's nose won't be the only things lit up on Christmas. According to NASA, the first full moon on Christmas since 1977 will rise on Friday night.

The next Christmas full moon won't happen again until 2034, so after presents are opened and dinner is eaten, make sure to take your family outside to look at the skies.

While looking at the Christmas moon, you are also looking up at a NASA spacecraft that is orbiting Earth's moon.

December's last full moon of the year is called the Full Cold Moon because it occurs during the beginning of winter. The moon's peak this year will occur at 7:11 a.m. CST.

— Amanda Elston



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Obituaries

Michael Lee Bell



Michael Lee Bell, 66, of Big Spring, died Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015 in a local hospital. Graveside funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 26, 2015 at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park.

Michael was born Dec. 10, 1949 in San Angelo, Texas.

A lifelong resident of Big Spring, he worked as a roughneck for 12 years. Michael was a member of College Baptist Church. He enjoyed reading and target shooting.

Michael is survived by several cousins.

He was preceded in death by his father, Harold L. Bell; his mother, Joyce E. Bell; his sister, Bonita Bell and his brother, Bryan Bell.

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

Support Groups

SATURDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

FRIDAY

• Stepping Stone Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets at Spring Town Plaza (inside the mall, next to Attitudes Hair Salon, down by Bealls). Open meeting at 7 p.m.

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

Take Note

Meetings

• The Big Spring Art Association meets every third Tuesday, September through May at 7 p.m. in the basement of the Howard County Library. Everyone is welcome to attend. Memberships are available. The annual dues are \$20.

• Howard College will be hosting several "update meetings" throughout Howard County for interested citizens to gather more facts and information about Howard College as they prepare for the tax rate rollback election to be held in January 2016. Those dates are: Tuesday, Jan. 5, 12:30 p.m. Hall Center for the Arts Auditorium, Howard College Campus, 1001 Birdwell Lane, (sign language interpretation provided); and Tuesday, Jan. 5, 6:30 p.m. Hall Center for the Arts Auditorium, Howard College Campus, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• The Big Spring Symphony Board of Directors meets every first Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. at the symphony office, 808 Scurry Street.

• The Kiwanis Club of Big Spring

meets at noon every Thursday in the Cactus Room at Howard College. Visitors are welcome.

• Order of the Eastern Star Big Spring Chapter 67 meets the third Tuesday of each month at 219 Main St. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. Lodge meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information, contact Jimmy Ruth at 271-2176.

• Staked Plains Masonic Lodge No. 598 meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. (dinner is at 6 p.m.) at 219 1/2 Main St. All Masons are welcome.

Volunteer opportunities

• Home Hospice is in need of volunteers of all ages. The organization is requesting volunteers to sit with patients, make items for patients and help with office work. Volunteers set their own hours. For more information, contact Sherry Hodnett at 264-7911 or 432-213-0150.

• Mobile meals is in need of volunteer delivery drivers. If you donate one hour per week to help deliver meals to the elderly, call Kim Plew at 263-4016 or 213-7960.

• Crossroads Hospice needs volunteers for patient care. Contact Eva at 263-5300.

• Victim Services is a non-profit independent community-based program serving victims of all violent crime, including, but not limited to, assault, sexual assault and domestic violence. Victim Services advocates are available 24 hours of day, 365 days a year to provide crisis intervention or accompaniment to the hospital and law enforcement agencies as needed. If you can commit to 30-hour training, an interview process and a background check, we need you. For more information, call Linda Calvio at 432-263-3312.

• Food 2 Kids Big Spring Needs You! It is time to start sacking food for Big Spring elementary students who do not receive adequate food over the weekends. Members of the community can be a part by volunteering to sack the food. It just takes a couple hours of your time and the work is very rewarding. For more information, call, 432-935-3998.

Local 5-Day Forecast

Fri 12/25	Sat 12/26	Sun 12/27	Mon 12/28	Tue 12/29
72/51 Partly cloudy skies with gusty winds developing during the afternoon. High 72F. Winds S at 20 to 30 mph.	58/25 Windy, and mainly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the mid 20s.	28/20 Watching a potential winter storm. A wintry mix changing to all snow, windy. Highs in the upper 20s and lows in the low 20s.	32/16 Watching a potential winter storm. Some light snow early, windy. Highs in the low 30s and lows in the mid teens.	37/18 Abundant sunshine. Highs in the upper 30s and lows in the upper teens.
Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:49 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:50 PM

Texas at a Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Arlene	70	42	Sunny	Kingsville	82	67	Cloudy
Amarillo	51	31	Sunny	Livingston	76	67	Cloudy
Austin	79	58	Sunny	Longview	76	61	Sunny
Beaumont	77	69	Cloudy	Lubbock	61	33	Cloudy
Brownsville	84	71	Cloudy	Lufkin	75	65	Foggy
Brownwood	74	41	Sunny	Midland	70	43	Sunny
Corpus Christi	76	66	Cloudy	Raymondville	85	70	Cloudy
Corsicana	78	55	Sunny	Rosenberg	79	71	Cloudy
Dallas	74	49	Sunny	San Antonio	80	60	Sunny
Del Rio	79	51	Sunny	San Marcos	79	58	Sunny
El Paso	62	41	P Cloudy	Sulphur Springs	76	54	Sunny
Fort Stockton	72	46	Sunny	Sweetwater	67	42	Sunny
Gainesville	67	41	Sunny	Tyler	76	60	Sunny
Greenville	73	51	Sunny	Weatherford	71	44	Sunny
Houston	79	71	Cloudy	Wichita Falls	66	39	Sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	72	66	T-Storms	Miami	83	75	P Cloudy
Boston	68	49	Cloudy	Minneapolis	27	22	Cloudy
Chicago	45	38	P Cloudy	New York	72	58	Showers
Dallas	74	49	Sunny	Phoenix	67	49	M Cloudy
Denver	37	17	Sunny	San Francisco	53	44	Cloudy
Houston	61	35	P Cloudy	Seattle	43	36	Cloudy
Los Angeles	62	42	P Cloudy	Saint Louis	55	40	P Cloudy

Moon Phases

First	Full	Last	New
Dec 18	Dec 25	Jan 2	Jan 10

UV Index

Fri 12/25	Sat 12/26	Sun 12/27	Mon 12/28	Tue 12/29
3	2	1	3	3
Moderate	Low	Low	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.

TREE

Continued from Page 1

not original. She saw something similar on the popular app and website Pinterest.

And from that inspiration, Richardson and fellow assistant Hilary Payne carefully crafted the tree from bottom to top, alternating red and green books from the library's reference section, a rarely used area in the Internet Age.

In fact, the medium-size display is made up of 300 books all together.

"The kids love it. I got a lot of positive comments saying how unique it was, creative, innovative, brings in the holiday spirit. A lot of them notice and comment on it when they come in. Not only the students, but the staff."

Payne said. "It adds a wonderful motif to the whole character of the library. More kids are coming to the library. It's all been very positive."

Richardson said she was a little surprised with the reaction from the student body and fellow co-workers. Teachers from other campuses and even some retired educators have made the trip to the high school library to view the "Tree of Knowledge."

"Kids can't have their phone out unless it's for educational purposes and I've had some kids ask, 'Can I take my phone out so I can take a picture?'" Richardson said.

After receiving so much positive feedback, Richardson hopes to continue the tradition in the years to

come.

"I think it's really neat because now the kids will expect it," Richardson said. "Next year I really would like to get the community involved with the parents, teachers, and student body. I would like to have a book drive for the library so every year the tree gets a little taller."

Donated books would then be entered into the library collection, she said.

"My kids really like sci-fi and books that have been made into movies," Richardson said. "They like James Patterson, the girls really like Nicholas Sparks and romance. They also like to read seasonal books. During Christmas, I get a lot of requests for Christmas books. At Halloween, it's the same."

New books are the most asked for by the students, but Richardson said she is always willing to accept any books in good condition.

Richardson is a Big Spring High School graduate who taught reading at the elementary level before completing her masters in information science at the University of North Texas. During some of her off time, she scours second-hand retail and whole-sale shops to update the library's collection.

For more information about how to donate to the library, call 264-3641 and ask for Richardson.

Staff Writer Lyndel Moody can be contacted at 263-7331, ext. 234, or by e-mailing citydesk@bigspringherald.com.

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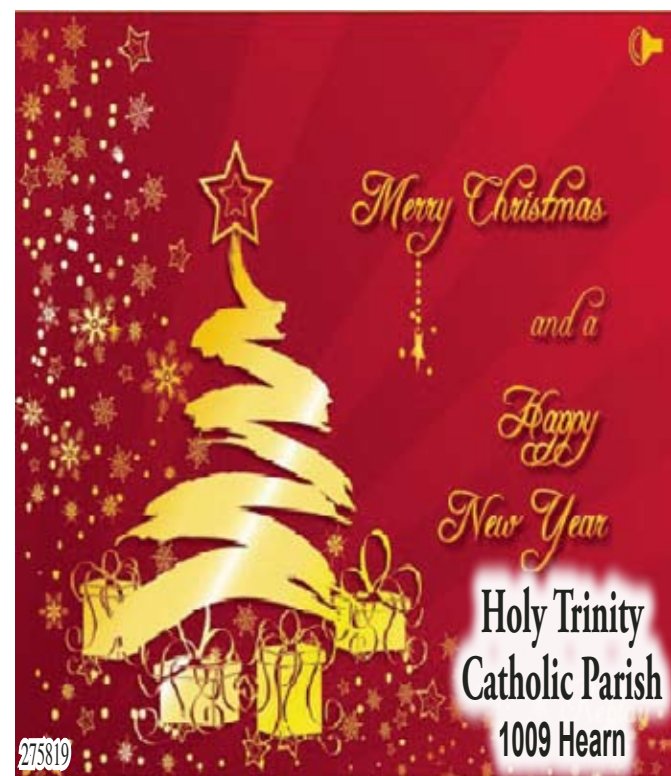
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Clockwise, from top left: A home in Highland South area is decorated and ready for Santa to visit; A set of deer brighten the evening as Christmas approaches; Paul's PC Repair on Scurry Street has a festive atmosphere for the passing cars to admire.

HERALD Photos/Julie Bass



Christians in Bethlehem mark Christmas

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) — Christian faithful from around the world descended Thursday on the biblical city of Bethlehem for Christmas Eve celebrations at the traditional birthplace of Jesus, as an outburst of Israeli-Palestinian violence dampened the typically festive mood.

Before the celebrations began, Israeli authorities said three Palestinians involved in attacks against Israelis were killed in violence across the West Bank. Another Palestinian was killed in clashes with Israeli troops, a Palestinian hospital official said.

Bethlehem has been a focal point for clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters during the three month-long wave of violence that has gripped the region. While the annual festivities in the

city's Manger Square were set to go on, other celebrations in the city were cancelled or toned down because of the violence. "We're in Bethlehem celebrating Christmas,

celebrating the birthday of our lord Jesus Christ. This is the birthplace of the king of peace so what we want is peace," said Rula Maayah, the Palestinian Tourism Minister.

Merry Christmas

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1 John 4:18

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Galatians 2:20

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Love has no fear because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of judgment, and this shows that his love has not been perfected in us.
1 John 4:18

The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them. I will satisfy them with a long life and give them my salvation."
Psalm 91: 14-16

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(Joel 2:23)

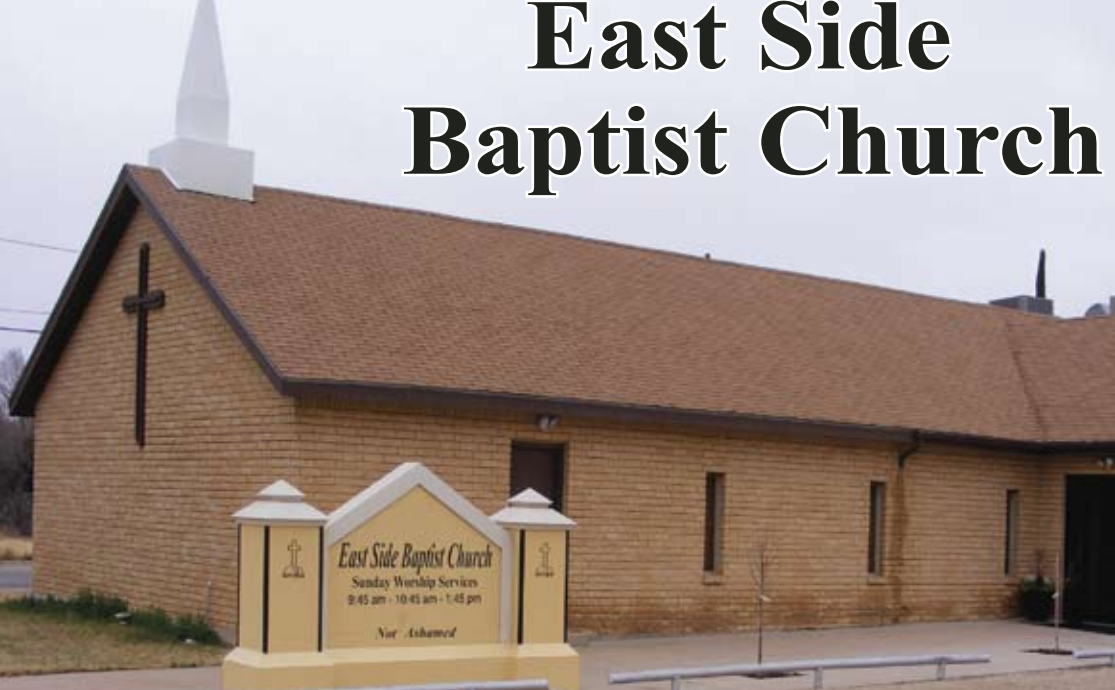
God's love supply is never empty. "For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth."
(Psalm 103:11)

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Did you ever wonder: Murmuring the bitter water

After the awesome miracle of the pathway through the sea, Moses led the Children of Israel in a song of worship of Hashem. Their faith had been restored and the song recounted each step of the event. The song glorified God!

Hebrew women were renowned for the beauty of their songs and choreographed dances. They often played small drums which they carried at one hip.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, was also a prophetess. She led the women in praising the Lord with song, drums, and dance. This is where we get the worship song, "Sing unto the Lord a new song... the horse and the rider thrown into the sea!"

From there, Moses led the people three days into the wilderness. Look at a topical map of the Sinai Peninsula. This is mountainous terrain: very high, steep mountains. It gets almost no rainfall, and there are very few springs of water.



EUNICE
FILLER

When they ran out of the water they had carried, they were thrilled to find a spring, but the water was bitter. Hence, they called it Marah, meaning bitter. They should have asked for help from their wonderful God who had just delivered them from Egypt in such a mighty way. Instead, these people complained to Moses!

God showed Moses a tree (in this barren waste where nothing grows). He told Moses to throw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

Then God gave them a decree, "If you hearken diligently to the voice of Hashem, your God, and do what is just in His eyes, give ear to His commandments and observe all His decrees, then any of the diseases that I placed in Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Yahweh Rofchah (God Your Healer.)"

We need to remember this name of God when we call on Him for healing.

Soon afterward they arrived at Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy date-palms. They camped there and probably stayed for a while to rest and recuperate.

God used this incident to show the people that their spiritual condition brings with it physi-

cal conditions. When they had walked through a wasteland for three days, they were hot, tired and weary. They probably grumbled among themselves. They had quickly lost their joy about God saving them at the sea.

Then when they became desperate for water, they were in no mood to ask for help nicely. They angrily demanded, "What shall we drink?"

This had been a test, and they had failed miserably. But after the bitter water had been made sweet and they were refreshed, God led them to a place of rest and refreshing that He had already prepared for them.

God was patient and forgiving with them. He wanted them to realize that their God cared about and was involved in every day human affairs. They were His children, and he wanted them to learn to love Him.

Eunice Filler, author of "Rachael: Porch Swings and Spearmint Tea," is a former school teacher with ties to the Big Spring community. She has returned to enjoy her retirement as a Big Spring resident. Questions? Fillereunice@yahoo.com.

Church News

First Baptist Church – Big Spring

Merry Christmas! Come celebrate the coming of The Messiah, Jesus Christ, with us Sunday at 10:50 a.m. as we gather in worship and adoration of Him.

Pastor Mark Lindsey concludes the sermon series "The Songs of Christmas" in which we are exploring classic songs of the season that extol the coming of our Savior. Drawn from Matthew 2:1-12, Sunday's message is "We Three Kings", and compels us to pursue Him with all our hearts, minds, and strength while reminding us that He alone is worthy of all worship, praise, and glory.

If you are unable to attend, you may worship with us through the live stream on our web site at: fcbigspring.org.

There will be no Sunday School classes of evening service.

FBC is located at 705 W. FM 700. You are always welcome at First Baptist Church and we look forward to meeting you Sunday.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:13-14

Birdwell Lane Church of Christ

You are invited to study God's word and worship with us.

Sunday:
Bible study - 9 a.m.
Worship - 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
Wednesday:
Bible study and devotional - 7 p.m.

Birdwell Lane Church of Christ is located at the southwest corner of 11th Place and Birdwell Lane.

First Presbyterian Church – Big Spring

The Lectionary Bible Study and the Chancel Choir will resume at 5:17 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. as usual on Wednesday.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight

Service - Communion was held at 6 p.m. on Thursday. Todd and Jennifer Patterson lit the Christ candle. Communion servers for that service were Ellen Austin, Jerry and Katie Grimes, Susan Holstedt, and Kay Kennemur. Ushers were Lynn Glass, Danny Kennemur, Tom Koger, and Paschal Odom. Rev. Craig Holdstedt led the service and officiated at Communion.

Vicki McLean is in charge of Take Ten for this Sunday. Ushers for December are Don and Christine Boling, Louise Hitch, and John Yater. Buddy Cochrane is Lector for December.

The lectionary for the First Sunday after Christmas Day is I Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52. Rev. Craig Holstedt will deliver the sermon. Linda Miracle will be the guest musician. The Noisy Offering will be collected during the Children's Moment.

Please note that our worship service begins at 10:50 a.m. for announcements and parish concerns before our radio broadcast starts at 11a.m.

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

Forsan Baptist Church

This Sunday morning our message comes from Mark 6:7-9 and is called, "The Road Ahead."

Our studies on Sunday evenings continues this week with the next segment of our "Heaven: Now and Then" series. This study will focus on what Heaven may be like as we enter it now, and what it will be like when Jesus returns. This Sunday evening our topic of discussion will be, "The New Jerusalem."

On January 3, we will have Lester Brown as our special guest speaker

during morning worship.

Regular youth and children's activities will resume on Wednesday afternoons after the Christmas break. Youth and children's meal will be served at 5:30, and age-appropriate classes will begin at 6:00 P.M. We will be offering CHAOS for youth, GA's for girls, RA's for boys, and Heroes in Training for kids age 3-5.

Our church is located at 201 Main in Forsan. Sunday School begins at 9:50, with worship services at 10:50 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Wednesday services begin at 6:00 P.M. Rides for all youth activities are available if arranged ahead of time. Call the church at 432-457-2342 or Pastor Darren Weaver at 432-213-2348.

Cornerstone Covenant Church

Cornerstone Covenant Church invites you to join us Sunday, Dec. at 10:30 a.m. for a time of great fellowship, praise and worship and the Word of God.

Wednesday we will not have Wednesday Night Bible study due to the Christmas Holiday. We pray everyone has a safe and blessed Merry Christmas.

Friday, Jan. 1, we ask that each day for the first 21 days you take a portion of your day for a time of fasting.

Sunday, Jan. 3 at 10:30 a.m., join CCC for our New Year's Service. It's sure to be a blast. #NYS2016

Monday, Jan. 4 at 6 p.m. the Soul Sisters woman's small group will be getting together the first and third Mondays of the month starting in the New Year, at 1709 Yale Ave (Kathryn Lane's home). All ages are welcome.

Sunday, Jan. 31 at 10:30 a.m. Join CCC for the Bountiful Blessings Sunday. More information Coming Soon.

Please join us every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for worship.

CCC is located at 706 E. 12th Street. For office hours or other question about the ministry, contact our administrative office at 432-264-0015. You can find us at facebook.com/cccbigspring or visit us at www.cccbigspring.org if you would like

more information.

Spring Creek Fellowship

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We will be starting a Traditional Worship Service in January 2016 in addition to our current Contemporary Service. Stay tuned for more information. We will also be implementing an "E-Giving App". With this app you can make tithes/donations, leave messages, send prayer requests and follow prayer chains. We will also have a Bible reading plan.

"Grief Share", a grief support group, meets Sundays from 4-6 p.m. Anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one is invited and encouraged to attend. For more info on "Grief Share", visit www.griefshare.org or contact the office.

"Sowing Seeds of Hope" fiber crafts and prayer shawl ministry meets at the church Saturdays at 10 a.m. If you are interested in learning a fiber craft (crochet, knitting, weaving, felting, etc.) or have projects you would like to share or just to have some fellowship while crafting, come join us.

If you are a musician or singer and would be interested in being a part of our Worship Team, contact Clint Bratcher.

Prayer Team meets at Spring Town Plaza from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. They have lunch at either Evita's or Brooklyn's Deli at 11:30 a.m. and then pray after lunch. You can bring your own lunch to eat in the restaurant if you prefer or come after lunch to pray with the group.

Chronic Pain Management group meets Tuesdays at 6 p.m. at the church.

Weekly Happenings:
Sunday-
9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. - Sunday school/connection groups
10:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. - "Holy Grounds Café" is open with snacks and fellowship.
10:45 a.m. - Noon - Worship Service
Tuesday-
Noon - 2 p.m. - Prayer team
Noon - Narcotics anonymous
6 p.m. - Pain management group
Friday-
7 p.m. - 8 p.m. - Narcotics anonymous
Saturday-
7:30 a.m. - Weekly men's prayer breakfast and fellowship
10 a.m. - "Sowing Seeds of Hope" crafting fellowship
Sunday
4 p.m. - "Grief Share"
If you would like any further information regarding any of our ministries or events, please contact the church office or visit our website.
Spring Creek Fellowship meets at the Spring Town Plaza at 1801 E. FM 700. Contact us at 432-714-4584 or visit our website at www.springcreekfellowship.org.

First Church of the Nazarene

Join us this Sunday as we take "A look back, pressing forward." The perfect way to start off the new year. Be sure and go to our website to



The greatest expression of love

People talk about love in different ways. I love my wife. I also love ice cream. Do those two statements make ice cream equal to my wife?

The Apostle John tells us how we can know that we have a relationship with God. He wrote to encourage Christians (those who had already obeyed the gospel) so they could be confident in their relationship with the Father and Jesus. But God sets the standards for the relationship, not us.

1 John 4:7-12, *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God,*



GREG SURLES

and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us (ESV).

I am so thankful that God doesn't love me the same amount that I love him. If that were the case, I would be hopelessly lost. God has set the standard for love. My sin sentenced me to death. God's love said, "I will die so that you don't have to!"

That is propitiation in simple terms. If you want it in big words, it is this – Christ's substitutionary sacrifice to appease God's wrath.

If that is God's standard for love, what does that mean for me? Does love only do for others when it's convenient? Do I only love those who do good to me? Can I just love people that I know will reciprocate my love?

May we all strive more and more to love like God loves! Love God more. Love one another more. *You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48; ESV).*

Greg Surles is the preacher at the Birdwell Lane Church of Christ

CHURCH NEWS

Continued from page 6

see all the small groups going on that you can get involved in. We have a lot of exciting groups for you to choose from.

Sunday morning youth, adult and children's classes start at 9 a.m. throughout the campus.

Sunday service begins at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Children's church at 10 a.m. Sunday in the Fellowship Hall.

Wednesday nights we have weekly prayer starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary while children and youth classes are in other classrooms.

Our mission is to win the lost and disciple people through the vision of loving God, loving others and loving community.

You can also listen each Sunday to KBST 95.7 at 10 a.m. for a live broadcast of our service. Contact

the church office at 432-267-7015 if you have any questions, or visit us in the glass class following Sunday Service to sit and visit.

First Christian Church

This Sunday is the First Sunday after Christmas. Our guest Minister Dan Miracle will be preaching on the Scripture Text, Luke 2: 41 – 52. We find a twelve year old Jesus has stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing. Worried they hurry back to find him 3 days later in the Temple in the midst of very learned teachers. Everyone including, his parents, are surprised at Jesus' knowledge and wisdom especially at such a young age. Join us to hear what more Dan has to teach us. Tara Trowbridge, our talented Choir director, and our Pianist Larry Thibeault each lend talent to enhance our worship experience.

Our Server will be Joel Miller as our Worship Leader, Hollis McCright and Joycee Davis are our Elders, while Ken and Mary Beth Johnson assist us as Deacons. And greeting you at the door will be Deniece and Larry Oster.

Our doors are open for

you to join us for Coffee, donuts and fellowship at 9:15 a.m., Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m. and Worship is at 10:50 a.m.

If you have any questions regarding our Worship Service, Isaiah 58, or if you just need someone to pray with you please call our office between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office will be closed, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The First Christian Church is located at 911 Goliad, Big Spring. The phone number is 432- 517-4821



"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6



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Reflections: A Star Wars Christmas

This has been a "Star Wars Christmas." The promotion surrounding the release of the latest Star Wars movie dominated the Christmas season. Entire aisles were dedicated to Star Wars toys: the Millennium Falcon, battle droids, lightsabers, Chewbacca, R2D2, C-3PO, and Yoda. Toys R Us offered Darth Vader and Storm Trooper cups for the older generation. Star Wars smashed all box office records raking in \$238 million on its opening weekend.

My oldest son was four when the first Star Wars movie premiered. He is now 42. Across the years, the characters have changed. Droids come and go (except for R2D2 and C3PO, who somehow survive). One theme remains constant in every Star Wars movie: the battle between evil and good, the Dark Side and the Light. The Force for good always triumphs. Good overcomes evil and hope remains.



BILL TINSLEY

It is the timeless theme of human history. The Dark Side represents tyranny, lust for power, absolute control, hate and revenge without regard

for the individual. The Light Side represents freedom, individuality, respect for persons, the value of life and love, sacrifice for the good of others and hope for the future. Perhaps this is one of the reasons Star Wars has "stuck around."

Star Wars is fiction. But the battle between good and evil is real. We see it all around us. With every news report: Paris, San Bernardino, the Boston bombing, 9/11, Sandy Hook, Columbine, Charleston, SC. Graft, greed, corruption, drugs, murder, abuse. The news media continually reports the darkness that seeks to overwhelm us.

This Christmas, thousands of family members will mourn the loss of loved ones who have been stolen away by the evil among us. More than 3,000 died in the Twin Towers, and thousands others have perished in senseless slayings, beheadings, and massacres around the world. In all of these cases we are left confused and hopeless unless we have "The Story" to help us.

"The Story" is the Christmas story. It is the defining story of good and evil, the reason Jesus was born. Jesus was sent as light to overcome the darkness. "In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." (John

1:4-5). Hundreds of years before He was born, Isaiah wrote, "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation might reach to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6). Jesus said, "This is the verdict, Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19).

Jesus was born into an evil and unjust world. King Herod sought to wipe out any threat to his throne by slaughtering the children of Bethlehem. Jesus was only spared by the wisdom of his stepfather Joseph, who fled with him to the distant deserts of Egypt after he was warned in a dream.

Unlike Star Wars, Jesus' triumph does not come by rallying others to rebellion and war. His triumph comes by overcoming evil with good, by refusing to curse those who cursed him, by enduring the cross and forgiving his tormentors. His triumph came through the Resurrection and the transformation of human hearts through faith in Him.

Bill Tinsley reflects on current events and life experience from a faith perspective. Email bill @ tinsleycenter.com.

Last minute holiday shopper? There's an app for that

ATLANTA (AP) — Procrastinators, rejoice. This year there are more apps and services than ever before to help last-minute shoppers.

Apps like Curbside deliver orders directly to the trunk of your car, more retailers are offering incentives to buy online and pick up in store, and Amazon Prime Now and other same-day delivery services have vastly expanded this year.

"In some sense, same-day delivery is going to become the new gift card," said Daphne Carmeli, CEO of Deliv which works with retailers to offer same-day delivery. "It used to be 'uh-oh, too late, here comes the gift card.' Now you've got two hours before the cutoff if you want something from national retailers."

That's good news as on-demand services have trained people to put off things until the last minute. This year, 44 percent of shoppers said they planned to wait until December or later to shop for holiday presents, up from 39 percent five years ago, according to Deloitte.

And as of Dec. 15, an NRF survey found the average holiday shopper has completed 53.5 percent of their shopping, up from 52.9 percent seen by that time last year. Only about 10 percent of those surveyed had finished shopping.

Jaron Waldman, CEO of Palo Alto based Curbside, said that

demand for the service, which delivers packages from stores like Target and Abercrombie & Fitch to the trunk of a shopper's car, has skyrocketed.

The service, which serves the Bay Area and Los Angeles in California and New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Chicago, is seeing about seven times the orders it did last year. Target, Best Buy, CVS and other retailers offer the service.

"It's definitely a way to shop to have the certainty you're not going to miss any kind of shipping window," Waldman said.

Target spokesman Eddie Baeb said the company has been pleased with results from Curbside and expanded the stores that offer the service from 20 in San Francisco last year to 120 stores, adding the New York, Chicago and Philadelphia areas this year.

The curbside delivery is "easier and more convenient, knowing how busy people are," at the last-minute, he said.

Other retailers are adding incentives so more people choose "buy online, pick up in store" options. For example, Macy's offered a \$10 e-gift card on a purchase

of \$50 or more when an online order is picked up in store via coupon aggregator RetailMeNot, said Brian Hoyt, RetailMeNot vice president of communications. The option lets retailers save on expedited shipping costs and cuts down time for last-minute shoppers, he said.

RetailMeNot's mobile app lets shoppers take advantage of last-minute deals in store too. The app uses a combination of GPS and WiFi signals to pull deals from stores you are in or nearby when you opt in.

"More consumers are using mobile devices versus desktop computers to shop, and that's opened the door to save not just online, but in-store as well," Hoyt said.

Those seeking deals on same-day delivery will find them, too. Shopify, which provides merchants with online checkout services, said last week that its retailers were partnering with Uber to provide free same-day delivery until Christmas Eve.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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on your dial Wednesday Service.....7:00 p.m.

Hoyer uses acupuncture during concussion recovery

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston quarterback Brian Hoyer has turned to acupuncture after suffering his second concussion in a month. Hoyer returned to practice on a limited basis on Wednesday, but remains in the league's protocol after suffering a concussion on Dec. 13 and is questionable for Sunday's game against Tennessee. Speaking to the media for the first time since then, he said he started seeing an acupuncturist after his first concussion on Nov. 16 and that he's continued to see the specialist since the second one. He believes it's helped

his recovery. "I think so," he said. "I'm a believer in doing anything that you think works. I've done a lot of stuff. That's one of the things I've done." Hoyer became a fan of acupuncture after his wife, Lauren, had a session when she was pregnant with their son Garrett, now 3. When she was 36 weeks pregnant the couple learned that the baby was breech. Doctors told her there was "no way this baby's flipping" and to prepare for a cesarean delivery. "My wife didn't want to have a C-section so she looked up alternative options and ac-

puncture happened to be one of them," Hoyer said. "We went up to this woman doctor. She put the needles in. They lit some roots and burned it. They had like yoga music on. I literally watched my wife's stomach shift." The couple visited her doctor the next day and learned that the baby had moved into the head-down position needed for a natural birth, he said. "Once I saw that, I believed acupuncture can do anything," Hoyer said. The 30-year-old Hoyer said he's visited the acupuncturist three or

four times since his first concussion and talked about where they place the needles. "Everywhere," he said. "With acupuncture it's all about the chi and stuff like that ... when I go in, you don't really feel it so I don't really necessarily know. A lot of times when I leave I feel really good. So I believe in it." He has also spent time in a hyperbaric chamber and used an app called BrainHQ, which the company says is a brain training system built and tested by neuroscientists, to aid in his recovery. "So basically anything

I deem through the research that can help, that's what I've been trying to do," Hoyer said. Hoyer admitted that he was worried about receiving two concussions so close together, but said he is confident that the team and the doctors he is working with will do what's best for his health. "With any concussion you're going to be concerned so for me I don't take it lightly, I do a lot of research," he said. "I talk to a lot of people who are highly respected in the area. I talk to people that I trust who have gone through the situation and then you

make the best educated decision. And like I said for me the way I feel, I feel good and now the doctors are basically evaluating that and ... I respect their opinion and the process." Coach Bill O'Brien didn't provide many details when asked if the team expects backup Brandon Weeden to play on Sunday. "As we go through the week we'll determine that, some of that has to do with Brian Hoyer and his ability to be cleared," O'Brien said. "We're still working through all those things."

Wait pays off, Moore preps for 1st start with Cowboys

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Kellen Moore faced Buffalo in the preseason when he was with Detroit, so Bills coach Rex Ryan already had an impression of the Dallas quarterback going into his first career start. "First thing that jumps out at you, he's a little bitty dude," Ryan said. "You're expecting these big 6-5 dudes and here's a guy that's 6-foot. Then he's throwing with the wrong hand."



Dallas Cowboys quarterback Kellen Moore warms up on the field before a game against the Atlanta Falcons on Sept. 27 in Arlington, Texas.

Moore on waivers and managed to get him back on the practice squad. Then came Romo's second injury, and Moore became Cassel's backup. Coach Jason Garrett went to Moore in the second quarter against the Jets. Cassel threw an interception on a pass that was so far from any Dallas receiver that he got an intentional grounding penalty, and he was replaced the series after taking a 19-yard sack. Moore threw an interception on his second career pass and had three overall, including one in the end zone with a chance to extend a 10-9 lead.

gets to seven on seven, better when he gets to 11 on 11," Garrett said. "And I think that's probably what his career has been all about." With Linehan running the offense, the Cowboys didn't take long grabbing Moore after he was released by the Lions at the end of the preseason. "He knows what he can't do," Linehan said. "His self-awareness is unbelievable. You look at some guys and say, 'Well, he looks like a pro football player.' You might not say that if you walked through the halls and didn't know him."

Ryan went on to say some of the same things others do about the left-handed Moore: accurate, poised, smart. But the first impression is always the same, and perhaps explains better than anything why Moore waited almost four years — most of that with the Lions — for his first regular-season snap in the NFL.

have to move in the pocket to see things. Some of us shorter guys find ways to get it done." Dallas offensive coordinator Scott Linehan was in Detroit in 2012 when the Lions signed the undrafted Moore out of Boise State, where he finished among career leaders in yards passing, touchdown throws and total offense. Moore always got plenty of work in the preseason, but never in a game that counted. This year has probably been as good an illustration as

any. The 26-year-old joined the Dallas practice squad in September, before the signing of Tony Romo's two broken left collarbones. When the first injury sidelined Romo for seven games, Moore was the backup to Brandon Weeden for two weeks while Cassel learned the offense following the trade that brought him from Buffalo. Once Cassel was ready, Moore was bumped to third team. And just before Romo came back, the Cowboys put

Moore on waivers and managed to get him back on the practice squad. Then came Romo's second injury, and Moore became Cassel's backup. Coach Jason Garrett went to Moore in the second quarter against the Jets. Cassel threw an interception on a pass that was so far from any Dallas receiver that he got an intentional grounding penalty, and he was replaced the series after taking a 19-yard sack. Moore threw an interception on his second career pass and had three overall, including one in the end zone with a chance to extend a 10-9 lead. But he gave the Cowboys that lead by beating a blitz with a quick throw in the flat to Dez Bryant, and led a drive to a tying field goal in the final two minutes before the Jets went the other way for the win. "I remember seeing him at the Senior Bowl and I remember the impression was only OK when throwing routes on air, better when he gets to one on ones, better when he

Moore never really stopped to consider whether that impression would keep from ever taking a snap in the regular season. "I think you just kind of stay ready and that's the way you've got to approach it," he said. "If that opportunity ever came, you've got to be ready. And fortunate for me, we have that here." The 1,318-day wait finally ended last weekend. NOTES: Bryant missed practice Wednesday because of soreness in his surgically repaired right foot. ... WR Cole Beasley (illness) and CB Morris Claiborne (hamstring) also didn't practice.

Giants punter Brad Wing says Beckham was threatened Sunday

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — New York Giants punter Brad Wing says Odell Beckham Jr. was threatened by an unidentified bat-wielding man dressed in Carolina Panthers sweatshirt during pre-game warmups Sunday. Wing said the man refused to shake Beckham's hand after it was offered near midfield, and later crossed onto the Giants' side of the field with the bat in hand. "I'll be the reason this will be your last game," Wing recalled the man saying. Wing talked about the incident for the first time with the media on Wednesday. Wing's account came just hours before appeals officer James Thrash upheld Beckham's one-game NFL suspension for multiple violations of player safety rules in Sunday's game. Beckham was flagged for three personal fouls in Carolina's 38-35 win, including one for a

helmet-to-helmet hit on Panthers cornerback Josh Norman, with whom he tangled repeatedly in the game. Panthers coach Ron Rivera said the team has used the baseball bat as a prop all season. He insisted reports that some players taunted Beckham with physical threats and homophobic slurs were not true. Rivera spoke to practice squad player Marcus Ball, who was seen carrying the bat before the game, but the defensive back denied any of the accusations. In hindsight, Wing said Beckham's actions during the game probably were influenced by the pre-game run-in with the unidentified man, who Wing believed was a practice squad player. Wing said Beckham was going through his normal pre-game routine, which includes some dancing, when the problem developed.

Rick Carlisle keeps new-look Mavs relevant

The NBA's un-chameleon franchise is in its fifth season of turning over almost the entire roster as a way of staying lean for its rabid -- and mostly failed -- pursuit of star free agents. Every season, it feels like a house of cards. And every season, the Mavericks win games -- enough to stay in the thick of the playoff race. These Mavs felt more fragile than ever. The Jordan fiasco left a mushy defense with out a rim protector, and the two max-level free agents Dallas has snagged since that glorious 2011 title run, Chandler Parsons and Wesley Matthews, were coming off injuries that ruin ca-

reers. If their season started poorly, the Mavs would have had some incentive to tank. They owe Boston a top-seven protected pick from the Rajon Rondo trade, and skeptics around the league predicted they might engage "Tank Mode" if they sputtered early. Mark Cuban, the team's owner, even declared publicly during the window in which Jordan appeared to be a Mav that Dallas had been prepared to tank, had he rejected them. But here the Mavericks are: 16-13, fifth in the confused West, nudging against the top 10 in both points scored and points allowed per possession. The Mavs have no choice now but to go all-out for a playoff spot -- a best-case scenario in which they cough up, say, the No. 18 pick to Boston, get that pain out of the way and move forward. It's unlikely they'll fashion a contender again during Nowitzki's twilight, but the annual reinvention is remarkable. So how

do the Mavs keep doing it? The simple answer, at least on offense, is that Nowitzki's ageless shooting and head coach Rick Carlisle's warlock genius can apparently carry any veteran supporting cast to roughly 45 wins. It was unclear how the Mavs would remold their offense after letting Tyson Chandler walk -- again. Chandler rolling for lob dunks, four shooters spotting up around him, was the fulcrum of a fun-and-gun pre-Rondo system that was on record pace last season. It turns out, Dallas needed a slight recalibration, rather than a total overhaul. The team traded a few pick-and-rolls for more intricate pieces of five-man basketball chess: classic Carlisle "flow" sets, with Pachulia and Nowitzki helping the elbows and a whirl of on-ball and off-ball screens unfolding around them. Only three teams have set more on-ball screens, and only five have nailed oppo-

picks, per SportVU data. The offense has been a perfect fit for Pachulia, a cinder block screener and expert passer who has saved the Mavs' season after Dallas stole him from the Bucks for practically nothing. It helps that most of the Mavericks' core lineups sport four capable 3-point shooters. Opposing defenses have to honor everyone; one good shooter screening for another creates a special kind of panic. The Mavs have collected smart players who read the game in snapshots, guys who can improvise an off-ball screening ballet and understand how to cut against the defense's expectations. They keep you guessing all over the floor until someone breaks. Both Raymond Felton and Deron Williams have revitalized their drive-and-kick games in contract years. Predictably, Matthews struggled early, but he's starting to find his footing. He ripped 10 3s against the Wizards two weeks



Taylor Ellis

ODELL

Continued from Page 9

"We got to the 50 and there was a guy dressed in warmup clothes, not in football gear, and he was kind of looking at Odell and Odell was still dancing around and went to shake his hand.

And the guy just looked at his hand and didn't go to shake his hand," said Wing, who was a teammate of Beckham's at LSU.

Beckham and the man exchanged words, the punter said.

Beckham was returning to his pre-game warmup when the player crossed the 50-yard line and walked to the 40 or

35-yard line on the Giants' side of the 50, carrying a bat, Wing said. He added that Beckham and the unidentified player exchanged words, with the second-year Giants receiver several times asking the man why he wasn't playing.

Wing had no problem remembering the response Beckham got from the bat-carrying

player.

"I'll be the reason you don't play," Wing repeated, adding there was a threatening nature to the statement. The player never swung the bat, Wing said.

"It was there. It was present in the situation, so I guess..." Wing said. "I don't know. He had a baseball bat. We're on a football field and he had

a baseball bat."

Wing and some game officials stepped between the players, and sent the unidentified Panther back to his side of the field.

The incident lasted less than a minute, Wing said.

Reports surfaced that Beckham was subjected to homophobic comments during the en-

counter. Wing said he could not recall hearing any, adding there was a lot of back and forth exchange and he did not hear it all.

"The only thing I can remember clearly is what was said to him about he would be the reason that Odell he didn't play today and other days," Wing said.

MAVS

Continued from Page 9

ago, and he is rediscovering his mean-spirited post-up game.

The Mavs don't drive or dunk as much as they did with Chandler vacuuming up space, but some of the big-picture results are the same: the most catch-and-shoot jumpers in the league, lots of 3s and killer ball movement. There is something Hawksonian about the post-Chandler Mavericks. They won't beat themselves, either; they have the second-lowest turnover rate in the league, the happy result of loading up on savvy veterans and building around a jump-shooter.

There is still room for improvement. Dallas has canned just 34 percent of wide-open 3s, the third-worst mark in the league, per SportVU data. If that changes, the offense could really start humming. Devin Harris has underperformed, the Matthews-Parsons pairing hasn't worked yet, and Parsons' minutes limit has prevented Carlisle from deploying him much as a small-ball power forward while Nowitzki sits.

Then there is Nowitzki, still the keystone for everything this team is on and off the floor. Historically great shooting from a 7-footer who sets more screens than almost

anyone has been an uncrackable code for two decades. Drop off of Dirk to corral a ball-handler, and it's high-arching death from deep. Stick close to Nowitzki in fear of that pick-and-pop jumper, and some Dallas ball-handler is bolting into the lane -- with passing options galore.

The Mavs are slow, shallow and ground-bound defensively. Their scheme is vanilla: Dallas drops back against the pick-and-roll to wall off the paint and force midrange jumpers. The Mavs will let you drive and kick to a 3-point shooter, so long as that shooter is all the way across the court -- far enough that Dallas can scamper over to him while the ball is in the air.

It's a sound scheme, but it feels at times like it's held together by Scotch tape. Teams aren't taking the midrange

mark in the league, per NBA Savant tracking. Team officials wince at every open 3, fearing it will trigger the reversal of fortune they know is coming. If you can get near the basket against the Mavs, you'll probably score. They have no rim protection; enemies are shooting almost 62 percent in the restricted area, one of the highest marks in the league.

The Mavericks have a cardinal rule: Only the center is allowed to crash the offensive glass. Everyone else has to run back on defense. As a result, Dallas is dead last in offensive rebounding, but opponents are still sprinting to nearly 15 fast-break points per game -- one of the highest marks in the league. Dallas' low turnover rate might help the defense as much as the offense. If the game descends into the fast-paced chaos of

live-ball turnovers, Dallas will lose. Explosive athleticism trumps smarts when the game gets too fast.

The Mavs seem prone to regression on defense, especially as the schedule -- easy so far, though heavy on road games -- brings on better competition. But they have banked enough wins in an unsteady conference that they should make the playoffs, provided they stay healthy.

That's nice, but it doesn't answer the larger question: Can the Mavs build something that lasts?

The answer depends almost entirely on Matthews and Parsons. If they get back to peak form, the Mavs have an in-their-prime wing duo around Nowitzki that might (finally) attract a stud free agent. Dallas has several paths to max cap space around Nowitzki, Parsons and Matthews, and

depending on some variables, the team might be able to use that space and then re-sign at least one of Williams and Pachulia via its Bird rights. (Williams' situation is tricky. Assuming he declines his player option, the Mavs will have only limited form of Bird rights on him. Long story short: If Williams wants a fat raise, Dallas will need to use cap space. Dwight Powell is also a restricted free agent, though subject to special salary constraints.)

Still, the downside is severe. The Dirk era will end at some point, and the Mavs haven't prepared for it as thoroughly as one would like. But this season is another reminder that as long as Dirk and Carlisle are here, we should never underestimate Dallas. They just win.

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HERALD



Full-Moon Christmas

A full moon on Christmas day -- beautiful! This spectacular lunar event will happen in the sign of home and hearth: Cancer. If you're home for Christmas, this will be the warmest, most exceptionally drama-free holiday you could ever hope for! Here's what to expect: love, love and more love. Merry Christmas!

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll bring tangible gifts to the loved ones in your life. Also, the unique way you see each person is a gift and this will be reflected in how you interact with those near.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The joy in your heart will be released in each and every interaction of the day. Good manners rule as you mix and mingle with the ones you love. En-

thusiasm will spread. **GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). You will look for (and you will find) the brightest potential in each person you meet. The magic that happens later is something to celebrate -- they will rise to embody your vision.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll have some of your favorite accidents today. Enjoy this convergence of good intentions, wild hearts, peaceful backdrops and generous benefactors.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). While children revel in the spirit of the holiday, the elders may need more attention than you would have thought. You'll forget yourself and be mindful of everyone else, but that will be a state of bliss for you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your personal wants are few, and they will be fulfilled in the early parts of the day. After that, what you'll need most is the spirit of mercy, and you will bestow her gifts gen-

erously into the night. **LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll wake up one person and go to sleep as someone else. Your world is a beautiful storm today and it will change everything. Everywhere you look there is something interesting to capture and twist your attention.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your version of the holiday spirit will center on elders and asking to hear stories of years gone by. These yesterday tidings will be important for generations to come.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Thoughtful, useful feedback is the best gift imaginable. You'll have plenty of this and you'll revel in the excitement. Your allies are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There is beauty in silence; some would even call it sacred. Can you hold a space open for someone who desperately needs that room? Maybe that

someone is you. **AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). How do you feel about singing? For better or worse, it will unify the crowd. Tonight: Those around you will feel warm and secure in your love, especially Gemini and Libra.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The one with your best interests at heart will come around and fulfill some of those interests. This is a dream come true for you. Go on and prepare your acceptance speech!

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 25). When the light shines on you it also illuminates someone close to you, which will make you so happy! Your alliances will keep you productive and profitable through February. The spring is for investing in your dreams. Someone close will seek refuge in your company in June. What you do for your family, you do for yourself. Aries and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers

are: 20, 2, 4, 44 and 18.

WEEKEND LOVE FORECAST: **ARIES:** Instead of putting your best foot forward, you'll put your real foot forward and everyone will love that foot (and all that's attached to it). **TAURUS:** Your love will shine, radiate and infect (in a good way). **GEMINI:** When you make up your mind to love someone, it stays made up. **CANCER:** The Chinese proverb suggests that you keep your broken arm inside your sleeve. **LEO:** You'll find magic under the mistletoe. **VIRGO:** There are many who think of you, and their good wishes give you luck in the moments you need it most. **LIBRA:** You're sorry about the way you treated a certain someone -- forgive yourself. It wasn't that bad, actually. Move on. **SCORPIO:** You'll do exactly what you are ready for -- nothing more, nothing less. **SAGITTARIUS:** Play it cool; don't rush. Don't introduce

anyone to your parents just because it's the holidays. **CAPRICORN:** Your expensive tastes will meet a qualified wallet. **AQUARIUS:** Give all information on a need-to-know basis. **PISCES:** You're the apple of someone's eye and that "someone" is likely an Aries, Leo or Sagittarius.

COUPLE OF THE WEEKEND: The tie between Libra and Capricorn is complicated. Both have expensive taste. Both want the finest that life has to offer. Libra will get there through keen discernment, Capricorn through the learning that comes with hard work. Capricorn is the sign of methodical efforts and steady progress, while Libra favors dreams dropped from on high. When they connect in the middle? Bliss.

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Annie's Mailbox

Dear Readers: Merry Christmas. We hope you are fortunate enough to be with family and friends today. For the past few years, we have printed the annual PNC Christmas Price Index, which we find interesting and amusing. Start singing:

"The Twelve Days of Christmas"

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree (cost: \$189.99 for the pear tree and \$25 for the partridge, an increase of 3.5 percent, mostly for the partridge).

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me, two turtledoves (\$290, an increase of 11.5 percent) and another partridge in a pear tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me, three French hens (\$181.50, same as last year), another two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, four calling birds (\$599.96, no change), another three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, five gold rings (\$750,

amazingly, the same price three years in a row), four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, six geese-a-laying (\$360, no increase), five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, seven swans-a-swimming (\$13,125, pricey, but the same as last year after the cost was revised to reflect open market pricing), six geese-a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, eight maids-a-milking (\$58, still, sigh, at minimum wage), seven swans-a-swimming, six geese-a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, nine ladies dancing (\$7,552.84, same as last year), eight maids-a-milking, seven swans-a-swimming, six geese-a-

laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the 10th day of Christmas my true love gave to me, 10 lords-a-leaping (\$5,508.70, a 3 percent salary hike), nine ladies dancing, eight maids-a-milking, seven swans-a-swimming, six geese-a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the 11th day of Christmas my true love gave to me, 11 pipers piping (\$2,635.20, same as before), 10 lords-a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids-a-milking, seven

swans-a-swimming, six geese-a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me, 12 drummers drumming (\$2,854.50, no increase), 11 pipers piping, 10 lords-a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids-a-milking, seven swans-a-swimming, six geese-a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtledoves and a partridge in a pear tree.

The cumulative cost of these gifts would be \$155,407.18, mostly due to those expensive swans. If you buy online,

the cost would be \$196,477.70. Have a happy holiday.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to anniesmailbox@creators.com, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 737 3rd Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. You can also find Annie on Facebook at Facebook.com/AskAnnie. 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.

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Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Bidding Quiz

Your partner opens with Two Notrump (20-21 points), and the next player passes, both sides vulnerable. What would you bid with each of the following five hands?

- ♠ J65 ♥ Q63 ♦ J732 ♣ J54
- ♠ KJ8 ♥ J32 ♦ AQ6 ♣ Q952
- ♠ KJ8543 ♥ 652 ♦ 74 ♣ 82
- ♠ KJ2 ♥ Q964 ♦ J85 ♣ AJ3
- ♠ Q74 ♥ Q1062 ♦ K953 ♣ 92

1. **Pass.** In addition to showing 20 or 21 points, partner's bid indicates a balanced hand with strength in all suits. It could therefore be argued that since the combined holding might contain 26 points, you should raise partner to three notrump.

However, another factor must also be considered, namely that partner will have trouble reaching dummy to take whatever finesse he might need. This lack of communication with dummy is apt to prove troublesome even if partner has a 21-point hand. While it is true that a combined holding of 26 points usually produces a satisfactory play for game, this is rarely the case when one player holds practically all of the high cards.

2. **Six notrump.** This is merely a matter of arithmetic. Partner's 20 or 21 points added to your 13 bring the combined holding to at least 33, the amount ordinarily required for a small slam with two balanced hands. You should therefore bid six without

further ado.

3. **Four spades.** High-card points are of course not the only criterion in judging the probability of game. Here you have only four points in high cards, but your six-card suit is worth several points more. Five or six tricks are likely to be taken with this hand if spades are trump. There is no point in bidding three spades, since you don't plan to pass a three-notrump bid by partner. Similarly, if you play Jacoby Transfers, you would bid three hearts to force partner to bid three spades, and then raise him to game.

4. **Four notrump.** This bid is simply a raise in notrump suggesting the possibility of a slam, and has nothing whatever to do with Blackwood. Partner should pass with a minimum, and bid six with a maximum. Holding 12 points, you can't tell whether the combined point count is 32 or 33, and the four-notrump bid expresses that uncertainty.

5. **Three clubs.** Even though you have a hand suitable for notrump play and enough points to make a game in notrump, you should check via Stayman to see if partner has four hearts. Your doubleton club may prove to be a key factor in making four hearts when three notrump might fail. If partner bids three spades or three diamonds (no four-card major), you will of course retreat to three notrump.

Tomorrow: There's only one right play.

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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.

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

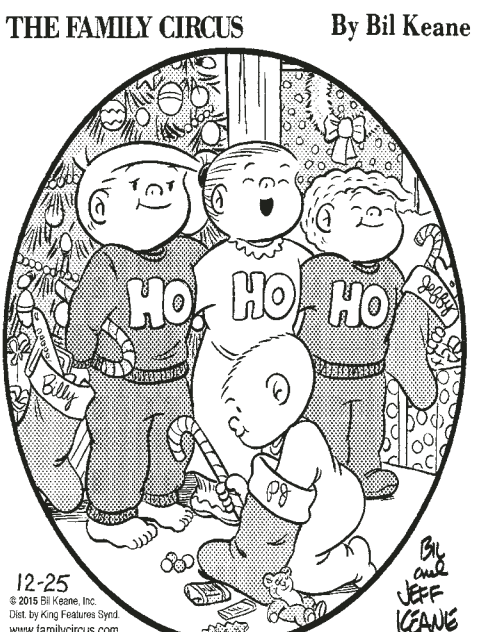
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	KMID (3) Midland	UNI (4) Spanish	KPEJ (5) Odessa	KOSA (7) Odessa	KTLE (8) Telemundo	KWES (9) Midland	KMLM (12) Odessa	KPBT (13) Odessa	KWWT (14) Odessa	KWES2 (15) Midland	WTBS (33) Atlanta	TNT (34) Atlanta	ESPN (35) Sports	ESPN2 (36) Sports	FSN (38) Sports	USA (55) New York	A&E (58) New York	DISC (60) Discovery	
5:PM :30	Cavaliers at Warriors	Hotel Notic.	Big Bang	News CBS	Tele Noticiero	News	Zola Lev.	Grand Mercer	CHiPs	American American	Movie: A Christmas Story (DVS)	Story (DVS)	SportsCenter	SportCtr College Basketball	Tailgate Big 12	NCIS (DVS)	What Would	Gold Rush	
6:PM :30	Wheel	Muchacha	Mod Fam Big Bang	News ET	Caso Car-rado	News	M:25 All About	PBS News-Hour	M*A*S*H	Fam. Guy	Movie: The Blind Side, Quinton Aaron (DVS)	Movie: Four Christmases (DVS)	NBA Basketball: Spurs at Rockets	College Basketball	Texans Mavericks	NCIS (DVS)	What Would	Gold Rush	
7:PM :30	CMA Country Christmas	Antes Muerta que	MasterChef	Andy Griffith	Celia (SS)	Undate	Upd	Wash Danube	Griffith	Fam. Guy	Movie: Erin Brockovich, Aaron Eckhart	Movie: The Blind Side, Quinton Aaron (DVS)	NBA Basketball: Spurs at Rockets	College Basketball	Rangers Top	NCIS (42) NCIS	What Would	Gold Rush: Pay Dirt	
8:PM :30	20/20	Creo/los Hombres	First Baptist	Blue Bloods	Bajo el Mismo Cielo	Dateline NBC	Best of Light of the Southwest	Call the Mid-wife Holiday	Mama's Heroes	Whose? Seinfeld	Movie: Happy Gilmore, Julie Bowen	Movie: Erin Brockovich, Aaron Eckhart	NBA Basketball: Clippers at Lakers	SportsCenter	Rangers Top	(9:50) NCIS	What Would	Alaskan Bush	
9:PM :30	First Baptist	Impacto	Mod Fam	News	Tele	News	Upd	Charlie Rose	C. Burnett	Cougar	Movie: Happy Gilmore, Julie Bowen	Movie: Erin Brockovich, Aaron Eckhart	NBA Basketball: Clippers at Lakers	SportsCenter	Rangers Top	(9:50) NCIS	What Would	Alaskan Bush	
10:PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Contacto Deportivo	How I Met Cleveland	Late Show-Colbert	Bajo el Mismo Cielo	Tonight Show	Messiah	World (Off Air)	T. Smiley	McCloud	Commun	Commun	Hawaii Five-0	SportsCenter	NBA Basketball: Clippers at Lakers	Big 12 No-Huddle	(11:56) NCIS	What Would	Alaskan Bush
11:PM :30	Nightline	Corona de lágrimas	Faith	Insider	Pagado	(07) Today	Best of Light of the Southwest	Gallery	King	Movie: Hot Tub Time	Hawaii Five-0	Movie: Hot Tub Time	SportsCenter	Big 12 No-Huddle	(12:59) NCIS	What Would	Gold Rush: Pay Dirt		

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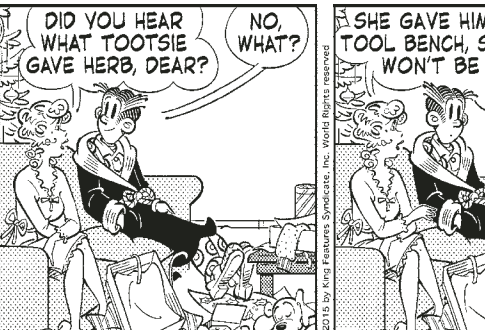
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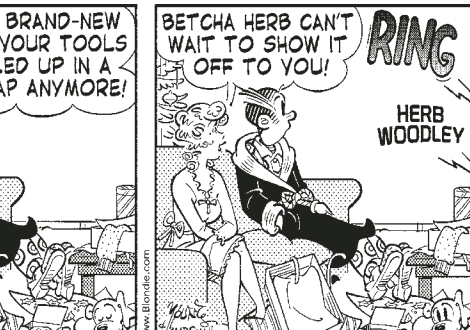
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"MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

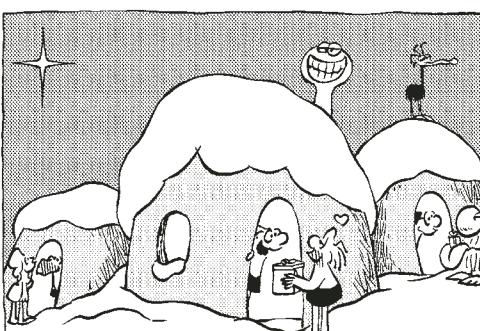
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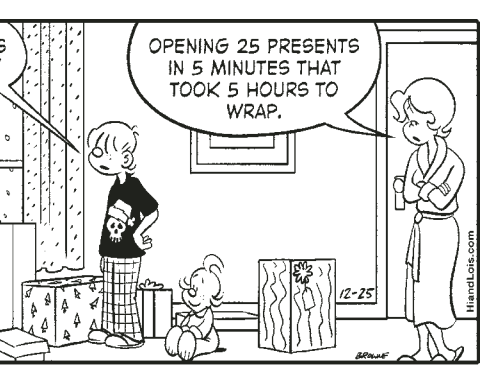
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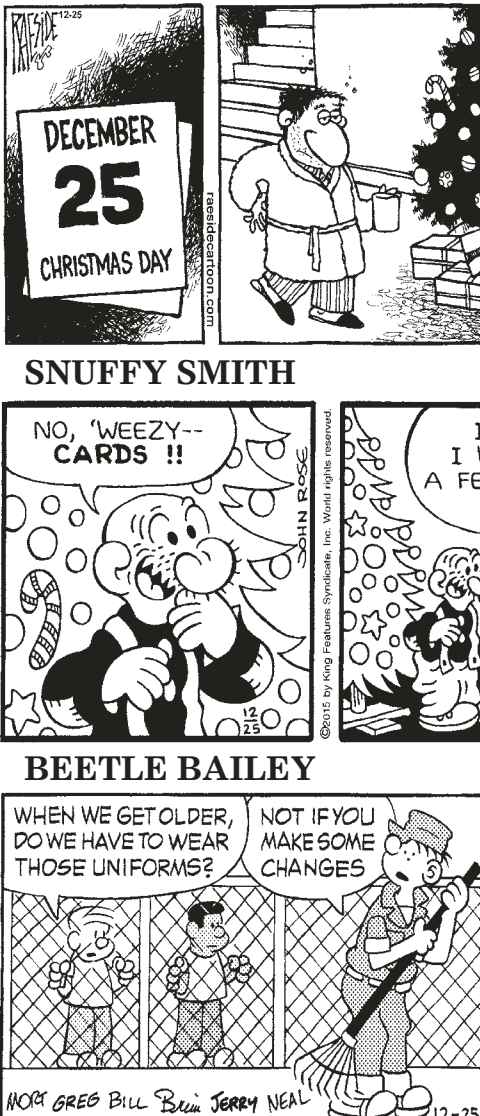
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WHEN WE GET OLDER...



WHAT CHANGES?



This Date In History

Today is Friday, Dec. 25, the 359th day of 2015. There are six days left in the year. This is Christmas Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 25, 1818, "Silent Night (Stille Nacht)" was publicly performed for the first time during the Christmas Midnight Mass at the Church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorf, Austria.

On this date:

In 1066, William the Conqueror was crowned king of England.

In 1776, Gen. George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River for a surprise attack against Hessian forces at Trenton, New Jersey.

In 1915, the Irving Berlin musical revue "Stop! Look! Listen!" (featuring the song "I Love a Piano") opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 105 performances.

In 1926, Hirohito became emperor of Japan, succeeding his father, Emperor Yoshihito.

In 1931, New York's Metropolitan Opera broadcast an entire live opera over radio for the first time: "Hansel and Gretel" by Engelbert Humperdinck.

In 1940, the Rodgers & Hart musical "Pal Joey" opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 374 performances.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII formally announced the upcoming convocation of the Second Vatican Council, which opened in Oct. 1962.

In 1973, "The Sting," starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford as a pair of 1930s grifters, was released by Universal Pictures.

In 1989, ousted Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo) and his wife, Elena, were executed following a popular uprising. Former baseball manager Billy Martin, 61, died in a traffic accident near Binghamton, New York.

In 1990, the World Wide Web was born in Geneva, Switzerland, as computer scientists Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau (KAH'-yoh) created the world's first hyper-linked webpage.

In 1991, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev went on television to announce his resignation as the eighth and final leader of a communist superpower that had already gone out of existence.

In 1995, singer Dean Martin died at his Beverly Hills home at age 78.

Ten years ago: Pope Benedict XVI marked his first Christmas as pontiff, calling for concrete actions to back up "signs of hope" in the Middle East and urging peace in Darfur, Sudan and the Korean peninsula. Opera singer Birgit Nilsson died in her native Sweden at age 87.

One year ago: The black comedy "The Interview" opened in 331 locations in the U.S., culminating in the truly unprecedented move by a major studio to release a film in theaters and on digital platforms simultaneously.

Thought for Today:
"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly."
Andy Rooney
CBS News commentator (1919-2011).

Answer to previous puzzle

ALAS	LETIN	JUTS
DEFY	EMOTE	ETON
DARN	AIDES	ZARA
SHOOT	FROM	THEHIP
NAY	SOB	
SATYR	JAG	RECAP
TRIM	FALLIN	LOVE
ART	SOMEONE	BOA
GOLF	COURSE	ERIC
SWEAR	PTS	BLADE
CUP	AFL	
BASEBALL	IN	FIELD
OREO	SAINT	PLEA
SELF	TONTO	SLAW
HALF	ASTON	ESPN

12/25/15

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Came to
 - 6 Lister's shortcut
 - 10 Apple products
 - 14 Potential legislation
 - 15 "I'm not listening to you!"
 - 16 Provider of King David Lounges
 - 17 Make pricier at auctions
 - 18 Possible MBA major
 - 19 Mutation location
 - 20 Like kids in kindergarten classes
 - 22 Where church aisles end
 - 23 Devoted fan
 - 24 Rap music
 - 26 Cheerless
 - 30 Four-legged friend
 - 32 Velocity
 - 33 False show
 - 35 Vast number
 - 39 Hidrógeno/oxígeno compound
 - 40 Large biotech company
 - 42 Do just right
 - 43 Nation near Fiji
 - 45 Order choices
 - 46 Centers of pride
 - 47 Checkups, for instance
 - 49 "As if!"
 - 51 Top of a tank
 - 54 NASA spacewalk
 - 55 Wise to
 - 56 The Daily Beast and Slate
 - 63 Outer limit
 - 64 "That's a surprise!"
- DOWN
- 1 '70s Swedish supergroup
 - 2 Bridesmaids star
 - 3 ___ Tyme (quaint)
 - 4 Model judging on America's Got Talent
 - 5 Felipe VI's land
 - 6 Opt for
 - 7 Racer's gauge
 - 8 Shower gel additive
 - 9 Maritime cry
 - 10 Sound boosters
 - 11 Letter in
 - 16 Across' logo
 - 12 Childish comeback
 - 13 Be dormant
 - 21 Midwest oil center
 - 25 Merkel, to herself
 - 26 "Dam it!"
 - 27 Shakespearean platter
 - 28 Bewilder
 - 29 Paltry nature
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Make living a healthy lifestyle a priority



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Living a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be a daunting task. There are many products available to help make the process easier. There is no time like the present to make your body a priority and it's no secret that good health can have an undeniably positive impact on quality of life.

Whether you are looking for the perfect workout outfit, accessories or equipment, or revamping your kitchen appliances to accommodate a new diet, JCPenney has everything you need to refresh your diet and exercise regimen no matter your budget.

Find more products like these to aid you in your quest to live a healthier lifestyle at JCPenney and jcpenny.com.

Find Comfort in Every Situation

Snuggle up in softness whether you're on the move or just relaxing with this Xersion Long Sleeve Cowlneck Hooded Fleece Pullover. Perfect for those trips to the gym or a jog around the block or neighborhood, the anti-pilling finish helps keep fleece smooth and comfortable, and thumbholes help keep the sleeves in place while you're on the go. Available for \$30 in three colors, the pullover also features a kangaroo

pocket to warm your hands and protect your belongings.

Unlock Hidden Nutrition in Food

Now you can have the power to unlock food's hidden nutrition in the comfort of your own home. The NutriBullet Blender, which retails for \$135, is ideal for milling grains, grinding fresh herbs and chopping nuts with a flat stainless steel blade that never needs sharpening. Complete with a power base, both tall and short cups, an extractor blade and pocket nutritionist, the blender makes it easy to keep your healthy eating goals on track.

Add Personality to Your Workouts

An all-over print adds a pop of personality to workout wear, such as these performance-ready Xersion Print Capris. The tight compression fit provides added comfort during workouts while Quick-Dri moisture-wicking fabric helps keep you dry and won't irritate your skin. Retailing for \$44, the capris come in five vibrant color patterns and feature a credit card pocket in the waistband so you can easily take everything you need with you.

Say Goodbye to Calorie Counting

Say goodbye to exercise journals and calorie counting with the iFit Vue Fitness Tracker. The rechargeable active band is an all-day fitness tracker that takes the stress out of keeping up with your goals while motivating your climb toward fitness. Retailing for \$140, the SmartSense technology automatically detects every movement, step and calorie burned. An easy-to-read touchscreen display with onscreen notifications allows you to track your progress and easily scroll through goals and activities.

Pick Portable Training Tools

Built for durability and comfort, this Stamina Doorway

Trainer Plus is the ultimate training tool to strengthen and develop your shoulders, back and arms with five grip positions to help you build and tone upper body muscles with pull-ups, triceps dips, push-ups and sit-ups. The trainer, which retails for \$85 and holds up to 250 pounds, fits most sturdy, standard doorways with trim and attaches and removes easily from the doorframe so you can take your workout with you.

Don't Forget About Your Feet

Whether running errands or working out at the gym, the right shoe can make all the difference. The Nike Flex Experience Run 4 Women's Running Shoe offers lightweight flexibility, mid-foot support and plush comfort that can help make even the most mundane of tasks less stressful on your feet. Flex grooves provide a smooth, efficient ride and a mesh collar and tongue enhance breathability. Available for \$75, these running shoes are the ideal trainer for everyday use.

Keep Your Mind and Body Focused

A favorite of yoga studio owners because of its length and thickness, this Deluxe Yoga Mat features a gripping design to keep it in place while allowing you to keep your mind focused on the physical task at hand. Available in 18 colors and retailing for \$24, the durable, one-quarter-inch foam provides added joint comfort and support and absorbs moisture, making it easy for you to take advantage of the physical benefits associated with yoga.

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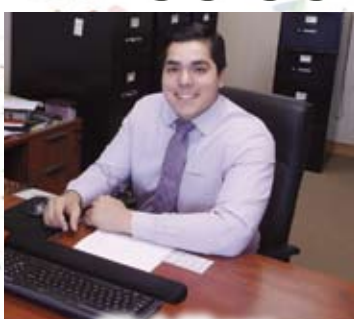
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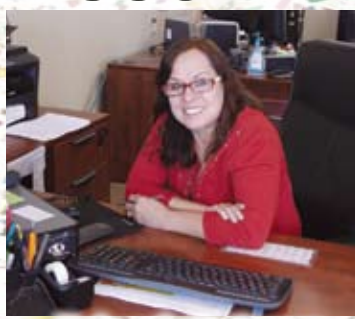
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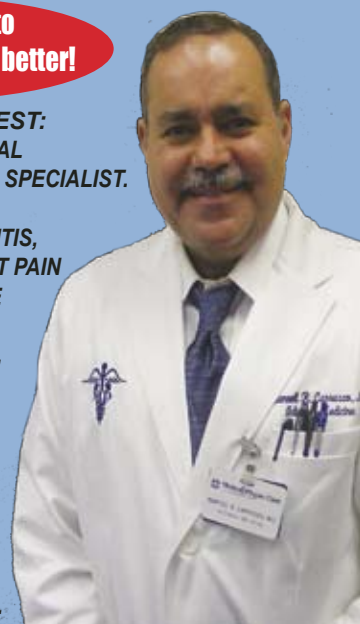
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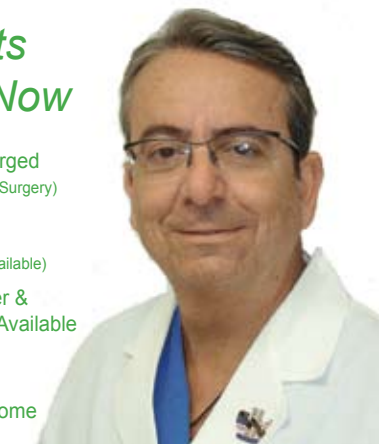
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