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BIG SPRING HERALD

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2016



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Oh Christmas tree, what to do with thee?

By **STEVE REAGAN**
 Staff Writer

They're a shining symbol of the Christmas season one day, a headache and potential fire hazard the next.

A problem many residents face each year with the end of the holiday is just what to do with their live Christmas

trees. Keeping them in the living room or den isn't an option, but dumping them in the alley isn't either — they'll just sit there, becoming drier and more fire-prone.

But there is a solution, and the best part is, it's free.

Starting Tuesday, you can take your live trees to the city-county landfill, and staff

at the landfill will take them off your hands for no charge. The offer is good through Saturday, January 14, said Johnny Womack, public works director for the city of Big Spring.

"We'll put them in our tree pile, then grind them down in February," Womack said.

The old trees will have a

second life of sorts, Womack noted — wood chips recovered after the grinding process will be used at the landfill and city parks for erosion control and water conservation.

Whatever you do, Womack added, don't put your discarded trees in a dumpster or in the alley.

"We are really encouraging people to bring their trees out to the landfill, and not dump them in the alley where they'd be a fire hazard," he said.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 432-263-7331, ext. 235, or email reporter@big-springherald.com

Deadline for Man/Woman of Year application nearing

By **LYNDEL MOODY**
 Staff Writer

Only two weeks are left to turn in a nomination form for the Big Spring Area Chamber 2016 Man and Woman of the Year.

"We are looking for people who are consistently contributing to our community — doing things behind the scenes — not for recognition or even a pat on the back but to make our community a better place to live," explained Debbye ValVerde, Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce executive director. "We want to honor those people, these silent leaders for what they do for our community."

The honor is given to one man and one woman each year at the annual Chamber Banquet set for Feb. 7.

See **HONOR**, Page 3



HERALD photo/Roger Cline

Volunteers dish up ham, sweet potatoes, casserole, pinto beans, cornbread, and pie for holiday diners at the Salvation Army's Community Christmas Dinner Friday.

Windbreak seedlings are now available at SWCD

Special to the Herald

Howard Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is now taking orders for evergreen and hardwood seedlings which can be used as windbreak plants.

Each year thousands of regionally adapted seedlings are grown from seed by West Texas Nursery — Texas A&M Forest Service in Idalou. The agency's primary objective is to produce and sell quality seedlings at an affordable price for landowners, allowing them to plant large quantities of trees for windbreaks.

"What is a windbreak?"

A windbreak consists of trees and shrubs systematically planted adjacent to fields, homesteads, or feedlots as a barrier to reduce or redirect the wind. They create protection and habitat for wildlife, reduce erosion, and increase land value and aesthetics.

They are established where production ends and homesteads begin, and they also act as protection for a residence, which increases the heating

See **WINDBREAK**, Page 3



Find us online at:
www.bigspringherald.com



Blizzards, ice storms wreak havoc across northern plains

CHICAGO (AP) — Travel conditions remained hazardous as a winter storm swept across much of the northern Great Plains Monday, with blowing and drifting snow creating near-zero visibility on some roads.

The combination of freezing rain, snow and high winds that forced the shutdown Sunday of vast stretches of highways in the Dakotas continued into Monday morning, and authorities issued no-travel warnings for much of North Dakota.

The storm also has caused widespread power outages in the Dakotas, Nebraska and western Iowa.

As of 1 a.m. Monday, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association was reporting 10,231 "member-consumer-owners" were without power. In Nebraska, high winds were cited for hundreds of power outages in central and eastern portions of the state.

"Between the ice and snow, and winds howling like crazy, there will be nothing moving" until late afternoon Monday, said National Weather Service meteorologist Greg Gust in Grand Forks, North Dakota. "Then it's dig-out time."

Gust's advice to travelers: "Stay put."

The weather service office in Bismarck, North Dakota, predicted snow accumulations of 8 to 15 inches in western parts of the state and thunderstorms in the central region.

The North Dakota Transportation Department closed most of a 240-mile stretch of Interstate 94 Sunday night, from the Montana border to Jamestown. That stretch remained closed Monday morning. Portions of U.S. Highways 2, 52 and 281 were also closed because of snow, ice and "near zero visibility."

Motorists who drive past the roadblocks can be fined up to \$250.

No-travel advisories were issued for much of North Dakota, including the Williston, Dickinson, Minot, Bismarck, Jamestown, Valley City and Grand Forks areas.

Authorities in South Dakota shut down Interstate 90 from the Wyoming border to Chamberlain — a distance of about 260 miles.

Icy conditions in Aberdeen, South Dakota, prompted the Brown County Sheriff's Office to issue a no travel advisory.

Aberdeen was also under a weather service flash flood warning after rain and snowmelt flooded major intersections in the city.

The weather service warned anyone who "must travel" on icy roads in central Minnesota to have an extra flashlight, food and water.

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 Dr. Sally Rand, AuD, CCC-A, Audiologist



Obituaries

Herminia G. Garcia



Herminia G. Garcia, 84, of Big Spring died Thursday, Dec. 22, 2016, at her residence.

Rosary services were held at 10 a.m. Monday, Dec. 26, 2016, at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Rosewood Chapel.

Interment followed at Trinity Memorial Park.

She was born Nov. 14, 1932, in Rio Grande City, Texas, and married Raul Garcia Sr. Dec. 1, 1956, in Starr County. He preceded her in death May 20, 2005.

Herminia graduated from high school in Rio Grande City in 1954 and attended college in Kingsville, Texas, where she studied to be a teacher. She came to Big Spring in 1957 and was a homemaker, loving mother, and loved cooking for her family.

Survivors include five sons, Raul Garcia Jr. and wife Rosie, Ralph Garcia, Tony Garcia and wife Anna, Canderlio Garica, and Oscar Garcia and wife Sandra, all of Big Spring; six daughters, Mary Ramirez and husband Tommy of Big Spring, Elisa Correa and husband Auturo of Garden City, Nelda Katchmazenski of Midland, Minerva Medrano and husband Victor of Midland, Sylvia Trevino of Big Spring, and Diana Chavez of San Antonio; 31 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; a sister, Viola Valdes of Rio Grande City; and one brother, Antonio Gonzales of Edinburg.

In addition to her husband she was preceded in death by two daughters, Linda Diana and Sylvia; one sister, Juanita Ramirez; and her parents, Isidoro and Leonor (Salinas) Gonzalez.

The family suggests memorials be made to Compass Hospice, 602 S. Main Street, Big Spring, Texas, 79720.

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

Paid obituary

Larry R. Miller



Larry R. Miller, 69, of Midland died Saturday, Dec. 24, 2016, in a Big Spring nursing home.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2016, at the Nalley-Pickle and Welch Rosewood Chapel in Big Spring with Dr. Randy Cotton officiating. Burial will follow at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2016, at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home in Big Spring.

He was born Aug. 15, 1947, in Big Spring, and married Marie Strickland May 28, 1968, in Big Spring.

Larry graduated from Big Spring High School in 1965 and from Howard College in 1967. He received his Bachelor of Pharmacy degree in 1970 from Southwestern State University in Weatherford, Okla. He returned to Big Spring in 1970 and became a partner in Carver's Pharmacy, and in 1974 he and Vic Keys became the owners. Larry served on the Big Spring City Council from 1979 to 1986 and also served as a reserve police officer for a number of years. In 1996 he sold the pharmacy and moved to Midland. He worked at Medical Center Hospital in Odessa for 14 years, retiring in 2009.

Survivors include his wife, Marie Miller of Midland; two daughters, Carol Jeter and husband Steve, and Meredith Burgess and husband Tommy, all of Midland; one son, Shane Miller of Big Spring; and five grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Roger and Ellen Miller.

The family suggests memorials to a charity of your choice.

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

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

• **MICHAEL ANGELO GARZA**, 28, of 304 E. 13th St Apt. A was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.

• **ROSA DEJESUS GUSMAN**, 33, of 1602 State St. was arrested on charges of possession of marijuana (less than 2 oz.) and public intoxication.

• **JOHN ANTHONY MIER**, 28, of 1514 Cardinal St. was arrested on charges of resisting arrest, search, or transport and public intoxication; and on an outstanding warrant.

• **KENNETH WAYNE MIEARS JR.**, 40, of 1511 Hubbard St. in Sweetwater was arrested on warrants for expired registration, displaying fictitious motor vehicle registration, defective head lamps, failure to appear, failure to maintain financial responsibility, and possession of a controlled substance (less than 1 gram).

• **ALYXANDRIA MARIE MUNOX**, 22, of 1216 Ridgeroad St. was arrested on a warrant for possession of marijuana (less than 2 oz.).

• **MAURICIO GARCIA HERNANDEZ**, 40, of 409 S. Aylesford was arrested on a charge of possession of drug paraphernalia.

• **ANDREA DANIELLE CROFT**, 32, of 2704 Lynn Dr. was arrested on charges of evading arrest or detention, possession of drug paraphernalia, failure to ap-

pear, and theft of property (less than \$100).

• **DANIEL MONTEZ VIERA SR.**, 29, of 1907 S. Main St. was arrested on a charge of criminal trespassing.

• **SYDNEY RENEE CANEDO**, 21, of 1501 Lincoln St. Apt. A was arrested on an outstanding warrant.

• **CHRISTOPHER ANDREW YANEZ**, 23, of 1100 E. Fifth St. was arrested on a charge of possession of a controlled substance (1 to 4 grams).

• **LORENZO FERRERA YANEZ**, 42, of 502 State St. was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **LITTLE JOHN WINFIELD**, 54, of 1408 S. Runnels St. was arrested on warrants for failure to appear, failure to maintain financial responsibility, failure to stop at the designated point at a stop sign, and failure to yield right-of-way at a stop intersection.

• **ROBERT RUBEN SANCHEZ**, 52, of 1023 Stadium Ave. was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.

• **MATTHEW ROMAN JIMENEZ**, 18, of 1205 W. Sixth St. was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana (less than 2 oz.).

• **GARRETT WADE FEASTER**, 18, of 1209 Todd Rd. was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana (less than 2 oz.).

• **ANGEL ENRIQUE HINOJOSA**, 19, of 1501 Stadium was arrested on charges of evading

arrest or detention, disorderly conduct (language), juvenile curfew violation, no driver's license, disregarding a stop sign, driving with an invalid license, burglary of a habitation intending other felony, and failure to maintain financial responsibility; and on another outstanding warrant.

• **YARA JASMINE RAMIREZ**, 20, of 1605 E. Sixth St. was arrested on charges of failure to identify/giving false or fictitious information and burglary of a habitation intending other felony.

• **LYNDON TRENT FRALEY**, 56, of 1506 Stadium Ave. was arrested on outstanding warrants.

• **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 1700 block of East Highway 350.

• **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 2600 block of Barksdale Drive and the 600 block of Steakley Street.

• **THEFT** was reported in the 500 block of State Street, the 5600 block of South Service Road, and the 900 block of Willia Street.

• **BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported in the 1300 block of Elm Street and the 1100 block of State Street.

• **HARASSMENT** was reported in the 500 block of Douglas Street.

• **MINOR ACCIDENT** was reported at the intersection of Northwest 12th Street and North Lamesa Highway.

• **ROBBERY** was reported in the 1900 block of Wasson Road.

Take Note

• 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. To volunteer, just show up at the time and dates listed. For more information, call, 432-935-3998.

The next sacking session will be at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 2 and 3 at the old Lakeview High School gym located at 1107 N.W. Seventh St. To get there, take Gregg Street north and turn left on Delaney, which is the block just past the Salvation Army retail store. Delaney turns into Seventh Street, you will go over the railroad tracks and the school is on the left.

If you want additional information about getting your child on this program please contact your child's school.

• Seniors and mature adults are invited to a dance on the first, third and fifth Friday of each month at the Dora Roberts Community Center.

Dances are from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. with live bands. No alcohol or smoking permitted. There will be a pot luck as well so bring a dish if you want to eat. Cost is \$8 per person.

Meetings

• The Big Spring Art Association meets the third Tuesday of each month a 7 p.m. in the basement of the Howard County Library.

• The Christensen-Tucker Post-2013 Veterans of Foreign Wars meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 pm at 500 Driver Road. For more information, contact David Leonard, Post

Commander, at 432-816-6004. All combat veterans of foreign wars are invited to come.

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

• 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.

• Membership to the Big Spring Native American Association is open to the public. People interested in Native American culture are encouraged to find out more about the organization by calling Richard "Indio" Lesser at 432-935-0125.

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Fans mourn singer George Michael

LONDON (AP) — Grieving fans mourned the death of pop star George Michael as British charities praised his behind-the-scenes generosity on behalf of numerous causes.

The singer's death was announced late Sunday. Many paid tribute on Facebook and Twitter and others cited years of good works that received little publicity.

Fans placed flowers and other tributes at his homes in north London and in Goring, England, where he died of apparent heart failure.

Michael's later years were marked by occasional brushes with the law and a series of driving incidents related to substance abuse, but another side emerged Monday as top charity figures stepped forward to thank Michael for years of donations and good works.

Among the groups he supported were the Terrence Higgins Trust, which helps people with AIDS, Macmillan Cancer Support, and Childline, which offers confidential phone counseling for young people.

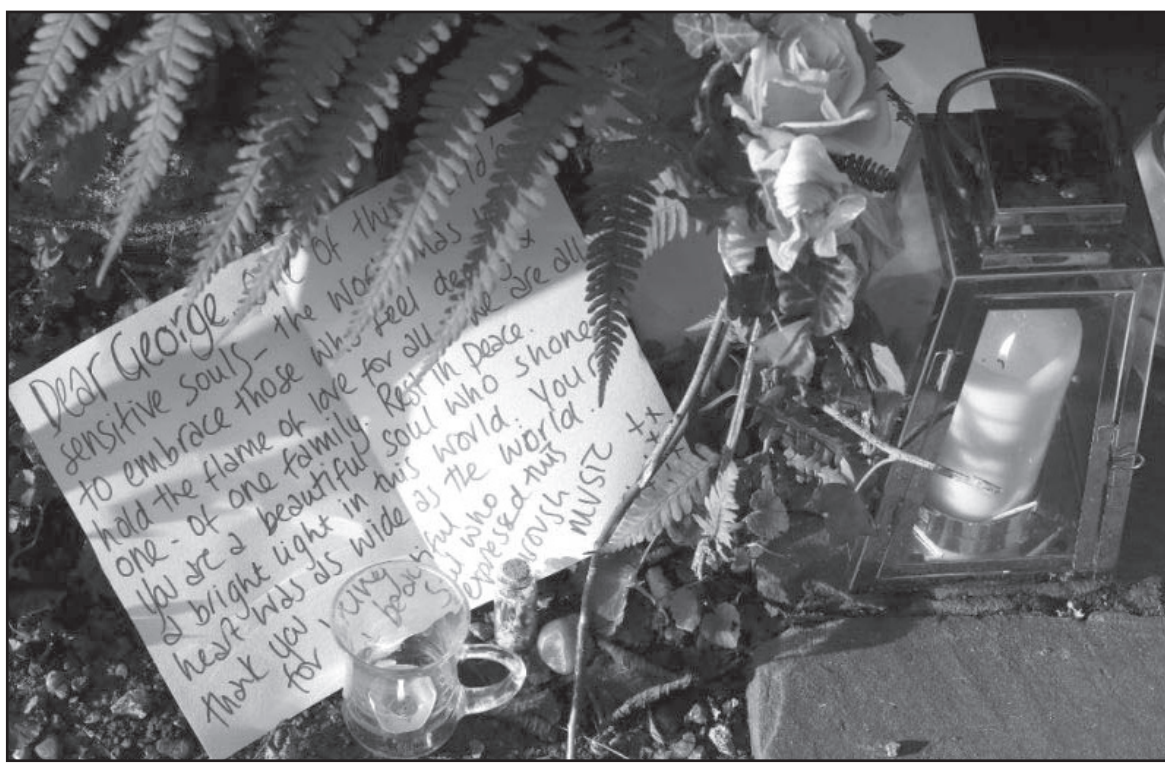
Childline founder Esther Rantzen said Michael gave royalties from his 1996 hit "Jesus To A Child" to the charity along with many other dona-

tions. "Over the years he gave us millions and we were planning next year, as part of our 30th anniversary celebrations to create, we hoped, a big concert in tribute to him — to his artistry, to his wonderful musicality but also to thank him for the hundreds of thousands of children he helped," she said.

She said Michael was determined that no one outside the charity should know "how much he gave to the nation's most vulnerable children."

Jane Barron from the Terrence Higgins Trust said Michael made many donations and gifts, including the royalties of his "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me" duet with Elton John in 1991.

Michael had spoken publicly about



AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth

Tributes left outside the home of British musician George Michael in London, Monday, Dec. 26, 2016. George Michael, who rocketed to stardom with WHAM! and went on to enjoy a long and celebrated solo career lined with controversies, has died, his publicist said Sunday. He was 53.

the pain of losing a partner to AIDS long history of donations to the Trust early in the epidemic, but he kept his private.

From Obama, a final Christmas tribute to the troops he's led

KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii (AP) — For eight years, Barack Obama has led a military fighting in multiple theaters overseas, becoming the only president in U.S. history to serve full two terms with the nation at war. On Sunday, he sought to pay tribute to the men and women who sacrificed along the way in battles that will continue even after his presidency comes to a close.

There was a tinge of nostalgia as Obama visited U.S. troops on Christmas for the last time, and some solemnity, too. The president, who

spent Christmas Eve calling troops serving overseas, pointed out that as Americans celebrate the holidays, U.S. troops are serving in dangerous, remote places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

He said some were carrying out missions against the Islamic State group even on Christmas Day.

"As tough as it is to be deployed, the people here in America, back home, understand that every single day you serve, you're fighting for our freedom," the president said, with first lady Michelle Obama at his side.

Obama has made it a tradition to spend some time on Christmas at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, not far from the rented house that he and his family have made their winter home away from home. As Obama spoke, a few hundred troops sat around tables in uniforms, many with their families, in a mess hall hosting their Christmas meal.

"I just want all of you to know that it has been the privilege of my life to serve as your commander in chief," Obama said.

He said even though he wouldn't be addressing them

again as president, he wanted to convey that as a private citizen, "my gratitude to you will remain." He said his wife felt the same way.

"Our commitment to standing by you every step of the way — that won't stop," Obama said.

Obama ran for president eight years ago as an opponent of the war in Iraq, then inherited conflicts there and in Afghanistan. Though he declared the end of the U.S. combat missions in both countries and drastically ramped down U.S. involvement in those conflicts, some

8,400 troops remain in Afghanistan and 5,000 in Iraq.

He leaves office in January with the U.S. military also fighting in Yemen, Syria, Somalia and Libya. The brutal civil war in Syria shows no signs of ebbing.

Yet as he bid farewell to troops in Hawaii, Obama ended on a lighter note, pointing out that it might not be his final goodbye.

"I understand that I still have a little bit of rank as ex-president," Obama said. "So I still get to use the gym on base and, of course, the golf course."

HONOR

Continued from Page 1

To make a nomination, the nominator must be a Chamber member. The nominee does not need to be.

Nominations must be in writing and should be based on a record of accomplishments rather than a single contribution or an achievement. But a nomination will not be ruled out if that person's one-time contribution is of sufficient importance, ValVerde added.

The committee will base its choice on information provided in the written nomination only.

To make a nomination, the nominators name, address, and phone number must be included for con-

tact purposes of the committee. Nominees can not currently hold a political office.

The deadline to turn in the nomination form is Jan. 9, 2017. Forms can be sent to Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce; 215 W. Third St. or P.O. Box 1391; Big Spring, Texas 79721, or dropped off at the Chamber offices at 215 W. Third St.

For more information, contact the Chamber at 432-263-7641.

Last year, the 2015 honorees were Gale Pittman, owner of Gale's Baker, and Muffet Bomar. Both are very active volunteers in several local non-profit programs

Contact Staff Writer Lyndel Moody at 263-7331, ext. 234, or email citydesk@bigspringherald.com.

Typhoon kills 6 in Philippines

BATANGAS, Philippines (AP) — A powerful typhoon blew out of the northern Philippines on Monday after killing at least six people and spoiling Christmas in several provinces, where more than 380,000 people abandoned celebrations at home to reach emergency shelters and other safer grounds.

Typhoon Nock-Ten cut power to five entire provinces due to toppled electric posts and trees, dimming Christmas revelries in Asia's largest Catholic nation. More than 300

flights were delayed or re-scheduled and ferries were barred from sailing, stranding more than 12,000 holiday travelers.

Six people died from drowning or by being pinned by fallen trees, poles and a collapsed concrete wall in the provinces of Quezon and Albay, southeast of Manila, after the typhoon made landfall in Catanduanes province Sunday night, officials said.

Many military camps and outposts in Catan-

duanes and outlying provinces were damaged and some troops were injured, the military said.

Nock-Ten, locally known as Nina, then blew westward across mountainous and island provinces, damaging homes, uprooting trees and knocking down communications.

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Crystal Nichole Ramirez Muniz, 30, died Wednesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. A fund has been set up at Myers & Smith Funeral Home to help the family with funeral expenses.

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WINDBREAK

Continued from Page 1

and cooling efficiency of a homestead.

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Livestock windbreaks are very beneficial during the winter and summer months. Cattle hidden in an "L" or "U" shaped multiple row windbreak are allowed to utilize their energy to continue gaining weight rather than use it to keep warm, as a result, the amount of feed afforded by the producer is reduced.

These windbreaks also reduce the risk of mortality during the harsh winter months, such as Winter Storm Goliath in 2015. They also provide shade during the hot summer months and help keep the

dust down when used around dairies and feedlots.

The following evergreen container seedlings are sold in bundles of 25/\$65 plus tax (\$70.36): Afghanistan Pine and Austrian Pine.

The following hardwood container seedlings are sold in bundles of 25/\$65 plus tax (\$70.36): Fourwing Saltbush and Osage Orange.

The following hardwood bareroot seedlings are sold in bundles of 25/\$45 plus tax (\$48.71): American Plum, Bur Oak, Pecan, and Shumard Oak.

The deadline to order is Feb 17. Orders will be delivered in March.

For more information on purchasing seedlings, please contact the SWCD at 432-267-1871, ext. 3 or contact West Texas Nursery — Texas A&M Forest Service directly at 806-892-3572.

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Clowney, Texans headed to postseason

HOUSTON (AP) — Jadeveon Clowney can't wait for his first career playoff appearance after missing Houston's postseason game against the Kansas City Chiefs last season with a foot injury.

"It's going to be great," he said. "I was mad last year. I missed it and I was real upset I couldn't get out there with my teammates. This year, I'm going to try and get out there with them and try to help win another game and keep going forward."

Clowney and the Texans are headed to the playoffs after surviving a scare from the Cincinnati Bengals to get a 12-10 victory on Saturday night that clinched their second straight AFC South title.

Tom Savage threw for 176 yards in his first career start and the Bengals missed a field goal as time expired to give the Texans the win.

The Bengals converted a fourth down play to keep a drive alive, but four plays later, former Texan Randy Bullock missed wide right on a 43-yard attempt, securing Houston's victory.

Clowney, the top overall pick in the 2014 draft who had a sack on Saturday, felt a rush of emotions when he saw that Bullock's kick was no good.

"Champs. That's all I was thinking right there," he said. "We did it. We won the division. Go on to something new. What's next? Scratch

it off. Get ready for the playoffs."

Savage helped the Texans (9-6) rally for a win over the Jaguars last week after taking over when Brock Osweiler was benched after throwing interceptions on back-to-back possessions in the second quarter.

The Texans knew they were in the postseason with a win after the Titans fell to the Jaguars earlier Saturday. But it didn't look good for them early with Savage completing just two passes for 13 yards and them trailing 3-0 at halftime.

Cincinnati (6-8-1) went on top when Andy Dalton found Brandon LaFell on a short pass and he took it 86 yards for a touchdown that made it 10-6 with about 11 minutes left.

A 24-yard touchdown run by Alfred Blue put the Texans back on top with about nine minutes left, but the extra point was blocked to leave Houston up 12-10. That score was set up by a 21-yard reception by DeAndre Hopkins.

Some things to know about Houston's win over the Bengals.

FILLING IN: Lamar Miller missed his first game this season because of an ankle injury and Blue had a season-high 73 yards rushing in his place. Blue's playing time has been limited this season with the addition of Miller after he started nine games last sea-

son following a season-ending injury to Foster.

"Maybe his stats don't always look the greatest, but he's a very tough runner," coach Bill O'Brien said. "And what I think happens is more you use him, he tends to wear the defense out after a while."

BIG PLAY: Dalton's 86-yard pass to LaFell was the longest of the quarterback's career. Dalton depended on LaFell on Saturday night with star receiver A.J. Green out for the fifth straight game with a hamstring injury. LaFell finished with a career-high 130 yards receiving.

"When I looked up the field, it was me and the safety," LaFell said. "When I saw him stop his feet, I was like: 'Yeah, no way he's going to come catch me.'"

MAKING UP FOR MISTAKES: The Bengals have had problems with their kicking game all season.



AP Photo/Eric Christian Smith

Houston Texans wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins (10) kisses his daughter after an NFL football game against the Cincinnati Bengals Saturday, Dec. 24, 2016, in Houston. The Texans won 12-10.

for his mistakes late in Saturday's game.

He was able to do that when he grabbed that 21-yard reception that set up Blue's touchdown.

"I had some plays I wish I could have had back ... me being me it put a little fire in me," he said. "Once I got the ball I knew I had to make a play."

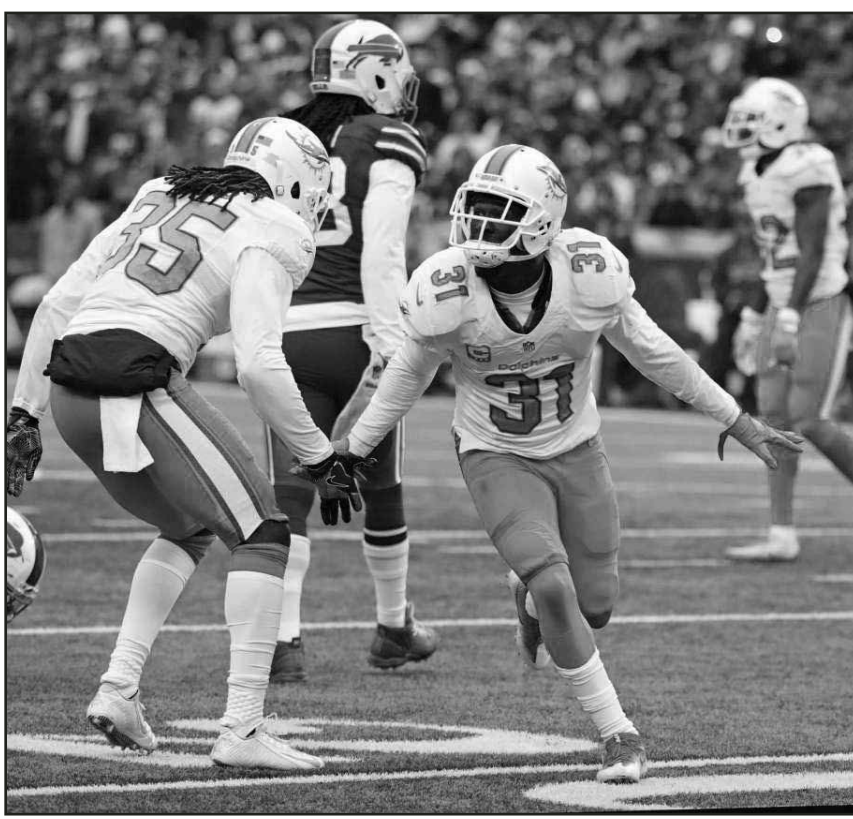
KICKING WOES: The Bengals have had problems with their kicking game all season.

They released Mike Nugent and claimed Bullock off waivers from Pittsburgh on Dec. 13 after Nugent missed six field goals and five extra points this season.

Bullock, who was drafted by the Texans in 2012, made a 43-yard field goal in the second quarter before his miss that would have won the game.

"That was exactly what I wanted," he said. "I did have the opportunity, but I didn't take advantage."

Dolphins earn 1st playoff berth since 2008 with Denver loss



Al Diaz/Miami Herald via AP

Miami Dolphins free safety Michael Thomas (31) and safety Walt Aikens (35) celebrate a defensive play in the first half of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills in Orchard Park, N.Y., Saturday, Dec. 24, 2016.

MIAMI (AP) — Now that the Miami Dolphins are in the playoffs for the first time in eight years, they'll try to end an even longer drought.

They haven't won a postseason game since 2000.

The Dolphins clinched

an AFC wild-card berth Sunday night when Denver lost to Kansas City 33-10. The Broncos' defeat, coupled with Miami's 34-31 overtime victory at Buffalo on Saturday, assured the Dolphins (10-5) of no worse than the sixth and final seed in the con-

ference playoffs.

The Dolphins had Sunday off. At least some players watched the late-night Denver-Kansas City finish.

"Playoffs I See You," receiver Jarvis Landry tweeted shortly before the Broncos' game ended.

"It's only the beginning," linebacker Jelani Jenkins tweeted.

Miami's playoff berth comes in Adam Gase's first year as a head coach. The Dolphins have changed

coaches seven times since Dave Wannstedt led them to their most recent postseason win.

Miami's first-round game in the playoffs will be at AFC South champion Houston or at AFC

North champion Pittsburgh.

The Dolphins conclude the regular season at home Sunday against AFC East champion New England.

The Patriots (13-2) are still battling for home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

Miami bounced back from a 1-4 start by winning nine of its past 10 games, including the last two with backup Matt Moore at quarterback.

The Dolphins are playoff-bound even though they have been outgained by 682 yards and have scored only four more points than their opponents this season.

In games decided by a touchdown or less, they've won nine in a row, but they haven't beaten a team that's above .500 since Week 6.

None of that matters to long-suffering fans celebrating the Dolphins' first winning season since that 2008 playoff team.

Miami hasn't been to the AFC championship game since the 1992 season, and last won the Super Bowl in the 1973 season.

Stars beat Kings 3-2 in overtime

DALLAS (AP) — Jamie Benn has 276 career assists and an Art Ross Trophy, which goes to the NHL leader in points each year.

Dallas captain showed why on Friday night, slipping a pass to Esa Lindell for a goal 1:07 into overtime that gave the Stars a 3-2 victory over the Los Angeles Kings.

"I was thinking shoot almost the whole way down

the ice," said Benn, who led the NHL in scoring during the 2014-15 season. "It was kind of hard not to pass it to him there. He worked so hard to get up the ice and he made a good play in the D zone. You know, he was wide open."

Lindell, a rookie defenseman, skated in with Benn 2-on-1 on Kings goalie Jeff Zatkoff. Benn eased a pass from the right side

to Lindell at the left faceoff circle for his third goal this season.

"Saw they were changing one guy and saw the opportunity to get 2-on-1," Lindell said. "That was pretty easy to put in from that pass."

Zatkoff couldn't stop the odd-man rush during 3-on-3 play in overtime.

"It comes down to rushes, and Benn made a great pass," he said.

Los Angeles fell to 6-1 in overtime this season. Dallas is 2-7.

"Really, (overtime) hasn't been working the way we've been trying it, so we talked about some different pairs," Stars coach Lindy Ruff said. "We've got to change direction with the way we're going. Tonight it worked."

Jeff Carter scored both Kings goals on rebounds.

Sports in Brief

PRO FOOTBALL

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — As Derek Carr fell to the turf with a broken leg, a celebratory day in Oakland immediately turned somber.

The Raiders had suffered their most significant loss of the season.

Carr broke a bone in his right leg in the fourth quarter of the Raiders' 33-25 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Saturday, immediately throwing a dark cloud over a resurgent season in Oakland.

"Seeing him go down like that, it hurt us," linebacker Bruce Irvin said. "It didn't even feel like we won."

Carr got hurt with Oakland leading 33-14 early in the fourth quarter when he was sacked by Trent Cole. Carr stayed on the ground for several minutes in pain as trainers came out to treat him.

With the crowd chanting "M-V-P! M-V-P!" Carr limped off the field without putting any pressure on his right leg. He was then taken away on a cart for X-rays which showed the break. Carr was scheduled to have surgery on Sunday.

"As soon as I got out there, he said, 'I think it's broken,'" coach Jack Del Rio said.

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFC North title showdown between Green Bay and Detroit has been moved to Sunday night on New Year's Day.

The NFL announced the switch on Christmas Day, and also moved two afternoon games back from 1 p.m. ET to 4:25 p.m. ET: New Orleans at Atlanta and the New York Giants at Washington.

Green Bay (9-6) has won five straight games. Detroit (9-5) plays at Dallas on Monday night before hosting the Packers. Regardless of the outcome of Lions-Cowboys, the game with the Packers will decide the NFC North.

A first-round playoff bye also could be available for the Packers-Lions winner.

SOCCER

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Valencia's club president has apologized to fans for the team's poor performance in 2016.

Laythor Chan, who runs the Spanish top-tier side for Singaporean owner Peter Lim, said it "has been a difficult year and I want to ask forgiveness from all of Valencia's fans for the poor season."

Chan spoke while standing beside a Christmas tree in a video posted on the club's website.

Valencia has won only three matches in 15 rounds of the Spanish league, leaving it just above the relegation zone near the midpoint of the campaign. It has a game in hand, albeit against league leader Real Madrid.

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2	5	7	1	8	6	4	9	3
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MATHISRare Jupiter
Opposition

As evidenced by the astounding percentage of lottery wins gone bad, fairy-tale weddings turned divorce disasters and rises to power that end with a fall, what is widely considered to be good luck doesn't always turn out to be so. Every 14 years, Jupiter and Uranus argue about the nature of luck and who deserves it. Today starts the debate.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Instead of wanting something (SET ITAL) from (END ITAL) another person, want something (SET ITAL) for (END ITAL) that person. This subtle shift of intention in your wanting will make a powerful difference in your ability to per-

suade.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Ask any ballerina; balance requires core strength. Core strength is also needed in your dance through life. You'll get it in character-building moments. To flail and fall is human. To pop back up, divine.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are some really tricky aspects to the day, but you've been known to surmount much bigger challenges. When you put your mind to it, you usually amaze yourself, and today will be no different.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're too busy looking at what you have to notice what you may have missed. Good. Stay that way. It's the way to grow your love and appreciation into a very interesting future.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Why should you get hooked into other people's bad moods that have nothing to do with you? Thought of the day: Ignoring provocation is not defeat; it's actually productivity.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Whether you're being paid for the work or not, you'll

benefit from setting clearly defined objectives. Decide how you will know you've arrived at the goal, and then choose the actions that will get you there.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What was lost and longed for has been found! It's one of the most satisfying emotions of all -- sweet relief. Celebrate first, and then put into place the safety measures to prevent future loss.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). As it happens, it only takes a small action to advance the plot of a certain delightful storyline of your life. The very specific (and probably charming) gesture you make will change or reinforce the way someone feels about you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The felicitous circumstance of the day is that what you want wants you right back. You still have to take action to get it, though. The first action will be to communicate delicately but clearly.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Go forward, even if you have to go alone.

You'll take only a few steps solo, really. It won't be long before you're joined by one who sees the significance of your journey. This person may even hold your hand.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You take the responsibility of growing your own brain very seriously. These days, the job may require that you let go of some dearly held beliefs you've had for a long time. They may have been comforting, but they are limiting, too.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It's a good day to ignore the bad habits of those close to you. Your refusal to pay attention will free you up for a truly wondrous block of time in which you can focus on what fortifies you.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 26). Big projects will move forward. A higher degree of teamwork will be necessary to make things happen in 2017. As if on cue, new members sign up to help in February. You're the glue of your social network, and you can expect to also be the frequent host. Financially, June and October will be

highlights. Libra and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 50, 21, 3, 36 and 42.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "Other people sound so passionate about their aims, but I haven't ever found anything that motivates me to want to work hard. Can a 36-year-old Cancer be successful without having a passion?"

Some believe that the most successful people are intensely passionate about their interest and it's this passion that motivates individuals to ever higher levels of accomplishment. There are also those who consider passion to be mythological. They note that victory often goes to the person who has the highest tolerance for boredom. In other words, when the work gets hard or tedious, the one who will keep on working anyway will ultimately get the reward.

Ruled by the ever-changing moon, Cancer is a sign noted for shifting with the moods of the hour. With that flexible attitude come changing desires and aspirations. Accept that

it's just part of your makeup. The plus side is that it keeps you in the moment. Now you must also develop the emotional muscle to keep working in spite of your changing moods and interests. The "what" doesn't really matter so much as your commitment to do what it takes to get to your original goal. Do it, not because it's your passion but because you said you would.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Humorist and best-selling author David Sedaris was born when the sun and Mercury were in ambitious Capricorn and the moon and Neptune were in insightful, soulful Scorpio. Sedaris, who was discovered by NPR's Ira Glass while reading his diary to a rapt audience in a small Chicago nightclub, now sells out large venues of devoted fans eager to hear his next story.

To write to Holiday Mathis, visit www.creators.com/author/holiday-mathis and click "Contact." COPYRIGHT 2016 CREATORS.COM

Annie's Mailbox

discuss the issue.

In the past few years, whenever I try to talk about my unhappiness, he maintains that I am narcissistic and asks me not to nag him about it. I know he has performance problems, and it doesn't help that he drinks every night. He has also told me that although he loves me, he is not in love with me and considers us companions.

I have gone for counseling, but I feel as if I say the same things over and over

with no resolution. I think my husband hopes I'll forget about sex and learn to be content with the situation. Because I am near retirement age and used to living with a family, the idea of living alone scares me, but I can't continue living in limbo.

-- Sad and Fed Up
Dear Sad: Your concerns don't make you a narcissist; they make you normal. Ten years is not part of the normal intimacy ebb-and-flow all couples experience. A fulfilling sex life is part of any healthy marriage -- and so is communication. Your husband is shutting you down on both fronts. Rather than talk about the problem, he blames

you for even caring. He's using the tired old defense mechanism called deflection. Don't fall for it.

It sounds as if your husband is suffering from depression. Tell him that whether he wants to recognize that there is a problem or not, his refusal to get help is hurting you. Implore him to seek counseling.

It also may be that he is an alcoholic. At the very least, his drinking bothers you. That's reason enough for you to attend an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting (by yourself), where you will find a roomful of people who can relate to what you're going through. I wish you all the best.

Dear Annie: I just read the letter from "Hopeless," whose son turned against her and sided with his grandparents (who were abusive to his mom when she was growing up).

I had a similar situation. My daughter's father and stepmother tried (and succeeded for several years) to cause separation between my daughter and me. I fought it. I tried to stick up for myself. I tried to explain things to her. (I left out the parts about her father's abusing me.) Nothing mattered. I was just the awful person who left the marriage and broke up the family.

Eventually, I had to just let go and let

God take control. Once they no longer had to fight with me to keep convincing her of how awful I was, their true colors showed. My daughter and I have a relationship, and she sees her father and his wife for who they are. Please let Hopeless know to keep her head up and just be patient. My thoughts and prayers are with her. -- Vindicated in Indiana

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. To find out more about Annie Lane and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2016 CREATORS.COM

Sexless Marriage

Dear Annie: My husband and I have been married for over 30 years. In many ways, we are very compatible and have shared interests in music, books and movies. However, we no longer have a sex life or any form of intimacy. It has been almost 10 years since he expressed an interest in being with me. He also refuses to

Contract
Bridge

By Steve Becker

Famous Hand

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 10 9 4
♥ 7
♦ K 8 4 2
♣ 10 7 6 5 2

WEST
♠ K Q J 5
♥ 9 4
♦ J 10 9 5 3
♣ A 8

EAST
♠ 8 7 6 3 2
♥ 8 3
♦ Q 7 6
♣ K Q J

SOUTH
♠ A
♥ A K Q J 10 6 5 2
♦ A
♣ 9 4 3

The bidding:
South West North East
2♥ 2♠ Pass 3♠
3NT Pass Pass 4♠
4NT Dble
Opening lead — king of spades.

This deal occurred in the Open Pairs at the Eastern States Regional tournament more than 60 years ago. The heroine was Helen Sobel, considered by many to have been the greatest woman player of all time.

Sobel was South and opened with two hearts. Had the opposition remained silent, she no doubt would have settled into a quiet four hearts, making exactly.

But when East-West began bidding spades, Sobel adopted a different strategy. Looking at 10 tricks in her own hand, and certain West would lead a spade, she bid notrump at both her second and third turns!

True, she didn't have the "book" distribution for notrump play, but this didn't stop her from making what she considered to be the best bid under the circumstances. She had not, after all, achieved her reputation by rigidly following textbook principles.

West doubled four notrump, but wound up taking second money when Sobel ran off the first 10 tricks for a score of +810.

At several other tables, East-West also reached four spades, but at most of these tables, less-imaginative Souths continued on to five hearts and went down one.

The four-spade bidders who got doubled fared badly — although not quite as badly as the pair that doubled four notrump. North led his singleton heart, and South cashed two hearts and the ace of diamonds before leading a third heart. There was then no way declarer could prevent North from scoring a trump trick either immediately or eventually, and West wound up down three for an 800-point set.

Tomorrow: A little worry never hurts.

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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.

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

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	KMID (3)	UNI (4)	KPEJ (5)	KOSA (7)	KTLE (8)	KWES (9)	KMLM (12)	KPBT (13)	KWTT (14)	KWES2 (15)	WTBS (33)	TNT (34)	ESPN (35)	ESPN2 (36)	FSN (38)	USA (55)	A&E (58)	DISC (60)
	Midland	Spanish	Odessa	Odessa	Telemundo	Midland	Odessa	Odessa	Odessa	Midland	Atlanta	Atlanta	Sports	Sports	Sports	New York	New York	Discovery
5:30	Local 2	Hotel	The List	News	Tele	News	Uri Harel	Over	Mama's	American	Wrecked	Movie: Man of Steel	(:15) NFL Football: Detroit Lions at Dallas Cowboys.	Monday Night Countdown	World Poker Tour	Mod Fam	Intervention	Street Out-laws
6:30	ABC	Notic.	Mod Fam	CBS	Noticiero	News	D Stringer	Business	Mama's	American	Wrecked	Movie: Michael Shannon (DVS)		Carrying World Independence Bowl	World Poker Tour	Mod Fam	Street Out-laws	Street Out-laws
7:30	Jeopardy!	Rosa de Guadalupe	Big Bang	News	Caso Cer-rado	News	McDonald R. Booker	PBS News-Hour	M*A*S*H	Fam. Guy	Wrecked			UFC	Mod Fam	Leah Remini	Street Out-laws	Street Out-laws
8:30	Wheel	Despertar Contigo	Gotham (DVS)	Kevin Can Man-Plan	Silvana Sin Lana	Hairspray Live!	Upd	Antiques Roadshow	Griffith	iHeartRadio Jingle Ball 2016	Detour			Mavs Pre.	Mod Fam	Leah Remini	Street Out-laws: Full	Street Out-laws
9:30	Charlie Brown	Vino el Amor	(:01) Lucifer	Kevin Can Man-Plan	La Doña (SS)	Light of the Southwest	Independent Lens	Who's?	Griffith	MacGyver	Detour			NBA Basketball: Mavericks at Pelicans	WWE Monday Night RAW	Leah Remini	Street Out-laws	Street Out-laws
10:30	Rudolph's New Year	El color de la pasion	News TMZ	Scorpion	El Chema (SS)			Heroes	Seinfeld	Detour				SC Top Plays		To Be Announced	Fast N' Loud: Demo	
11:30	Baking Show	Impacto	Mod Fam	News	Tele	News	House	Charlie Rose	C. Burnett	King	Detour			E:60	Mavs			
12:30	Local 2	Noticiero	Two Men Cleveland	Late Show-Colbert	Titulares	Tonight Show	Mani	Perry Mason	King	Detour				Outside	Texans	(:05) Movie: Last Vegas, Morgan Freeman (DVS)	(:03) The First 48	Street Out-laws
1:30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Contacto Deportivo	How I Met James Corden	El Chema (SS)	Insider	News	1st Fruits	Kojak	Search	Search				SportsCenter Spec.	NBA Basketball: Mavericks at Pelicans	CSI: Crime Scene	To Be Announced	Street Out-laws
2:30	Nightline	Extra	La Mujer del	How I Met	Middle	News	1st Fruits		Search	Search				College Football: St. Petersburg				
3:30	AM Paid	A Que No Me Dejas	Law Order: CI	ET	Pagado	(:08) Today	Light of the Southwest		Search	Search								
4:30	AM Paid								Search	Search								

DENNIS THE MENACE

12-26

"RUFF IS CUTE WHEN HE PANTS."

"HE'S NOT PANTING. HE'S STICKIN' HIS TONGUE OUT AT YOU!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

12-26

"I wish they always ate breakfast as fast as they do the day after Christmas."

HAGAR

CONGRATULATIONS, MEN!! WE WON THE BATTLE!!

AND NONE OF US WENT TO THE AFTERLIFE!

WHICH MEANS ALL OF US ARE GOING TO THE AFTERPARTY!

YAY! YIPPEE! YEAH! YAHOO!

BLONDIE

HONEY, ELMO JUST CALLED... HE LEFT HIS NEW VIDEO GAME HERE

I'LL TAKE IT OVER TO HIS HOUSE RIGHT NOW

DEAR... OKAY, OKAY! I'M GOING! JUST ONE MORE SECOND!!

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

BC

I RESOLVE TO OWN UP TO MY MISTAKES WITHOUT FEAR OF RIDICULE.

CAN YOU CHECK THIS FOR SPELLING ERRORS?

LOOKS GOOD.

THANKS. I'D HATE TO LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT.

WIZARD OF ID

I GOT A VISIT FROM SANTA LAST NIGHT—THE JOLLY OLD ELF HIMSELF!

ELF! MY FOOT!

MASSIVE WHITE BEARD...

MAGICAL SLEIGH...

ABILITY TO CONTROL ANIMALS...

HE'S A WIZARD!

AGNES

WHAT DID YOUR MOM GET YOU FOR CHRISTMAS, TROUT?

SHE GAVE ME ALL OF HER OLD MAKEUP!

WOW! SHE MUST THINK YOU ARE GROWING UP!

HUH?

MAKEUP IS A GROWN-UP THING.

HA! I'M GOING TO PAINT PICTURES OF PIZZA AND STEW!

HI AND LOIS

BEFORE CHRISTMAS, WE HAD THE WHOLE PLACE ALL SPIFFED UP FOR SANTA.

I HOPE HE DOESN'T HAVE TO COME BACK FOR ANYTHING!

THE OTHER COAST

I JUST BOUGHT A NEW CAR.

IT'S FULLY LOADED WITH EVERYTHING. IT EVEN COMES WITH HEATED FRONT SEATS.

MY CAR HAS A SEAT HEATER, TOO.

IT'S CALLED A DOG.

SNUFFY SMITH

WHY TH' HECK WOULD ENNYONE WANNA LIVE WAY UP THAR?!

YEEEE-HAW !!

AH !! GOT IT !!

BEEBLE BAILEY

SARGE!

DON'T BOTHER ME WHEN I'M DOING MY @!#\$%^&* PUZZLE!!

THEY REALLY ARE CROSS WORD PUZZLES WHEN SARGE DOES THEM

This Date In History

Today is Monday, Dec. 26, the 361st day of 2016. There are five days left in the year. The seven-day African-American holiday Kwanzaa begins today. This is Boxing Day.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 26, 1941, during World War II, Winston Churchill became the first British prime minister to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress. Churchill grimly warned that "many disappointments and unpleasant surprises await us," but also expressed faith that "the British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together in majesty, in justice and in peace."

On this date:

- In 1776, British forces suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War.
- In 1799, former President George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."
- In 1865, James H. Nason of Franklin, Massachusetts, received a patent for "an improved coffee percolator."
- In 1908, Jack Johnson became the first African-American boxer to win the world heavyweight championship as he defeated Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia.
- In 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, the embattled U.S. 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne, Belgium, was relieved by units of the 4th Armored Division. Tennessee Williams' play "The Glass Menagerie" was first performed at the Civic Theatre in Chicago.
- In 1966, Kwanzaa was first celebrated.
- In 1967, "Magical Mystery Tour," the Beatles' poorly received TV special, was broadcast (in black and white) on BBC1.
- In 1972, the 33rd president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, died in Kansas City, Missouri, at age 88.
- In 1980, Iranian television footage was broadcast in the United States, showing a dozen of the American hostages sending messages to their families.
- In 1990, Nancy Cruzan, the young woman in an irreversible vegetative state whose case led to a U.S. Supreme Court decision on the right to die, died at a Missouri hospital.
- In 1996, 6-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey was found beaten and strangled in the basement of her family's home in Boulder, Colorado. (To date, the slaying remains unsolved.)
- In 2004, more than 230,000 people, mostly in southern Asia, were killed by a 100-foot-high tsunami triggered by a 9.1-magnitude earthquake beneath the Indian Ocean.
- Ten years ago: Former President Gerald R. Ford died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 93. Iraq's highest court rejected Saddam Hussein's appeal of his conviction and death sentence and said the former president should be hanged within 30 days. (Saddam was executed on Dec. 30, 2006, Iraq time.)
- Five years ago: A heart surgeon from a Mayo Clinic in Florida flying across the northern corner of the state to retrieve a heart for transplant was killed with two other people when their helicopter crashed.

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Newsday Crossword

JUST SKIDDING by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

- 1 Declares frankly
- 6 Bit of mistletoe
- 11 Uncooked
- 14 Mountain in Exodus
- 15 Old-fashioned "Cool!"
- 16 Nation north of Mex.
- 17 Treaties
- 18 Sharpshooter Oakley
- 19 Huge
- 20 Be inattentive
- 23 "Electric" fish
- 24 Champagne and Chablis
- 25 Dispel the doubts of
- 29 ___ Antoinette (French queen)
- 32 Large family
- 33 Blossom piece
- 34 Owns
- 37 "Understand me?"
- 41 Network with an eye logo
- 42 Heats in the microwave
- 43 Memo's "regarding"
- 44 Later than
- 45 Highest-quality
- 47 Gig for a soprano
- 50 ___ down (write quickly)
- 51 Student's field-trip form
- 58 Also
- 59 Providence, ___ Island
- 60 Residences
- 62 Finish up
- 63 Of humble status

DOWN

- 1 Cleopatra's snake
- 2 Perfume bottle
- 3 ___ upon a time ...
- 4 Light-bulb measure
- 5 Female sibling
- 6 Slow-moving creature in a shell
- 7 Actor Sean
- 8 Used a doorbell
- 9 "That's the way ___"
- 10 Runs amok
- 11 Apply, as lotion
- 12 "All kidding ..."
- 13 Payments to workers
- 21 ___-haw (donkey's sound)
- 22 Be deceitful
- 25 Electrical adapter letters
- 26 Messy one
- 27 Puts into words
- 28 Most important "numero"
- 29 Cab-fare calculator
- 30 24-hr. cash dispensers
- 31 Sunbeam
- 33 Small dog, for short
- 34 Clue
- 35 Spherical hairdo
- 36 Staircase part
- 38 In a biased way
- 39 Belly
- 40 Sleeper Van Winkle
- 44 Jacket sleeve
- 45 2,000 pounds
- 46 "Turn up the air conditioning!"
- 47 ___ for (chose)
- 48 Showy flower
- 49 Wear away
- 50 Baby kangaroos
- 52 Loafer or sneaker
- 53 Female pigs
- 54 Inactive
- 55 The ___ Ranger (Western hero)
- 56 "Sign me up!"
- 57 Chest muscles, for short
- 61 Glance at

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Russia: Focus is on faults, not terror, in plane crash probe

SOCHI, Russia (AP) — A pilot error or a technical fault — not terrorism — is likely to be the cause of the plane crash into the Black Sea, Russia's transport minister said Monday as the nation held a day of mourning for the victims.

All 84 passengers and eight crew members on the Russian military's Tu-154 plane are believed to have died Sunday morning when it crashed two minutes after taking off from the southern city of Sochi. The passengers included dozens of singers in Russia's world-famous military choir, nine Russian journalists and a Russian doctor known for her charity work in war zones.

On Monday, the search operation involved more than 3,500 people on 45 ships — including 135 divers flown in from across Russia — sweeping a vast crash site at sea and along the shore, according to the Defense Ministry.

Five helicopters and drones were being used to help spot bodies and debris. Two deep-water submersibles arrived Monday in Sochi to aid the operation, which went on all through the night thanks to powerful searchlights.

The Black Sea search area — which covers over 10 square kilometers (about 4 square miles) — is plagued by underwater currents that can carry debris and body fragments into the open sea.

Recounts or no, US elections are still vulnerable to hacking

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Jill Stein's bid to recount votes in Pennsylvania was in trouble even before a federal judge shot it down Dec. 12. That's because the Green Party candidate's effort stood almost no chance of detecting potential fraud or error in the vote — there was basically nothing to recount.

Pennsylvania is one of 11 states where the majority of voters use antiquated machines that store votes electronically, without printed ballots or other paper-based backups that could be used to double-check the balloting. There's almost no way to know if they've accurately recorded individual votes — or if anyone tampered with the count.

More than 80 percent of Pennsylvanians who voted Nov. 8 cast their ballots on such machines, according to VotePA, a nonprofit seeking their replacement. A recount would, in the words of VotePA's Marybeth Kuznik, a veteran election judge, essentially amount to this: "You go to the computer and you say, 'OK, computer, you counted this a week-and-a-half ago. Were you right the first time?'"

These paperless digital voting machines, used by roughly 1 in 5 U.S. voters last month, present one of the most glaring dangers to the security of the rickety, underfunded U.S. election system. Like many electronic voting machines, they are vulnerable to hacking. But other machines typically leave a paper trail that could be manually checked. The paperless digital machines open the door to potential election rigging that might not ever be detected.

What's more, their prevalence magnifies other risks in the election sys-

tem, such as the possibility that hackers might compromise the computers that tally votes, by making failures or attacks harder to catch. And like other voting machines adopted since the 2000 election, the paperless systems are nearing the end of their useful life — yet there is no comprehensive plan to replace them.

Trump's pick for ambassador to Israel has all sides on edge

NEW YORK (AP) — If President-elect Donald Trump wanted to show he planned to obliterate President Barack Obama's approach to Israel, he may have found his man to deliver that message in David Friedman, his pick for U.S. ambassador.

The bankruptcy lawyer and son of an Orthodox rabbi is everything Obama is not: a fervent supporter of Israeli settlements, opponent of Palestinian statehood and unrelenting defender of Israel's government. So far to the right is Friedman that even many Israel supporters worry he could push Israel's hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to be more extreme, scuttling prospects for peace with Palestinians in the process.

The heated debate over Friedman's selection is playing out just as fresh tensions erupt between the U.S. and Israel, punctuated last Friday by the Obama administration's stunning move to allow a U.N. Security Council resolution to pass condemning Israeli settlements as illegal. The move to abstain, rather than veto, defied years of U.S. tradition of shielding Israel from such resolutions, and elicited angry condemnation from Israel, lawmakers of both parties, and especially Trump.

"Things will be different after Jan. 20th," when he's sworn in, Trump vowed on Twitter.

Friedman, certainly, is different.

Cuban President Raul Castro faces deep problems in 2017

HAVANA (AP) — Alex Romero was delighted when President Barack Obama came to Havana in March bearing the promise of a bright new future.

Like so many other Cubans, the 42-year-old state photography shop employee thrilled at the president's vision of restored ties between the U.S. and Cuba. Families would reunite. A flood of American business would lift the stagnant centrally planned economy, fueling its slow path toward reform. Even as Obama spoke, an 80 percent surge in U.S. visitors was drenching state-run and private businesses with hundreds of millions of desperately needed dollars.

Nine months later, the world seen from Havana looks very different.

President Raul Castro faces what could be his toughest year since he took power in 2006. 2017 brings a possible economic recession and a U.S. president-elect who has promised to undo Obama's normalization unless the Cuban government makes new concessions on civil rights. Resistance to pressure from Washington is a founding principle for the Cuban communist system, making domestic concessions in exchange for contin-

ued detente a virtual impossibility.

"People expected that after Obama came there would be changes in the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba but that we could keep the best of what we have, the benefits for the people," Romero said. "Trump's not going to be able to get what he wants, another type of Cuba. If the world's number one power takes us on, 2017 is going to be really bad for us."

Fleeing war, South Sudanese create booming camps in Uganda

BIDI BIDI CAMP, Uganda (AP) — "I don't want to go back," James Issac declared, just minutes after becoming a refugee. "I don't want to die."

For two days, the slender 30-year-old from South Sudan's Equatoria region navigated his way out of civil war, riding a motorcycle along dirt roads and avoiding government soldiers who, according to accounts by refugees to *The Associated Press*, have taken aim at civilians.

In his last steps on South Sudanese soil, Issac passed a group of rag-tag rebel soldiers and crossed a rickety bridge into Uganda, and safety.

"I am happy," he said, as Ugandan soldiers searched his belongings for contraband. "There (are) no problems here."

He is one of 440,000 refugees who have fled South Sudan's spiraling conflict into Uganda this year alone, creating some of the world's largest refugee camps in just six months' time.

Once a killer, now a CEO: Ex-con works to turn youths around

SOMERVILLE, Mass. (AP) — John Valverde isn't your typical CEO. He spent 16 years in prison for killing a man accused of raping his girlfriend.

While in prison, Valverde did his best to redeem himself, earning two college degrees, teaching fellow inmates how to read and write, and working as an HIV/AIDS counselor.

Next week, he'll take over as chief executive officer of YouthBuild USA Inc., an organization with a global network of programs aimed at helping young, low-income dropouts reclaim their lives and get skills to land jobs and become community leaders.

Valverde said he thinks it is important for him to be honest about his past with the young people he's trying to help. One in three has a criminal record.

"They are just like me, and therefore their path could be like mine, and therefore they could achieve things that they never imagined," Valverde said in a recent interview at YouthBuild's Somerville, headquarters.

Ski industry skews big, so smaller resorts tout authenticity

DENVER (AP) — A budget ski resort in western Colorado came up with an eye-popping offer — a \$700 lift ticket, the most expensive in the nation. Only this lift ticket comes with a sweet bonus: a pair of handcrafted skis made from Colorado wood.

Gimmicky? Sure. But Sunlight Mountain Resort says that in an era of increasing ski-industry consolidation, where a handful of companies control more and more winter sport terrain, scrappy independent resorts need all the help they can get to compete with amenity-laden megaresorts.

From baking fresh doughnuts for skiers to displaying local art to play up a sense of community, smaller, independent resorts say they have to rely on personality.

"It's the difference between Budweiser or a craft brew," said Troy Hawks, Sunlight's head of marketing and sales.

The ski industry used to be dominated by independent resorts, where downhill and cross-country skiers would drive to a local mountain, maybe get a fireside cup of hot chocolate in a lodge, then drive home. A ski area with an on-mountain hotel was a rarity; one with nighttime entertainment and white-tablecloth dining would be a true destination.

WNBA offers players security app for safety overseas

NEW YORK (AP) — The WNBA is offering an assist to players trying to stay safe while traveling overseas.

The league has partnered with LiveSafe, a safety communications platform, to provide a mobile security app to its 60-plus players competing in Russia, Turkey, China and other countries this offseason. The app debuted this week and players are already signing up.

"This was a proactive effort to protect our players and secure their personal safety," WNBA President Lisa Borders said in a phone interview with *The Associated Press*. "Our partner in this endeavor is LiveSafe. It has multiple features and functionality. It's a real-time way for our players to ask for help and receive help in dangerous situations or threatening environments."

The app will allow the players to communicate directly with the league and its security team. It also can send security advisories and notifications to players when they're overseas, similar to what one might get from the state department.

Borders said that the league's security team has been working with LiveSafe on the app for a while, and that it was not in reaction to any specific threat to players.

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