

BIG SPRING HERALD

Reflecting A Proud Community

TUESDAY
December 3, 1996

50 cents

Early voting under way in Senate runoff

By JOHN H. WALKER
Managing Editor

A total of 140 Howard County residents voted early Monday in the runoff election for the District 28 Texas Senate seat between Republican Robert Duncan and Democrat David Langston.

Duncan resigned a seat in the Texas House to run for the seat while Langston resigned his post as Lubbock mayor to run. Early voting in the Dec. 10 election continues through Friday at the Howard County Courthouse. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. next Tuesday, election day.

The two candidates will square off in their only face-to-face meeting in the southern part of the district Wednesday night at 7 in a forum sponsored by the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, Big Spring Cable TV and the Big Spring Herald.

The hour-long forum will be held at the

Candidates forum

Time: 7 p.m.
Date: Wednesday, Dec. 4
Place: Dora Roberts Community Center

Dora Roberts Community Center and will feature both candidates fielding questions from the audience on a variety of issues, but one commercial in this runoff campaign is already causing tempers to flare.

Among the issues expected to be discussed at Wednesday's forum will be property tax relief, school finance, funding for higher education, welfare reform and juvenile crime.

Persons attending the forum will have the

opportunity to write down their question on a form. The question will then be submitted to a three-person panel before it is passed on to moderator Shirley Shroyer.

The three-person panel, which will include one representative from each campaign, will combine similar questions, work to ensure concise wording and eliminate questions that do not relate to campaign issues.

Duncan led a seven-candidate field in the Nov. 5 special election with 40,437 votes or 31.67 percent while Langston managed 30,352 votes or 23.78 percent.

The race is viewed as crucial by both political parties, since a Duncan win would give the Republicans a majority in the Senate for the first time since Reconstruction.

The state Democratic Party has kicked money into Langston's campaign, sending

Please see **RUNOFF**, page 2

Christopher sentencing on conviction expected

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Only three days remain before Big Spring resident and businessman Charles "Chris" Christopher is scheduled to be sentenced for his part in defrauding American Universal Insurance Co. of Providence, R.I., and Diamond Benefits Life Insurance Co. of Arizona.

Christopher's sentencing date, the ninth he has faced since his July 1995 conviction, is set for Friday in Providence and, according to Laurie Kizior, clerk to U.S. District Judge Frances Boyles, there is no indication that Christopher will not be sentenced this time.

Christopher was originally convicted on 11 counts of wire fraud and 10 counts of interstate transfer of stolen goods. He faces a possible 155 years in prison and \$60 million in fines. It was the largest theft in Rhode Island history.

Please see **CHRISTOPHER**, page 2

Howard County Pecan events slated Thursday

By KELLIE JONES
Features Editor

The Howard County Extension Service is sponsoring its annual Pecan Show and Pecan Food Show Thursday morning at the courthouse.

The deadline for those wanting to enter the pecan show is 8:30 Wednesday morning. Turn the entries in to the extension office located on the first floor of the courthouse. The pecans will be processed starting at 9 a.m. so no entries can be taken past 8:30. An entry consists of 40 pecans of the same variety and must be grown in Howard County by a Howard County resident.

Anyone wanting to enter the food show portion of the contest can bring their entries Thursday morning between 7:30 and 10 a.m. You can bring the food to the lobby of the courthouse that morning.

According to County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Science Dana Tarter, entries for the pecan food show will be accepted in two divisions. The youth division is open to those in school or 18 years of age and younger while the adult division is open for those 19 years of age or older. Within each division, there are five classes you can enter including cakes, pies, cookies, candies and breads. Tarter said an individual may enter one or more classes but may have only one food entry per class.

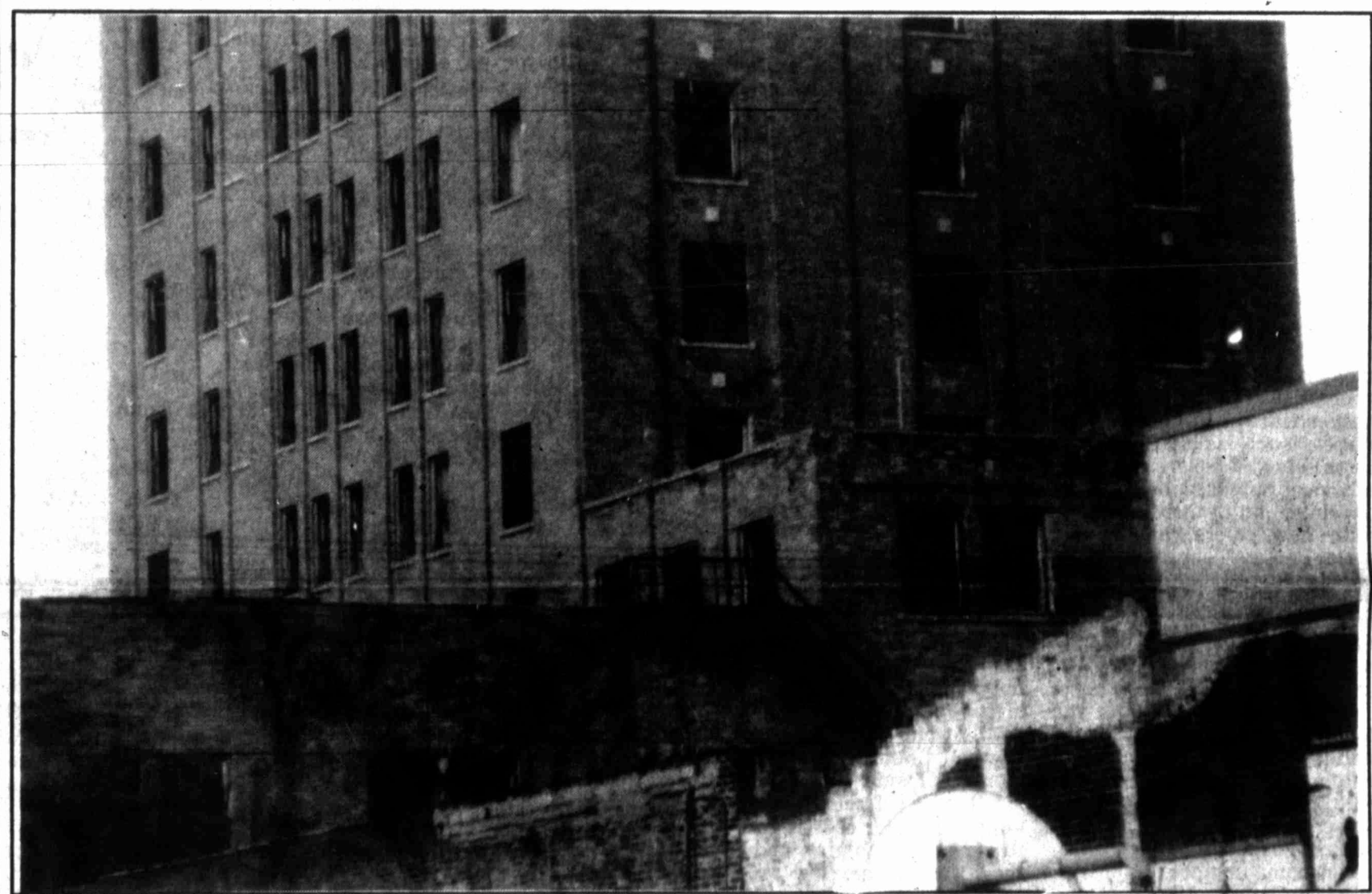
The food has to be prepared by the exhibitor but the pecans do not have to be grown by that person. Mixes can be used as an ingredient but not alone and pecans must be included in the actual dish and not just in the icing or for decoration.

An entry consists of a whole cake, pie or loaf of bread, eight pieces of candy or eight cookies. The candy and cookies should be placed on a paper plate while all entries must be covered by transparent wrap with the name and address of the exhibitor on the bottom of the container.

Each entry must also be accompanied by the recipe printed on a three-by-five index card. Recipes won't be returned and will be available to the public upon request.

The entries will be judged between 10 a.m. and noon on Thursday. From 1 to 3 p.m. that day, the extension office will host a holiday open house.

GETTING A FACELIFT!



Tommy Churchwell is spearheading on effort to get the Settles Hotel into better shape. He has added three new windows and has challenged other people in the community to do the same. Windows may be purchased for \$150 at Quality Glass and they will do the installation.

Cotton harvest really in full swing now

Howard County's production expected to be way down at 20,000 bales

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Recent low humidity levels and above average temperatures have boosted cotton harvest efforts in the 30-county High Plains region into high gear.

As a result of almost ideal weather conditions, the Lubbock and Lamesa United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cotton Classing offices have processed more than 1.2 million bales of cotton, and according to Lubbock-based Plains Cotton Growers (PCG) Inc., many High Plains gins are starting to report significant backlogs in cotton processing.

PCG officials say the help from Mother Nature has allowed the High Plains harvest to pass the halfway mark of harvesting this year's crop.

The most recent cold spell did put a damper on the good news because the pace at which the harvest was proceeding slowed during the Thanksgiving holiday.

Despite the changes in weather, yield estimates for the 1996 crop continue to be very close to 2.81 million bales for the high Plains region, according to the most recent USDA report.

Howard County Extension Agent Don Richardson expects Howard County's cotton yield to be about 60 pounds per acre or 20,000 bales, way down from years past.

The USDA's November estimate of the size of the High Plains cotton crop is also expected to be slightly larger than the 480-pound bales the USDA estimated.

According to PCG officials, cotton bales usually weigh in at about 495 pounds.

Estimates from the Lubbock and Lamesa classing offices reflect production in actual bales, meaning the offices expect to receive cotton samples from 2.75 to 2.8 million bales.

Converting 2.75 million actual bales to statistical bales would mean the 1996 yield for the High Plains cotton crop would be about 2.83 million 480-pound bales.

As the harvest continues, it appears that producers are seeing greater than expected yields from the 1996 crop, despite drought and uncooperative weather patterns.

Other news of concern to High Plains producers and PCG officials is the pending decision of the Texas Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation's (TBWEF) spraying program.

Attorneys for both sides pre-

sented their case to the Supreme Court two weeks ago and a decision is expected within the next two months.

Meanwhile, according to High Plains officials, the boll weevil population has continued its spread throughout the High Plains area since the suit was filed against the TBWEF in 1995 by 10 Hale County cotton producers.

Officials are also concerned by the boll weevil because of the lack of assessment collections needed to fully address the problem during the recent diapause spray program.

"We were able to spray approximately three million acres with what we did collect," Shawn Wade, PCG spokesman, said. "We had about \$11.2 million that we were trying to collect and we collected about \$5.6 million (49.9 percent), leaving about \$5.6 million uncollected."

Strickland suit retrial set Dec. 16

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Pending an appeal before the Eleventh District Court of Appeals in Eastland, the retrial in a wrongful death suit brought against Yale E. Key Inc., by the family of Roy E. "Gene" Strickland is tentatively scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Dec. 16 in Howard County's 118th District Court.

Billie Strickland, widow of Roy E. "Gene" Strickland, and her daughters, Connie Moore and Eugenia Andrews, were granted a new trial by 118th District Judge Robert Moore III on Sept. 23, overturning the a June verdict in favor of Yale E. Key.

The suit was originally filed because of the April 13, 1995, death of Strickland, who was killed when a multi-piece rim tire he was repairing for the oil well service company exploded.

The June verdict in favor of Yale E. Key was overturned and a new trial ordered because Yale E. Key was found to have withheld evidence in June by not naming employee Jack Morris in its answer to a plaintiff's interrogatory, which asked the defense to information on all employees or independent contractors providing tire repair for Key's Forsan yard during the last five years.

Moore's order stated such failure on the part of Key was not justified.

The previous judgment in favor of Key was set aside by Moore and the company was also ordered to pay the plaintiffs \$29,160 as attorney fees.

The Stricklands were seeking to have their original judgment request for \$6 million entered because of the discovery abuse by the defense. The plaintiffs contend Morris' testimony would, in all likelihood, have caused the jury to render a judgment in their favor.

The plaintiffs also argued they were entitled to a new trial because they were prohibited during the first trial from presenting evidence regarding Key's admitted removal and subsequent return of safety violations from its Forsan yard prior to the OSHA investigation, all of which occurred within hours after Strickland's

Please see **RETRIAL**, page 2



Dec. 3
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TODAY'S WEATHER	
59	▲ Highs
	▼ Lows
	30

Today: Sunny with a high in the upper 50s. Low near 30.
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, high around 60. Low in the 30s.
Extended outlook: Thursday, fair with a high in the 60s. Low in the upper 30s. Friday, fair with a high near 70. Low in the upper 30s. Saturday, fair with a high in the 50s. Low in the 30s.

Christmas definitely poinsettia's season

By CARLTON JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Several varieties of poinsettias, including salmon, pinks, whites as well as novelty colors have been developed over the years by growers, but when it comes to December and Christmas, a majority of flower lovers just want the velvety reds and dark green leaves of the traditional poinsettia.

"About 70 percent of the poinsettias produced and marketed are red, and the other 30 percent include everything else,"

said Dr. Harvey Lang, a Texas A&M University horticulturist. Poinsettias were introduced in the U.S. in the 1800s from their native home of Mexico, and are the flower of choice in nurseries and greenhouses in the U.S., edging out the chrysanthemums in the past 30 years to become the number one selling flowering potted plant in the country.

"Greenhouse producers pay many of their bills with poinsettias, and it all happens within about one month of sales," Lang said.

According to Lang, U.S. growers have increased production this year from 1995 and are expected to send about 38 million plants to market.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Texas' 94 poinsettia producers will contribute more than one-tenth of that at 3.85 million pots. The wholesale value of the crop has jumped from \$37.6 million in 1976 to \$209 million for the 1995 season. Texas growers brought \$13.5

Please see **GROWTH**, page 2

TEXAS BRIEFS

The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prosecutor fired after arrest for cocaine possession

HOUSTON — A Harris County prosecutor who had handled several high-profile cases has been fired after she was arrested on a charge of possession of cocaine, authorities say.

District Attorney John B. Holmes Jr. said Monday that Kristen Pain, 31, was fired immediately after she was arrested Saturday morning for allegedly snorting cocaine in front of an undercover FBI agent.

Pain, who had been an assistant district attorney for five years, had spent the past six months in the consumer fraud division.

Holmes said he did not have to wait until her trial to fire her, saying the arrest was enough. He noted that it was the first time he can remember that an assistant district attorney has been arrested on a drug possession charge.

"I don't think it is unreasonable for folks who enforce the rules to follow them," he said. "I'm not going to tolerate any failure to follow the law."

Tilton's first wife joins attempt to gain church's assets

DALLAS — Evangelist Robert Tilton's first wife has joined in the fight over church property in his second divorce.

Marte Tilton intervened Monday in Tilton's divorce from fellow evangelist Leigh Valentine Tilton, demanding that any church assets judged community property should go to her interests first.

State District Judge Bill Burdock has ruled that he will not drop Word of Faith World Outreach Center Church from the divorce case, under the argument that Tilton controls the church and its finances so completely that he and the church are one and the same.

Burdock's decision apparently prompted Marte Tilton's action and leaves open the possibility that church property, including the \$1.6 million former parsonage and some of the church's other \$30 million in assets, could be awarded in the divorce verdict.

American Airlines to turn off giant airport signs

DALLAS — Eight giant gate information signs erected at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport by American Airlines that were the subject of a multi-million dollar lawsuit will be shut down, according to a published report.

The Dallas Morning News reported in a copyright story today that airline chairman Robert Crandall notified airport officials last week that the airline planned to turn the five-story illuminated signs off after the busy Thanksgiving Day travel rush ended on Monday.

Suit seeks interest collection on back child support

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A judge has entered a class-action order providing for parents to collect interest on past-due child support, a sum plaintiffs attorneys say could total billions of dollars.

"This is based on the fundamental proposition that child support is not a request. It is a court order. These are just and valid debts owed to the children of the state of Texas," plaintiffs' lawyer Steven Sinkin said after the order was issued Monday.

State District Judge John D. Gabriel Jr. ruled custodial parents who have been owed back child support would be certified

as a class. Maria del Carmen Rios and Deirdre Wilson, two San Antonio women who have been owed past-due child support, are the plaintiffs representing the class.

"It feels good to be able to help out others," said Ms. Rios, the mother of a 15-year-old. Ms. Rios' past-due child support increased from \$4,575 to \$22,199 once interest was figured in, Sinkin said.

Texas Attorney General Dan Morales intervened in the court case last week and pledged to pursue unpaid interest in the child support cases his office

handles. "We do in fact want to collect interest on the past due child support," said Ron Dusek, a spokesman for Morales.

The state began collecting interest on pending cases of past-due child support in July, Dusek said. Cases in which the past-due amount has been paid will be re-examined for interest assessment, he said.

There is was no figure available on how many cases that would apply to or how much money is involved, Dusek said.

Interest has not been assessed uniformly in private or state cases for back child support,

according to the Attorney General's Office. A state law was passed in 1991 allowing interest to be paid. It was amended in 1993 to provide for a 12 percent interest rate.

Sinkin and Richard Orsinger, another plaintiffs' attorney in the class-action lawsuit, said the judge's order means anyone who received child support since Sept. 1, 1985, can seek recalculation of the amount of any past-due child support to include interest.

The attorneys estimate some 2 million Texas children may be affected, with the interest totaling billions of dollars.

GOP, Democrats eye same leaders in Senate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite talk of bipartisan cooperation, Senate Republican and Democratic leaders will guide a chamber already clashing with President Clinton over welfare and more conservative than it has been in years.

GOP and Democratic senators hold separate meetings today to pick their leaders for the Congress that convenes in January. Both leadership teams are all but certain to be re-elected without opposition, starting with Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D.

Lott would for the first time head a Senate whose agenda he can set. When he replaced Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., as GOP leader last June, he inherited a chamber whose members were eager to complete their work quickly

so they could plunge into the campaign.

On the Democratic side, Daschle would begin his third year as minority leader. The soft-spoken South Dakotan, who will be 49 on Monday, won his post by a single vote two years ago over Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., and has steered a course that has mixed cooperation with partisan attacks.

The meetings come exactly four weeks after an Election Day that saw voters expand the GOP's 53-47 Senate majority to 55-45. Members of both parties have said that voters want compromise, but Republicans are already ruling out helping the president ease parts of this year's welfare overhaul.

"A significant reforming or undermining the welfare bill, no," Senate Majority Whip Don

Nickles, R-Okla., said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Nickles is expected to retain his position, and Connie Mack, R-Fla., will take the No. 3 job of conference chairman. Mack will replace Thad Cochran, R-Miss., who promised not to seek the job again after Lott easily defeated him last June.

Also virtually certain to return to their Democratic side jobs are Sens. Wendell Ford of Kentucky, the whip, and Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, who is conference secretary.


The Senate leadership selection was a mirror of what happened in the House two weeks ago, when Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., and their current leadership teams were re-elected by the rank and file.

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14	
13	
12	
11	
10	
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

136 TOTAL POINTS

Name _____
Address _____
City, State (zip) _____
Day Phone () _____
Night Phone () _____

HOW TO PLAY

Select a winner from each of the week's games, listed below. Select in descending order of your CONFIDENCE in your choices. Win points at left for each correct selection toward possible total of 136 points. See complete rules below. You must be at least 8 (eight) years old to enter. To enter, clip along dotted line, then place game entry in POWER POINTS container at co-sponsor's retail outlet(s). Entrants must list name, address and phone number below.

LIMIT: You may enter only one coupon statewide per week.

DEADLINE: 2 P.M. FRIDAY

TIEBREAKER 1 Total points scored (both teams) in COWBOYS game.

TIEBREAKER 2 Total offensive yards (both teams) in this game.

- THIS WEEK'S GAMES**
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Atlanta at New Orleans | Carolina at San Francisco |
| Buffalo at Seattle | Denver at Green Bay |
| Dallas at Arizona | N.Y. Giants at Miami |
| Jacksonville at Houston | St. Louis at Chicago |
| N.Y. Jets at New England | Washington at Tampa Bay |
| San Diego at Pittsburgh | Kansas City at Oakland |
| Minnesota at Detroit | Army vs. Navy |
| Baltimore at Cincinnati | Big 12 Title Game |

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POWER POINTS OFFICIAL RULES

- Object of the game is to amass as many of the 136 possible points as you can. Simply review the week's schedule of games, listed on entry form, and decide which game you are sure of picking a winner in. Write the name of your projected winner on the 16-point line. If that team wins its game that week, you win 16 points. Write the name of your second-surest winner on the 15-point line, and so on down to the 1-point line, which game you figure to be a loss-up. Next, fill in Tiebreaker 1, the total points scored by both teams in the week's Cowboys or Oilers game. If this step fails to produce a winner, the judges will apply Tiebreaker 2, total offensive yardage from scrimmage in this game. If a winner still doesn't emerge, a drawing will be held among those contestants still tied. Decisions of the judges are final. The weekly winner of the contest will receive \$1,000.
- Any entry form that does not contain a legible name, address, etc., will be disqualified.
- Entries that fail to forecast a winner from each and every game will be disqualified, as will entries that fail to distinguish between the Jets and Giants of New York and Pitt and Pittsburgh.
- No points are awarded on tie games or in case any game is not played for any reason during its scheduled week.
- Entering POWER POINTS constitutes permission by contestant for his or her name and photograph to be used for news and reasonable promotional purposes at no charge.
- Employees of this newspaper and their immediate families are ineligible to participate.
- Any inquiry about or protest of weekly results must be made by Noon on the Friday following the announcement of winners.
- No purchase necessary. Facsimile game entry forms will be accepted. Enter contest by dropping entry form into POWER POINTS container at participating co-sponsors.
- Weekly deadline for entry will be 2 p.m. Fridays except when noted otherwise on weekly entry form.
- Neither this newspaper nor any co-sponsor will be responsible for illegible entry forms or those lost, stolen or damaged in any way.
- Limit: one entry per person per week. Each entry must represent the original work of one entrant; "group" entries, "systems" or other attempts to enter multiple entries will be disqualified. Filing out extra forms and putting your friends' and relatives' names on them violates this rule. Any such entries are destroyed prior to grading.
- Contestants must have reached the age of eight (8) years by the Sunday of any week's play.

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EDITORIAL

Quote of the Day

"A silent majority and government by the people is incompatible."
-Tom Hayden

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

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News Editor
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Features Editor

OUR VIEW

Remember to vote in runoff for Senate

It's been almost a month since the November general election, but for voters in Big Spring and the surrounding area, the task of filling all the positions up for grabs won't be accomplished until Dec. 10 when the District 28 Texas Senate seat runoff between Republican Robert Duncan and Democrat David Langston will be decided.

The two survivors from the November free-for-all race pitted seven candidates seeking to fill the vacancy created when former Sen. John Montford quit the post to accept the position as chancellor of Texas Tech University.

Early voting for the runoff race began Monday and continues through Friday at the County Clerk's Office in the Howard County Courthouse.

The 28th District's decision could have historical ramifications, since a Duncan victory would give Republicans a majority in the state Senate for the first time since Reconstruction following the Civil War, while a Langston victory would give Democrats a slim one-man majority in the upper house.

In addition, the 75th Legislature is expected to consider a number of important issues during its session, particularly school finance and property tax reform.

Duncan, who served Lubbock's 84th District as state representative during the last Legislature and was endorsed by the *Herald*, paced the field in November's balloting with 40,437 of the 127,663 votes cast. In Howard County, he also led the tally with 2,269 votes.

Langston, who resigned as mayor of Lubbock to seek the post, received 30,352 votes district-wide, and was fourth in Howard County returns with 1,081.

Anyone registered to vote can cast a ballot for the runoff, even those who were either unable to vote or chose not to exercise their privilege in November.

It is important that local voters remember that showing up at the polls and casting their votes is more than just a privilege, it's a responsibility and should always be taken seriously.

OTHER VIEWS

It was predicted by every other American who reads the newspapers, but it was still astonishing when a federal judge in California temporarily restrained enforcement of a proposition prohibiting racial and gender discrimination by public schools and agencies in the state.

Proposition 209, passed by 55 percent of the state's voters this past Nov. 5, was patterned after the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It is simple and clear. When hiring people, when letting contracts and when admitting students to the state university system, it says, public officials may not consider race or sex.

In all probability, says our judge, Thelton E. Henderson, this is unconstitutional. His restraining order will stay in effect until an inevitable preliminary injunction on Dec. 16, to be followed by a trial most expect to last at least a year. The voice of the people in California has thus been nullified for at least a period, but on what grounds? Heed carefully the judge's words.

"Courts must look beyond the plain language of an enactment," he wrote. "The relevant question is whether, in reality, the burden imposed by a law necessarily falls on minorities and women."

In other words, you can't have laws mandating equal treatment of individuals if that gets in the way of preferential treatment of individuals

belonging to particular groups.

This is worse than balderdash. If accepted as a new guiding principle of our republic, it would upend a goodly portion of previous civil rights legislation. It turns the notion of equality under law on its head. It subverts the U.S. Constitution and it makes a mockery of the Declaration of Independence. It is an affront to democracy and liberty.

The issue here is not whether you believe in affirmative action as a wise social policy. The issue is whether a court can disregard the Constitution's irrefutable meaning in pursuit of its own political ends. Grant that it can, and you will have gone far to strip authority from all other branches and means of government and to confer it on the judiciary, which supposedly exists to protect rights, not deprive people of them.

Judge Henderson should have tossed the suit out of court on the grounds that it was frivolous and made no sustainable constitutional point. The fact that he chose instead to give credence to a ludicrous argument is testimony to his own judicial extremism and one more piece of evidence that our system of checks and balances is badly out of whack.

-SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

LOCAL OFFICIALS

BIG SPRING CITY COUNCIL
Big Spring City Hall - 264-2401.
Tim Blackhear, mayor - Home: 283-7961; Work (Blackhear Rentals): 263-4086.
Pat DeAnda, mayor pro tem - Home: 287-7896; Work (College Heights Elementary): 264-4115.
Stephanie Horton - Home: 264-0908; Work (VA Medical Center), 283-7361.
Chuck Cawthon - Home: 283-7490; Work (Chuck's Surplus): 283-1142.
Tom Guess - Home: 283-5097.
Jimmy Campbell - Home: 287-7895; Work (Big Spring FCI) 263-5904.
John Paul Anderson - Home: 287-7123; Work: 267-6608.



Fanning racial flames with 'Ebonics' controversy

By BONNIE ERBE
Scripps Howard News Service

Is everybody in your neighborhood talking about the "Ebonics" controversy? If not now, they will be soon.

Note this article, which recently ran on the front page of that bastion of conservatism, The Washington Times. It began, "Officials of a California public school system think black pupils who speak 'Black English' should qualify for federal bilingual education funds, because they speak an authentic language other than English."

The article went on to report an Oakland (California) Board of Education task force on educating African-American students that are in supreme demand.

Allow me to paraphrase. What if, instead of calling Black English "Ebonics," and classifying it as a separate language Oakland officials just called it "Blap special English comprehension and speech classes for African-American students who need to learn proper English to do so?"

Then it would not be a story, agreed? Then it would not be a controversy, agreed again? And then, it would not whip up the fervor of white people against black people and against necessary educational reforms.

tal funds to teach Americans how to speak English sends any right-thinking person into spasms of cholera, spewing forth invectives about our "liberal, spend-thrift" government.

It is the sort of story Right Wing politicians love to wave in the air, flailing about and shouting billingsgates about the wanton Left. What's more, it's the type of issue that any simpleton (wrongly) thinks he or she can understand. It's the type that makes us feel angry and push for political change.

Here's the opaque part most citizens would not be able to comprehend, however. It also is the type of story that has a hidden agenda of dividing Americans along racial lines and reducing beyond disingenuousness educational reforms that are in supreme demand.

What if, instead of calling Black English "Ebonics," and classifying it as a separate language Oakland officials just called it "Blap special English comprehension and speech classes for African-American students who need to learn proper English to do so?"

Then it would not be a story,

agreed? Then it would not be a controversy, agreed again? And then, it would not whip up the fervor of white people against black people and against necessary educational reforms.

The use of the term, Ebonics, is not new. Even the Washington Times story buries this fact toward the end of its article, noting Ebonics is a "little-used term that grew out of a 1973 conference of educators, researchers and psychologists concerned about the language skills of black students — speakers say, for instance, "I been done walk" instead of "I have walked."

If the goal of conservatives were to bring blacks and whites together, instead of tearing us apart by reporting the outrageous yet clearly anecdotal moves of a few wily extremists, it could have reported on the latest news out of the University of Virginia.

rate for whites at U. Va. of 93 percent and at University of Michigan of 87 percent.

Only 10 public university systems have black student graduation rates of more than 50 percent, and Penn State ranks at the bottom of those 10 at 51 percent.

If the University of Virginia had to offer remedial English to entering black students to help them not only graduate, if not excel, it surely would. The only difference is, it would not classify remedial English a bilingual education.

Of course the designation of Ebonics as a separate language is ludicrous. But to report one school board's approach as if it were the beginning of a trend is just as outrageous.

We are at a point in history when we sorely need to come together. And journalists should help, not hinder, that process.

(Bonnie Erbe, host of the PBS program "To the Contrary" and legal affairs correspondent for the Mutual/NBC Radio networks, writes this column weekly for Scripps Howard News Service.)

Thanksgiving postmortems on anything, everything

By CHARLES McDOWELL
Media General Newspapers

At midmorning on the day after Thanksgiving, my neighbor Mr. Bumbleton and I observed our annual custom of having coffee and raisin-rolls with cream cheese at his kitchen table. Our wives had gone Christmas shopping in the dim dawning of the season.

"I have to wonder how long the ladies' traditional first shopping trip will endure," my host said. "On the Today Show this morning, there was talk about a new gift-advisory service on a web site, the Gadget Guru. As such sites develop, the ladies will be able to order presents on their computers."

"Mr. Bumbleton, Thanksgiving is your hobby and you're my expert on it, but do you really think the day will still mark the opening of the Christmas-shopping season when the shopping is in cyberspace?" I asked.

"Well, I have to admit I'm not entirely happy about

Thanksgiving's opening of the Christmas season, anyway," he said. "My hope is that we'll give more attention to getting together and eating, watching football and being thankful. I'm encouraged to have learned on TV this morning that 3,000 poor people were served Thanksgiving dinner on the Capitol grounds."

"You accept football games as part of the tradition?"

"Sure. Football's a recent addition to the folklore really, but it brings people together," he said. "And so does Macy's parade with the big balloons in New York. That's a big deal on TV in the modern Thanksgiving, especially if you have grandchildren visiting. I think it's fairly wholesome."

"Do you think the size of modern football players is wholesome?"

"Huh?"

"I'm kind of joking, Mr. B. The Redskins game in Dallas inspired an analyst on TV to inform us that the number of football players in the NFL weighing 300 pounds or more

was zero in 1976, eight in 1986 and is 179 in 1996."

"Fascinating, assuming the numbers are right," Mr. Bumbleton said. "We should be thankful for statistics like that. But, frankly, we don't get enough on TV. What TV likes to do is make big statements without documenting them."

We've been told repeatedly on TV that the day after Thanksgiving is the biggest shopping day of the year, and advertisers have sales from 6 a.m. on to try to fulfill the exaggeration. Truth is, as the Washington Post documented, the biggest days last year were December 23, 22, 16, 21 and 20 in that order. The day after Thanksgiving was seventh. But it gets things started."

"I was sobered by TV's recurring emphasis on incredible crowds and delays at airports," I said. "But I was sobered a lot more to learn that this was all about an increase in the average plane's passenger load from 80 percent of capacity to 80 percent. Wow! But what I really wanted to ask you about,

Mr. B., is the true origin of Thanksgiving, now that we've survived it again."

Mr. Bumbleton spoke briskly: "Everyone should get this straight. The Massachusetts settlers of 1620 had a prayerful, grateful feast with the Indians in 1621. And settlers at Berkeley Hundred in Virginia had given thanks in 1619. Indeed, settlers in Maine had already done that in 1607. And Virginia settlers had done the same thing the same year."

"But where does that leave us, Mr. B.?"

"Well," he said, "in Canaan where the Israelites in 1200 B.C. learned about a Thanksgiving ceremony. Or in Greece 2000 years ago at the festival to honor Demeter, the goddess of harvests. Or in England only 1500 or so years ago when the Saxons arrived with the festival to be known as Harvest Home. Anyway, it still works pretty well, pending shopping in cyberspace."

(Distributed by Scripps Howard News Service.)



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TUESDAY

DEC. 3

Table with 33 columns representing different TV channels (KMD, KPEJ, KERA, etc.) and rows for different time slots (6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30) listing various programs and their corresponding channel numbers.

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FAMILY CIRCLE



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HI AND LOIS



GASOLINE ALLEY



SNUFFY SMITH



BEETLE BAILEY



"Dolly asked me to play with her, but so far I just hafta sit and watch her dance."

"I DIDN'T HAVE TO RUN AWAY TO JOIN THE CIRCUS... ONE MOVED IN NEXT DOOR!"

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

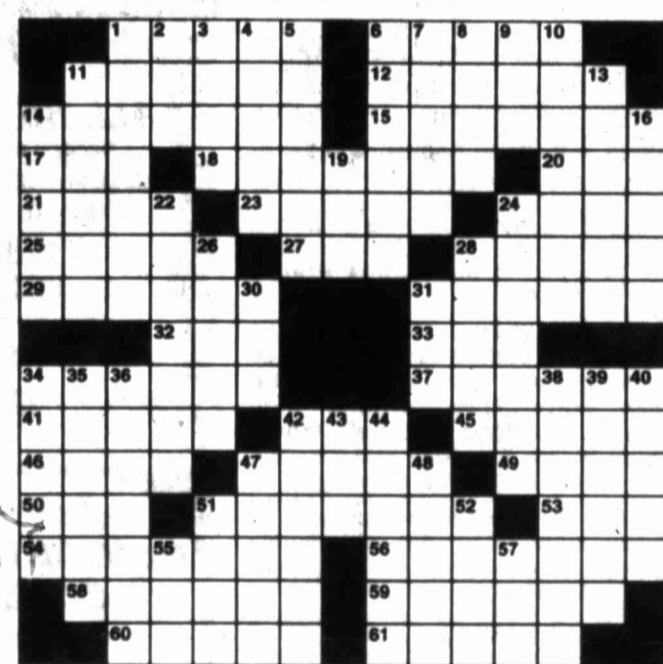
The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Tuesday, Dec. 3, the 338th day of 1996. There are 28

days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 3, 1967, a team of surgeons in Cape Town, South Africa, headed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard, performed the first human heart transplant on Louis Washkansky, who lived 18 days with the new heart.

On this date: In 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state. In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States. In 1833, Oberlin College in Ohio — the first truly educational school of higher learning in the United States — opened its doors. In 1894, author Robert Louis Stevenson died in Samoa. In 1925, "Concerto in F," by George Gershwin, had its world premiere at New York City's Carnegie Hall, with Gershwin himself at the piano. In 1947, the Tennessee Williams play "A Streetcar Named Desire" opened on Broadway. In 1953, the musical "Kismet" opened on Broadway. In 1960, the Lerner and Loewe musical "Camelot" opened on Broadway. In 1964, police arrested some 800 students at the University of California at Berkeley, one day after the students stormed the administration building and staged a massive sit-in. In 1967, the Twentieth Century Limited, the famed luxury train, completed its final run from New York to Chicago. In 1979, 11 people were killed in a crush of fans at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum, where the British rock group The Who was performing. In 1984, more than 4,000 people were fatally stricken after a cloud of poisonous gas escaped from a pesticide plant operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal, India.

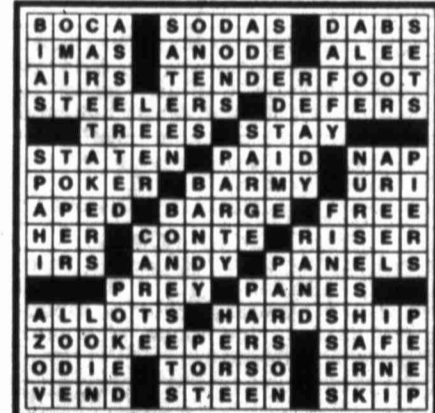
THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS 1&6 Broke 11 Lying on the back 12 Prayer 14 Power failures 15 Where cheques are cashed 17 — jacot (here lies) 18 Fit to be consumed 20 Bottom line 21 Jot 23 Spikes the punch 24 Fairy tale mannie 25 Kind of candle or nose 27 Guided 28 Soft leather 29 Places for sports events 31 Prison attendant 32 Ms. Gardner 33 Priestly garb 34 Showed malice toward 37 Asian bird 41 Walk supports 42 Launching or writing end 45 Frighten 46 Split 47 Factions 49 Comprehend 50 Fighter of note 51 Takes back 53 Pindar offering 54 Chancy meal 56 Hand over 58 CA port, jocularly 59 Spun around 60 & 61 Broken



by Al Becker 12/03/96

Monday's Puzzle solved:



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- DOWN 1 Result 2 — tree (helpless) 3 Actor Andrews 4 Shaq the cager 5 Joyful 6 Crowded, as by fans 7 Certain exams 8 Baseball number 9 Honoric: abbr. 10 "— Than Springtime" 11 One who courts a woman 13 —well (wastrel) 14 Actress Maureen 16 Dutch painter 19 Expert 22 Sea cow 24 Aussie hinterland 26 Church areas 28 Shopper's delights 30 Blue 31 Mercator offering 34 Junk 35 "...fetch a — water" 36 Within an artificial environment 38 British ruling family 39 Eaten away 40 Less used 42 — the litter 43 OK town 44 Tree: pref. 47 Dry plaster painting 48 Take the helm 51 Oxidation 52 Luge 55 NY school letters 57 —de-France

Advertisement for Big Spring Herald, including contact information (915-263-7331), publisher details (Chuck Williams), and a list of staff members.

Advertisement for Ritz, featuring a movie poster for 'The Mirror Has Two Faces' and other entertainment listings.

Advertisement for Cinemark Theatres, listing movies like 'Dalton's 101 (G)', 'Set It Off (R)', 'Space Jam (PG)', and 'Star Trek (PG-13)'.