

BIG SPRING HERALD

FRIDAY

December 26, 1997

50 cents

Reflecting A Proud Community

With cotton harvest done, producers begin thinking about next year

By **CARLTON JOHNSON**
Staff Writer

The 1997 cotton harvest in Howard County is complete, meaning the focus for many producers will now shift to next year. Howard County Extension Agent David Kight and Assistant County Agent Brandon McGinty are encouraging producers to begin thinking about next year by attending the Southern Mesa Agricultural Conference in January.

The conference is scheduled for 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 19 in Lamesa and is a direct result of

producer requested educational programming and will focus on regulation and policies affecting Texas agriculture.

The conference will also focus on the best management practices (BMPs) for cotton, grain sorghum and peanut production.

The program is being sponsored by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAES) offices in Dawson, Howard, Martin, Borden, Scurry, Mitchell, Lynn, Garza and Midland, and will feature information on the latest production technology for crop production,

insect control, and weed control of cotton, grain sorghum and peanuts, according to Dawson County Extension Agent John Farris.

Risk management and production outlooks will be discussed and top speakers from across the state will make presentations concerning current research production trials.

Speakers will include Mindy Shugart, Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA); Drs. Randy Bowman, Robert Lemon, Mark McFarland, Jackie Smith and Peter Dotray; TAES agents Farris and Tommy Doederlein;

and Dr. Wayne Keeling with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

The conference agenda will include the following topics: cotton cropping systems; cotton insect management and pesticide usage; risk management; cotton production management; present and new weed control; boll weevil management; fertilization and salinity; peanut production systems; and laws and regulations.

Producers will have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with experts, specialists and other growers and

will be able to visit commercial booths throughout the day.

Five Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be provided for private, commercial and non-commercial applicators for attendance at the conference. Producers wanting their updated CEU information may contact TDA at (800)835-5832.

Registration fees for the conference will be \$15 if paid before Jan. 15 and \$20 after Jan. 15. The registration fee includes technical sessions, door prize tickets, lunch, educational materials and access to exhibits.

Registration forms and fees, payable to "Dawson County Ag Fund," should be mailed to the Dawson County Extension Office at P.O. Box 1268, Lamesa, Texas 79331.

Producers seeking additional information about the conference may contact these county extension agents:

•John Farris, Dawson County — (806)872-3444
•David Kight, Howard County — (915)264-2236
•Stephen Zoeller, Martin County — (915)756-3316
•Holly Mote, Martin County — (915)756-2251

Big Spring gets a White Christmas

Storm system dumps snowy blanket on area

By **JOHN H. WALKER**
Managing Editor

Dreams of a white Christmas came true in West Texas Thursday night as a slow moving upper level storm system dumped up to six inches of snow on portions of West Texas and Southeast New Mexico.

According to a National Weather Service spokesman in Midland, the disturbance developed over the Southwest United States and then moved slowly over West Texas.

"Actually, the system is still in the process of moving through, it's so large," the spokesman said. "The snow pretty much ended by morning and the skies should begin clearing pretty soon."

Snow reports ranged from three inches in Fort Stockton to near six inches in and around Big Spring. Areas of Southeastern New Mexico received up to four inches, although higher elevations received a foot or more of snow.

Not much melt-off was expected today, as the high temperature was forecast to only reach 35 degrees.

"One thing that will help is that we should have pretty good sun and that will melt some of it off," the NWS spokesman said. "The problem is that we could have some icy conditions tonight and in the morning after we have some melt-off and the temperature starts to drop."

Police, sheriff's department and Texas Department of Public Safety radio frequencies were relatively quiet in regards accidents that might have been caused by slick roads.

City and state crews began sanding operations around



A winter storm passed through Howard County Christmas night, dropping up to six inches of snow on the area. The snow lent a definite Currier & Ives look to Big Spring, including these scenes from Comanche Trail Park. Above, the park as seen from the west side of the historic spring. At left, tree branches were heavy with snow this morning. Below, a bridge by the lake dam becomes part of a wintry landscape.



Photos
by
**Jonathan
Garrett**

See **SNOW**, Page 2A

Census: Country getting crowded

HERALD staff report

As Americans traditionally wait for the next five days to pass in order to take part in the biggest party of the year, New Year's Day 1998 will also bring something more to light than just a new year — more people.

According to the U.S. Commerce Department's Census Bureau, as people ring in the new year, the projected population in the U.S. is expected to be 268,921,733, which represents an annual population increase of 2.4 million (0.9 percent).

The projected New Year's Day population is based on 3.9 mil-

The level of births occurring in the U.S. has declined each year since 1990 (when 4.2 million births occurred), according to the Census Bureau.

lion births, 2.3 million deaths, net international migration of 827,000 and a net return of American citizens (including armed forces personnel) of 40,600 during 1997.

The level of births occurring in the U.S. has declined each year since 1990 (when 4.2 million births occurred), according to the Census Bureau. The 40,600 deaths in 1997 is slightly higher than in 1996.

The population in the U.S. is expected to grow by an additional 2.3 million people in 1998 because of natural increase — the excess of births compared to the number of deaths.

Charges rise against concealed gun permittees, DPS records show

DALLAS (AP) — Criminal charges filed against Texans with concealed handgun licenses rose sharply in 1997, according to statistics compiled by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Felony and misdemeanor cases involving permit holders rose from 431 in 1996 to 666 this far in 1997, a 54.5 percent

increase, according to The Dallas Morning News' Tuesday editions.

By comparison, the number of permit holders increased from 114,500 last year to 161,702 through mid-December, a 41.2 percent jump.

Opponents of the "concealed-carry law" say the numbers prove the need for increased

restrictions on handgun permits. Supporters of the 2-year-old law say the figures show that fewer than 0.5 percent of permit holders got in trouble with the law in 1997.

"The preponderance of the evidence suggests that the vast majority act responsibly," said state Sen. Jerry Patterson, R-Pasadena, the main architect of

the concealed-carry law.

Patterson said no Texas permit holder has been convicted in a homicide since the law took effect Jan. 1, 1996.

Four permit holders have been charged with killing people. DPS statistics don't identify the suspects, and they classify the cases as pending. The files do not reveal whether firearms

were involved in the deaths.

"We haven't had a case yet in which a citizen was proven to use his weapon in an unjustified or illegal manner," Patterson said. "Sooner or later, we will have a handgun licensee do something stupid, but it hasn't happened yet."

Travis County Constable Bruce Elfant, who favors tighter

restrictions on handguns, said the arrest figures tell him that lawmakers should require psychological screening of permit applicants.

"I am disturbed that several hundred people with these permits have apparently committed crimes," said Elfant, a spokesman for Texans Against Handgun Violence.

WEATHER

Tonight:



Sat:



Sun:



Mon:



Tonight, mostly clear. Patchy fog possible after midnight over the eastern Permian Basin. Lows 18-25. Saturday, patchy fog possible eastern Permian Basin, otherwise mostly sunny. Highs 45-54. Saturday night, mostly clear. Lows from near 20 to the mid 20s. Extended forecast, Sunday through Tuesday, fair and dry. A gradual warming trend. Lows from the mid 20s to

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To reach all departments, please call 263-7331

Late surge makes for good shopping season

By **JOHN H. WALKER**
Managing Editor

Wednesday's last-minute shopping frenzy put a cap on what some retailers described as a "good" Christmas season while others called it "strange." "It was a really strange season," explained Big Spring Mall Manager Tammy Watt. "We had a lot of traffic the weekend after Thanksgiving, but then it just kind of tapered off ... then it really picked up again towards the end."

On Wednesday, most of Big Spring's retail outlets were filled with customers. In some instances, it was easier to find a customer than merchandise.

"I waited until the last minute to buy one gift and now I'm having trouble finding an extra-large shirt," one man, shopping in the mall, said.

"Anthony's didn't have anything and I think I found three in Bealls," he added.

At mid-afternoon Wednesday, Mall traffic was brisk, with approximately 50 customers in Bealls and another 50 or so in

Anthony's. The Mall's other major merchants — Blum's Jewelers, On-Cue, Athletic Supply and Merle Norman — were also busy with last-minute shoppers.

"I know one retailer who probably made the biggest sale of their holiday season today (Wednesday)," Watt said.

This was Anthony's last Christmas season following the sale of the company to SRI, the parent company of Bealls, Stage Stores and Palais Royale.

Most Anthony's in West Texas have either closed or been con-

verted to Bealls. The Big Spring store is expected to stay open through the end of January, then close for a remodeling period before reopening as a Stage Store.

In addition to the traffic at the Mall, other retailers around town — Wal-Mart, Dunlap's, Family Dollar, Dollar General — were bustling as well.

"It was an up-and-down season," said one retailer, who asked not to be identified. "It was good and you'd get excited,

See **SHOPPING**, page 2A

DECEMBER 26 1997

Husband chronicles wife's recovery on Internet site

HOUSTON (AP) — Laurie Sepulvado's life has become a real Web page-turner.

The 35-year-old mother of two, a lifelong dancer who has spent the last decade in a successful country and western dance partnership with her husband, is recovering from an accident that left her brain-injured.

Her husband, Larry Sepulvado, 49, has turned her daily recovery into an online journal, accessed every day, he says, by about 400 to 600 people.

The "Laurie" Web site offers Mrs. Sepulvado's current medical status, details on the accident, a list of her injuries, dates for fund-raisers and even a set of "frequently asked questions."

Sepulvado said he started the site to keep track of his wife's recovery and was surprised by the number of people who were following it like a soap opera.

"For me, right now, I think of it just as a journal that the kids can read 10 or 15 years from now or she might get in a place where she could actually read it," Sepulvado said.

Larry and Laurie Sepulvado met in the 1980s, during what Sepulvado describes as the "urban cowboy" period. They married 12 years ago and then started their competitive career.

"When I first met her she was like tops in her field," Sepulvado said. "It took a few years before I got good enough."

The Sepulvados opened their own dance studio in Houston, named Step'n Style, devised a line of instructional videos and hosted a number of dance events on the United Country & Western Dance Council circuit, most recently the Eighth Annual Texas Classic Dance Event in May.

In January, the Sepulvados earned the 1997 UCWDC World Champion title in the Champions division.

On Aug. 21, Mrs. Sepulvado was driving in the family van behind a 12-wheel trailer-truck carrying bricks. Her 18-month-old daughter, Tyler, was strapped into her car seat in the back seat. The truck stopped to

make a U-turn and Mrs. Sepulvado slammed into the rear of the trailer at about 60 mph.

Tyler survived with just a few scratches, but the impact caused Mrs. Sepulvado's brain to shake violently. Both her legs were fractured and she sustained a serious injury to her left arm as well as a collapsed lung. Doctors also had to remove part of her skull and brain tissue from her right lower temporal lobe because of severe brain swelling.

The ultimate effect of Mrs. Sepulvado's injuries has not been determined, but she is working on her walking and motor skills in therapy.

Dr. Cindy Ivanhoe, director of the brain injury program at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, or TIRR, where Mrs. Sepulvado is recovering, said Mrs. Sepulvado's ability to speak and communicate has been improving.

In four months, she's come a long way from lying in a hospital bed, in an induced coma, and later able only to open her right eye in a blinking stare.

"I'm sure she's already gone a lot further than most people expected and she's still going to do a lot better than she is now," Dr. Ivanhoe said.

Sepulvado attributes the improvement partly to his wife's competitive nature.

"Laurie is just a real rock-solid person, very calm and she's competitive," Sepulvado said. "She has a real healthy attitude about competing. It's always been about how good you can be."

The accident has taken a financial toll on the Sepulvado family, which also includes 11-year-old Austin. Thanks to fund-raisers organized by members of the dance community, Sepulvado said, he's been able to cover his house and car payments, but he's had to close the dance studio after a decade.

Sepulvado, who spends about six hours a day at TIRR, said he just doesn't have time to slow down.

Man accused of espionage comes home for the holidays

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Accused of spying in Russia, Richard Bliss walked into an applauding crowd and open arms back home, the joyous bear hug he gave his dad tempered by uncertainty over how long he'll be able to stay.

Bliss, a 29-year-old field technician, stepped from a chartered Lear jet Thursday afternoon and entered a swarm of about 20 friends and family members who flew in from around the country to greet him.

Then his father, Robert, made it through the crowd to deliver a long-promised hug. Asked how that felt, the teary-eyed elder Bliss replied: "Better than I ever thought it would."

Richard Bliss' long journey — delayed 18 hours by weather and hectic holiday travel schedules — took him from southern Russia to Moscow, Paris, Los Angeles and, finally, home on Christmas Day.

"After a couple days of resting and spending a few days with my family, I'm very much looking forward to getting back to my job," Bliss said.

Amid the relief was a huge unknown: Will Russian officials will order Bliss back to Russia?

"They would have given us an even better present if they'd decided there was no need for

Richard to return," said Irwin Jacobs, chairman of Qualcomm Inc., Bliss' San Diego-based employer.

Bliss was arrested on espionage charges in late November, two days before Thanksgiving. He was installing a cellular phone system in the city of Rostov-on-Don, about 600 miles south of Moscow.

Pressure from Vice President Al Gore and others persuaded the Russians to let Bliss come home for two weeks under an agreement between Qualcomm and Russia's Federal Security Service — or FSB, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB.

Bliss said the support from San Diego, the nation and his fellow Qualcomm employees helped him through what he called a "very trying experience."

It appeared Russian officials might be softening their stance on a demand that Bliss return Jan. 10 to face spying charges.

The Interfax news agency reported Thursday that the term of Bliss' stay in the United States had not been defined and Qualcomm officials confirmed that.

But Bliss could be summoned back to Russia at any moment, the news agency reported, citing FSB spokesman Mai. Gen.

Alexander Zdanovich.

Bliss said that he was not mistreated during the ordeal, in which he was arrested and jailed for 12 days for using Global Positioning System equipment to survey sensitive areas.

Under Russian law, survey measurements accurate to within 30 yards are considered a state secret, say security officials.

The system works by communicating with an umbrella of satellites orbiting the Earth.

The receiver unit picks a satellite signal, and when three satellites link up with GPS, the user can record precise latitude and longitude.

Bliss was using GPS equipment to make land surveys, according to his company.

It was part of an effort to locate receiving and transmitting stations for installation of a Russian cellular system.

Systems similar to the one Bliss was using can be found in U.S. stores such as The Sharper Image or Radio Shack.

The FSB said the equipment was brought into the country illegally, but Qualcomm maintains Bliss declared the equipment on his customs form.

Bliss has acknowledged making land surveys, but said he is innocent of espionage.

United passengers stranded in Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE (AP) — After five hours stuck in a motionless airplane that lacked drinking water and working toilets, Joseph Vranich probably kicked himself for not taking the train.

Vranich, a former spokesman for Amtrak, was stranded for hours aboard United Airlines Flight 1536, one of seven diverted to Milwaukee's Mitchell International Airport on Christmas Eve because of heavy snow in Chicago.

More than 800 United passengers were sent to Milwaukee —

including 150 aboard Flight 952 from Los Angeles. They had to wait more than five hours to get off their plane.

"It was just like Laurel and Hardy was running the airport," said passenger Croft Long, 38, of Costa Mesa, Calif. "It's a Christmas to remember."

Vranich's flight was en route from Orange County, Calif., to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

Instead, he was trapped with some 200 other passengers as Flight 1536 sat on the tarmac.

Eventually the drinking water ran out and the toilets stopped working; he said one passenger was taken away by medical personnel.

With plenty of time on his hands, Vranich kept notes. At 5:30 p.m., with the plane going nowhere, passengers can see empty airport gates; at 9:53, the ailing passenger is taken off the plane; at 10:20, the pilot tells passengers they will be able to get off via a ladder, but 41 minutes later says no one is around to operate the necessary equipment.

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EDITORIAL

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

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

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OUR VIEWS

We salute:

Each Friday, the *Herald* salutes individuals and groups from our community and area who have been recognized for special achievements or accomplishments.

We recognize these special people for working to help make our region a better place to live, work and play.

- This week we salute:
- **STANTON'S BUFFALOES**, on winning the UIL Class 2A state football championship, 33-7 over Rogers at Texas Stadium. The Buffs became the first area school to win an 11-man football title.
 - **UNITED WAY OF BIG SPRING AND HOWARD COUNTY**, on breaking its campaign goal for the second consecutive year. This year's campaign raised \$215,952 against a goal of \$212,500.
 - Six local and area schools that received cash awards from the Texas Successful Schools Awards Program. Schools recognized with \$500 awards were **MOSS** and **KENTWOOD** elementary schools and **ELBOW ELEMENTARY** and **FORSAN HIGH SCHOOL**. Schools recognized with \$1,000 awards were **COAHOMA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL** and **COAHOMA HIGH SCHOOL**. Schools recognized with \$1,000 awards were **COAHOMA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL** and **COAHOMA HIGH SCHOOL**.
 - Organizers and supporters of the annual **DORA ROBERTS COMMUNITY CENTER** fund-raiser, held last Friday.

Is there an individual or organization in our community that you feel should be saluted? If so, please send us their name and why you think they should be recognized. We must have your name and telephone number and you must provide it in writing.

OTHER VIEWS

Being a legal immigrant to the United States is tough enough without a new hurdle erected by some state and federal officials to hinder the passage: squeezing newcomers to repay health and welfare benefits that they were legally eligible to receive.

Consider Martha Torres, a legal immigrant from Mexico, who upon her return from a visit to her native country was informed by California authorities that she must cancel her Medi-Cal coverage and make arrangements to reimburse the state for past benefits or risk losing her legal status. Multiply Torres' story by thousands and you'll have the full scope of a dirty drama taking place along the nation's borders and in some U.S. consulates abroad.

Both the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department say they have advised immigration officers here and abroad that they have no legal authority to demand reimbursements in the vast majority of these cases. But the message has not trickled down.

California officials vehemently deny wrongdoing, insisting they are simply encouraging "voluntary" repayments by immigrants who they say might have received benefits fraudulently, which in fact has been the case with a small number of short-term visitors. But legal immigrants and their children born in the United States are fully eligible for state and federal health programs, to deny them, beyond being illegal and inhumane, runs the risk of health problems in the wider community if infectious diseases break out among immigrants.

those charges against Espy that carry mandatory prison sentences under a law that prohibits Agriculture Department inspectors from accepting gratuities from companies they regulate.

Cabinet officers should set the standard for the agencies they govern, and should be held accountable to the same laws that govern their employees.

The Post and Courier, Charleston, S.C.

It's good that Ohioans concerned about the continuing loss of farmland to urban sprawl are not waiting until the crisis that some people anticipate actually comes about.

The governor's Ohio Farmland Preservation Task Force brought together diverse interests to study the situation and make recommendations.

They wisely chose to emphasize local planning and voluntary steps that may be taken — not to halt development, but to channel it in economically sound ways, via the prudent application of incentives.

(A proposed) bill would create voluntary, countywide land-use plans; reduce urban sprawl by providing tax incentives for redevelopment of run-down areas of Ohio cities; and create Agricultural Security Areas for designated farmland.

The Columbus Dispatch

When most people think of young children toiling away in sweatshops or fields, they think of Third World nations. But an Associated Press investigation found illegal child labor common in America from New Mexico to New York.

Like something out of John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," AP reporters found children as young as 4 years old working in fields in the Southwest.

In a Texas sweatshop, a 9-year-old girl put in 12-hour days, along with six other children under 14.

According to a study by Rutgers University labor economist Douglas Kruse, nearly 300,000 children are unlawfully employed each year.

Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette

Los Angeles Times

A federal judge has dismissed three serious charges against former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, saying that federal laws governing meat inspectors don't apply to a Cabinet officer. Shouldn't the nation expect an even higher standard for a member of the Cabinet?

District Judge Ricardo Urbina's ruling is particularly significant in that it eliminates

Enjoy the season; remember the reason

It wasn't that long ago that I would wake up at 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. on Christmas morning and ask my parents if Santa Claus had come yet.

Somehow, the idea of Santa Claus has lost some of what I think it was intended for in the first place — a harmless, innocent childhood fantasy.

Instead of being a part of Christmas, Santa Claus — no doubt because of the insane way the holiday has been commercialized, has become Christmas.

Have we all become so consumed with what's under the Christmas tree, that we've forgotten what was in the manger in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years ago?

It seems that anything related to Jesus Christ has been omitted from any type of observation we have of Christmas, especially in our public schools.

Schools are the one place other than home, or so it is supposed to be, where a child's mind is at its most vulnerable state — vulnerable, that is, to learning.

Big Spring is not as big as other communities, but I really enjoy Christmas in a town such as Big Spring because of the Living Christmas Tree at First United Methodist Church and the Drive-Through Nativity at First Church of the Nazarene.

I often sit down during the holiday season, which traditionally begins at Thanksgiving and runs through New Year's Day and think, "I miss Christmas."

Each family member brings something special to Christmas, which makes it that much more special.

This Christmas will be the second Christmas I've spent without my paternal grandmother.

She was some kind of woman. I often make references to the things she taught me in the almost 32 years I got to spend with her.

Grandma (as she was known to everyone in the family) didn't do anything spectacular at

Christmas time, but she had a presence about her that made it clear that you didn't let Christmas pass without stopping at Grandma's house.

She died in the spring following her 85th Christmas, the last of 13 brothers and sisters despite being the third from the youngest child.

It was Grandma who made me realize that it is God's presence at Christmas time and not his presents, that is important.

Whom else could we serve by serving others and be guaranteed a reward for it?

How did something as precious as the three wise men bearing gifts for the new born king 2,000 years ago become so commercialized that it's now a multi-billion dollar a year industry?

Why do children today know more about Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer than they do about the greatest story ever told?

Why is it that more people can name more of Santa Claus' eight reindeer than they can the Ten Commandments or Jesus' 12 disciples?

At one time in my life, Thanksgiving became my favorite holiday because it

seemed to be the only holiday that maintained its fundamental meaning. And because I was actually able to sit down and give thanks for my health and the things that had been bestowed upon me.

I have to say I still enjoy Thanksgiving, but Christmas has gained a whole new meaning in my life because of the people I've lost in the last two years.

For as much as I've lost, I have gained twice as much.

Despite what society has done to trivialize Christmas, we must always remember Jesus truly is the reason for the season.

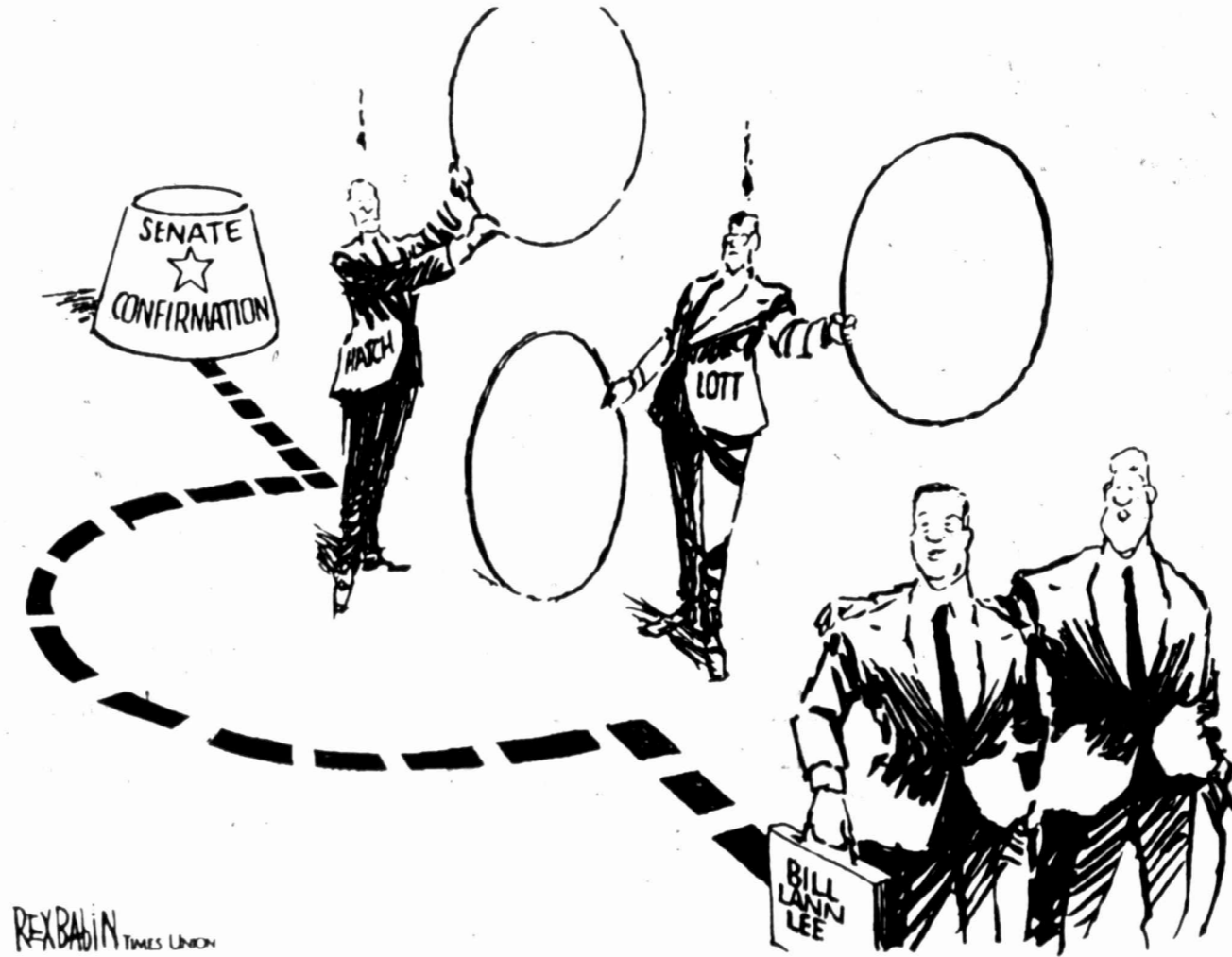
As we give presents, as we receive presents and as we fellowship with our families, let us remember those who have not, those who will be alone or homeless, those who are too far away from their loved ones and those who think all hope is lost.

Let us also remember those organizations like the Salvation Army that try to make the holiday season a special occasion for everyone.

What we take for granted, for some, would be a dream come true.



Carlton Johnson
Staff Writer



Confirmation process a minefield

By **WALTER R. MEARS**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After President Clinton lamented a Senate confirmation system he said was souring talented prospects for top government jobs, it got worse.

What was an obstacle course is becoming a minefield, a reform advocate said, describing 1997 as the worst year ever for the presidential appointment process.

That was the year later follow-up to the Twentieth Century Fund appraisal Clinton wanted Congress to look at closely. Instead, the nomination feuds that have marked his presidency continued — two high profile appointees withdrew and two more are in Senate limbo because of political and philosophical disputes with the Republicans.

Clinton got one into his appointed job anyhow, naming Bill Lann Lee acting assistant attorney general for civil rights, to the wrath of Republicans who don't agree with his views on affirmative action. The president does.

Dr. David Satcher is on hold as surgeon general because he agrees with Clinton that there should be medical exceptions to a federal ban on late-term abortions.

In his second look at the situation, C. Calvin Mackenzie, executive director of the Twentieth Century Fund task force on confirmations, said the notion that presidents are entitled to Senate deference in choosing their subordinates has been dying away in political disputes.

He called it institutional combat in which the confirmation process is being used for Senate leverage.

A 17-member task force including veterans of senior federal positions and of the Senate, from both political parties, produced the confirmation study a year ago, saying the process has become intrusive, often abusive and repellent to government recruits for top jobs.

"The confirmation process is undermining the very trust in government it is supposed to foster," the panel reported.

It recommended cutting the number of posts that require confirmation, prohibiting filibusters against nominees, streamlining disclosure, clearance and hearing procedures, and preventing individual senators from blocking nominees with what are called holds.

Clinton said at the time that the confirmation "climate has changed to the point where a lot of people don't want to fool with

it any more." He said the reform proposals merited a close look in Congress.

"... It would require the Senate to, with some discipline, moderate its own procedures and change it," the president said.

And that was before the struggles over such nominees as Anthony Lake to be CIA director, and William Weld for ambassador to Mexico. "The whole confirmation process has become more and more outrageous," Lake said when he withdrew on March 17, amid a long, partisan dispute over his appointment. "It is nasty and brutish without being short."

There's a continuing dispute over Clinton's choices and Senate confirmation of federal judges. There are 80 vacancies. Republicans insist they are not creating a confirmation bottleneck, but they also insist that activist nominees who would seek to make laws instead of interpreting them aren't fit for the bench.

The Senate confirmed 36 federal judges in 1997, a pace GOP leaders said was in keeping with prior averages.

"Judicial nominations are not one of the principal ideological battlegrounds of American politics," Mackenzie, a professor of government at Colby College, said.

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Mallard Fillmore
by BRUCE TINSLEY

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SLICE of life!

QUICK TRIVIA

◆ In 1933, fluorescent lamps were introduced for floodlighting and advertising purposes.

◆ Road maps for automobile travel came into use about 1910.

Do you have a good story idea for the life! section? Call 263-7331, Ext. 236.

Reach out to someone else who needs joy

Christmas is always wonderful, and the joy of the peak of the season has come upon us. I was blessed to be a part of a good family when I was growing up, and so Christmas always means joy to me.

On Christmas Eve I remember other Christmas Eves, long ago.

Snowy Christmas Eves on West Virginia nights, with my face pressed against the frosty windowpane, looking into the night sky for reindeer, and listening for the sound of a sleigh.

Windy Christmas Eves in West Texas, where they make Christmas trees out of tumbleweeds. And again, cold, snowy

Christmas Eves, high in the mountains of Northern New Mexico, where the luminaries light the way for the Christ child and the sweet scent of pinon smoke rises up from the old adobe fireplace.

It has always been a happy and joyous time for me, this

peak of the Christmas season.

I wish it would be that way for every boy and girl, every man and woman, on the face of the earth.

I know it's that burning question, "Why am I left out of the joy? Why can't I share in it?" I really believe that Jesus wants there to be Joy To The World.

But sometimes that Holy Joy can only come if you reach out your hand and your voice and give it. And sometimes it can only come, too, if you reach out your hand and take it from someone trying to give it to you.

Today might be just the day for this. Is there anyone you

know who might have missed the joy of Christmas? Take time today to reach out to them with love.

This year, be one of the blessed ones. Yes, reach out to someone lonely, and invite them into the warmth of Christian Joy. And if you need the joy, don't be too afraid to ask to come in.

There is room at the birthday party of Jesus for everyone, if we will just do our part.

Hope you will be in a church this Sunday as we again worship the Holy One.

Ed Williamson is pastor of First United Methodist Church.



Ed Williamson
Guest columnist

Focus on peace for the new year

By NANCY PATRICK
Guest Columnist

"Walking by faith and not by sight," people around the world focus hearts and minds on the Peace of God at noon Greenwich time on Dec. 31.

This faith endeavor has brought together people who envision the possibility of peace and harmony throughout the world. Laying aside barriers to greater global understanding, participants transcend doubt and fear to lay hold of faith and love.

By devoting one hour for opening oneself up to God's will for Planet Earth and uniting with others of like purpose, people become co-workers with God and with each other. As reports come in from countries where citizens have joined in, it is shown that this concert of prayer is drawing people into more peaceful ways of thinking and behaving.

Some have expressed a desire for a Planetary Pentecost when the Holy spirit is so well received that the world will be turned "upside down." It is hoped that this concentration of love and concern for all people everywhere will help individuals to receive

themselves as true sons and daughters of the Creator.

Jesus Christ said, "Peace I leave unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." Humanity, as a whole, has not even begun to grasp the meaning of this peace. Those who have opened their hearts and minds to it desire that all may come to know such peace.

Prayer efforts which unite peaceful, loving energies of people committed to the welfare of humankind bless Planet Earth. This particular gathering of people in cooperation with each other in envisioning a world where the Kingdom of God prevails, requires only a willingness to be involved. Individually and in small and large groups, participants commit one hour to focus on what peace really means.

People in the Central Standard Time Zone join in from 6-7 am on the last day of the year. "Walking by faith and not by sight," participants believe they can make a difference in a world so in need of true peace.

Nancy Patrick is with Friends of Unity.

CLUB NEWS

Elbow FCE Club

The Elbow Family and Community Education Club met on Thursday, Dec. 18, in the home of Erma Steward. The meeting was called to order by leader Sybil Duffer. Roll call was answered by eight members as they told about "A special Christmas gift" they had received in the past.

A new member, Mildred Carlson, was welcomed to the club. The thought for the day was "A Christmas Gift I Have Made."

The group then held their drawing for gifts donated by Erma Steward.

The public is invited to attend Elbow Family and community Education Club meetings on the first and third Thursdays of each month. For more information, please call 263-6819 or 263-2233.

Rosebud Garden Club

The Rosebud Garden Club met Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the home of Charlie Morehead for a Christmas luncheon. Co-hostesses for the luncheon were Kathryn Perry and Steve Marie Haynes. Guests were given crocheted Christmas wreaths by Mamie Lee Dodd, also candy canes and reindeer pins.

Club members were served buffet style and were seated at tables on the open patio. Announcements were made by Kathryn Perry, president. The members will bring cookies for the Big Spring State Hospital in April. Thelma Carlile reported a visit with Dot Blackwell, a former Rosebud Garden Club member now living in California. The club will meet on Jan. 27 at the home of Doris Hicks.

Youth Horseman's Club

Winners of the saddle and belt buckle series for 1997 are:

First Belt Buckle Series: Samantha Balthrop, Chance Pool, Brittany Hill, Ky Hofacket, Ashley Hill, Justin Taylor, Heather Harris, Ty Savell, Arcie Calvert and J.P. Sherman; second belt buckle series: Kendall Balthrop, Garrett Pool, Shiloh Pool, Josh Bales, Kristy Kinard, Justin Denton, Madera Gray, Cody Kinard and Walt Bordelon; third belt buckle series: Kayley Hill, Keaton Merket, Meagan Smith, Casey Bedingfield, Amanda Gray, Bradley Tatum, Haley Fernau, Tony Wyrick and Brandon Ramey; saddle winners: Samantha Balthrop, Brittany Hill, Ashley Hill, Madera Gray and J.P. Sherman.

Please see CLUB, page 6A.



MEDIEVAL TIMES

Runnels Junior High SIGNAL students had a medieval feast last week, complete with costumes and the performance of scenes from classic plays. Shown are, above, Chelsea Helsey, April Ward and Brian Wingert in costume; and at right, student Nathan Smith with teacher Lois Cunningham.

HERALD photos/Jonathan Garrett



CHURCH NEWS

First United Methodist Church

"To Join The Eagles" (Acts 9:36-43) is Dr. Ed Williamson's message this Sunday at the First United Methodist Church, 400 Scurry. The message is about taking the faith of Christmas into the New Year ahead. Worship is at 8:30 and 10:50 a.m. Our home page is <http://www.xroadstx.com/users/fumc/index.htm>. The First United Methodist

Church has several Sunday School classes for adults, youth and children. There is a Wednesday noon Bible study class and meal each week in Garrett Hall and everyone is invited to attend.

The Senior Adult Ministry will have their second annual New Year's Day Brunch at 9:45 a.m. in Garrett Hall. There will be a full breakfast complete with black-eyed peas. Make reservations by calling the church office, 267-6394. Happy blessed New Year!

Sand Springs Church of Christ

Guest speaker at Sand Springs Church of Christ

Sunday, will be Chris Ragle, minister of the Moultrie, Ga., Church of Christ.

Formerly of Big Spring and a 1993 graduate of Lubbock Christian University, Ragle is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Verne Ragle and brother of Scott Ragle, all of Big Spring. He will speak at both Sand Springs services at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Chris Ragle has been a youth minister at churches in Snyder and Coahoma. He served as a minister in Milam, Mich., before moving to Georgia.

Chris Ragle's wife is the former Shana Greenlee of Wolforth, also a former stu-

Please see CHURCH, page 6A.

Alcoholism is treatable if drinker wants to change

QUESTION: You listed alcoholism as a marriage-killer. My husband has that problem. It has created a great deal of pain in our home, and I am concerned about the emotional welfare of my children. Can it be treated, and is there hope for families like mine?

DR. DOBSON: Alcoholism is a devastating disease, not only for the person who has it, but for his or her entire family.

Research shows that 40 percent of people living in Western nations have a close family member who is an alcoholic. That incidence is even higher in Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe.

There is no way to calculate the impact of this problem on children, on spouses, and on the culture itself. Fortunately, it can be treated successfully for those who are willing to seek that help.

I discussed the issue of alcoholism with a panel of knowledgeable people on the Focus on the Family radio broadcast, including Dr. Keith Simpson, a physician who has treated this problem for 20 years.

I did not ask the panel members for a detailed analysis of alcoholism; our listeners already knew how serious it is. Rather, I wanted the panel to provide us with practical suggestions as to how family members can recognize the disease and then be of help to those they love. The answers they gave were most encouraging and enlightening.

Dr. Simpson was asked

whether alcoholism can be treated successfully today. Is it a hopeless condition, or is there a way out for the victim and his family? This was his reply:

"I specialized in the field of internal medicine for many years, but found it to be depressing work. I could help my patients with chronic lung disease and severe diabetes and heart disease, but in reality, my efforts were just a delaying action. Over time, conditions worsened and the diseases progressed. I made my rounds in intensive care each day and watched people losing their battle for life, whereas my alcoholic patients were getting well."

"That's why I deal almost exclusively with alcoholics now, and I find it to be extremely rewarding work. I see people who come in with more horrible problems than you can imagine, but they get into a recovery program, and in a few months the difference is like going from night to day. So, yes, not only is alcoholism treatable, but the medical community does better with this disorder than any other chronic disease. Alcoholics emerge from treatment programs more functionally integrated, more capable and more effective than before they 'caught' the disease."

That was the theme of the entire discussion: There is hope for the alcoholic! But before recovery can begin, the problem has to be acknowledged and treatment sought. That applies to your own family situation, I'm sure. Your husband can be helped if he has "the want to."

QUESTION: I've been aware of my husband's unfaithfulness for some time now. I've taken him to task for it, which has

Please see DOBSON, page 6A.



Dr. James Dobson
Columnist

SLICE of life!

COMMUNITY NEWS

Club supports state hospital patient parties

The local chapter of American Business Women's Association recently donated fruit to the Big Spring State Hospital for patient Christmas parties. The club raises its funds through arts and craft sales, and an annual auction. Another project ABWA supports is scholarships. Shown are, clockwise from top right, Norma Morrow, Billie Russworm of BSSH, Betty Kelley, Danille Castillo and Amber Rich.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Holiday camp continues

Big Spring Family YMCA continues its holiday camp for children in the community whose parents must work during the school break. The camp continues Monday, Tuesday, and Friday of next week. Hours are 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. For more information, call 267-8234.

IRS volunteer training

The Internal Revenue Service is looking for volunteers to assist taxpayers with preparation of their 1997 Income Tax Returns. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) training for volunteers will be Monday-Friday, Jan. 12-16 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the First Presbyterian Church, Eighth and Runnels. For more information call Dorothy Kennemur at 398-5522.

THE LAST WORD

Be yourself is the worst advice you can give to some people.
Tom Masson

Before I judge my neighbor, let me walk a mile in his moccasins.
Sioux Proverb

Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.
Susan Ertz

Spirit-filled worship

Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship's style invigorates churches

By JIM JONES
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FORT WORTH — The Rev. Tyrone Lister swayed behind the pulpit as an organist played a rhythmic gospel song. Then he began to clap his hands with the beat and dance, urging others to join in.

"I could have danced, danced, danced all night," the black-suited minister from Lewisville chanted as congregation members jumped to their feet, clapping and moving to the music.

That spirited style of worship is the trademark of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, which has burst onto the American religious scene in the past three years and already has ties with about 3,000 congregations.

Lister was master of ceremonies recently when the Rev. James Brown of Fort Worth was installed as new district overseer of the fellowship. There were formal moments during the installation, but people also shouted and prayed, and one young man began vigorously jerking and jumping as he danced between pews.

Fellowship members pray, shout, jump, dance and run in the church as the spirit moves them.

"It has brought excitement to our churches," said Brown, pastor of the New Hope Christian Center in the Woodhaven section of Fort

Worth, who was a traditional Baptist until he received what many refer to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The fellowship blends traditional Baptist beliefs such as "once saved, always saved" and a strict reliance on the Bible with more Pentecostal teachings such as speaking in tongues, prophesying in the spirit and laying on of hands to cure illness, Brown said.

There are no figures for nationwide membership in the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, but 50,000 people attended its national convention last year in New Orleans, said Bishop Milton M. White of Freeport, the bishop over Texas.

The growing denomination has churches in Fort Worth, Bedford, Corinth and Lewisville.

Some, such as Morning Star New Testament Church on Edderville Road, draw members from other municipalities. Morning Star is pastored by Ernest Sargent, an Arlington police officer and resident.

Although most fellowship churches are small, there are a few mega-churches. The 20,000-member Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church in New Orleans, led by fellowship founder Bishop Paul Morton, is one of the nation's largest African-American congregations, said Bishop Andy Lewter of Columbus, Ohio, publisher of

the fellowship's national newspaper. Other large fellowship congregations are in Atlanta, Miami and Los Angeles.

"Bishop Morton's church was already both Baptist and Pentecostal, and he realized there existed a multitude of churches that shared his thinking and worship style that stood on the periphery of the traditional Baptist family," Lewter said. Morton could not be reached for comment.

Lewter added: "I think we have blossomed because the fellowship accommodates many elements of the black religious experience, from a freer style of worship to high church practices that include bishops." Baptists normally do not have bishops.

The fellowship is winning over many African-American Baptists and members of other denominations. Whole Baptist congregations have moved into the fellowship. One example is the church of Bishop L.D. Leonard of Houston. It formerly had ties to the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., but now is independent. Other fellowship churches retain their ties to Baptist congregations.

Officials emphasize that the fellowship is not a new denomination. Nevertheless, it looks like one. It has 21 bishops, 40 state overseers, 156 district overseers, a men's fellowship, a women's fellowship, a social action organization and ties to

churches in the Caribbean, Africa and Europe.

Another distinction is that women are encouraged to become fellowship pastors, a practice many traditional Baptists do not follow.

"We believe Baptists can experience some of the things Pentecostals do, and yet maintain our basic Baptist beliefs," said Leonard, who is bishop over a region encompassing Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Montana.

Many traditional Baptists, however, including most Southern Baptists, discourage charismatic practices such as glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. Some quote New Testament writings indicating that such worship practices are divisive.

White said he was ostracized by many traditional Baptists after he began accepting charismatic practices.

But some Baptists are more accepting.

Many fellowship churches are dually aligned with other Baptist denominations, said White, a fellowship founder who oversees more than 60 Texas fellowship congregations, including those in Tarrant County.

Fellowship members argue that their intense mystical encounters with the Holy Spirit solve problems ranging from depression to drug and alcohol abuse.

DOBSON

Continued from page 5A.

resulted in some incredible, horrible battles. I have even made demands that he stop his infidelity, yet no changes in his attitude and behavior have happened. What am I doing wrong?"

DR. DOBSON: I'm afraid you've made the common mistake of misunderstanding the difference between expressions of anger and loving toughness. Simply becoming angry and throwing temper tantrums is no more effective with a spouse than it is with a rebellious teen-ager. Screaming, accusing and berating are rarely successful in changing the behavior of human beings of any age. What is required is a course of action — an ultimatum that demands a specific response and results in a consequence. Then you must have the courage to deliver on the promise.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. James C. Dobson's "Focus on the Family" appears each Thursday as a cooperative effort of Scenic Mountain Medical Center and the Big Spring Herald. Letters to Dr. Dobson may be sent to P.O. Box 444, Colorado Springs, Colo.; 80903.

CLUB

Continued from page 5A.

The Howard County Youth Horseman's Club and all of its members and families wish to thank you for your financial support. Without your generous help and the help of all the area donors, our playday season and awards banquet would not have been the success that it was.

CHURCH

Continued from page 5A.

dent at LCU. She will accompany him on his visit to Big Spring.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Paul Nabors, a longtime member of St. Mary's who is an accomplished performance musician, will supply for services on Sunday and Jan. 4. The church is very grateful for his help.

TAKE TIME OUT FOR YOURSELF READ

School News is due Tuesday at noon at the life! desk. Call Debbie L. Jensen, 263-7331, ext. 236 for details

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Randy Cotton Pastor

Persistent puppy survives washing-machine cycle

GLADEWATER (AP) — A tenacious puppy that wrapped inside a washing machine cycle was later named Lazarus for the Bible character who rose from the dead.

Elaine Crawford of Gladewater thought she killed one of eight puppies born this week to Ashley, a Husky-Shepherd mix.

Ms. Crawford on Tuesday put the puppies' blanket in the

washing machine, not knowing one was still wrapped inside.

When she took the blanket out, she discovered a stiff puppy that wasn't breathing.

"I got sick. I thought, 'oh no, I killed this little puppy' and it was cold and wet and I knew it was gone," Ms. Crawford said.

She wrapped the animal in a plastic bag, knotted it and put it into a box for burial later.

But Ashley found the box and

got the pup out.

A few hours later, Ms. Crawford discovered the empty box. The animal that she

thought was dead was safe, breathing and back with the other pups.

Coming in Sunday life!

- A look inside the Dora Roberts Community Center.
- Local weddings, anniversaries.
- Military news about local people.
- Big Spring Humane Society has a pet for you.

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'95 Chevy Suburban LT - Stk#U-170, power windows & locks, tilt, cruise, rear a/c.....	\$22,988

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SPORTS

BIG SPRING HERALD
FRIDAY, DEC. 27, 1997

SCOREBOARD

Table with two columns: On the Tube (College Basketball Puerto Rico Classic, Michigan vs. Syracuse, TBA, ESPN; College Football Motor City Bowl, Ole Miss vs. Marshall, 7 p.m., ESPN) and National Basketball Association (Miami at Detroit, 7 p.m., TNT; Washington at Dallas, 7:30 p.m., Fox Sports Southwest).

Got a story idea or a sports news tip?

Call Sports, 263-7331 Ext. 233

or leave voice mail

1B

Syracuse, Michigan advance to finals of Puerto Rico tournament

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Syracuse and Michigan took different routes to the championship game of the Puerto Rico Holiday Classic. No. 19 Syracuse had a tough test in the semifinals, edging No. 25 Texas Christian 82-78 behind Todd Burgan's 23 points.

• 3B — How top 25 fared No. 19 Syracuse 82 No. 25 TCU 78 Syracuse trailed by nine points early in the second half before Burgan rallied the Orangemen. Marius Janulis scored 18 points for Syracuse, while Ryan Blackwell had 16 points and 13 rebounds.

Michigan routed American-Puerto Rico. The Wolverines jumped to a 14-2 lead and were ahead 27-4 with 9:44 left in the first half. American was coming off the huge upset over Arkansas, but the Pirates were defenseless against Michigan's inside power game. Orlando Santiago led American with 16 points.

Razorbacks (8-2). Mayes made 13 of 18 shots, including 5-of-7 from 3-point range. He also sank 11 of 13 free throws and grabbed 10 rebounds. Nick Davis led Arkansas with 28 points and 15 rebounds.

Iowa St. 62 Saint Louis 57 Marcus Fizer scored 11 of his 17 points in the second half as Iowa State won the consolation bracket game. Paul Shirley's three-point play with 39 seconds left clinched it for the Cyclones (6-5), who bounced back from a 39-point loss to TCU on Wednesday. Saint Louis (8-3) lost its third straight.

Huskies rip Spartans in Aloha, 51-23

HONOLULU (AP) — No. 25 Michigan State got the message in a big way at the Aloha Bowl. The Washington Huskies deserve a much better ranking than 21st. With the Huskies at their healthiest since the start of fall practice, they easily dismantled the Spartans 51-23 on Christmas Day.

Rashaan Shehee, who missed the last three regular-season games with a sprained knee, rushed 29 times for a bowl-record 193 yards, and the defense returned a pair of interceptions for touchdowns. What was expected to be a close contest — Washington was favored by five points — became a rout.

Tony Parrish picked off Todd Schultz's pass and returned it 56 yards for a TD, and Lester Towns grabbed another errant pass by Schultz and went 66 yards for another score. Brock Huard, bothered by injuries during the season, also sparkled, completing 18 of 30 passes for 179 yards and two TDs by Fred Coleman.

Michigan State coach Nick Saban was the first to admit Washington's dominance. "We play against some great backs in the Big Ten, but not with quite the athletic ability and speed of Shehee," Saban said.

Barry Sanders named NFL's offensive player of the year

NEW YORK (AP) — The best season for one of the greatest running backs in NFL history earned Barry Sanders The Associated Press Offensive Player of the Year award today. Sanders rushed for 2,053 yards, second only to Eric Dickerson's 2,105 in 1984, and 11 touchdowns. He added 33 receptions for 305 yards and three scores as he led the Detroit Lions to an NFC wild-card playoff berth.

That is reflected in the statistics. We all pull for each other and that shows every Sunday. Sanders romped in balloting by a nationwide panel of 48 sports writers and broadcasters, getting 37 votes. Terrell Davis of Denver, who led the AFC in rushing with 1,750 yards and scored 15 TDs, was second with 7 and Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre, with three, came in third. Davis was the 1996 winner and Favre won the year before.

Dana Stubblefield earns NFL's top defensive award

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Dana Stubblefield's season went from a humble start to a special finish. The San Francisco 49ers defensive tackle stormed back from an early-season demotion to become a dynamic force on the league's top-ranked defense. His rugged play in the middle marked him as a staunch run defender, a top pass rusher and earned him The Associated Press Defensive Player of the Year award, which was released Thursday.

pass-rush specialist Kevin Greene prior to this season, the 49ers planned to take Stubblefield out on passing downs and replace him with Greene. But an injury to Greene in the season-opener and later to Bryant Young and Roy Barker, along with Stubblefield's exceptional play, quashed the plan before it really got started.

"I think it's a reward for all the hard work that I've put in. This is just something telling me that for you to spend the offseason putting in the effort to have a season like you did this year, this is what it's going to take. You've set the standard for what you have to do." After managing just one sack and 39 tackles in 1996, Stubblefield was unstoppable this season. He had 15 sacks — second in the NFL to John Randle of Minnesota — and he anchored a defensive line that was among the league's toughest to run against.

deserved. "He put a lot of hard work into his offseason and you know, that's kind of how it goes," Mariucci said. "Those who put in that kind of time and effort have the best chance to perform. He was in such good shape and so determined. He earned that good year." Stubblefield did some of his best work in the middle of the season when his partner at tackle, Young, was injured. In a Monday night showcase at Philadelphia, he had four sacks and constantly was in the Eagles' backfield disrupting plays.

NFL playoffs

Broncos get second chance at Mile High vs. Jaguars

The ASSOCIATED PRESS With a 6-0 start that made them appear the class of the NFL, the Denver Broncos never expected to be playing a wild-card game. But at least they won't take Jacksonville for granted when the Jaguars come to Mile High Stadium on Saturday for the game the Broncos didn't expect to play — not after the Jags shocked them 30-27 last season a round later.

That game is certainly motivation for Terrell Davis, who sat out the final regular-season game with a separated shoulder, but expects to play on Sunday. "I haven't watched tape of that game since then, but it remains vivid in my memory," says Davis, who led the AFC in rushing with 1,750 yards. "I was like in a coma for a week after the game. I didn't want to answer my phone, didn't want to do anything." On paper, this matchup between the Broncos (12-4) and Jaguars (11-5) is closer than last season's game.

Then, the Jaguars were a second-year team that finished 9-7 and made it into the playoffs only because Atlanta's Morten Andersen, one of the most accurate kickers in NFL history, missed a 30-yard field goal at the end of the final regular-season game. Now they're considered one of the more talented young teams in the NFL.

The Broncos went into that game after a 13-3 season and had home field in the AFC. But they had not played a meaningful game for a month and after jumping to a 12-0 lead, seemed to fall apart, particularly on defense.

Last year, nobody on that Broncos team — from the owners to the team trainers — thought we could beat them," says Jacksonville guard Ben Coleman. "Now, it's totally different. We didn't know if we could win in Denver, but we thought we could. This year, we know we can."

The Jaguars-Broncos game is the second of four games in the wild-card round this weekend. In the first game on Saturday, Minnesota is at the New York Giants. On Sunday, it's Miami at New England and Detroit at Tampa Bay.

The top seeds, San Francisco and Green Bay in the NFC, Kansas City and Pittsburgh in the AFC, await the winners. Minnesota (9-7) at New York Giants (10-5-1) The Vikings managed to

Texans lead charge as Grays ease past Blues, 31-24 in Montgomery

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — For linemen, all-star games are more about technique, assignments and effort than game-breaking plays. But Texas Christian defensive end Chance McCarty got noticed for the big things at the Blue-Gray Classic. He had two sacks and a safety and constantly put pressure on the quarterback in the Gray's 31-24 victory Thursday.

expect to see that much talent from you. I think I played pretty good. This is something I'll remember the rest of my life." He's hoping NFL scouts will feel the same. About 50 of them were present for the Christmas Day all-star game.

team. And I personally wanted to show that the Dennis Riddle everyone knew is still there." Riddle led the Gray in rushing with 66 yards, including an 18-yard touchdown late in the third quarter. Alexander had 11 yards rushing and a 46-yard touchdown catch, and Scissum ran for 18 yards and a 5-yard score.

Stephen F. Austin receiver Mikhael Ricks, the Gray's most valuable player, and Texas quarterback James Brown. Ricks finished with six receptions for 106 yards, including a diving 43-yard touchdown reception on Brown's desperation pass at the end of the first half.

this level," Ricks said. "But this was a big deal for me. It was an opportunity I wanted to take advantage of." Brown completed eight of 13 passes for 150 yards and the two long touchdowns. It offered a nice close to a season in which Texas, like Alabama, wound up as one of the biggest disappointments in college football.

When you're from a small school that went 1-10, people don't put a bittersweet end to a 4-7 season. "This was our main goal all week," Riddle said. "It gave us a chance to show there was some talent on our side." Other top performances came from

Jim Fassel of Giants is Associated Press Coach of the Year

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — When Jim Fassel talks about coaching philosophy, he doesn't start discussing offense or defense or how to deal with players.

He talks about team. Without that concept, a coach can't do anything.

That's the approach he used in turning the last-place New York Giants into the NFC East champions. And that's the reason the 48-year-old rookie coach was selected NFL Coach of the Year by The Associated Press on Wednesday.

In a season in which a half-dozen coaches did masterful jobs, Fassel collected 20 votes from a nationwide panel of 48 sports writers and broadcasters. He doubled the total of runner-

up Marty Schottenheimer of Kansas City.

Tampa Bay's Tony Dungy was next with eight, followed by Bill Parcells of the New York Jets, Bill Cowher of Pittsburgh and Steve Mariucci of San Francisco, each with three, and Jimmy Johnson of Miami with one.

Giants offensive tackle Scott Gragg said Fassel has been outstanding in putting players in position to make things happen. He doesn't ask the players to do things they can't or call plays with little chance of success.

"He is not big into 'This is my offense, my team and we're going to do it my way,'" Gragg said. "He's not like that. We're going to do whatever is best for the team."

Team is really at the heart of Fassel's approach to football.

He learned his Xs and Os as an assistant at Stanford. His insight into the human side of football was instilled by his father and later, coaches at high school and junior college.

"I think the whole process that I learned growing up is that it's team first," Fassel said. "It's team concept. A collection of all-stars that doesn't have a common goal is not going anywhere."

Fassel replaced Dan Reeves, who feuded with the Giants' front office tandem of George Young and Tom Boisture over personnel decisions. Fassel had no qualms about the team's management structure. He stuck to coaching.

After spending 1991 and '92 as an offensive assistant with the Giants, Fassel was the offensive coordinator for two seasons at Denver. John Elway credits Fassel with improving his techniques and Elway had two strong years working with Fassel.

He next spent a year as quarterbacks coach with the Raiders and then was the offensive coordinator in Arizona last season.

Fassel is smart enough to credit everyone involved in his award.

"I'm not self-centered enough to think that this is about Jim Fassel," he said. "It's a recognition of an organization that has done a great job."

Schottenheimer rebuilt much of his team, allowing former

starters such as Neil Smith and Steve Bono to leave as free agents, adding quarterback Elvis Grbac and going with many youngsters on defense. Those moves paid off in a 13-3 record, best in the league along with San Francisco and Green Bay.

Dungy's second season at Tampa Bay was a huge success. He led the Bucs to their best record since 1979 and their first winning season in 15 years. The Bucs made the playoffs as a wild card.

Parcells took the worst team in the league the last two seasons and lifted it to 9-7. The Jets were in contention for a playoff berth until the final seconds of the 16th game, and they matched the biggest turnaround

in modern NFL history after going 1-15 in 1996.

Cowher did a job similar to Mariucci after the Pittsburgh defense was hit hard by free agency. The Steelers won the AFC Central at 11-5 and have a first-round bye.

Mariucci took over the most successful franchise of the last two decades and kept it humming despite losing Jerry Rice in the first game and getting him back only for a few plays in the 15th week. The 49ers were 13-3, won the NFC West and secured home-field advantage for the playoffs.

Last year's winner was Dom Capers of Carolina, whose team upended the defending Super Bowl champion Dallas Cowboys en route to the Super Bowl.

Notre Dame misses Christmas at home with family, faces LSU Sunday night

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — Notre Dame linebacker Kory Minor missed his mother. Defensive end Melvin Dansby felt a little weird spending Christmas with his teammates instead of his family.

And Rick Kaczinski? No offense to the rest of the Kaczinski family, but the senior center was actually happy to spend Christmas in Shreveport, La., instead of at home in Erie, Pa.

"I'd much rather be on a plane flying to a bowl game than staying at home by the television watching the other teams play," he said. "We're excited, espe-

cially after staying home last year."

OK, so the Irish (7-5) think getting ready for Sunday's rematch with No. 15 LSU (8-3) in the Independence Bowl is better than sitting at home waiting for spring practice like they did last Christmas.

But this is Notre Dame. Isn't there something a bit strange about the Irish spending a major religious holiday away from home?

"It's tough," admitted Minor, who hails from LaVerne, Calif. "A lot of the guys aren't used to being away from home. I know I'm not."

Actually, spending Christmas away from home is nothing new for Notre Dame. Before it built its indoor practice facility in 1988, road trips to warmer climates were a holiday tradition for the Irish.

Besides, it's not like Notre Dame skipped the holiday altogether. In fact, the team built up to it all week.

The players pretty much had Notre Dame's campus to them selves earlier this week, with the rest of the students clearing out as soon as exams were finished. So, after practicing all

day, coach Bob Davie made sure there was something to amuse his team at night. Some nights the players gathered at a coach's house. Other nights there was planned entertainment like the talent shows that were such a hit during winter conditioning.

"We're going to do a lot of things as a team," Davie said before the Irish left South Bend.

As for Christmas itself, Davie was no Scrooge. After arriving in Shreveport on Wednesday, the Irish had plenty of Christmas activities before

heading to the practice field.

The Rev. Edward Malloy, university president, and the Rev. William Beauchamp, executive vice president, were along for the ride, so that took care of Christmas Mass. Then there was a special holiday breakfast. Afterward, the team opened gifts. The players traded with each other, and the coaching staff exchanged with university administrators.

It may not have been the ideal holiday, but there were no complaints, even about the stature of the bowl.

"In years past, we've been a little spoiled going to major bowl games," Dansby said. "All in all, we're really happy we're able to go to a bowl game. In any situation you have pros and cons. We're looking at it as, 'Well, we've got a long break afterward that we can spend with our families.'"

Besides, there will be other holidays. In fact, Dansby's already looking forward to the next one.

"I'm going to have a really good New Year's Eve," he said, laughing.

NFL

Continued from 1B

Miami (9-7) at New England (10-6)

Here we go again. The second meeting in six days after the Patriots won the right to play this at home with their 14-12 win in Miami last Monday night. The Pats also won 27-24 at Foxboro on Nov. 23.

There are two good omens for the Dolphins. One is that Jimmy Johnson is 7-1 in the playoffs, albeit with a more talented Dallas team. The second

is that nine times teams have met back-to-back in season finales and then playoff games and six times the loser of the first has won the second.

On the other hand, the Patriots are expected to have Curtis Martin back to provide the running game they've lacked the last three games. And they also get the home weather advantage.

"It's going to be harder, it's going to be colder, but we're not going to lay down," says Miami linebacker Zach Thomas. "Hopefully, we can use this anger. We're angry that we let each other down."

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FRIDAY DEC. 26. Table with 21 columns (stations) and 7 rows (times 6-12 PM). Lists programs like News, Sports, Movies, and various shows.

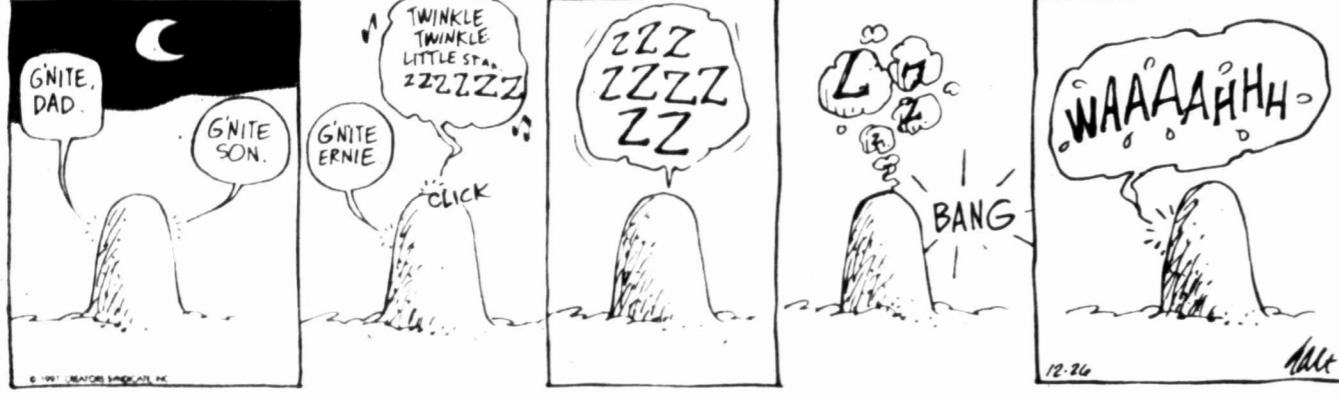
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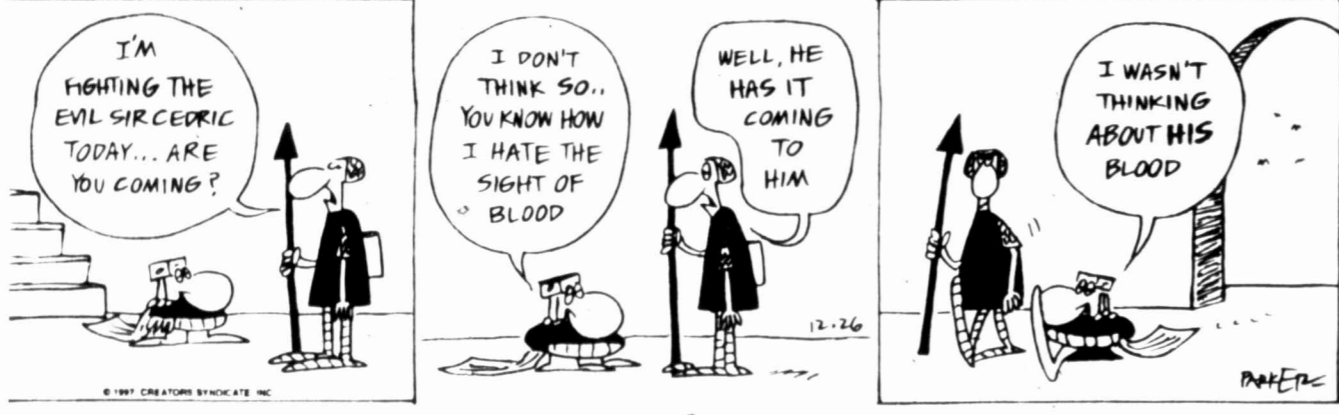
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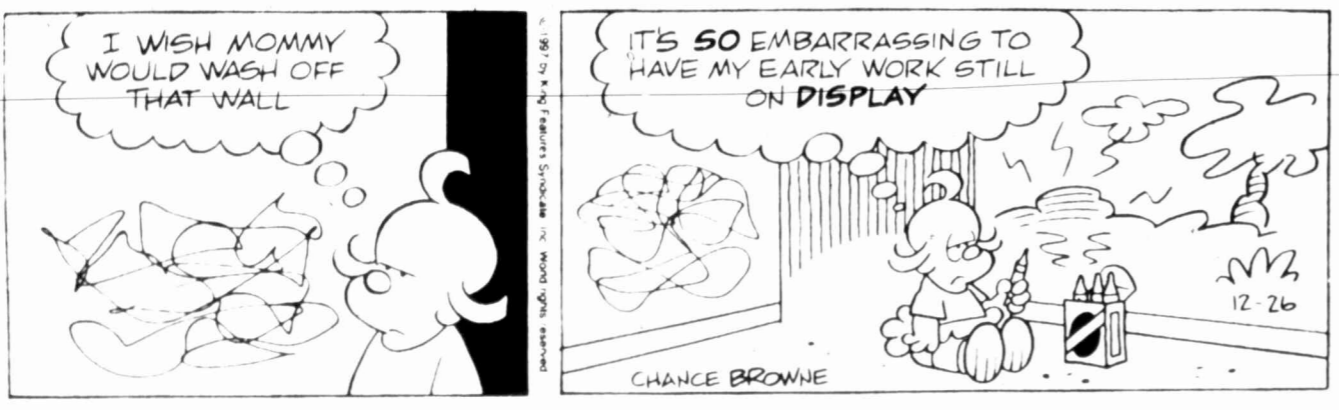
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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Friday, Dec. 26, the

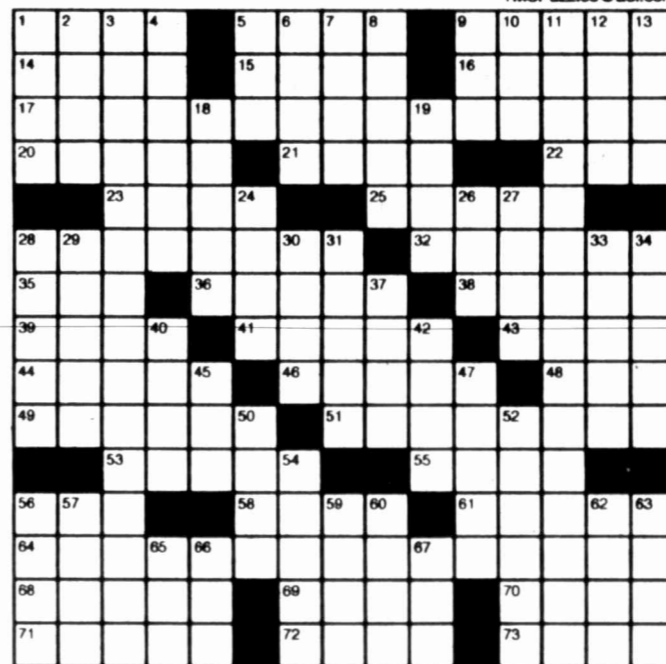
360th day of 1997. There are five days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 26, 1944, in the World War II Battle of the Bulge, the embattled U.S. 101st Airborne Division was relieved by units of the 4th Armored Division.

On this date: In 1776, the British suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War. In 1799, the late George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Permits
5 Bruins of coll. sports
9 Hidden supply
14 Pisa's river
15 Hungarian violinist
16 Caine film
17 String of presidential inits.
20 Oscar de la
21 Elevator man
22 J. Davis' grp.
23 Inclination
25 Wynonna's mother
28 Add to
32 Past arrests
35 M.D.
36 Incantation
38 Madder family flower
39 Long time periods
41 Finalists' determiner
43 Polynesian beverage
44 Magnani and Freud
46 Euripedes subject
48 Bairn-sized
49 Charred
51 Attendance check
53 37th president
55 Custard tart
56 Say more
58 Island in the Marianas
61 Provide with property
64 String of espionage inits.
68 Jewish teacher
69 Time periods
70 Circular shape
71 Spanish hero
72 High-tail it
73 Fencer's stiletto



By Randall J. Hartman Escondido, CA

Wednesday's Puzzle solved.



DOWN

- 1 Actor Bert
2 Highland Gaelic
3 String of TV station inits.
4 Not so harsh
5 Egt.-Syr., once
6 Stephen King novel
7 Remaining
8 Actor Alan
9 Solo of 'Star Wars'
10 Aged
11 String of labor union inits.
12 Chest bones
13 vu
18 Polonius, Laertes, et al.
19 Quickly, briefly
24 Light knocks
26 Powerful sphere
27 Dairy product
28 Brainstorms
29 Herman's Hermit's singer
30 Appear to be
31 Fudd of cartoons
33 Make merry
34 Writer Madame de
37 Venice beach
40 Gandhi's garb
42 Individuality
45 Gender
47 Marcus or Irwin
50 Canines
52 Burning light
54 Microwaved, so to speak
56 Land measure
57 Gauge face
59 Taj Mahal city
60 Econ. degs.
62 One woodland
63 Help with the dishes
65 Japanese sash
66 Silly Caesar
67 Cigar end

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