

BIG SPRING HERALD

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 SUNDAY

MONDAY
February 15, 1999

Tonight:



CLEAR
TONIGHT TUESDAY
35°-40° 65°-68°

BSSH patient steps in front of westbound semi

Big Spring Police say a 55-year-old patient at Big Spring State Hospital attempted to end his life by jumping into the path of a westbound semi-truck on I-20 about 9 p.m. Sunday.

According to reports, Big Spring Police Department officers responded to a suspected suicidal individual call from the hospital.

"Before the officers could arrive, witnesses indicate he stepped out in front of a truck that was west bound, and was struck," said Sgt. Roger Sweatt with the BSPD.

The man sustained massive injuries to his right side, Sweatt said, including broken bones, a possible concussion and head injuries, he said.

He was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical center, and then flown to University Medical Center in Lubbock, Sweatt said.

University Medical center house supervisor Nancy Smith said the man is listed in critical condition today.

Ed Moughon, superintendent of the BSSH, said a complete report has not been written, but a preliminary report indicates the man left the hospital property without permission.

"He left unauthorized, and as our staff continued to observe him, they contacted local law enforcement when he crossed off hospital property," Moughon said.

WHAT'S UP...

TODAY

□ Junior college basketball — New Mexico Junior College at Howard College, 6 and 8 p.m., Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

□ Big Spring Evening Lions Club, 6:30 p.m., 1607 E. Third.

□ Disabled American Veterans Chapter No. 47, 6:30 p.m., VAMC room 212.

□ Big Spring Amateur Radio Club, 7 p.m., at the club house.

TUESDAY

□ Beginning line dance classes, 9 a.m., Senior Citizens Center.

□ High school girls basketball playoffs — Lubbock Coronado vs. Abilene High at 6 p.m. and Slaton vs. Crane at 8 p.m., Dorothy Garrett Coliseum.

□ Big Spring Art Association, 7 p.m., county library.

□ Big Spring Chapter No. 67, Order of the Eastern Star meeting, 7 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 219 Main.

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Big Spring sales tax rebates rebound in February, show increase

By JOHN H. WALKER
Managing Editor

After experiencing a drop last month, sales tax rebates to Big Spring rebounded in February, according to the Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Big Spring will receive a check for \$454,229.42 for February — up .57 percent over the same period a year ago. Year-to-date, city sales tax receipts are still down slightly more than \$14,000, or 2.03 percent.

Both Coahoma and Forsan will receive less money than a year ago. Coahoma receipts are down

just \$144 — to \$6,610.87 — but Forsan's sales tax revenues are down 29.76 percent, from \$2,140.57 in 1998 to \$1,503.39 this year.

A total of 1,097 Texas cities and 118 counties were issued their February sales tax rebates, which totaled \$318.2 million. February's rebates is a 9.5 percent increase over the \$290.5 million allocated to cities and counties in February 1998.

The payments include sales taxes collected by monthly filers in December, and reported to the comptroller in January, plus quarterly returns for sales in October, November and December, and returns from annual filers for the entire 1998

tax year.

Other area communities receiving rebates included Andrews, \$81,942.01 (down 10.73 percent); Colorado City, \$64,878.29 (up 29.36 percent); Lamesa, \$129,853.79 (up 4.45 percent); Loraine, \$1,128.72 (up 1.82 percent) and Midland, \$1,630,023.90 (up .43 percent).

Also, Odessa, \$1,601,872.86 (up 18.2 percent); San Angelo, \$1,158,021.27 (up 5.17 percent); Abilene, \$3,142,123.98 (up 5.5 percent); Snyder, \$157,399.95 (down 9.03 percent) and Sweetwater, \$238,961.98 (down .49 percent).

Also, Stanton, \$13,008.40 (down 3.55 percent).

FEBRUARY SALES TAX REBATES

CITY	1999 REBATES	1998 REBATES	% CHANGE
Abilene	\$3,142,123.98	\$2,978,050.63	+5.5
Andrews	\$81,942.01	\$91,794.89	-10.73
Big Spring	\$454,229.42	\$451,645.58	+0.57
Coahoma	\$6,610.81	\$6,754.85	-2.13
Colorado City	\$64,878.29	\$50,151.56	+29.36
Forsan	\$1,503.39	\$2,140.57	-29.76
Lamesa	\$129,853.79	\$124,312.24	+4.45
Midland	\$1,630,023.90	\$1,622,954.41	+0.43
Odessa	\$1,601,872.86	\$1,355,140.67	+18.2
San Angelo	\$1,158,021.27	\$1,101,057.58	+5.17
Snyder	\$157,399.95	\$173,031.97	-9.03
Sweetwater	\$238,961.98	\$240,149.96	-0.49



Jesse Rodriguez pours paint at a residence on 18th Street. Spring-like weather has a number of people working on outdoor projects throughout the community.

Pops

After initial success, presenters looking forward to July 3

By JOHN H. WALKER
Managing Editor

The second annual Pops in the Park, combining patriotic music with fireworks, will be held on Saturday, July 3, according to project organizers.

Presented by the Big Spring Symphony, City of Big Spring, Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce and Big Spring Herald, the program drew an estimated 5,500 persons to the Comanche Trail Amphitheater and more than 10,000 persons to the park itself.

"The night before, we thought if we drew a thousand people, we'd be happy," project chairman Archie Kountz said. "Before it was over, the crowd was so large that police had to close access to the park."

Kountz said more fireworks would be included in the program this year and that more activities are planned.

"After the success of last year, we're hoping for more food booths and we're looking at some other things as well," he said.

Among them would be a "warm-up" show prior to the performance by the symphony

and chorale.

"We've talked about Allen Damron, who is well-known in the area and can do a Texas-type program," Kountz explained. "He is as versatile a performer as you could ever want and, with all the kids in the audience, could even do some of his kid's songs."

Damron has performed in Big Spring several times, including at the West Texas Center for the Arts, Coahoma Community Concerts and for Kids' Zone.

Other activities that have been discussed include a sand castle building contest on the beach at the lake. Construction on the beach is currently under way and should be finished in the next 10 days to two weeks.

Another thing organizers are hoping will grow from last year's success is the fund raising to support the \$30,000 project.

"We already have nearly \$7,000 in-hand, thanks largely to a \$5,000 grant from the Convention and Visitors Bureau, but we think the success of the event last year will make people want to support it this year," Kountz said.

He said that because the century will change this year, the demand is already great for fireworks.

"Our supplier has already asked us for a commitment for next year," Kountz said.

See POPS, Page 2

Problems seem plentiful in CISD's new science building

By MARSHA STURDIVANT
Staff Writer

As a new \$360,000 science laboratory for Coahoma Independent School District nears completion, contractor Speed Fab Crete of Fort Worth is working with three final punch lists in an effort to address numerous problems.

District business manager Gina McEndree explained that some of the work on the building is unacceptable, such as painting, as well as the cabinets that are not placed properly.

"There are gaps around some of the electrical outlets, they seem to have been cut wrong,

and there seems to be no electricity to a vent-a-hood in the chemistry room," McEndree said.

Also, a leak from the roof is suspected, and ceiling tiles need to be replaced.

"We will definitely have a final walk through after all of these items have been taken care of. Our commitment to this project has not diminished," said Russ Bloxom, marketing director for Speed Fab Crete.

A punch list, Bloxom explained, is a detailed list of any work in a completed building that still needs further attention.

"It's a list of items that are not

BUILDING WOES

Problems highlighted to the Coahoma ISD school board regarding the new science building:

- Poor paint job
- Misplaced cabinets
- Gaps around outlets
- No electricity to vent-a-hood
- Roof leaks
- Ceiling tiles need to be replaced

complete according to the building contract. But these are not

of major concern that would prevent the customer from occupying the building," he said.

There are other items on the punch list, and, Bloxom said, these specific items are common for new building construction.

"Coordinating these repairs will be the difficult part now, as we will try to get these different subcontractors to go back, we will have to work with their schedules as well," Bloxom said. "None of these can be taken care of in a day, but we are actively involved in addressing the punch list."

Bloxom said an unusual

aspect for completing the project was that Speed Fab Crete has received three separate punch lists for the same construction site.

The first came from former superintendent Michael Hartman Jan 2.

"On Jan. 2, Mr. Hartman signed off, which generally signals the end of a project and that the customer is satisfied with the work performed," Bloxom said. "With that comes a punch list of items from the owner."

On Feb. 1, while in Austin attending a midwinter adminis

See PROBLEMS, Page 2

Southern Blacklands OK's boll weevil zone, but not assessment

By MARSHA STURDIVANT
Staff Writer

Howard County cotton producers will vote April 8 for a Permian Basin Boll Weevil Eradication Program, which has just been approved in the 65-county Southern Blacklands Zone.

"We must have state assistance to ensure this program's completion and to help our farmers catch up with other southern states that have completed eradication and are gain-

ing ground on Texas through lower production costs," said Susan Combs, Texas agriculture Commissioner.

Cotton producers and crop-sharing landowners in the six-county Permian Basin zone will also be allowed to vote on an acreage assessment designed to pay for the eradication program.

The assessment program is estimated at \$6 per acre charge for dryland, and \$12 an acre for irrigated land. The vote also will assess a maximum rate.

The blacklands zone voted the assessment down, and Combs said this is because cotton prices have dropped from 70 cents a pound to the most recent 56 cents a pound.

Currently, the United States export sales are also down by almost half, from 7.5 million bales in 1997 to 4 million bales in 1998.

"This vote shows cotton farmers support boll weevil eradication, but cannot afford assessments on their acreage with dropping cotton prices and ris-

ing debt from drought," Combs said.

She said the support the program, but the defeat of the producer paying for the program through an acreage assessment clearly shows that producers have been hard hit by last year's drought and are in need of state assistance to complete this vital program.

To be eligible to vote on April 8, a producer must have grown cotton for at least seven years. Voters will also select a local representative to have a seat on

the statewide eradication program board.

Nominees must have the support and signature of 10 other cotton producers to be eligible, and must submit a nomination form, which is available at the local county extension offices.

The nomination deadline is March 9.

The Permian Basin Boll Weevil Eradication Zone spans 500,000 acres, and includes Dawson, Ector, Howard, Martin and portions of Borden and Midland counties.

Drug trafficking, trade top agenda items between Clinton, Zedillo

MERIDA, Mexico (AP) — From a cozy Valentine dinner between two couples to a summit of two leaders, President Clinton is making a neighborly call on Mexico to encourage its uphill battle with drug traffickers and promote purchases of U.S. exports.

His meetings today with President Ernesto Zedillo at the secluded Hacienda Temozon — translated, aptly for this 23-hour visit, as "Whirlwind Estate" — come only two weeks before Clinton must render a formal evaluation of Mexico's cooperation in fighting illegal drugs.

Officials traveling with Clinton tried to keep drugs from dominating headlines from the visit, which they described as "regular maintenance" of relations with an important ally.

Export-Import Bank president James Harmon, part of a 52-member U.S. delegation, was

here for Clinton's announcement today of a new two-year, \$4 billion line of credit to Mexican businesses that "buy American," in an effort to increase the already bustling Mexican market for U.S. exports.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who joined Clinton from her weekend visit to the Paris peace talks on Kosovo, has not made her recommendations on the drug certifications, required under a 1986 law.

But White House officials made plain in advance of Clinton's arrival in this city on the Yucatan Peninsula that he is likely to certify Mexico as an ally in fighting narcotics, as it has been for 12 years. This would come despite Mexico's disappointing record on extraditions and a drop last year in cocaine and heroin seizures.

"There's no doubt Mexico is

SUMMIT AGREEMENTS:

- A \$4 billion line of credit to Mexican businesses that "buy American," in an effort to increase the already bustling Mexican market for U.S. exports.
- A civil aviation pact between the U.S. and Mexico, set to be signed in the coming days.
- \$1.2 million in U.S. funds to promote a market of 100,000 U.S. exports to Mexico.
- U.S. training and technical assistance to help Mexico improve its law enforcement capabilities.
- Increased cooperation in the processing of narcotics.
- The Agency for International Development will provide \$11,000 new cases of AIDS in the United States by migrants.

doing everything it can to fight this massive problem," said National Security Council spokesman David Leavy.

A failing grade would mean tough economic sanctions on top of diplomatic insult to Mexico, which sees the U.S. certification process as political.

To that end, Clinton was here partly to gird Zedillo for a hard sell on Capitol Hill, where Congress can override his certification of Mexico. "If history is any guide, we certainly anticipate a very difficult time" in Congress, said deputy White House chief of staff Maria Echaveste.

Mexico blames much of its drug problem on the United States, because Americans are the world's biggest buyers of illicit narcotics. About two-thirds of the cocaine sold in the United States comes through Mexico.

Today marks Clinton's second trip to Mexico as president and his seventh meeting with Zedillo.

They were expected to sign modest agreements to improve border safety, prevent cross-border pollution and tuberculosis infections, and train Mexico's soon-to-be-created federal police force, which is modeled after the FBI and meant to be a fresh start for the country's long-corrupt law enforcement.

They also planned to highlight booming economic trade in the five years since the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Eclipsing even Japan, Mexico has emerged as the second-largest foreign market for U.S. exports, after Canada. U.S. exports to Mexico total \$79 billion a year, more than twice the pre-NAFTA figure.

For Clinton, the mission marked a passage into his post-impeachment presidency and brought an obvious sense of freedom.

Kosovo peace talks head into final week

RAMBOUILLET, France (AP) — The Kosovo peace conference headed into a high-pressure final week with the United States bearing down hard on the Serbs to make a deal with rival ethnic Albanians or suffer NATO's wrath.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov arrived today at the 14th century French chateau that is the site of the encounter to try his hand at speeding up the talks between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians.

The Russians are pushing just as hard as the United States for a resolution of the Kosovo conflict by a Saturday deadline, but Moscow adamantly opposes the use of NATO airstrikes if the talks fail.

Ivanov told reporters after meeting with both delegations that he was convinced "they realize the importance of the moment."

"I would like to emphasize, once again, that only a political settlement is possible," he said. "There is no military solution to this problem."

On Sunday, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright berated Serbian President Milan

Milutinovic in Paris in what Serbian sources described as an extremely unpleasant meeting. She then came out to the site of the talks in Rambouillet, 30 miles southwest of Paris, and dragged both sides to the table.

The Albanians, she said later, seemed to accept the plan drafted by the United States and five European countries as a "fair deal," and appeared ready to sign it by the end of the week. The best she could say for the Serbs was that they seemed to appreciate the consequences of a deadlock.

At stake is the future of Kosovo, a poor southern province of Serbia, the dominant of the two remaining republics in Yugoslavia and home to 2 million people, 90 percent of whom are ethnic Albanians. An estimated 2,000 people have died since a major outbreak of fighting began a year ago.

The three-year plan for Kosovo is designed to end the fighting, compel Serbia to withdraw most of its troops from Kosovo and set up elections to clear the way for some autonomy for ethnic Albanians.

A NATO peacekeeping force of 25,000 troops, including about 4,000 Americans, would take charge of collecting weapons and storing them while keeping the sides apart so the election could proceed in a secure environment.

"Both sides told me, and each other, that they recognized they are faced with this historic opportunity, that the killing must stop, that time is short," Albright said after bringing Albanian and Serbian delegations to the table for the first time since the talks began.

Previously, international mediators led by American Christopher Hill had been shuttling between the two delegations on separate floors of the chateau.

"I hope this joint meeting will be a model for further discussions in the coming days," Albright said.

An American official said he had no idea if direct talks would continue.

The six-nation Contact Group, meeting in Paris on Sunday, extended the deadline for the two sides to reach an agreement to noon Saturday.

In a joint statement, the six ministers from five European nations and the United States said, "We will hold both sides accountable if they fail to seize the opportunity."

Albright told reporters that "the threat of NATO airstrikes remains real."

Ivanov had told Russian correspondents after the Contact Group meeting that deploying international troops in Kosovo to enforce an eventual peace settlement was not discussed, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

"Yugoslavia is a sovereign country and any international mission, civilian or military, is possible only on consent of Belgrade," the Russian news agency quoted Ivanov as saying.

Albright said she came to Rambouillet with a clear message for both sides.

"They face a fork in the road," she said. "One fork is to disaster, chaos and more killing. The other fork leads back to a rational solution that will achieve peace, democracy and human rights for all the people of Kosovo."

American Airlines slowly getting pilots back on job

DALLAS (AP) — With a growing number of American Airlines pilots reporting for duty, airline officials think they can resume regular service this week.

As of late Sunday, "well under 1,000" of American's 9,400 pilots were still listed as sick, compared to the nearly 2,500 Thursday and Friday who declared themselves unfit to fly, an American spokeswoman said.

"We're just glad they are coming back and we hope by the end of the week to be in business as usual here," said Sonja Whiteon, adding that 100 percent service was possible by Tuesday.

However, about 231 flights, or about 10 percent, scheduled for today have been canceled

because not all of the pilots were immediately available for flying.

More than half a million travelers have been left at the gate by the nation's second-largest airline since Feb. 6. That's when a large number of pilots started calling in sick in a dispute concerning how quickly American should integrate the pilots from recently purchased Reno Air into its own roster.

According to American, pilots have been taking themselves off of the sick list at a rapid rate since a federal judge held the Allied Pilots Association and two top board members in contempt of an order that pilots return to work. He promised sizable fines against the union.

Despite the continued cancellations, most of the nation's air-

ports were calmer Sunday with many passengers prepared for delays.

At Miami International Airport, heart-shaped decorations adorned American's baggage counter wall and musicians strolled through the terminal serenading passengers. But many travelers remained angry.

"I think I lost two to three years of age off my life," said Luis Delgado, a furniture exporter who faced delays in three cities over four days while trying to get home to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

"This is not my problem, it's American Airlines. We don't have to be the ones that suffer," U.S. District Judge Joe Kendall said he would decide Wednesday how much to levy

in fines. He required the union to place \$10 million with the court and for union president Rich LaVoy and vice president Brian Mayhew to remit a total of \$15,000.

"While we are disappointed and disagree with Judge Kendall's order of contempt, we urge all pilots to comply with the restraining order," LaVoy said. "We're taking his order seriously. I took his order seriously Wednesday night."

Negotiations on the Reno pilot issue are scheduled to restart this afternoon.

Nearly 6,000 flights have been canceled since the work action began, costing American between \$67 million and \$90 million, according to Chris Chiames of AMR Corp., parent company of American Airlines.

Independent Counsel Act likely to die in June

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Independent Counsel Act that grew out of the Watergate scandal and culminated in Kenneth Starr's investigation of President Clinton is headed for extinction in June, lawmakers from both parties say.

"One thing we can do in this Congress is not extend the life of the independent counsel statute. It was a post-Watergate liberal notion and it was a disaster," Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"This law needs to be terminated. I don't want it to be amended. I want it to be ended," Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said on CNN's "Late Edition." He noted that he was one of 21 senators who had voted against reauthorizing the act after it lapsed in the early 1990s. It will die on June 30 unless Congress and Clinton renew it.

Congress passed the law in

1978 as a post-Watergate means to ensure that investigations into the president, his Cabinet and other top officials would be free of politics. Under the act, the attorney general can ask a court to appoint an independent counsel when there is compelling evidence that a senior federal official is guilty of wrongdoing and a Justice Department investigation might give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

But Republicans were displeased with the independent counsel's treatment of the Reagan administration during the Iran-Contra affair and Democrats have accused Starr of abusing his powers in his four-year, \$40 million probe of the White House. It started with the Whitewater land deal and proceeded through the White House travel office firings, the handling of FBI files and finally the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Both parties have questioned the Office of Independent Counsel's nearly unlimited powers to spend money. Prosecutor Donald Smaltz spent \$17 million in a four-year corruption case against former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, who was acquitted of the charges six weeks ago.

Attorney General Janet Reno has sought the appointment of seven independent counsels to investigate Clinton administration officials, but Republicans have criticized her refusal to use the act to look into Clinton's and Vice President Al Gore's possible links to alleged Democratic fund-raising violations.

"It's either going to be rewritten significantly or it will be allowed to lapse — in all likelihood the latter," Senate Republican Whip Don Nickles of Oklahoma said on ABC's "This Week."

Congress is expected to hold hearings on the act in the coming weeks, but McConnell said Congress might simply kill it by failing to act on its reauthorization.

While the administration has not taken a final stance, "it's virtually hopeless to try to fix it, I think, without some major, major revisions," White House chief of staff John Podesta said on NBC.

The American Bar Association, which helped craft the Independent Counsel Act two decades ago, decided to end support for the law in a 384-49 vote by its House of Delegates last week.

"It was designed to remove politics from the investigation of public officials," said Philip Anderson, who heads the 400,000-member organization of lawyers. "The majority of Americans would say that politics has not been removed."

New book: Jon Benet Ramsey's mother capable of harming her

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — JonBenet Ramsey's mother revealed "the hard side of her persona" when questioned by a detective, leading authorities to suspect she was capable of harming her daughter, author Lawrence Schiller writes in a new book on the crime.

The book, "Perfect Murder — Perfect Town," draws on nearly 600 interviews with key players in the investigation to unveil never-before reported details about the unsolved slaying of the 6-year-old beauty queen.

After Detective Tom Haney interviewed Patsy Ramsey June 23-25, police reviewing a videotape believed he had "gotten to the real Patsy," according to excerpts released by Newsweek Sunday.

"She had exhibited the hard side of her persona," Schiller wrote in the book, to be released later this week. "A side capable of bringing harm to her daughter."

When Haney told Mrs. Ramsey that she had lied to him, Mrs. Ramsey replied, "Pal, you don't want to go there. Don't start that," Schiller wrote. "The tougher the questions became, the tougher Patsy became."

JonBenet's beaten and strangled body was found Dec. 26, 1996 in the basement of the Ramseys' Boulder home, about seven hours after Mrs. Ramsey called 911 and said she found a ransom note demanding \$118,000.

Police have said the Ramseys remain under suspicion in JonBenet's death, while the Ramseys have repeatedly maintained their innocence.

Attorney Hal Haddon, who represents JonBenet's parents, declined comment Sunday because he had not had a chance to read the book.

Schiller theorized that JonBenet's killer was familiar with the house and knew where the family kept the blanket in which her body had

been wrapped.

Schiller also revealed police evidence which was presented to District Attorney Alex Hunter on June 1-2, before the interview with Haney, according to excerpts of the book printed in the Rocky Mountain News of Denver today.

The police presentation helped convince Hunter to take the case to a grand jury, which is now hearing evidence. A spokeswoman for Hunter declined comment.

The evidence included the Colorado Bureau of Investigation's conclusion that four fibers found on the duct tape that had covered JonBenet's mouth were consistent with the jacket Mrs. Ramsey wore Christmas night, Schiller wrote.

Police said the cord and duct tape used on JonBenet likely had been purchased by Mrs. Ramsey at McGuckin hardware store in Boulder, he wrote.

Police also told Hunter that the fine-line Sharpie pen used to write the ransom note was one that Mrs. Ramsey had used before and was found in a cup "right beside the phone in the kitchen where Patsy always kept them," Schiller wrote.


The author said that some listening to the police presentation suspected JonBenet had wet her bed and Mrs. Ramsey had reacted violently, accidentally killing her, then she and John Ramsey covered it up.

Schiller, who assisted O.J. Simpson on his book "I Want to Tell You," and co-wrote "American Tragedy: The Uncensored Story of the Simpson Defense," also worked with Norman Mailer on his Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Executioner's Song."

"I think there will be a resolution to the case," Schiller said. "I think all the evidence will come out, but that doesn't mean someone will be convicted."

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Dora Roberts Student Union Building
Howard College Campus
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POPS IN THE PARK!**

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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

New softball park to host first game set for Tuesday

Virtually everything will be new Tuesday when Big Spring's Lady Steers open their third season of varsity softball play playing host to Odessa High's Lady Broncos at 4 p.m. in the first game ever played at the Big Spring High School softball facility.

There is no question that school district officials have provided the Lady Steers with the best softball facility in West Texas, having spent just more than \$300,000 in building not only a state-of-the-art field — a sodded Bermuda grass outfield and synthetic Diamond Pro covered infield placed atop a clay and gravel base — but grandstands that seat 300 fans on both the home and visitors' sidelines, an excellent public address system in its two-story press box, a concession stand building and restroom facilities.

It seems only fitting that the Lady Steers program be able to call the new complex home, having reached the Class 4A regional semifinals in its first two seasons, making do with what was available in the way of a softball field — one of the diamonds at the city's Roy Anderson Complex.

Tuesday's game will not only mark the first game played on the new field, but will also be the first Lady Steers varsity game for coach Dan Arista and several of his players.

Arista inherited only a handful of players returning from last year's District 4-4A championship team when he took over the program's reigns following Wes Overton's decision to take the head softball coach's position at Midland Lee.

Whether or not this year's Lady Steers team will again play deep into the Class 4A playoffs remains to be seen, but as they begin to open the 1999 season in their new home, we want to wish them our best wishes for a successful year.

What's more, we encourage members of the community to attend Tuesday's season and home opener.

By providing them with the best in facilities our school district has proven its commitment to the program, and now it's our turn to prove our support by being in the seats Tuesday afternoon.

YOUR VIEWS

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing to you in hope you can tell us, our here at Coahoma, how we could go about getting our railroad crossing repaired. It is on the main area on FM 321.

It is very rough, has some boards broke in between the rails that can damage your tires. Also the crossing bar arms sometimes come down and stay down for long periods of time when there is not a train in sight.

There is a number listed on the pole but when you call, it is in a northern state and we never get any response.

Anyway you can help us we would be pleased.

MAXINE HINSLEY
Coahoma

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Check with Coahoma City Hall at 394-4287 or 394-4288 to see if a complaint has been filed with Union Pacific. You might also check with the Texas Department of Transportation at 263-4768 to see what might be done.)

TO THE EDITOR:

It has been my pleasure to serve on the board of the Big Spring Howard County Area Crime Stoppers for the last five years. I've seen the Crime Stoppers rise from

nothing to something of excellence. I've also witnessed the solving of the recent horrendous vandalism crimes from Crime Stoppers' tips.

Many thanks to Mark Sheedy, who spent many tireless hours getting the myriad of paperwork in order to obtain state recognition. To Stanley Bogart, the treasurer, for getting finances in order and keeping them there. To Bev Mohn, the secretary, for her work in keeping accurate and complete minutes of our meetings, reminding members of meeting times, and keeping us to the meeting agenda. To coordinator David Mohn of the Big Spring Police Department, for his professionalism and attention to detail. To Johnny Hooper, the past Vice Chairman, for his positive attitude and helpful suggestions. To the other members for being there and providing invaluable input to our decisions and discussions.

The Crime Stoppers unit is at work for you, the people of the area. Give them your support. It is with pride that I served with this group, and with some reservations, that I retire from the board.

CARL WYRICK
Big Spring

Presidential candidates move toward gate

Well, here it is only February 1999, and the presidential candidates are already starting to mill around the starting gate.

Al Gore, the current No. 2, is promising people stuff at such a rate that he'll have \$3 trillion in promises racked up before the leaves turn in the autumn of 2000.

Some say former Sen. Bill Bradley may challenge him for the Democratic nomination. I hope somebody does. The Washington press crowd really likes Bradley, as well as Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican who's making candidate-like noises. Of course, the admiration of the Washington press corps is not a good recommendation to anybody looking for a conservative

horse. I've been around the game a good while, and I've never seen the Washington press like a conservative.

Bradley seems like a nice fellow, but he sure takes a long time getting around to a point when he talks. I don't need any generalities — which is what most politicians and he in particular deal in — because I have a garage full of my own.

Besides, Bradley is one of those Rhodes scholars, and they're all on my suspicious list this year. I'd like an "America First" president for a change. McCain is being called a war hero, but what he mainly did was get shot down, and he was too eager to kiss and make up with the people who shot him down to suit me. He's also a bad legislator. His performance on the tobacco issue stunk worse than a cheap cigar. He's the guy who ruined the settlement deal by piling on more and more punishment until not even the tobacco lawyers who wanted a settlement could go along with it.

Gary Bauer, of the Family Research Council, is thinking about running, but I figure he's got as much of a chance of

winning as a team of club-footed midgets would have in the National Basketball Association. People, especially conservatives, forget sometimes that political races are popularity contests. Bauer's like a priest at a pornographer's convention who hasn't noticed who the delegates are and what they do for a living.

Then there's Mrs. Bob Dole. She's kind of a stereotypical Republican woman of her generation — a little long in the tooth but well-preserved, coiffured and dressed. She's rich as six lottery winners and has got a resume that impresses people who don't know how political appointments are made. Trouble is, most Americans won't vote for a woman to be president, and those who will are steely eyed liberal Democrats.

Come to think of it, though, that may make her an ideal Republican nominee. Republicans of late have been about as astute as Homer Simpson. So it would not surprise me for them to nominate a woman when most feminists are Democrats; a rich woman when most conservative

women are blue collar and middle class; an old Washington Beltway type when most people are looking for new blood; and an elderly woman when the party desperately needs to attract younger voters. D'oh!

The two well-heeled horses, of course, are Steve Forbes and Gov. George Bush of Texas. Forbes doesn't look presidential, and I don't know how he can overcome that. Bush is a moderate Republican, which is to say a corporate liberal who knows how to make conservative speeches and say a few words in Spanish. We can all do the Spanish now thanks to that cute little Taco Bell dog.

Finally, there is former vice president Dan Quayle. The press, most of whom are a whole lot dumber than Quayle, will nevertheless ridicule him to pieces, and I'm not sure there is a defense against that in a nation of couch potatoes and parrot heads. What I plan to do is pray every day that we do not get the kind of leader we deserve — again.

Charley Reeses e-mail address is OSReese@aol.com.

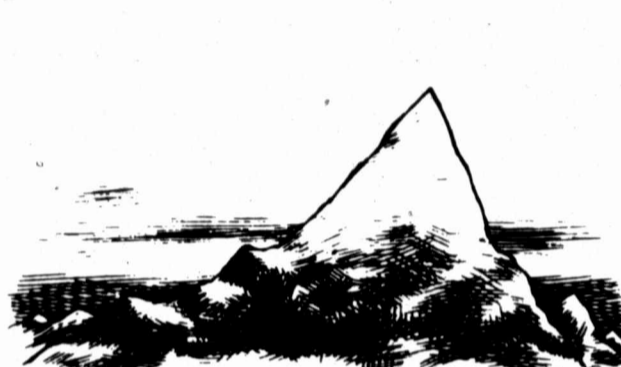


CHARLEY REESES

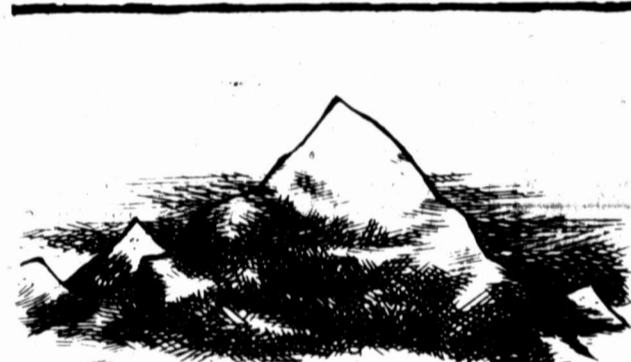
Illustration by Columbus Dispatch 1/99



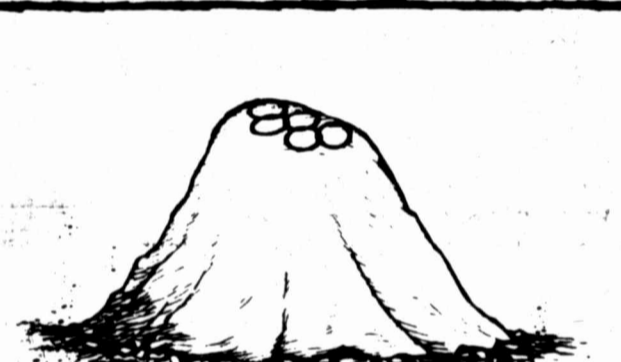
Mt. Everest



Mt. Kilimanjaro



Mt. McKinley



Mt. Olympus

Giving up our sacred Saturdays to politicians

Heroes emerge from wars, and I've finally found one in the Great Bore War against Bill Clinton.

Last week in the U.S. Senate, while the lawyers were droning on about yet another picky procedural matter, a visitor in the gallery stood up and said, "GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY, TAKE THE VOTE AND GET IT OVER WITH!"

Naturally, since he was the only one in the entire chamber reflecting the majority opinion of the American people, the Capitol police came and took Richard Llamas away.

Llamas should have held a press conference and announced he was running for something, anything. He could win in a landslide. Then came Saturday. Saturday was a beautiful day. The daffodils in the ditches

were popping open, the four boys in the house up the road were trying to get a kite airborne. The amazing Publix grocery store in my town was pushing a new kind of pizza.

And inside, on Saturday morning TV where the cartoons are supposed to be, the House managers were showing tape of Monica, mature vixen or childlike victim — depending on which side you want to believe.

I most resent it when politicians ruin our Saturdays. They should only be given weekdays with which to monkey. The House impeached the president on the Saturday before Christmas, timing that should have been illegal, and which never would have happened if there were enough women in Congress.

Women everywhere are in the panic mode the last Saturday before Christmas, too darn busy to drop what they're doing just to impeach a president.

And now behold the Senate spoiling a springlike Saturday in February, a perfect car-washing, leaf-raking Saturday. "The trial has been over for several days," one Democratic

senator complained. "This is water torture."

Maybe he was just sore about missing his Saturday, I don't know.

But he was paid to watch. The rest of us were compelled by morbid curiosity, or the compulsion that makes you finish a dull book just because you started it.

If there's anything left we don't know about Monica and Bill's encounters, and I doubt that there is, we'll read about it when the Senate trial is over and the \$1 million memoir phase of this unfortunate business begins.

The glut of books following the O.J. trial will be a short stack next to the ones coming out of this mess.

Monica will have her book. And Linda Tripp. Ken Starr. All the lawyers.

Perhaps a House manager or two. Somebody will end up hosting a talk show, no doubt. "Late Night With Linda Tripp." Somebody will end up experiencing a public, Charles Colson-style conversion. Monica as missionary to Mozambique.

Already Monica has romped for Vanity Fair and is the

Mona Lisa on the current New Yorker's cover. Her face will be with us for a long, long time.

Gennifer Flowers, on the other hand, must really feel cheated by all that's happened during the past year. Where was Ken Starr when she was the Other Woman?

Gennifer was a tabloid cover girl for a while, but her infamy never reached anywhere near Monica heights. The Senate certainly never convened on a Saturday to hear about Gennifer's sexual misadventures. If only she could have held off and told her story to the well-oiled Starr machine instead of selling out cheap to grocery store gazettes.

Maybe the arch-conservatives, at least, will leave satisfied that they have shown up the baby boomers as reckless sex fiends. South Carolina's Lindsey Graham may try for a career as a stand-up comedian. Some good could come of all this.

Most of us will best remember how our paid representatives turned a deaf ear while we stood up time and again and hollered: "GOOD GOD ALMIGHTY, TAKE THE VOTE AND GET IT OVER WITH!"



RHETA GRIMSLEY JOHNSON



Mallard Fillmore by BRUCE TINSLEY

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MONDAY

Table with 33 columns representing different TV channels (KMID, KPEJ, KERA, etc.) and rows for different times of the day (6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30) listing various programs.

HAGAR



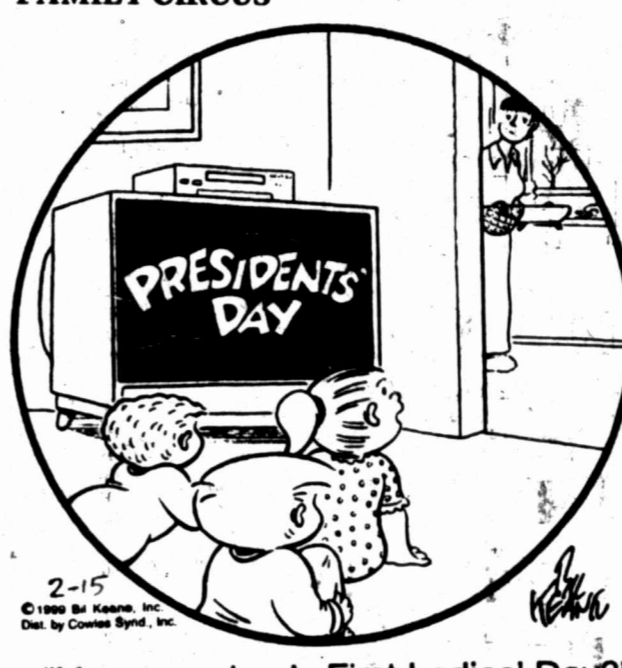
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FAMILY CIRCUS



DENNIS THE MENACE



GEECH



THIS DATE IN HISTORY

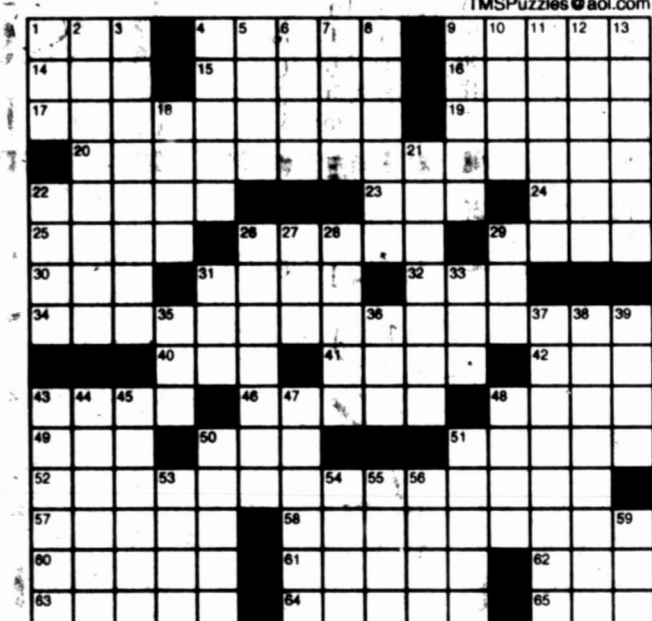
The ASSOCIATED PRESS Today is Monday, Feb. 15, the 46th day of 1999. There are 319

days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Feb. 15, 1898, the U.S. battleship Maine mysteriously blew up in Havana Harbor, killing more than 260 crew members and bringing the United States closer to war

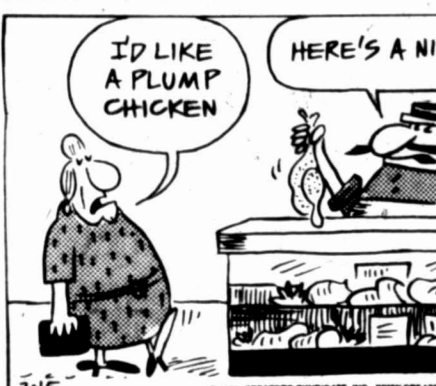
with Spain. On this date: In 1564, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei was born in Pisa. In 1764, the city of St. Louis was established. In 1820, American suffragist Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, Mass. In 1879, President Hayes signed a bill allowing female attorneys to argue cases before the Supreme Court. In 1933, President-elect Franklin Roosevelt escaped an assassination attempt in Miami that claimed the life of Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak. In 1942, the British colony Singapore surrendered to the Japanese during World War II. In 1961, 73 people, including an 18-member figure skating team from the United States, were killed in the crash of a Sabena Airlines Boeing 707 in Belgium. In 1965, Canada's new maple-leaf flag was unfurled in ceremonies in Ottawa. In 1982, 84 men were killed when a huge oil-drilling rig, the Ocean Ranger, sank off the coast of Newfoundland during a fierce storm. In 1992, Benjamin L. Hooks announced plans to retire as executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Ten years ago: The Soviet Union announced that the last of its troops had left Afghanistan, after more than nine years of military intervention. Five years ago: Navy chief Adm. Frank Kelso II agreed to early retirement because of criticism over the Tailhook sex abuse scandal. Viacom won a hard-fought victory to acquire Paramount Communications. One year ago: Monica Lewinsky's attorney, William Ginsburg, continued his harsh criticism of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr for alleged leaks of information to the news media. Two Japanese ski jumpers, Kazuyoshi Funaki and Masahiko Harada, leapt to gold and bronze medals in the 120-meter event at the Nagano Olympics. Today's Birthdays: Actor Kevin McCarthy is 85. Country singer Hank Locklin is 81. Former Illinois Rep. John Anderson is 77. Comedian Harvey Korman is 72. Actress Claire Bloom is 68. Author Susan Brownmiller is 64. Songwriter Brian Holland is 58. Rock musician Mick Avory (The Kinks) is 55. Actress Jane Seymour is 48. Singer Melissa Manchester is 48. 'Simpsons' creator Matt Groening is 45.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS 1 Rocky outcrop 4 Transfer image 9 Frown 14 Tankard filler 15 Greek market 16 Collar extension 17 Sobriquets 19 University of Maine town 20 Advocates of currency reform 22 Composer Saint 23 'Just the Way You Are' 24 Pioneer filmmaker Browning Part of Q.E.D. 26 Humorist Cleveland 29 Millennium 30 Play part 31 Declare 32 D.C. old-timer 34 Advocates of nativism 40 Mandela's org. 41 Adam's grandson 42 Debt letters 43 S. American rodent 46 Messenger for Standish 48 Dial control 49 Expert 50 Fuss 51 Marsh grasses 52 Advocates of progressivism 57 Run the show 58 Stoneworks 60 Aired again 61 Follow in order 62 Dine 63 Derisive noise 64 Tractor maker 65 Mrs. in Madrid 5 Alaska's first governor 6 Search carefully 7 District 8 Indian sailor 9 Incline 10 'Mia' 11 City north of Lisbon 12 Continued 13 British insurance syndicate 18 Daily Planet reporter 21 Inert gaseous element 22 Resting spot 26 Tropical fruit 27 Cut the lawn 28 Possessed 29 Actor Wallace 31 Columnist Landers 33 Exclamations of surprise 35 Jay follower 36 Single 37 Gay 38 Blimp name 48 Deborah of film 50 Catkin 51 Hindu queen 53 Regah's father 54 Reasonable 55 Caesar's existence 56 Decant 59 RR stop



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