

BIG  
SPRING

# HERALD

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At the Crossroads of West Texas

50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

TUESDAY

December 23, 2003

## WEATHER

Tonight:



CLEAR

TONIGHT TOMORROW  
27°-29° 62°-64°

## BRIEFLY

## Herald holidays

The Herald office will be closed at noon on Christmas Eve and will open again at 7:30 a.m. Friday. There will be no Christmas Day paper. Subscribers who do not receive their Christmas Eve paper should call the Herald that evening between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

## Blood drive

With the holidays in full swing, United Blood Services more than ever is in need of people willing to give the gift of life.

A blood drive has been set for 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday at Woodforest National Bank in Wal-Mart, 201 W. Marcy.

Donors must be at least 17 years of age, weighs at least 110 pounds, in good health and have not donated blood within the last eight weeks. All donors must present some type of identification such as a driver's license, school or work I.D., Social Security card or a passport.

For more information, contact United Blood Services at (432) 561-5539.

## Senior tours

An RSVP meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Jan. 8 to plan upcoming vacation tours. The meeting will be held in the Dora Roberts Community Center.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program offers tours throughout the year. The 2004 schedule includes new destinations as well as some of the old favorites.

For more information, contact the RSVP office at 264-2397 or Bilbrey Tours at 1-888-692-1308.

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Vol. 100, No. 33

Find us online at:  
www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us, please call 263-7331. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call 263-7335 before 7 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. on Sunday.

## County will have consolidated boxes for special election

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

When voters go to the polls for the Jan. 20 special election, it may not be the polling place they're accustomed to.

Howard County commissioners voted unanimously to consolidate polling places for the election, which will decide the fate of the Texas Senate's soon-to-be-vacated District 31 seat. Commissioner Jerry Kilgore said the turnout in these types of special elections is fairly low traditionally, and consolidating polling places will help reduce the cost to the county.

"On these elections it's usually a small

"The fewer polling places we have, the less expense we have."

Jerry Kilgore,  
county commissioner



turnout," said Kilgore. "The fewer polling places we have, the less expense we have. Of course expense isn't as important as accessibility to the voters, but since we think there will be less turnout, we think this consolidation will be adequate."

County Clerk Donna Wright said cost nor-

mally plays a large role when determining polling places, and this special election is no different.

"Cost is the most prominent reason for the consolidation," said Wright. "Of course the voter turnout on special elections is generally low as well, so to be cost effective you need to combine polling places."

"In the last special election, which was the one with Congressman Neugebauer running, 1,749 people cast their ballots. That's out of just over 19,000 registered voters."

Wright said she expects the consolidation

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Eight-month-old Skyler Belcher gives Santa Claus an ear-full at the Big Spring Mall. Pictured with the merry pair is Yvonne Qualls.

HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins

## HOLIDAYS

County, city offices plan to close their doors for Christmas

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

As area citizens race to finish their Christmas shopping before Santa's Thursday morning deadline, many area businesses and agencies are getting ready to take some time off to enjoy the season.

The city of Big Spring will close all offices, including the municipal landfill and compost facility, on Thursday and Friday in observance of the Christmas holiday. There will be no sanitation pick-up on these days.

Unfortunately the holiday doesn't extend to emergency services, including the Big Spring Police Department, fire department, emergency medical services and Howard County Sheriff's Office, which all report the special day will be "business as usual" for them. The police department's main office will be open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Wednesday and close Thursday and Friday.

County employees will get time to spend with their friends and family as well, as the Howard County Clerk's Office and County Attorney's Office both plan to close Thursday and Friday. Both offices will also close at noon on Wednesday. Other county offices are expected to do the same.

For those planning to take their Christmas shopping down to the last second, the Wal-Mart Supercenter will close for the holiday at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, and remain closed until 6 a.m. on Friday. HEB will also share in the holiday spirit, as it prepares to open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and reopen at 6 Friday morning.

Area banks will also be observing the holiday. American State Bank, Big Spring Banking Center, First Bank of West Texas, State National Bank, Western National Bank and Wells Fargo will all close Wednesday at noon and reopen Friday at 9 a.m.

See CLOSING, Page 3A

## Girl Scouts get in the Christmas spirit

By LYNDEL MOODY

Staff Writer

Instead of receiving gifts this holiday season, members of Girl Scout Unit 35 decided to sacrifice their annual tradition and give back to the community.

"The girls decided they didn't want to exchange gifts this year," said Spokesperson Brandi

Pollock.

"Instead, at our annual Christmas dinner which was held on Dec. 8, each family brought an unwrapped gift."

Now those gifts are going to help several area children who might otherwise receive Christmas presents without community toy drives have a merry Christmas.

The Girl Scouts donated close to 200 unwrapped gifts to the Herald's Toy Drive, which ended on Wednesday.

All the toys donated in the drive were given to the Salvation Army "Angel" Tree program for distribution to area families eligible for the

See SCOUTS, Page 3A



Firefighter Lt. Mark Heins of the Big Spring Fire Department sprays down a cotton module at the Co-Op Gin of Big Spring Monday morning after it caught fire. According to witnesses, the fire was caused by an errant cigarette.

HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins

## Seven file for Senate District 31 seat

HERALD Staff Report

Two more West Texans threw their hats in for the State Senate District 31 seat, making the final candidate count at seven.

Monday was the last day to file with the

Texas Secretary of State.

Education consultant Elaine King Miller, a Democrat from Amarillo, and farmer Lee Gibson, a Republican from Dumas, joined the race to replace Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, who will step down on Jan. 12.

Bivins, who has served for 15 years,

announced his resignation earlier this month, citing his nomination by President Bush as ambassador to Sweden and a desire to spend more time with this family as the reasons.

See RACE, Page 3A

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## Obituaries

## Clarence E. Williams

Clarence E. Williams, 62, of Forsan, died on Sunday, Dec. 21, 2003, at his residence. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2003, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Jeff Janca, pastor of Forsan Baptist Church, officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

Mr. Williams was born on Nov. 11, 1941, in Beckville, and married Judith Bondy on July 18, 1974, in El Paso. She preceded him in death on Feb. 21, 2001. He then married Ronda Campbell on Nov. 23, 2002. Clarence had lived in the community since 1956. He served in the United States Army. He worked as a truck driver for Unichem. He had served on the Forsan City Council for 12 years and as the chief for the Forsan Volunteer Fire Department for many years. He was a loving husband, father and PeePaw.

His survivors include his wife, Ronda Williams of Forsan; three sons and daughters-in-law, Joe and Teresa Williams of Del Rio, Chad and Angie Williams of Big Spring, and Robert and Jennifer Williams of Big Spring; three stepchildren, Marcus, Kynnie, and Katyanna Campbell all of Forsan; two brothers, Willie Williams of Big Spring, and James Williams of Odessa; four grandsons, Trevor, Caden, Brandon, and Christopher; one granddaughter, Hannah; and three great-grandchildren.

The family suggests memorials to the G.I.F.T. Fund at Allison Cancer Center, 301 North N, Midland, 79701.

Funeral arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com).

Paid obituary

## Leroy "Bud" Hammonds

Graveside services for Leroy "Bud" Hammonds, 75, of Andrews was held at 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 22, 2003, in the Andrews North Cemetery with the Rev. Jimmy Braswell, Home Hospice chaplain, officiating.

Mr. Hammonds died Saturday, Dec. 20, 2003, at the Home Hospice House in Odessa.

He was born Dec. 5, 1928, in Prague, Okla. He married Clara Dill on Aug. 11, 1962, in Boswell, Okla. They previously lived in Andrews and Arkansas, and moved back to Andrews in 1976. While in Andrews, he worked for Carl S. Ham Well Service, and then Harvey's Well Service for 23 years. He was preceded in death by his daughter Carla Hammonds in 1963. He attended the Assembly of God church.

He is survived by his wife Clara Hammonds of Andrews; two sons, Wayne Hammonds of Andrews and Carl Hammonds of Granite, Okla.; three daughters, Rhonda Lopez of Big Spring, Dana Ohta of Gait, Calif., and Tammy Ashabranner of Andrews, one sister, Anna Beatty of Bokchito, Okla., 10 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be sent to Home Hospice House, 903 North Sam Houston, Odessa, 79761. Services are under the direction of McNett Funeral Home of Andrews.

## Alfredo S. Ramirez

Alfredo S. Ramirez, 79, of Lamesa died Sunday, Dec. 21, 2003, at Sage Health Care Center. Funeral services will be held Tuesday at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church with the Rev. Father Rudy Crasta officiating. Interment will be in the Lamesa Memorial Park.

A Rosary service will be held at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 28 and Monday, Dec. 29 in the Gonzales Funeral Home chapel.

Mr. Ramirez was born Nov. 9, 1924, in Seguin. He married Maria Delores Torres June 22, 1946, in Lamesa. He worked most of his life as a farmer for John Middleton Farms. He moved to Odessa in 1978 and worked in construction with B & B Construction Company. After retiring in 1995 he returned to Lamesa and lived there until his death.

Mr. Ramirez's survivors are his wife, Maria Delores Ramirez of Big Spring; two daughters, Olivia Gonzales of Lamesa and Janie Deleon of Big Spring; one son, Rudy Ramirez of Odessa; 10 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren; and many nephews and nieces.

## Take note

□ **THE MOBILE MEALS PROGRAM**, which delivers to the elderly and homebound, needs volunteers to deliver meals.

If you can spare one hour per week to deliver eight or 10 meals, you are needed.

About 85 to 90 meals are prepared, packaged and delivered to recipients within the city limits of Big Spring.

If you can volunteer, please call 263-4016 before 3 p.m.

□ **BIG SPRING AND SURROUNDING** counties are in critical need of foster families.

Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected.

For more information on becoming foster parents or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

□ **SPRING TABERNACLE CHURCH**, 1209 Wright, has free food for the area needy.

Distribution is scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon every Thursday.



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## Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 a.m. today:

• **ROBERT BUCK**, 34, of 111 Shiflett Drive, was arrested Monday on a capias warrant and three local traffic warrants.

• **CYNTHIA BOLT**, 43, of 1403 Nolan, was arrested Monday on a capias warrant.

• **TERRY PARTLOW**, 35, of 1501 Lexington, was arrested Monday on charges of driving while intoxicated-third or more offense, possession of drug paraphernalia and no seat belt.

• **MARK ROMINE**, 30, of 1908 E. Highway 350, was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.

• **DETRICK HOUSTON**, 36, of 2601 Hunter, was arrested Monday on a charge of driving while license suspended.

• **THEFT OF SERVICES** was reported in the 1700 block of Third Street.

• **THEFT** was reported:  
- in the 1800 block of Gregg Street.

• **POSSESSION/DELIVERY OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA** was reported:  
- in the 400 block of Fourth Street.

- in the 1000 block of Main Street.

• **RUNAWAY** was reported in the 1000 block of Eighth Street.

## Sheriff's report

The Howard County Sheriff's Department reported the following recent activity:

• **JAMES D. HEADRICK**, 31, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of bailman off of bond for driving while intoxicated.

• **JEFFREY CLARK FORSHEE**, 45, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated-second offense.

• **RICHARD LEE BEATTY**, 19, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of assault/family violence.

• **RUTHIE MARIE MURPHREE**, 34, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for theft and two counts of forgery of a financial instrument.

• **JAMIE JONES CHAPPELL**, 26, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on a charge of assault/family violence.

• **BUCK B. CHAPPELL**, 30, was arrested Saturday by the HCSO on charges of assault/family violence and interfering with an emergency call.

• **JAMES SIDNEY HENDERSON**, 37, was arrested Saturday by DPS on charges of failure to appear and no liability insurance.

• **BETTY NEWBERRY**, 36, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana-two ounces or less.

• **ALBERT SELF**, 35, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of resisting arrest.

• **PATRICIA CADENA RODRIGUEZ**, 29, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on a charge of assault/family violence.

• **BRYAN SCOTT RODRIGUEZ**, 33, was arrested Sunday by the HCSO on charges of unlawfully carrying a weapon, evading arrest or detention, resisting arrest and assault/family violence.

• **SHELBY J. PARKER**, 24, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of felony possession of a controlled substance.

• **RICKY MARTIN PITTS**, 25, was arrested Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of issuance of a bad check.

• **JIMMY DEE KILMAN**, 54, was transferred to the county jail on Monday by the BSPD on charges of driving while intoxicated and driving while license suspended.

• **RICHARD MARX DELACRUZ**, 38, was transferred to the county jail on Monday by the BSPD on a parole violation.

• **TERRI JO HOBBS**, 40, was transferred to the county jail on Monday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **KATHERINE DELORES SCAGGS**, was transferred to the county jail on Monday by the BSPD on a parole violation and charges of possession of marijuana-two ounces or less and failure to identify as a fugitive from justice.

• **MERCY NICOLE ROBLES**, 20, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of issuance of a bad check.

• **BRIAN COLIN KESLER**, 23, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of harboring a runaway child.

• **PATRICK TERRALL KESLER**, 25, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of harboring a runaway child.

• **CADEN JAMES HALL**, 17, was arrested Monday by DPS on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol by a minor and failure to notify/report.

• **THEFT** was reported near Bow Hunter. HCSO was notified of theft of oil rig equipment. Deputy was dispatched, report to follow.

• **VEHICLE FIRE/COTTON STRIPPER** was reported near Highway 350 in Vincent. Deputy responded along with the fire department.

## Bulletin board

If you have items for the Bulletin board, contact the Herald news room at 263-7331 or email [editor@bigspringherald.com](mailto:editor@bigspringherald.com)

**Today**  
Intermediate line dance classes meet at 9 a.m. in the Senior Citizens' Center. Call 267-1628 for more information.

## Christmas Eve

Line dancing meets at 1 p.m. in the Senior Citizen's Center in Industrial Park. Call 267-6966 or 267-1628 for more information.

Duplicate Bridge Club meets Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 1 p.m. at Big Spring Country Club.

The Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room.

Downtown Lions Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room.

Senior Circle meets at 10 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center classroom for stretch and tone.

## Christmas

Merry Christmas

## Friday

Spring City Senior Citizens country and western dance is held from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. All area senior citizens are invited.

AMBUCS meet at noon at La Posada.

Greater Big Spring Rotary meets at noon in Howard College Cactus Room.

Signal Mt. Quilting Guild will not meet the last Friday of December.

## Saturday

Dance begins at 8:30 p.m. at Eagles Lodge, 704 West Third. Members and guests welcome.

Potion House, 200 Greg, a restored historical home is open from 1 to 5 p.m. A one-time admission fee of \$2 for adults and \$1 for children and senior citizens is encouraged.

Heritage Museum, 510 Scurry, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hanger 25 Air Museum is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday 1:30 to 4 p.m.

For information on meeting times for Big Spring Squares, call 267-7043 or 263-6305.

## Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 6-13-14-29-34.

Number matching five of five: 1.

Prize per winner: \$48,978.

Winning tickets sold in: Dallas.

Next Cash 5 drawing: Tuesday night.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 1-4-0

## Weather

Tonight...Clear. Lows in the upper 20s. Northwest winds around 5 mph shifting to the southwest after midnight.

Wednesday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 60s. South winds 5 to 15 mph. Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s. South winds 5 to 15 mph.

Christmas day...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. South winds 5 to 15 mph with higher gusts.

Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs around 70. Friday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 40s.

Saturday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 60s. Saturday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Sunday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. Sunday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Monday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s.

**BIG SPRING HERALD**  
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MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$12.50 monthly Howard & Martin Counties. \$13.25 elsewhere.

Trying  
a col  
mess

Christmas almost and way to

ple in the holiday than the famous "The Night Before Christmas"...

In recent months watched one of workers (for and purposes let's call Bill McClellan, news editor for the Big Spring Herald, just to protect the pseudo-guilty) battle with the after-effects of viruses and system crashes on his PC for several months.

Although I've given a great deal of advice on how to right his the conversation concludes in the manner.

"You know you avoid all of this you just reformat a computer," I say of factly. Bill's response is always something ending on "never" "not in a million

I recently came version of the fact "Twas The Night Christmas," and although the author this slightly different version remains tery, I thought there would be an excellent way to make my reformatting. So, this one is for you

"Puter Night B Christmas"

"Twas the night Christmas, when through the house peripheral was st not even a mouse modem was plugged the phone line w in hopes that a d soon would be the

Our pirates wended all snug in the beds, while vision unprotected dance their heads. And in her kerchief, my cap, had just down for a long nap.

When up on the drive there arose clatter, I sprang bed to see what matter. Away to itor I flew like a sat down at the keyboard and gave the space mash.

The sight on the screen, all a flicker snow, gave the power surge to the below. When, wondering eyes appear, but an autoexec.bat that

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268-101

# Trying to get a computer message across

Christmas is almost upon us, and what better way to get people in the holiday mood than the famous "T'was The Night Before Christmas" ... Well, sort of.

In recent months I've watched one of my co-workers (for anonymity purposes let's call him Bill McClellan, news editor for the Big Spring Herald, just to protect the pseudo-guiltily) battle with the after-effects of viruses and system crashes on his PC for several months.



THOMAS JENKINS

Although I've given him a great deal of advice on how to right his system, the conversation always concludes in the same manner.

"You know you could avoid all of this mess if you just reformat your computer," I say matter-of-factly. Bill's response is always something bordering on "never" or "not in a million years."

I recently came upon a version of the famous "T'was The Night Before Christmas," and although the author of this slightly different version remains a mystery, I thought this would be an excellent way to make my point on reformatting. So, Bill, this one is for you.

"Puter Night Before Christmas"

"T'was the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a peripheral was stirring, not even a mouse. The modem was plugged to the phone line with care, in hopes that a download soon would be there.

Our pirates were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of unprotects danced in their heads. And Mama in her kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled down for a long winter's nap.

When up on the hard drive there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the monitor I flew like a flash, sat down at the keyboard and gave the spacebar a mash.

The sight on the screen, all a flicker with snow, gave the luster of power surge to the menu below. When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, but an autoexec.bat that seemed

rather queer.

With a little print driver so lively and quick, I knew in a moment I had seen a new trick. More rapid than eagles the cursors they came, my MIDI whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

"Now Format, now Rename, now Copy, and Enter! On Num Lock, on Caps Lock, on Scroll Lock, and Printer! To the top of the page, to the top of the doc, now tab it and bold it and merge it and block!"

As utilities that build up the CPU speed, clash with just the programs I need. So up to the screen top the cursors they flew, with a RAM full of memory and an expansion board too.

And then, in a twinkling I heard on the speaker, the grinding of the hard drive growing much weaker. As I tried to reboot and turn it around, the attributes changed from blue into brown.

I hit the control, the alt, and delete. The screen message it gave me, I cannot repeat.

It asked me to Ignore, Retry, or Abort. It told me the parallel had become the comm port.

Its lights how they twinkled; its pixels how merry, its prompts were all scrambled, like a bowl full of cherries. It sounded just like it wanted to blow, the screen was suddenly white as the snow.

It scrolled its directory before my eyes, with programs I didn't even recognize. It wouldn't see D-drive, it wouldn't see E. I couldn't get out of B into C.

Norton's tried to read it, finally finding the FAT. But alas! The disk was faulty, and couldn't reformat. Away flew the Excel, away flew the Access. Away flew all of Office, right out with the Windows.

The spreadsheets were spreading, the footers were headings. What once had been memory was close to forgetting. When the grinding was over and the smoke had all cleared, I looked at the hard drive, it was just as I feared.

The 16 gig wonder had crashed in the night. I'll never be able to block out that sight!

So tell everyone you know to avoid my plight. Back up your files! Merry Christmas! Good night!

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at newsdesk@crcom.net

## CLOSING

Continued from Page 1A

State Farm Bank will keep normal hours Christmas Eve and close for Christmas day, returning at 8:30 a.m. on Friday. Woodforest National Bank will be open until 4 p.m. on Wednesday and reopen at 9 a.m. on Friday.

Those people in search of last-minute batteries and egg nog won't be without a safety net this holiday season, however. Seven-Eleven convenience stores will be open 24-hours-a-day throughout the Christmas holiday.

If you're expecting a package in the mail, you'll be glad to know the Big Spring Post Office will be delivering mail as usual on Christmas Eve, with the windows at the facility closing at 1 p.m. On Christmas Day, the post office will only be delivering Express Mail packages, with the facility set to reopen on Friday at 8 a.m.

The Spring City Senior Citizens Center will be closed on Thursday and Friday, and will reopen at 8 a.m. Monday.

The Herald office will be closed at noon on Christmas Eve and will open again at 7:30 a.m. Friday. There will be no Christmas Day paper. Subscribers who do not receive their Christmas Eve paper should call the Herald that evening between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at newsdesk@crcom.net



HERALD photo/Lyndel Moody  
Girl Scout Unit 35 spokesperson Brandi Pollock sorts through some of donations unit members made to the Big Spring Herald Toy Drive. The toys were delivered to the Salvation Army for the Angel Tree program.

## SCOUTS

Continued from Page 1A

Friday was the deadline to return the adopted "angel" gifts to the Salvation Army. The pre-

sents were being distributed today.

Those who still have "angel" gifts can turn them into the Salvation Army at 811 West Fifth St. or drop them off under the tree where the card originated.

For more information on how you can help, contact the Salvation Army at 267-8239.

Contact Staff Writer Lyndel Moody at 263-7331, ext. 234, or by e-mail at newsdesk@crcom.net

## POLLS

Continued from page 1A

to save the county an estimated \$15,000.

"There's a lot of money that goes into these elections," said Wright. "You have to pay for your polling officials, the ballots, frames and for the election computer technician to make up the styles for the ballots. Before it's all said and done, this is going to save the county around \$15,000."

Polling places for the Jan. 20 special election are:

- Precincts 101-115,

North Side Fire Station, 100 N.E. Eighth Street.

- Precincts 202-205, 208, Washington Place School, 1201 S. Birdwell Lane.

- Precincts 207, 405, 407-409, Coahoma Community Center, Coahoma.

- Precincts 302-305, Goliad Middle School Library, 2000 Goliad Street.

- Precincts 401-406, 410, Big Spring High School Library, 707 E. 11th Place.

Early voting in the election will get under way Monday, Jan. 5, at the Howard County Courthouse from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day, continuing through Friday, Jan. 16.

Seven people have paid their filing fee to the state in hopes of replacing Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, who will step down on Jan. 12. Bivins, who has served for 15 years, announced his resignation earlier this month, citing his nomination by President Bush as ambassador to Sweden and a desire to spend more time with this family as the reasons.

Those who have filed are restaurant owner Bob Barnes of Odessa, businessman Kirk Edwards of Odessa, businessman Kel Seliger of Amarillo, busi-

nessman Don Sparks of Midland, farmer Lee Gibson of Dumas, restaurant owner/attorney Jesse Quackenbush of Amarillo, all Republicans, and Elaine King Miller of Amarillo, a Democrat.

Questions about voter registration and eligibility should be directed to the County Tax Assessor's office at 264-2232.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at newsdesk@crcom.net

## RACE

Continued from Page 1A

Miller, the lone Democrat in the race, and Gibson joined five other senate hopefuls to pay their filing fee to the state.

The other five candidates are restaurant owner Bob Barnes of Odessa, businessman Kirk Edwards of Odessa, businessman Kel Seliger of Amarillo, businessman

Don Sparks of Midland and restaurant owner/attorney Jesse Quackenbush of Amarillo.

Another proposed candidate for the seat, Midland Mayor Mike Canon, dropped out of the race and in fact announced Monday he will seek a second term as mayor.

Early voting in the election will get under way Monday, Jan. 5, at the Howard County Courthouse from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day, con-

tinuing through Friday, Jan. 16.

Senate District 31 covers 26 counties, including Howard, Midland, Martin and Glasscock.

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## Holiday Greetings



Back Row: Dee Clawson, Dr. Shroff, Gracie Gonzales, Front Row: Becky Coker and Pragna Shroff.

All we want for Christmas is to thank our loyal patients for their support. We hope this holiday season brings you many blessings in the company of family and friends.

**Dr. Manish Shroff & Staff Cardiology Clinic**  
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In observance of Christmas, Thursday, Dec. 25, these financial institutions will observe the following hours...

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Wells Fargo</b><br>Closed   | <b>Cosden Federal Credit Union</b><br>Closed    | <b>The Electric Utilities Credit Union</b><br>Closed Thurs. & Fri. Dec. 25th & 26th             |
| <b>First Bank of West Texas</b><br>Closed  | <b>T &amp; P Federal Credit Union</b><br>Closed | <b>State Hospital Federal Credit Union</b><br>Closed Wed., Thurs. & Fri. Dec. 24th, 25th & 26th |
| <b>Education Employees Federal Credit Union</b><br>Closed Thurs. & Fri. Dec. 24th & 25th | <b>Citizens Federal Credit Union</b><br>Closed  |   |
| <b>Big Spring Banking Center</b><br>Closed   |   |   |

## 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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Publisher

Susanne Reed  
General Manager

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Bill McClellan  
News Editor

## OUR VIEWS

## Let's have a safe holiday season again this year

As Christmas draws near, let's remember in our gaiety and joy to take the time to think things through, to use caution... to be smart.

Each year, homes and lives are lost across this country because of preventable accidents caused by faulty cords or lights, badly positioned space heaters, candles left burning or appliances misused.

This is the time of year, for instance, when many people use extra extension cords. We use them for lighting displays indoors and out, to reach another outlet for that old crock pot or to provide power to the electric blanket while we curl up on the sofa. Before you do any of that, check all cords to make sure they are not worn or frayed. If they are, replace them. Don't take a chance.

In our effort to stay warm, we sometimes use a space heater to provide heat to a cold bathroom or utility room. But it's easy to toss a towel or clothes down in front of a heater without thinking. If you must use one of these portable heaters, do so with extreme caution. Many have a thermostat and can appear off when they're not. They must be kept out of the way of any flammable material and, of course, any source of water.

Decorations are beautiful, but they can be fire hazards, too. So always make sure you pull the plug or throw the switch before you leave the house or go to bed. Don't ever leave them unattended, especially if you have young children or pets. Candles are another favorite holiday decoration, but if you use them, think safety first. Be certain they are placed away from any flammable object and snuff out the flame before you leave the room.

Then, take one more precaution. Make sure you have smoke detectors in working order and that each has fresh batteries. Have a plan so that every family member knows how and where to exit the home in case of a fire.

Let's all have a wonderful... and safe, holiday season. Let's make sure the celebrating doesn't turn to weeping.

## LETTERS POLICY

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor. Please:

- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- We do not acknowledge receipt of letters.
- Letters from our circulation area will be given preference.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to [jmoseley@crcom.net](mailto:jmoseley@crcom.net) or [editor@bigspringherald.com](mailto:editor@bigspringherald.com)

## How To CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail to Managing Editor John Moseley at [jmoseley@crcom.net](mailto:jmoseley@crcom.net) or editor@bigspringherald.com, or News Editor Bill McClellan at [newsdesk@crcom.net](mailto:newsdesk@crcom.net).
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

## Justice for Hussein: Not at the U.N.

I would trust the producers of "Survivor" to put together a fitting trial for Saddam Hussein before I would trust the United Nations.

To start, any solon who worries about giving Hussein a "fair" trial should not be allowed near the tribunal. For such people, Hussein's trial is an opportunity to establish how fair-minded they are as jurists, rather than a chance to redress the rivers of red blood spilled in this thug's name.

And it takes a special kind of person to insist — as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan did Monday — that there be no death penalty for a strongman responsible for, as The New York Times reported in January, possibly "a million dead Iraqis." It's one thing to believe a free state shouldn't kill civilians. It's another to argue that a murderous head of state should be immune from the only punishment he fears — meeting his maker.

The enormity of Hussein's crimes exceeds anything ever presented in a court of law; it asks a court to settle questions historically settled in uprisings or on battlefields.

Thus, any trial would be problematic. For one thing, there is no need to "solve" the crimes. There's no Col. Mustard in the library with the candlestick. The world knows that Hussein is guilty, that

when he ruled Iraq, his government gassed Kurds, his henchmen executed political enemies, his prison guards tortured and killed dissidents, and his military invaded Kuwait — a move that precipitated two Gulf wars.

The purpose of putting Hussein on trial then would be to determine the appropriate punishment, and perhaps more important, to prompt Iraqis to acknowledge the carnage that occurred in Hussein's Iraq and recognize that it is carnage they failed to prevent.

This is where I wouldn't trust the United Nations. The august body has a name for Hussein's misdeeds — "crimes against humanity." The term, alas, turns a thousand murders into one statistic.

Under U.N. auspices, former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic is on trial in The Hague for crimes against humanity. Milosevic has turned the trial into a farce. A lawyer by training, Sloba has been having a ball cross-examining witnesses and highlighting deaths caused by NATO bombing. He has used the United Nations' fear of appearing to mete out "victors' justice" to prolong his trial and mock his accusers.

Nothing would make Saddam Hussein happier than a U.N. trial in The Hague. It's clear that, for all his promotion of jihad and martyrdom, Hussein is afraid to die. That's why he surrendered, when a nearby pistol could have made him a martyr.

It would be insane to give Hussein a trial that spares him

the threat of capital punishment and bestows an international spotlight on his two-ton ego.

President George W. Bush said Monday that the United States would work with Iraqis to try Hussein in a way that would withstand international scrutiny. By all means, let Iraqis judge Hussein's fate. If they choose the death penalty, his crimes will have warranted it.

The important thing, however, is a trial that doesn't politicize Hussein's many crimes. Iraq needs a trial that humanizes Hussein's victims.

Try Hussein for genocide, and the tribunal will feature one expert after the next opining on the motives behind genocidal crimes and historical enmities that spurred the hate. Try Hussein for each murder, however, and the story will focus on the Kurdish child who was gassed, the Shiite boy who saw his mother raped, or the scientist who was carted away and never seen again. It could take decades for all Hussein's victims to tell their tales.

I want Hussein to get a fair trial — but it won't be fair to Iraq if Hussein is allowed to turn his trial into a circus.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at [dsaunders@schronicle.com](mailto:dsaunders@schronicle.com). To find out more about Debra J. Saunders, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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## Dean's urban legend is typical

It was bad enough when Howard Dean, interviewed on National Public Radio Dec. 1, spread a conspiracy theory that George W. Bush ignored Saudi Arabian warnings of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was worse Dec. 7 on "Fox News Sunday," when the Democratic presidential front-runner neither apologized nor repudiated himself for passing along this urban legend.

None of Dean's frantic opponents for the nomination immediately took him to task, not wanting to defend the hated Republican president. A week later, however, they contemplated whether the doctor posed too easy a general election target for President Bush. Al Gore's surprise endorsement boosts Dean among Democrats but surely does not make him more electable.

A half-hour after Dean alarmed party regulars over television Sunday, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on NBC titillated worried Democrats by hesitating at closing the door for 2004. Although her prospects of being nominated for president remain minimal, normally sober Democrats are looking toward Mrs. Clinton in 2004 because of apprehension about what Dean could do to the party.

Unlike George McGovern in 1972, Dean's core problem is not ideological. It is loose lips: fabricating the story of a patient impregnated by her father, seeking support from pickup truck drivers with Confederate flags, and seemingly exulting in his draft deferment for a bad back. Nothing so worries old-style Democratic politicians, however, as proclaiming the apocryphal warning from Saudi Arabia.

In his Dec. 1 interview on NPR's "The Diane Rehm Show," Dean was asked about allegations that President Bush is suppressing information that he was warned about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "The most interesting theory that I have heard so far..." Dean responded, "is that he was warned ahead of time by the Saudis." This received scant media attention (except for Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer), but Democratic politicians shuddered.

Dean was given a chance to back off six days later by Chris Wallace, debuting as "Fox News Sunday's" moderator. "I don't believe that," the candidate said, then added: "But we don't know, and it'd be a nice thing to know." He concluded: "Because the president won't give information to the Kean Commission, we really don't know what the explanation is." After playing to Bush-haters who listen to National Public Radio, Dean repeated the same canard to Fox's Sunday morning mainstream viewers.

None of Dean's opponents raised the issue during Tuesday night's debate in Durham, N.H., but moderator Scott Spradling of WMUR TV did. Dean still defended publicizing what he now called a "crazy" theory.

Where did Dean pick it up? A Dean spokesman told this column it was "out there." A rival Democratic candidate's campaign suspected it came from "some blog." The Russian newspaper Pravda published reports that Jordan's and Morocco's intelligence — not Saudi Arabia's — gave the CIA advance knowledge. The World Socialists circulated a story that the Saudi royal family knew of the attack in advance. Somehow, the urban legend penetrated Dean's mind.

"It's McCarthyism in reverse," one 35-year Democratic political

veteran told me. "Dean doesn't understand that he's accusing Bush of something worse than an impeachable offense. It's treason." He and several other Democrats that I contacted all expressed the fear that Bush's political operatives will shred an opposing presidential candidate that undisciplined.

As worries about Dean's nomination rise inside the Democratic establishment, hopes of stopping him diminish — particularly after the Gore endorsement. To slow Dean even temporarily, Rep. Dick Gephardt must stop him in the Iowa caucuses Jan. 19. That's why these worried Democrats were stirred by Hillary Clinton Sunday on "Meet the Press."

After an impressive performance answering Tim Russert's policy questions, the former first lady would not flatly promise to turn down a presidential draft. "The nomination — it's not going to be offered to me," she insisted. "But if it did happen?" asked Russert. "You know, I have, I am —," she stammered. "I think the door is opening a bit, Senator," Russert concluded. "Oh, no, it's not," Clinton shot back. Finally, when pressed to say she would "never" accept the 2004 nomination, she said, "I am not accepting the nomination."

That was ambivalent enough to intrigue Democratic worriers. It's a slender reed, but still reason for them to think that Hillary Clinton might be there if Howard Dean self-immolates by next summer. They are thinking such thoughts because their prospective nominee is spinning wild conspiracy theories.

To find out more about Robert D. Novak and read his past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).

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## TEA

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The bodies women were p

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# Remap papers demanded; Dems claim appointees overruled staff

AUSTIN (AP) — Democrats are continuing to press the U.S. Justice Department to release documents they contend will show that a GOP congressional redistricting plan was approved by political appointees who overruled the agency's staff.

Members of Texas' Democratic congressional delegation want a copy of a memorandum written by the Voting Section of the department's Civil Rights Division in time to present it today in an Austin federal court. A three-judge panel was expected to rule after closing arguments Tuesday in the lawsuit challenging the new

congressional plan that Republicans want to use in the 2004 elections.

"It is vital that the public and the three-judge panel have access to the Voting Section's recommendation before the start of closing arguments," the delegation said in a prepared statement on Monday.

A lawyer representing the congressional Democrats has said sources within the department told him the agency's career professional staff found that the Texas map violated minority protections in the Voting Rights Act. J. Gerald Hebert said he was told the staff

was overruled by Republican political appointees.

Hebert has demanded a copy of the staff recommendation under the Freedom of Information Act.

"We urge the Justice Department to immediately release the Voting Section's memorandum so that the public and the judges will know what illegalities led career Justice Department employees to recommend against pre-clearing the Texas plan," the congressional statement said.

Jorge Martinez, a Justice Department spokesman, declined comment Monday.

Minority groups and Democrats contend the congressional redistricting plan passed in October by the Legislature illegally dilutes minority voting strength.

Among those issuing the statement were Democratic U.S. Reps. Shelia Jackson Lee, Chris Bell and Gene Green of Houston; Lloyd Doggett of Austin; Chet Edwards of Waco; Martin Frost and Eddie Bernice Johnson of Dallas; Charlie Gonzalez and Ciro Rodriguez of San Antonio; Ruben Hinojosa of Mercedes; and Nick Lampson of Beaumont.

Others were Solomon Ortiz of

Corpus Christi; Max Sandlin of Marshall; Charlie Stenholm of Abilene; and Jim Turner of Crockett.

Democrats now lead Texas' congressional delegation 17-15. But the new map could give Republicans, who already hold an overall majority in Congress, as many as seven additional seats.

The Justice Department clearance of the GOP redistricting plan eliminates the existing districts. But if the federal court finds violations, it could restore the old plan or make modifications to the legislative plan to make it legal.

# TEA to consider charter proposal to offer online learning

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Education Agency is considering a widely criticized request that would allow a Texas charter school to begin offering online classes using computer technology and state funds to teach students at home.

Eagle Academies of Texas wants to expand into online education from three campuses, adding a total of 3,000 students to its current limit. The school would be able to draw students from any county in Texas to set up the online school, under the proposal.

TEA interim Commissioner Robert Scott has until

Wednesday to make a decision on Eagle's request to expand current enrollment. No time limit exists on the other two parts of the request, which would allow Eagle to expand its boundaries statewide and use online teaching methods.

Forrest Watson, founder of Eagle Academies of Texas, said the online classes would primarily target students who attend small schools that may be limited in the variety of classes offered.

"One area of concern is the plight of small community schools that are limited in some of the curriculum offerings they have available," Watson

said. "This virtual education program could enable the extension of the curriculum in the small schools so they could keep the student enrolled in their school and at the same time provide the needed curriculum."

Also, online classes could be used to help students who need to work to support themselves or their families and need flexible hours, Watson said.

Since the request was made, TEA has received a barrage of complaints from school districts statewide.

Public school officials are concerned that the

already cash-strapped traditional schools would lose money to virtual charter schools.

"(State) monies follow the students," said Mary Perry, director of TEA's charter school division. "If students are moving from one place where they're already in attendance, it follows public school students. If they're picking up students who have not been enrolled in public school this year, for whatever reason, additional funds would flow in because of that."

The Legislature rejected a proposed charter school measure during the regular session this year. Sponsors of the legisla-

tion said it would benefit home-schooled students and would give children more flexibility to study at home at their own pace.

"We cannot afford to use taxpayer money on a questionable venture that will take precious resources away from the children in our public schools," said Doug Rogers, executive director of the Association of Texas Professional Educators.

"Our schools are having trouble meeting their budgets now, and draining money away from our classrooms and sending it to a for-profit enterprise is not acceptable."

Scott, who has said he favors the idea of virtual charter schools, said he would ensure safeguards were in place to ensure that school districts didn't lose money.

Some critics also say the measures are an attempt to mask public school vouchers in Texas.

Charter schools, funded by taxpayers, are considered public schools but are free from many state regulations that public schools must abide by.

The Legislature commissioned a pilot online learning program for public schools, but a TEA spokeswoman said Eagle's charter request would not be part of the pilot.

# Two killed in California's first deadly earthquake since 1994

PASO ROBLES, Calif. (AP) — Rescue efforts were called off as darkness fell over this central California city following a magnitude-6.5 earthquake that rocked the state's coast, killing two people, injuring dozens more and prompting fears that aftershocks might cause more damage in the days to come.

Residents from San Francisco to Los Angeles were shaken by Monday's quake, the first to cause fatalities in the state since a magnitude-6.7 temblor hit Northridge in 1994.

The bodies of two women were pulled from

under the roof of Paso Robles' 1892 clock tower, which pitched into the street and crushed a row of parked cars in this San Luis Obispo County community of 25,000 about 20 miles east of the epicenter.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger planned to tour downtown Paso Robles on Tuesday.

The main shock was centered in a sparsely populated area about 11 miles north of the coastal town of Cambria.

It was immediately followed by at least 50 aftershocks larger than 3.0, the biggest of which was estimated at 4.7, according to

the U.S. Geological Survey.

The state Office of Emergency Services said there was a 90 percent or greater probability that aftershocks of 5.0 magnitude or greater would follow in the next week.

By Monday night, search and rescue crews in Paso Robles had combed all seriously damaged buildings and were confident they had found all the quake's victims, though the owner of one car crushed in the rubble still had not been located.

"We're out of rescue mode and now it's just going to be general debris removal," said Battalion

Chief Scott Hall of the Ventura County Fire Department.

Earlier in the day, the bodies of Jennifer Myrick, 19, of Atascadero, and Marilyn Zafuto, 55, of Paso Robles, were found on the street outside a dress shop, police Sgt. Bob Adams said.

"It appeared as though they were trying to get away," he said.

A young boy suffered a broken arm and another person received minor injuries when a bakery collapsed, while citywide there were reports of about 40 minor injuries, said Adams.

Officials inspected more

than 80 downtown buildings and all remained off-limits Monday night. About 10,000 homes and businesses were without power in the San Luis Obispo area, said John Nelson, spokesman for Pacific Gas and Electric.

The quake was felt in the control room of the Diablo Canyon nuclear

power plant operated by PG&E. Nelson said there appeared to be no damage to the plant and that it was functioning normally.

The quake shook the Hearst Castle in San Simeon, the estate of the legendary publisher William Randolph Hearst.

## NATIONAL BRIEFS

### Elevated terror alert causes problems

MATAMOROS, Mexico (AP) — Those waiting to cross into Texas were feeling the effects of the elevated terror alert level Monday as lines extended not only across the river, but several blocks into Matamoros' downtown.

Maria Guadalupe Cordero, a vendor who sells tacos and beans near the Gateway International Bridge, said the line of pedestrians was the longest she had seen, even longer than immediately after Sept. 11.

"Usually it's a few stands up," she said, pointing to the vendors lining the street up to the bridge, "but today it was three times as long."

A major factor in the decision to raise the nation's terror alert level from "elevated" to "high" was the holiday season, when more people are distracted and traveling and large numbers of people gather at events.

But the upgrade from "yellow" to "orange" on the terror risk scale was also based on intelligence that al-Qaida may soon attempt to pull off a coordinated attack in multiple places to cause mass casualties.

In San Antonio, the SBC Center announced Monday that it has enhanced its security procedures during Spurs events in response to the current elevated state of alert and a mandate by the NBA.

### Outcry: Privatization could affect mental care

HOUSTON (AP) — A privatization change in state law could unravel mental health safety nets across Texas, several mental health experts fear.

"It would be a disaster," Melanie Gantt, public policy director for the Mental Health Association of Texas, said of the plan. "It's a hastily conceived notion that does not take into account ramifications to the consumer and the public safety net."

Privatization supporters say it can lead to more patient choice, access to better-quality care and greater administrative efficiency, but opponents fear the opposite could result if privatization is taken statewide.

Gantt and others say the main problem is mental patients could be left without care if private providers replace the current system but later decide to leave when it isn't as profitable as they'd like, the Houston Chronicle reported Monday.

Rep. Talmadge Heflin, R-Houston, inserted the privatization provision into a social services overhaul bill, stating that private providers would get preference in serving the mentally ill and mentally retarded.

### States consider regulating eating habits

Fighting to shed a few pounds and control that waistline? For the soaring number of Americans who are becoming dangerously overweight, states and cities across the country want to help.

With the U.S. Surgeon General calling obesity an epidemic, legislators nationwide are offering measures to encourage healthy food choices and ban the worst temptations.

Skeptics say government should stay away from trying to legislate something as personal as what we eat. But supporters say they can't ignore a growing public health problem or how it drives the ever-rising cost of health care.

Few ideas have become law yet. But states have considered scores of bills this year that would, among other things: get kids exercising; warn restaurant eaters about fat, sugar and cholesterol on the menu; and, ban sugary sodas and fattening chips from school vending machines.

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Especially for kids and their families  
**The Mini Page**

By BETTY DEBNAM

A Census of Our Feathered Friends

**Christmas Bird Count**

For more than 100 years, people have been leaving their cozy homes to brave the cold outdoors and count birds. Thousands of volunteers have made the Christmas Bird Count part of their holiday tradition.

It runs during the three weeks around Christmas Day.

This bird census, sponsored by the National Audubon Society, is the longest-running wildlife review in the world. It is also the largest.



Nearly 56,000 observers counted about 73 million birds in the 2003 Christmas Bird Count. Many learn to love bird watching so much that they do it throughout the year.

**Counting time**

Today the period for counting birds stretches from Dec. 14 through Jan. 5. Officials can choose any day in that period to count in their area.

This period is known as "early winter." During this time, many North American birds are still on their southward migration.

**History of the count**

The Christmas Bird Count got its name because the first count took place on Christmas Day in 1900.

It was founded by Frank Chapman, a scientist who studied birds.

He was upset by an event of the times, the "Side Hunt." In this event, on Christmas Day, hunters chose sides and then shot as many birds and small animals as they could. The side that killed the most animals and birds won.

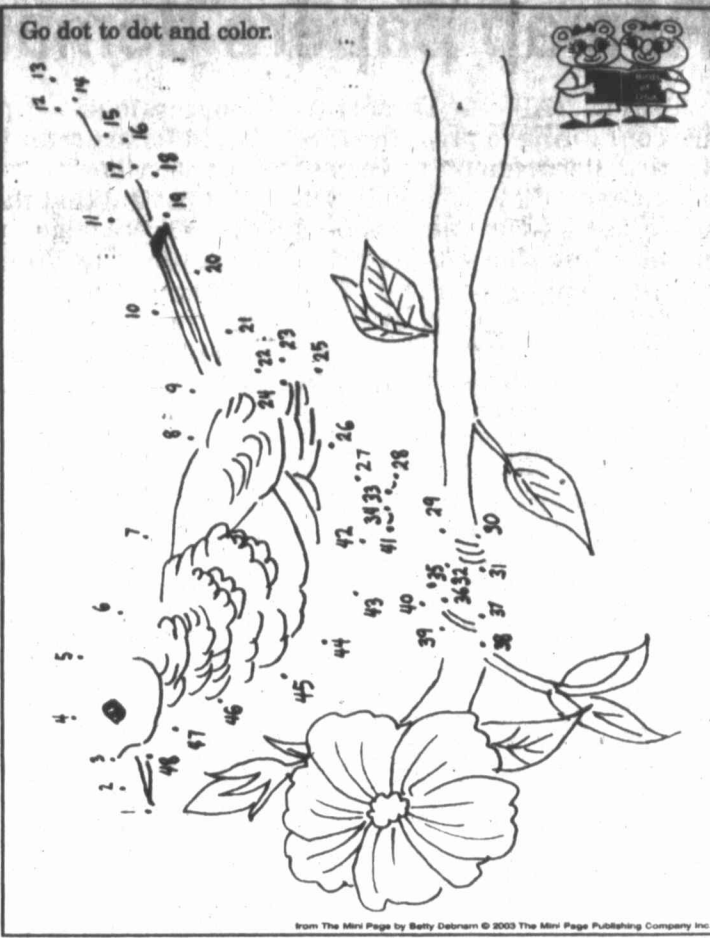
Many people were concerned that overhunting was threatening entire bird populations. Frank Chapman came up with the idea of counting birds on Christmas Day rather than killing them.



Frank Chapman (1864-1945)



In 2003, Bird Count observers covered about 2,000 different areas, ranging from northern Canada and Alaska above the Arctic Circle to southern South America near Antarctica. Most observers are in the United States and southern Canada.



Go dot to dot and color.

**Rookie™ Rookie Cookie's Recipe Festive Fudge Goodie Bags**

**You'll need:**

- 1 1/2 pounds white chocolate, broken in pieces
- 1 (10-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup gumdrop candy, cut in half

**What to do:**

- In a bowl, combine chocolate, milk and salt.
- Microwave on high for 3 to 5 minutes until chocolate is melted.
- Stir in gumdrops and vanilla extract.
- Line a pan with wax paper, pour fudge into pan and refrigerate until firm.
- Cut into squares and wrap several pieces together at a time.
- Place wrapped squares in a brown paper bag and decorate as you wish. Makes about 2 dozen squares.

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**Gus Goodsport's Report Supersport: Jason White**

Height: 6-2 Birthdate: 6-19-80  
Weight: 221 Hometown: Tuttle, Okla.

Jason White doesn't wear a Santa Claus suit or ride around town in a sleigh, but Oklahoma University's standout quarterback spreads lots of cheer. He has participated with a Fellowship of Christian Athletes holiday food drive, visited children in the hospital, and helped with elementary school reading programs.

White also has given the fans of No. 1-ranked Oklahoma lots to cheer about. He has passed for more than 3,000 yards and rates as one of the top players in all of college football.

White, who underwent knee surgeries the previous two years, is a sociology major who also enjoys art — and making people happy, kind of like Santa.

**Meet Sheryl Crow**

Singer and songwriter Sheryl Crow grew up with musical parents. Both her parents played in swing bands and encouraged their daughter to play music too.

Sheryl, 41, began playing the piano when she was 6 years old while growing up in Kennett, Mo. She studied music at the University of Missouri. Then in 1986, she moved to Los Angeles, determined to make it in the music business.

Before she became famous for her own songs, Sheryl was a backup singer to other musicians, including Don Henley and Eric Clapton. She produced her first solo album in 1993. She won a Grammy for Best Rock Album in 1997.

Sheryl likes all kinds of music, including rock 'n' roll, country, folk, jazz and blues. Her newest album is called "The Very Best of Sheryl Crow."

**Mighty Funny's Mini Jokes**

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

**Chris:** How do you make a banana split?  
**Dawn:** Cut it in half!

**Gareth:** Why didn't the banana want a suntan?  
**David:** He was afraid he might peel!

**Tim:** What is yellow and says "Ho, ho, ho"?  
**Neil:** Santa Banana!

**Going Out for the Count**

**The value of bird counting**

In the old days, miners used to send a canary into a mine. If the canary came back safely, the miners knew it was safe for them.

In nature, birds are also a good sign of whether the environment is healthy.

When the data from the Christmas Bird Count are combined with data from other studies, we get a good picture of the overall health of birds and of the environment.

By looking at how bird populations have changed in the last century, scientists can be alerted about possible dangers.

For example, if one type of bird disappears in an area, it could mean the habitat has been destroyed. Or it could mean there is a disease, or that the species has been poisoned with pesticides.

If bird populations go down a lot, it is a danger signal.

**Recent finds**

Blue jays and crows are especially vulnerable to the West Nile virus. Experts believe it has hurt groups of these birds in some parts of the U.S.

But in the latest national bird count, researchers did not notice significant drops over the whole country. Scientists do not know if that means these species are safe, or if they will suffer greater losses in the coming years.

It will take time to see how dangerous the West Nile virus really is.

**Conducting the bird count**

All counts are done in a certain way and in the same area each year. This gives a more accurate view of any changes in bird populations.

On the chosen count day, volunteers travel through a circle covering about 177 square miles.

They count every bird they see or hear that whole day. Some birds, especially in woodland areas, stay hidden. There are usually people in every counting group who can recognize bird calls.

Often watchers will walk slowly through an area in the assigned circle. Then they will drive to the next spot and get out and walk again.

In some places such as marshes, volunteers go by boat. Others may travel on skis or snowshoes. Some may spend the entire day standing by the ocean counting seabirds.

Experienced bird watchers are always present, so they can teach new watchers the proper way to count.

**Hunters were seeing fewer American black ducks.** Scientists looking at 50 years of data from the Christmas Bird Count found the numbers truly were going down. So hunters lowered the limit on ducks they could bag, and the numbers went back up.

**Bird counters have noticed that many birds such as the cardinal are staying farther north in the winter.** Experts believe this may be because more people are feeding birds during this cold season.

**The numbers of blue jays have dropped greatly in some areas.**

**Birds such as owls are hard to see, but they make a fair amount of noise.** This is a great horned owl.

**Next week The Mini Page features a 2004 calendar of events.**

Look through your newspaper for stories about special events during this holiday season.

The Mini Page is created and edited by Betty Debnam

Associate Editors: Tall Denton, Lucy Lien  
Staff Artist: Wendy Daley

The Mini Page thanks Geoff LeBaron, Christmas Bird Count director with the National Audubon Society, for help with this issue.

Site to see: www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/

**Bird Count TRY 'N FIND**

Words and names that remind us of the Christmas Bird Count are hidden in the blocks below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find: OUTDOORS, VOLUNTEERS, WALK, HOLIDAY, TRADITION, OBSERVERS, AMERICA, MIGRATE, FEED, WINTER, CENSUS, ENVIRONMENT, HABITAT, DATA, AREA, OWL, DUCK, JAY, DAY.

**DO YOU FEED THE BIRDS?**

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L R O U L N A J A Y N O R N T  
I E W V C K S T O I D O V T A  
D A L K D K O U A L A R E E T  
A E T A R G I M S L Y S R R V  
Y L S R E E T N U L O V S W D

**Mini Spy ...**

Mini Spy and Rookie Cookie are feeding the birds. See if you can find: • question mark • word MINI

- puppy
- letter D
- hot dog
- butterfly
- letter C
- sailboat
- dolphin
- number 3
- bell
- lips
- strawberry
- coffee pot

**IN BR**

Ten Star see all-star applic Applications being accepted Ten Star Summer B Camp. Boys ages 10-19 are apply. Camp include Comm Sterling, Colo. For more inf call (704) 373-00

**Hawks to ret court against**

The Howard Lady Hawks w to action on when they t Lancaster to fa Valley College. The Hawks, open Western College Conference p Jan. 12 again Phillips, ente holiday break a 5-3 record.

**Steers to part in Lamesa tou**

The Big Spr close out the 2 with an appea the Lamesa In al Basketball ment, beginni day, Dec. 29.

The BSHS ju sity will also the three-day ment.

Big Spring, 3 all, is schedu District 4-4A Jan. 16 with against Frensh

**BSHS swimme 4-4A meet on**

Big Spring School swim te try and nail d District 4-4A sw title on Jan. 2 they travel Stockton.

The Steers, coach Harlan finished second trict rival Pec recent Aqua Invitational Sw in Seminole.

**Prairie View ta new football c**

PRAIRIE VIE — Prairie Vie on Monday hire Frazier as the 2 ball coach in sc tory.

Frazier, who 26-24 record years at Bow University in land, takes downtrodden that just recent offering full ships again.

Prairie View overall and 0-Southwestern Conference las The school fir year coach C. tington afterw revealing that nal investigat cluded he had players during workouts.

**Rangers sign minor league**

ARLINGTON The Texas have signed fr Mike Bacsik a Tyner to min contracts an invited both t training, th announced Mo

**ON THE**

Sports Broadcast Dec. 23  
Event, Time .....  
Spurs vs. Clippers, 7 p.m. Dec. 25  
Event, Time .....  
Mavericks vs. Sacramento, 4 Dec. 26  
Event, Time .....  
Spurs vs. Orlando, 7 p.m. ....

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## IN BRIEF

**Ten Star seeking all-star applications**

Applications are being accepted for the Ten Star All-Star Summer Basketball Camp. Boys and girls ages 10-19 are eligible to apply.

Camp locations include Commerce and Sterling, Colo.

For more information call (704) 373-0873.

**Hawks to return to court against CVC**

The Howard College Lady Hawks will return to action on Jan. 3 when they travel to Lancaster to face Cedar Valley College.

The Hawks, who will open Western Junior College Athletic Conference play on Jan. 12 against Frank Phillips, entered the holiday break sporting a 5-3 record.

**Steers to participate in Lamesa tourney**

The Big Spring Steers close out the 2003 year with an appearance in the Lamesa Invitational Basketball Tournament, beginning Monday, Dec. 29.

The BSHS junior varsity will also play in the three-day tournament.

Big Spring, 3-11 overall, is scheduled to open District 4-4A play on Jan. 16 with a bout against Frenship.

**BSHS swimmers face 4-4A meet on Jan. 23**

Big Spring High School swim team will try and nail down the District 4-4A swimming title on Jan. 23 when they travel to Fort Stockton.

The Steers, under coach Harlan Smith, finished second to district rival Pecos at the recent Aqua Tribe Invitational Swim Meet in Seminole.

**Prairie View taps new football coach**

PRAIRIE VIEW (AP) — Prairie View A&M on Monday hired Henry Frazier as the 22nd football coach in school history.

Frazier, who built a 26-24 record in five years at Bowie State University in Maryland, takes over a downtrodden program that just recently began offering full scholarships again.

Prairie View went 1-9 overall and 0-7 in the Southwestern Athletic Conference last season. The school fired first-year coach C.L. Whittington afterward, later revealing that an internal investigation concluded he had hit two players during summer workouts.

**Rangers sign two to minor league deals**

ARLINGTON (AP) — The Texas Rangers have signed free agents Mike Bacsik and Jason Tyner to minor league contracts and have invited both to spring training, the team announced Monday.

## ON THE AIR

| Sports Broadcast Schedule           |         |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Event, Time                         | Station | Dec. 23 |
| Spurs vs. Clippers, 7 p.m.          | 1490    |         |
| Dec. 28                             |         |         |
| Mavericks vs. Sacramento, 4:30 p.m. | 1490    |         |
| Dec. 26                             |         |         |
| Event, Time                         | Station |         |
| Spurs vs. Orlando, 7 p.m.           | 1490    |         |

## Rodriguez may not be leaving Texas, after all

ARLINGTON (AP) — Alex Rodriguez may not become the first reigning MVP to switch teams, after all.

With a deadline imposed by Texas Rangers owner Tom Hicks looming Tuesday for the trade of baseball's only \$20 million-a-year players — Rodriguez to Boston for outfielder Manny Ramirez — there appeared to be no more negotiations.

Following weeks of discussions, Hicks said Monday that he hadn't spoken to anyone from the Red Sox in three days. And Boston was standing by its position that the proposed deal was "dead."

Red Sox owner John Henry did not alter that position or say, in response to an e-mail from *The*

*Associated Press* on Monday, that his club would contact the Rangers before Tuesday's deadline.

If the deal is to be revived, Henry said, "I don't believe there are any public statements I could make that would be helpful to the process other than to say that although there have been disagreements, I believe the principals involved on all sides have had good intentions thus far."

Hicks didn't respond Monday, but told *The Dallas Morning News* for its Tuesday editions that the deadline was final.

"If the deadline passes, we are going to put it behind us," Hicks told the newspaper. "And the best player in baseball is going to be our team leader next season."

Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras, believes Rodriguez would remain the Texas shortstop next season if the deadline passes.

"Tom Hicks told me he's setting forth his plan for 2004 beginning Wednesday," Boras said. "He said the team needed to make moves and put their marketing plan together."

Red Sox president Larry Lucchino proclaimed the trade "dead" Thursday, blaming the players' association for not approving a steeper proposed reduction in Rodriguez's contract.

If Rodriguez went to Boston, the Red Sox presumably would then trade longtime shortstop Nomar Garciaparra, possibly to the Chicago White Sox.

Rodriguez's \$252 million, 10-year contract has seven years and \$179 million remaining. Ramirez has five years and \$97.5 million left his \$160 million, eight-year contract.

During negotiations last week, the players' association said Rodriguez's agreement could be restructured but not reduced, and rejected Boston's proposal, which the union said would cut \$28 million to \$30 million.

Instead, the union said it would approve a change that would lower the contract by \$12 million to \$13 million in exchange for Rodriguez getting the right to use Boston's logo and trademarks in marketing deals. In addition, he'd be able to become a free agent after the 2005 season.



Coahoma High School head coach Kim Nichols discusses a call with an official during the Bulldogs 64-49 loss to Midland Christian Saturday. Nichols, who has coached at the school for 28 years and rolled up more than 320 career wins, will lead Coahoma back into action on Dec. 29 at the annual Reagan County Invitational Tournament in Big Lake.

## Orange terror alert felt in sports

When the nation's terror alert was raised to its second highest level, Louisiana Superdome personnel were ready.

"We've got the drill down pretty good," spokesman Bill Curl said Monday from New Orleans, where the Sugar Bowl will be played on Jan. 4.

He had one piece of advice for fans attending the Bowl Championship Series title game between LSU and Oklahoma: "Come early and empty-handed."

Several federal law enforcement officials, including Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, mentioned major bowl games as potential al-Qaida targets. Still, they urged fans to go about business as usual.

"This is a period of celebration," Ridge said. "There are public gatherings in major urban areas around the country, big celebrations. And we encourage people to, like we said before, be vigilant and be aware."

The Superdome is no stranger to hosting national sports events amid heightened security.

Two years ago, it was the site of the first post-Sept. 11 Super Bowl. The imposing dome was ringed by national guardsmen and chain-link fences. In April, during the war in Iraq, a stepped-up police presence was in place when the Superdome hosted the Final Four men's basketball championship.

That kind of atmosphere was already evident at various bowl sites around the country.

"I visited the TCU practice on Sunday and there were more police around the team than there had been," said Tim Simmons of the Fort Worth Bowl. TCU plays Boise State in the inaugural Fort Worth Bowl tonight. Ross Bailey, in charge of operations at Amon G. Carter Stadium, said there would be extra security sweeps of the stadium.

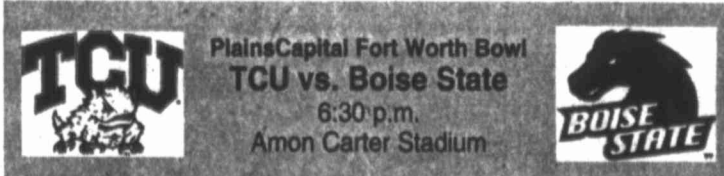
At some sites, operating at a high level of security has been the norm since the terrorist attacks.

"Ever since 9-11, we boosted security up across the board," said Shawn Schoeffler, a spokesman for Friday night's Insight.com Bowl and the Jan. 2 Fiesta Bowl at Tempe, Ariz. "We never backed off from that. We won't do anything more."

## Boise State, TCU to meet in Fort Worth Bowl tonight

FORT WORTH (AP) — Here's a change for Boise State: The Broncos finally are in a bowl far from their blue-turfed home.

No. 18 Boise State meets No. 19 Texas Christian University in the inaugural Fort Worth Bowl on tonight in a game between one-loss teams from non-BCS conferences.



The Broncos (12-1) are playing in a bowl on the road for the first time after three appearances in four years in the Humanitarian Bowl.

Yet, they will be the "home" team against No. 19 TCU (11-1), which is staying home for its post-season game after a being in contention for one of

the four big-money games in the Bowl Championship Series until its only loss Nov. 20.

"Now the roles are reversed and we're at TCU's house for a bowl game," Boise State receiver-punt returner Tim Gilligan said Monday. "We so much wanted to go somewhere besides the H-Bowl, and we got it."

## Baltimore continues rebuilding process by adding Javy Lopez

BALTIMORE (AP) — Javy Lopez agreed to a \$22.5 million, three-year deal with Baltimore, giving the Orioles a big hit-

ter and another key addition to their program. The deal for the All-Star catcher is contingent on the free agent passing a

team physical. Lopez, 33, hit .328 last season for Atlanta, with 43 homers and 109 RBIs, both career highs.

Baltimore added shortstop Miguel Tejada last week. The 2002 AL MVP agreed to a \$72 million, six-year contract.

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MISCELLANEOUS

For Sale, Intel 2.2 GHz 2 - 80 MByte Hard Drives, 1.0 GByte of memory, Rambus 400MHz, NVidia Video Card w/128 MByte of Memory, DVD & CD Writer and Reader (HP), DVD & CD Reader (Plextor), LCD 17" monitor, 250 Watt 5.1 Dolby 5 speaker set, modem, 10/100 ethernet card, many more options. MS Keyboard/MS Optical mouse, Window Prof XP installed. \$1,500. 263-3519.

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ConocoPhillips Company, 4001 Penbrook Street, Odessa, TX 79762, is applying to the Railroad Commission of Texas for a permit to inject fluid into the Yates and Grayburg/San Andres formations, S.T. Eason "A" Lease, Well No. 1. This well is a vertical produced water disposal well. The well is located four miles West from Forsan, Texas, in the Howard Glasscock Field in Howard County, Texas. Fluid will be injected into the subsurface depth interval of 1300'-2360'.  
**LEGAL AUTHORITY:** Chapter 27 of the Texas Water Code, as amended; Title 3 of the Natural Resources Code, as amended; and the Statewide Rules of the Oil and Gas Division of the Railroad Commission of Texas.  
Requests for a public hearing from persons who can show they are adversely affected, or requests for further information concerning any aspect of the application, should be submitted, in writing, within fifteen days of publication to the Environmental Services Division, Oil and Gas Division, Railroad Commission of Texas, P.O. Drawer 12967, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711 (Telephone 512) 463-9792 44070 December 23, 2003

**ATTENTION THE BIG SPRING HERALD APPRECIATES YOUR BUSINESS**

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**DONT LET SOMEONE MAKE YOUR DECISIONS FOR YOU. VOTE!**

BY JOYCE JILLSON

The new moon is in Capricorn, just like the sun is now.



Joyce Jillson

This puts more emphasis on the qualities of Capricorn holds near and dear, the most prevalent of which is a simple matter of respect. Give it where it's due, and you'll have no problem getting it. Don't give it, and you'll be craving it, never satisfied that you've had enough.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** It's apparent—we must stick together for progress to be made. Bond through shared interests, especially cerebral ones. The excitement of new romance is featured. Tonight, disagreeing relatives decide to communicate.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** One innovative idea will bring dollars to you. But which one? Look deep down in your soul, and make a decision—except don't try this in the morning when everything will be fuzzy. A former love is on your mind tonight.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Boundary issues don't have to upset your life. Instead of acting on a whim, ask the opinion of someone who has been in your shoes. Problems, even persistent ones, will be sorted out in due time.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Health tip: It's easy to slip up, but that's only

Tomorrow's Horoscope

an opportunity to get right back on track. It's consistent action that matters, not perfect action. Tonight, people tend to take advantage if you don't stand up for yourself.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Life on the other side of the fence looks better than it really is—stop worrying about what others are doing, and find out what pleases you. Leave decisions to their rightful owners.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You may feel you are between a rock and a hard place in a family matter—resolution is just around the corner. Keep being open to things turning out differently than the picture you've got in your head, which is limiting.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Important business is placed under your supervision, but you're up to it. Your best problem-solving ideas come in the morning. Stretch to accommodate ever-changing times, and earn extraordinary pay for ordinary work.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Minor setback leads to a major breakthrough. Your new strategy will work. The stars for finance are especially tricky. Your boldest moves are rewarded. Share your work with as many as you possibly can.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You'll be introduced to circus life: Everyone is running around with different agendas, and you are the

ringmaster. If you can

sort through the confusion, you'll find that friends really do contribute worthwhile ideas.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Work on the important, but not urgent, items. Being at the beck and call of "emergency" stuff is a good way to become exhausted. Some things marked "urgent" are really distractions from what's truly important to you.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Some situations are designed to stress you out. Those are easily avoidable, though. Plan to leave the house earlier, and make sure you have enough cash in your wallet and gas in your car. Staying calm is a choice.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Gifts, bonuses and surprise invitations are featured, along with the rare chance to mingle in the winning circle. Put yourself in new environments—the health club, a new art exhibit or a computer class. This leads to love.

**WHEN THE NEW YEAR SMILES ON AMBITIOUS SOULS, HERE'S HOW TO TAP INTO YOUR INNER GO-GETTER:** The coming year is the kind of year that helps those who help themselves. Luck will strike the moving target most often. But each sign fuels up in a different way. Where will you get your motivation in 2004?

**ARIES:** While others are trying to get more energy, you weren't even

aware there was a short-

age. You've always got that plugged-in feeling, as if you'll never tire as long as you're on track.

**TAURUS:** You're an expert at breaking projects down into chunks, a very valuable skill. There always seems to be enough fuel to get to the next checkpoint, then the next, then the next, as long as you keep each task reasonable and doable. To ensure that your efforts aren't wasted, however, enlist a long-range thinker to help you with a business plan. Meet with this person often along the way. (It could be a Capricorn or Pisces.)

**CELEBRITY PROFILES:** Daytime diva Susan Lucci has a sensible Virgo moon as well as many planetary placements that suggest a particular knack for making money. I'm willing to bet that she has invested well and that her friends come to her for stock and investment tips before they ask their brokers! Capricorn folks enjoy sharing their knowledge with others, so long as they are being properly thanked and respected.

If you would like to write to Joyce Jillson, please go to www.creators.com  
© 2003 JOYCE JILLSON

Annie's Mailbox® Advice for those in need

Dear Annie: Last year, my wife and I decided it was time to get a larger house. Around the same time, my mom concluded she should sell her home. Since the price Mom wanted for her place was too good to pass up, we agreed to buy it. After the papers were signed, however, Mom decided she would simply move to one of the upper floors instead of moving out.



ANNIE'S MAILBOX

The upper floor has its own entrance, and Mom assured us we would live separate lives. We couldn't very well throw her out of the home she'd known for years, so we allowed the arrangement to stick. The problems began when Mom started invading our section of the house whenever she pleased. If the doors were locked, she simply would use her garage key to let herself in through the

kitchen. Three months ago, my wife gave birth to twins. At that point, Mom came into the house every half-hour. She'd bang on the door if it was locked. I decided to take the garage key away because her behavior was so intrusive. My wife actually had heart palpitations whenever she saw Mom coming.

My main problem, Annie, is that my wife and mother always respected each other. Now that respect is gone, and my mother cries about the way my wife has "changed." My mother believes we don't let her see the twins often enough. She thinks she should be downstairs every day.

The stress level in our home is very high right now, and I'm stuck between my mother and wife. I want to protect my wife, but I don't want to hurt my mother in the process. What do I do? — M.P.

Dear M.P.: You must get your mother out of the house, or sell it and move elsewhere. Mom, no matter how well-intentioned, is going to ruin your marriage if you don't create a more solid separation between her and the life you have with your wife and children. Encourage Mom to move into a condo or apartment where she will have autonomy and privacy. Help her look through the classifieds. We know the separation will be difficult, and yes, Mom's feelings will be hurt, but it is necessary to do this.

Dear Annie: I read the letter about the 14-year-old boy who wears thong swimsuits. I'm in my 30s, heterosexual, and I love to wear skimpy swimsuits at the pool and tight leotards at the gym. Wearing these items, which leave little to the imagination, enhances my workout because it gives me extra energy, if you know what I mean. I admit I'm an exhibitionist, but I'm proud of my body and enjoy the attention when I see people staring at me.

the intensity of my workout? — Love To Be Nearly Naked

Dear Naked: As long as you aren't doing anything illegal, we say, whatever floats your boat. Just make sure you don't get too carried away.

Dear Annie: My husband is an alcoholic, and it makes me sick to look at him. I have gone to Al-Anon meetings, but not recently. I just want to get away as fast as I can. We have been married for 28 years, and he has been drunk the whole time. I want out. My sister says I should think of him as having cancer. Frankly, I do not consider the two things the same. I believe he has a choice and he chooses to drink. What do you say? — Landover, Md.

Dear Landover: Try Al-Anon one more time, and let your husband know how close to the brink his marriage is. He is addicted to alcohol, and this is not a choice he makes freely. If Al-Anon cannot help you work through this, and your husband is unwilling to make the effort to change, it may be time to pack up.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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TUESDAY

Table with 21 columns representing different TV channels and their respective programming for Tuesday, Dec 23, 2003.

DENNIS THE MENACE



INSTEAD OF THE USUAL BEDTIME STORY, HOW 'BOUT A TRIP THROUGH THE TOY CATALOG?"

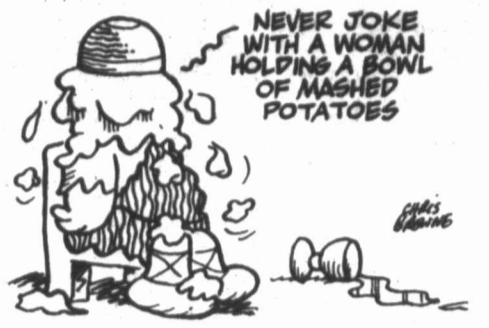
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Could I mail this follow-up letter to Santa in case he has a surplus of anything?"

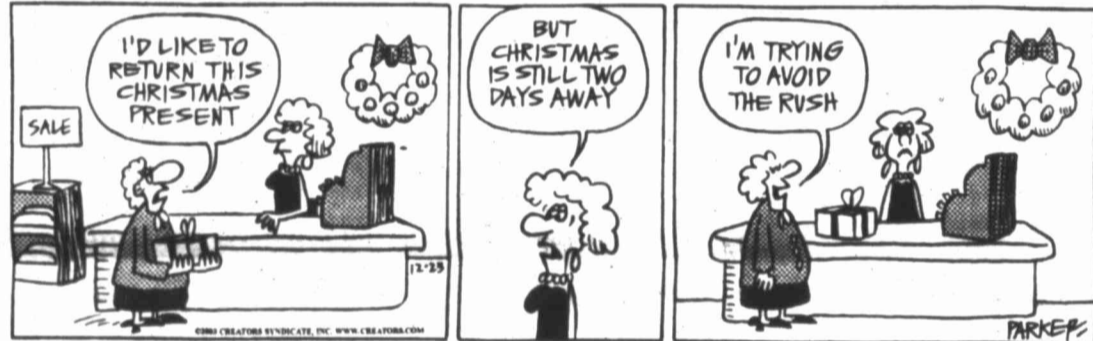
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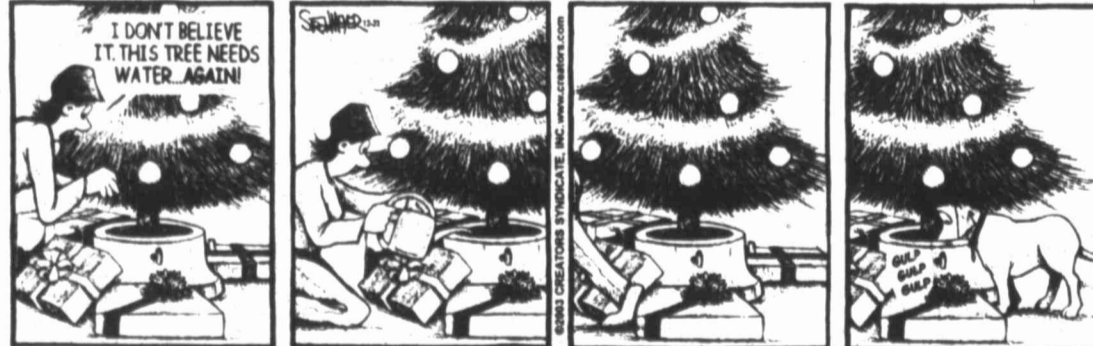
AGNES



HI AND LOIS



MR. HOUSEWIFE



SNUFFY SMITH



BEETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 23, the 357th day of 2003. There are eight days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 23, 1823, the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" by Clement C. Moore was published in the Troy (New York) Sentinel.

On this date:

In 1783, George Washington resigned as commander-in-chief of the Army and retired to his home at Mount Vernon, Va.

In 1893, the Engelbert Humperdinck opera "Haensel and Gretel" was first performed, in Weimar, Germany.

In 1928, the National Broadcasting Company set up a permanent, coast-to-coast network.

In 1941, during World War

II, American forces on Wake Island surrendered to the Japanese.

In 1948, former Japanese premier Hideki Tojo and six other Japanese war leaders were executed in Tokyo.

In 1968, 82 crew members of the U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo were released by North Korea, 11 months after they had been captured.

In 1980, a state funeral was held in Moscow for former Premier Alexei N. Kosygin, who had died Dec. 18 at age 76.

In 1986, the experimental airplane Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager, completed the first non-stop, non-refueled, round-the-world flight as it landed safely at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1987, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, serving a life sentence for the attempted assassination of President Ford in 1975, escaped from the Alderson Federal Prison for Women in West Virginia. (She was

recaptured two days later.)

In 1997, a jury in Denver convicted Terry Nichols of involuntary manslaughter and conspiracy for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing, declining to find him guilty of murder.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Gerald S. O'Loughlin is 82. Actor Ronnie Schell is 72. Emperor Akihito of Japan is 70. Actor Frederic Forrest is 67. Actor James Stacy is 67. Rock musician Jorma Kaukonen is 63. Rhythm and blues singer Eugene Record (The Ch-Lites) is 63. Actor-comedian Harry Shearer is 60. Singer-musician Adrian Belew is 54.

Answer to previous puzzle: STRUM DEMO HEAP, PIETA ADAM OLLA, EASEL MIRA USES, WRISTWATCH REST, SAT EGG ARG, SEETO PLANS, LASTED ANIMATOR, EREI ELLEN SISI, GERMPREE SESTET, SABER ASKED, POP EAU CAB, ZITI ALARMCLOCK, EDIE NORM AURAL, ALEC DIII TIPSYPY, LYRE ANAT ESSEN

Newsday Crossword

ON THE DINER TABLE by Randall J. Hartman Edited by Stanley Newman

- ACROSS: 1 \_\_\_ Hari, 5 Saunter, 10 Lotto relative, 14 Like \_\_\_ of bricks, 15 Formal title, 16 Currier's partner, 17 Medicine-chest bottle, 19 Star Wars princess, 20 Shopping jaunt, 21 Former science magazine, 22 Merely, 23 Attorney's deg., 25 Rugged rock, 27 Best, 34 Feel badly, 35 Do in, 36 Grabs, 38 Get dirty, 40 Third planet, 43 Damon of Good Will Hunting, 44 Body of principles, 46 Cookie introduced in 1912, 48 Pod inhabitant, 49 Nutcracker sprite, 53 Medicinal plant, 54 "Not \_\_\_ can help it!", 55 Throat-clearing sound, 58 Arm: Fr., 61 Shake an Etch-A-Sketch, 65 Seafood order, 66 Dairy-case container, 68 Its capital is Teheran, 69 Politician, 70 Falco of The Sopranos, 71 Steak seasoning, 72 Gathers, 73 Butterfly catchers, 11 50-50, 12 Playwright Simon, 13 Anthem starter, 18 Former North Carolina senator, 24 Current North Carolina senator, 26 Feign feelings, 27 Instance, 28 Civil uprisings, 29 Philanthropist, Yale, 30 LAX regulator, 31 Region of Austria, 32 Giraffe cousin, 33 Actor Ustinov, 37 Don't leave kingdom, 39 Bone connector, 41 Broadway show about Capote, 42 Prefix for sphere, 45 Baseballer Ripken, 47 Auction bid, 50 Thief, 51 Examine in detail, 52 Charles Lindbergh and Wiley Post, 55 Sale condition, 56 Israeli dance, 57 Israeli airline, 59 "\_\_\_ boy!", 60 Short distance, 62 Errand person, 63 Skirt opening, 64 Barely manages, with "out", 67 Slalom curve

