

BIG SPRING

HERALD

At the Crossroads of West Texas

50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

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FRIDAY

December 26, 2003

WEATHER

Tonight:



TONIGHT 55°-57° TOMORROW 66°-68°

BRIEFLY

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, weigh at least 110 pounds, be 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)

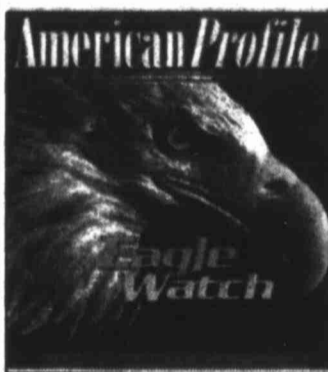
Senior tours

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.

COMING SUNDAY



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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.

City to collect Christmas trees at municipal landfill

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

As the last few needles on the Christmas tree begin to fall this season, many people may be faced with a holiday dilemma: What do I do with my tree now?

The city of Big Spring has the answer.

"We'll be collecting the Christmas trees in a large 30-yard container here at the Municipal Landfill," said City Sanitation Supervisor Joe Pesina. "We'll collect them all

here, and then we'll send them over to the city compost facility." Pesina said the seasonal effort is two-fold.

"The compost facility will grind the trees up to be used in the compost," he said. "That way we're recycling them and not just throwing them in the landfill. The other reason we do this is to keep people from putting the trees in their dumpsters. When people put them in the dumpsters, they get stuck and cause a serious problem for us."

For those that choose to dispose of their trees in dumpsters, Pesina said the results could get serious.

"If someone puts their tree in a dumpster or next to the dumpster, we won't pick it up," he said. "We'll simply notify code enforcement and let them handle it."

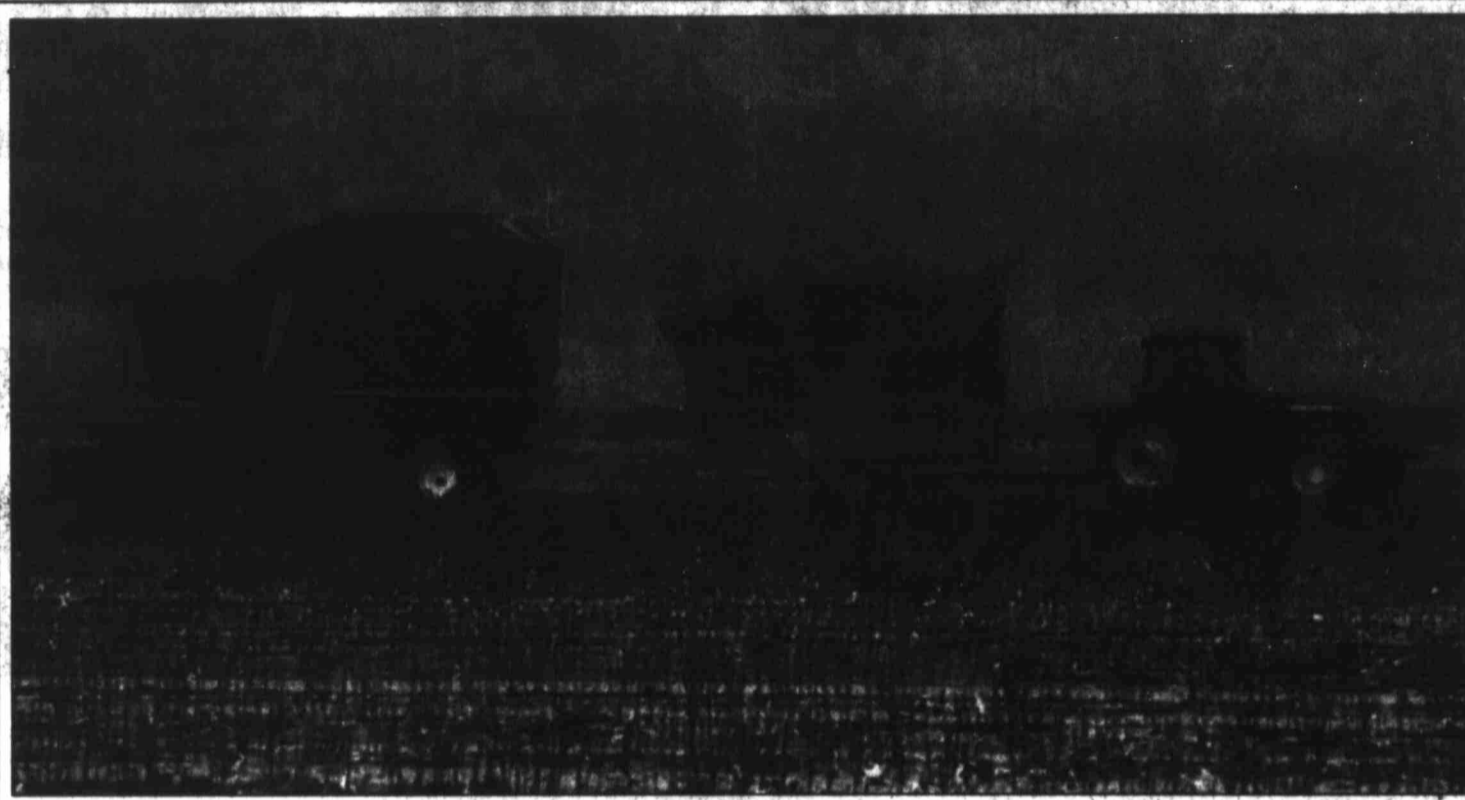
Pesina said dropping your tree off at the landfill is free of charge, and there are only a few simple guidelines to follow.

"We need people to make sure

all of the lights and ornaments are off the tree," he explained. "We also can't take it if it's still wrapped in plastic or anything like that. You also need to make sure the tree stand has been taken off. Once they drop it off, we'll take it from there."

All city facilities are closed until Monday, including the municipal landfill and compost facility.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232.



A cotton farming season that may have looked a little rocky in the beginning is showing a silver lining, as gins all over the area report above average production. Area cotton gins recently reported more than 82,000 bales have been completed this season, with more on the way. Local cotton producer Horace Tubb reported yields of 2.5 to 3.5 bales per acre from irrigated crops, and an average of 2 bales per acre on dry-land cotton.

HERALD photos/Bruce Schooler

Gins report cotton production up

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Cotton farmers and gin owners in the Crossroads area report a welcome upswing in cotton production this season, despite what appeared to be a rough start earlier in the year.

Irma Leal, with the Co-Op Gin in Ackerly, said production is on track compared to previous years and is expected to top last year's figures by a good margin.

"We've done 18,340 bales so far, so I think it's safe to say we're where we expected to be at this point in the season," said Leal. "This is going to be a better year for us compared to last year. We expect to finish between 32,000 and 35,000 bales. There's definitely more cotton to gin this season."

The Big Spring Gin, which expected to process approximately

8,000 bales by the end of the season, has had to change that outlook as it races to keep up with producers.

"We've been incredibly busy," said Rene Beall, bookkeeper.

"It's been so strong we've had to put on a night crew. We're really having a great year."

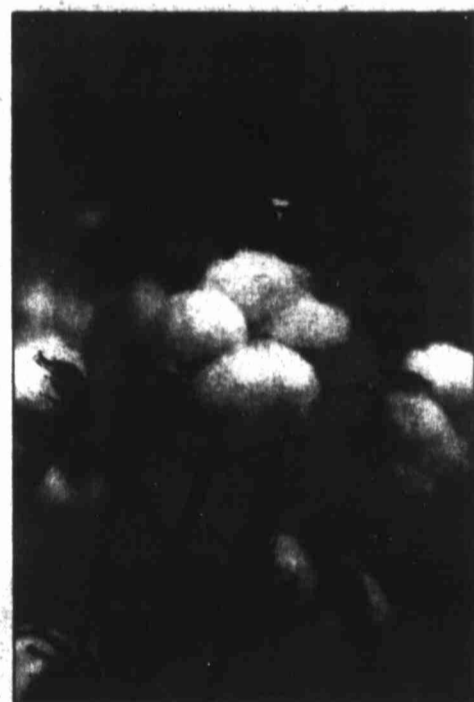
Brenda Robinson, Tarzan Gin

"We've completed approximately 6,600 bales of cotton so far, and we're still going strong. I suspect we're about halfway through now."

"We managed to do a little more than 12,000 last year and we're expected to come close to that this season as well."

With the abundance of cotton also come the problems associated with falling behind, something Big Spring Co-Op Gin's Julie Bartlett said she's happy to see.

"After not ginning last year, this is a very pleasant surprise," said Bartlett. "We've finished 7,346 bales so far, and we're about 10



days behind where we want to be. Of course, when you have this much product to deal with, you expect to get behind.

See COTTON, Page 3A

LIGHTS!

One week left to view displays in the city park

By LYNDEL MOODY

Staff Writer

Sightseers have less than a week to view the vast array of illuminated displays at Comanche

Trail Park this holiday season as the final day for the Festival of Lights is Wednesday.

"It's been bumper-to-bumper traffic," Pat Simmons, coordinator, said on Christmas Eve.

"Last night, I was real surprised. We had 1,400 people come view the lights."

Simmons said the number of people to view the annual display of lights in the park had reached almost 10,000 by Tuesday and she is expecting that number will double before the end of the run on Wednesday.

"I haven't counted up all the people who've come from different states but we have had someone from Germany and someone from Australia," she said.

One constant problem that plagues the yearly event has yet to arise, Simmons said with relief.

"We haven't had any vandalism yet, other than the bulb pullers," she said. "They're the ones who get a kick out of pulling a bulb out of a strand of lights and throwing it away."

Since Dec. 15, the Festival of Lights has illuminate the spring and lake areas of the park with 500,000 lights nightly.

In one of the more breathtaking displays, large poinsettias decorate the dam in a red and green displays. Another is located at the spring. Numerous other lighted exhibits range from patriotic to western themes.

The event runs from 6-

See LIGHTS, Page 3A

Dumas candidate wants to be farmer's voice in Austin

By LYNDEL MOODY

Staff Writer

Texas Senate District 31 candidate Lee Gibson hopes to bring the farmer's voice to Austin.

"I will be for the farmer — the voice who is concerned about you, the voice who is aware of your needs, the voice responsible for ensuring farmers get the treatment they deserve, the voice eager to serve the farming community and the farmer representing you in Austin who stands behind his word," Gibson said in a prepared statement.

Gibson, a long-time Panhandle farmer, officially announced his intention to seek the Senate seat from his home town in Dumas Monday.

He is among seven hopefuls hoping to fill



GIBSON

the position currently held by Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, who announced his intention to leave office on Jan. 12. Bivins cited his nomination by President George W. Bush as ambassador to Sweden and a desire to spend more time with this family as the reasons for his resignation.

Gibson defines himself as a "straight shooter" concerned with the needs of agriculture industry.

"I've always been up front with everybody in this community. What you see is what you get," he said. "I feel like my voice, and hopefully I have the personality, too, to convey the concerns and the interests of the agriculture people — not just farmers, but ranchers

in the state of Texas."

In other issues, Gibson said he understands the need to reform the state public school financing system and to ensure proper benefits and retirement plans for teachers and all state employees.

What he doesn't see the need for, Gibson said, is a state income tax nor unfounded state mandates.

Gibson has served in a number community leadership and civic roles as well as several agricultural committees. He has served as a Dumas Independent School District school board trustee since 1991 and was elected in 1991 to the Moore County Farm Bureau board of directors. He also served on the

See GIBSON, Page 3A

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Obituaries

H.O. "Hack" Hudgins

H. O. "Hack" Hudgins, 83, of Big Spring, died on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2003, in a local hospital. Graveside funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 27, 2003, at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park with the Rev. Gene Cravens, pastor of First Christian Church, officiating.

Mr. Hudgins was born on Dec. 21, 1920, in Van Zant County and married Katherine Morrison on Feb. 7, 1942, in Big Spring.

He came to Howard County from Van Zant County with his family at the age of three. He was employed with Cosden Oil and Chemical and Fina for 42 years, retiring in 1982. He served with the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. He was a member of First Christian Church.

His survivors include his wife, Katherine Hudgins of Big Spring; one son and daughter-in-law, Wesley and Dolores Hudgins of Abilene; two brothers, Pete Hudgins of Big Spring and A. C. Hudgins of Carbon; one sister, Dorothy Barnhill of Graham; two granddaughters, and a number of step-grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one son, Jodel Hudgins, in 1980.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday at the funeral home. Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at www.npwelch.com.

Joyce Barree

Joyce Barree, 74, of Big Spring, died Wednesday morning, Dec. 24, 2003, at Comanche Trail Nursing Home following a long illness. Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. Friday at Myers & Smith Chapel with Captain Russ Keeney of the Salvation Army officiating. Interment will be held at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

Mrs. Barree was born Nov. 15, 1929, at Marlin. She had been a resident of Big Spring more than 35 years, coming from Snyder. She was a home care nurse.

She is survived by one son, Joe Barree and his wife Deborah of Dallas, and one brother, James "Buddy" Abernathy of Big Spring.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

J.B. Keaton



J. B. Keaton, 81, of Big Spring, died Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2003, at his home. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday at Trinity Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 28, at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Mr. Keaton was born March 17, 1922, in Okmulgee, Okla. He grew up in Oklahoma and worked with his father in the oil industry until he entered the Army Air Corps during World War II. After his discharge he attended Oklahoma University and became a geologist, working in the oil industry until 1972. He then went to work for the city of Midland as a building official. He retired from his work with the city of Midland in 1988 and moved to Big Spring.

He is survived by his wife, P. V. "Pearl" Keaton of Big Spring; two daughters, Tory Keaton of Walnut Creek, Calif., and Hetty Keaton Yeland of Stockton, Calif.; three sons, Frank Nobles of Salem, Ind., Mike Nobles of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., and Eliot Green of Wichita, Kansas; one brother, Gene Keaton of Bedford; three sisters, Martha Dilday of Sapulpa, Okla., Betty Grable of Redding, Calif. and Zella Zigan of Vancouver, Wash.; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; a number of nieces and nephews, including his best buddy Richard Keaton.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

Alice Smith

Alice Smith, 65, of Big Spring, formerly of Abilene, died Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2003, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center in Big Spring.

Mrs. Smith was born Aug. 30, 1938, to Henry Taylor and Clare Elizabeth Fender Webb in Stamford and grew up in Winters. She graduated from Winters High School in 1956, graduating with honors, and was selected most representative girl in her class.

She worked for two summers in Washington, D.C., and made maximum score on the civil service test. She attended Texas Tech University and worked as a technical secretary for a number of years. She served as president of the PTA, was active in The Big Brother and Big Sister program, and once was elected as a Big Sister of the year.

She married Chuck Smith on Aug. 25, 1970, in Oklahoma. She was a member of the Church of Christ.

Her survivors include her husband, Chuck Smith of Big Spring; three children, Irene Sanders of Salt Lake City, Utah, Dorothy Nichols of Anderson, Mo., and George Battey of Atlanta; two brothers, Brian Webb and Bob Webb of Winters; one sister, Virginia "Ginny" Rhodes of Uvalde; seven grandchildren; three surrogate grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 26, at the Winters Funeral Home Chapel with Adam Hester officiating. Interment will follow in Bradshaw Cemetery under the direction of the Winters Funeral Home.

Lottery

The winning Cash Five numbers drawn Thursday by the Texas Lottery: 10 - 13 - 25 - 29 - 32

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Thursday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 9-4-9

For all of your news, sports and local information

Police blotter

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

• **TERRY DEWAYNE BAILEY**, 32, of Dallas, was arrested Wednesday on a Dallas County warrant for driving while license suspended.

• **JOHNNY TREVINO**, 37, of 703 Lorilla, was arrested Thursday on charges of public intoxication and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

• **RICHARD RENTERIA**, 30, of 1207 Marijo, was arrested Thursday on a charge of public intoxication.

• **AGGRAVATED ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON** was reported in the 1600 block of Martin Luther King Boulevard.

• **THEFT** was reported:

- in the 1100 block of Lamesa.

- in the 900 block of Willia.

- in the 3300 block of FM 700.

• **BURGLARY OF A VEHICLE** was reported in the 1800 block of FM 700.

• **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported:

- in the 1700 block of Purdue.

- in the 1400 block of Stadium.

Sheriff's report

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

• **CADEN JAMES HALL**, 17, was arrested Tuesday by DPS on charges of failure to notify/report and driving while intoxicated.

• **TERRY LEON PARTLOW**, 35, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated-third or more offense.

• **DETRICK L. HOUSTON**, 36, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid.

• **MICHELLE A. BUSTAMANTE**, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **DORA DEHOYOS**, 25, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of possession of a controlled substance and bondsman off of bond.

• **UNATTENDED DEATH** was reported in the 3900 block of Rice. HCSO was advised of a possible unattended death. Deputies responded along with Sheriff Walker. Report to follow.

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.

☐ **ROAD TO RECOVERY DRIVERS WANTED.** Volunteer drivers are needed to transport cancer patients to and from treatments. If you can spare a few hours each month, please consider volunteering to drive somebody along the Road to Recovery. For more information about volunteering or if you are a cancer patient in need of the service, call La Wanda Hamm, 263-7827.

☐ **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.

Weather

Tonight...Mostly clear...Becoming mostly cloudy after midnight. Lows in the upper 50s. South winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts to 25 mph.

Saturday...Mostly cloudy...Becoming partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s. South winds 10 to 20 mph. Saturday night...Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers. Cooler. Lows in the lower 40s. South winds 10 to 20 mph becoming west.

Sunday...Sunny. Highs in the mid 50s. West winds 10 to 20 mph. Sunday night...Mostly clear. Lows around 30.

Monday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the upper 50s. Monday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 30s.

Tuesday through Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s. Lows in the upper 30s.

New years day...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s.



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HENRY BACKES

Bulletin board

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

Today

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.

Potton House, 200 Gregg, 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.

Monday

Senior Circle meets at 4 p.m. at the Scenic Mountain Medical Center for sit and be fit chair aerobics. People age 50 and over are invited to participate. 268-4721.

Evening Lions Club meets at 6:30 p.m. at La Posada. The public is invited to attend.

Tuesday

Intermediate line dancing classes meet at 9 a.m. in the Senior Citizens Center. 267-1628.

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

Support groups

FRIDAY

☐ AA open discussion meeting from noon to 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Noon Open Big Book Study Meeting, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

SATURDAY

☐ Open Discussion Meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open Podium/Speakers Meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Open Birthday Night, No Smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY

☐ Alcoholics Anonymous meets from 11 a.m. to noon at 615 Settles. Open meeting 5 to 6 p.m.

☐ Surviving Pregnancy Loss meets the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Howard County Library Committee Room. Call 631-4430 for more information.

TUESDAY

☐ Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin will hold a self-help support group for care givers in Howard County on Tuesday.

The meeting will be held at Canterbury Retirement Homes Inc., 1700 Lancaster, from 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. For more information, call Raynetta Williams, caregiver coordinator, at (432) 563-1061 or (800) 491-4636 or locally call Debbie Read at Home Hospice at (432) 264-7599.

This group is open to the public and funded by the Texas Department on Aging.

THURSDAY

☐ Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, 12 noon to 1 p.m.; Women's meeting; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Non-Smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 to 9 p.m.

☐ Fibromyalgia/Chronic Fatigue Support Group meets at noon at the Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center.

BIG SPRING HERALD

www.bigspringherald.com

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ROME (AP) — Walls of Vatican City in Bethlehem's Square and beyond world Christmas are warnings and violence that U.S. Pope John Paul II appeal for peace U.S. troops Hussein's honor Tikrit paused patrols Thursday the holiday w turkey, cranbe and apple pie. leagues in Af sang Christm and dressed as elves in a parade rated jeeps and "Of course it b

that I'm away family. But I good work so bother me so m Sgt. Jay Conig Mountain Div dier from Roche as he manned t the main U.S. Afghanistan at

"I have no many more Ch we'll be here — as it takes," he

The Christm was a bit more the West Bank Bethlehem, Filipino worker from Israel were the only f attending En gauge Masses in tional birthplace

Three years o Palestinian fight kept thousands o and pilgrims a dampened sp Palestinian resid relied on tou their livelihoods

And the violen ued Thursday: a bombing near a outside Tel Av three bystander first such attack than two month City, an Israeli h fired two missi car, killing a Islamic militant other people.

As Thursday though, resid Bethlehem got Christmas mood ning Santa outfi ing Mickey Mo loons and eating ton candy in a fe iday parade.

The pope tur thoughts to Isra Palestinians cu traditional C Day greeting, a the "great evils and terrorism mankind at the third millen

"Save us from and armed which lay was areas of the wo the scourge of t and from the ma of violence whi the weak and the ble," John Paul thousands of pe eered in St. Peter under a brilliant "Save us from ament as we

LIGHTS

Continued from Pa

10 p.m. Those plann through the should enter t through the H entrance. The d also accessible f ers who would view the exhibit

Contact Staff Lyndel Moody at ext. 234, or by newsdesk@cron

CHRISTMAS 2003

Threats of terror attacks; U.S. troops celebrate with carols

ROME (AP) — From the walls of Vatican City to Bethlehem's Manger Square and beyond, the world celebrated Christmas amid terror warnings and Mideast violence that underscored Pope John Paul II's latest appeal for peace.

U.S. troops in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit paused in their patrols Thursday to mark the holiday with sliced turkey, cranberry sauce and apple pie. Their colleagues in Afghanistan sang Christmas carols and dressed as Santas and elves in a parade of decorated jeeps and Humvees.

"Of course it bothers me that I'm away from my family. But I'm doing good work so it doesn't bother me so much," said Sgt. Jay Coniglia, a 10th Mountain Division soldier from Rochester, N.Y., as he manned the gate at the main U.S. base in Afghanistan at Bagram.

"I have no idea how many more Christmases we'll be here — as many as it takes," he said.

The Christmas mood was a bit more gloomy in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, where Filipino workers bused in from Israel were virtually the only foreigners attending English-language Masses in the traditional birthplace of Jesus.

Three years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting have kept thousands of tourists and pilgrims away, and dampened spirits of Palestinian residents who relied on tourism for their livelihoods.

And the violence continued Thursday: A suicide bombing near a bus stop outside Tel Aviv killed three bystanders in the first such attack in more than two months. In Gaza City, an Israeli helicopter fired two missiles at a car, killing a senior Islamic militant and four other people.

As Thursday wore on, though, residents of Bethlehem got into the Christmas mood by donning Santa outfits, carrying Mickey Mouse balloons and eating pink cotton candy in a festive holiday parade.

The pope turned his thoughts to Israelis and Palestinians during his traditional Christmas Day greeting, as well as the "great evils" of war and terrorism afflicting mankind at the start of the third millennium.

"Save us from the wars and armed conflicts which lay waste whole areas of the world, from the scourge of terrorism and from the many forms of violence which assail the weak and the vulnerable," John Paul said to thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square under a brilliant sun.

"Save us from discouragement as we face the

paths to peace, difficult paths indeed, yet possible and therefore necessary," he said, his voice strong despite having celebrated a lengthy Midnight Mass just hours earlier.

"Save us from the wars and armed conflicts which lay waste whole areas of the world, from the scourge of terrorism and from the many forms of violence which assail the weak and the vulnerable."

Pope John Paul

He stressed it was particularly urgent to follow such paths to peace in the Middle East.

Security around the Vatican was particularly tight this year, amid reports that churches could become terrorist targets. Clusters of police lined the main boulevard leading to St. Peter's on Thursday morning, and the faithful attending Midnight Mass had to pass through metal detectors.

Intelligence warnings of possible terrorist plots also prompted the cancellation of six Air France flights between Los Angeles and Paris. The cancellations added to holiday tensions already high since President Bush raised the national terror alert level to orange, the second highest level, last Sunday.

Violence, meanwhile, continued in Iraq, with anti-U.S. forces unleashing a string of grenade, rocket and mortar attacks across Baghdad. The Ishtar Sheraton Hotel, where many foreigners live, the Iranian and Turkish embassies, banks and the gates of a U.S. army base were targeted, although only one person was injured.

"I guess they think security's going to be downgraded because of the holiday," Army Lt. Kurt Muniz of New York City said after the hotel attack. "If they want to bring it, I say bring it on."

Outside the war zones, though, Christmas went off relatively without incident.

Thousands of Christians in mostly Hindu India decorated their homes, dressed as Santas and flocked to five-star hotels for parties — despite fears of violence raised by anti-Christian pamphlets distributed in western Gujarat state, which has been plagued by religious violence this past week.

World leaders issued

their traditional greetings: Queen Elizabeth II paid tribute to British troops who took part in the Iraq war, while Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf praised Foreign Minister Anna Lindh as a role model. Lindh was fatally stabbed Sept. 10.

And in Puerto Rico, the centuries-old tradition of the Christmas parranda continued, with revelers bursting into homes around midnight to sing Christmas carols and play music on maracas and gourds in exchange for food and drink. While the tradition has waned in recent years because of high crime, some parties still went off without a hitch.

"This is the best parranda in San Juan," said Charles Juhasz, whose home was targeted this year. "They come and drink everything!"

COTTON

Continued from Page 1A

"A lot of the farmers are getting their mods together before we can catch up with them. We're just glad to see so much cotton."

At the Tarzan Gin in Lenorah, the increase in product volume this season has the facility ginning around the clock.

"It's been really heavy the last couple of weeks," said secretary Brenda Robertson. "It's been so strong we've had to put on a night crew. We're really having a great year. We've finished 12,500 bales so far."

"A lot of farmers are telling us they're through. It's really been much better than we thought it would be. We had expected to make around 11,000 to 12,000 bales, but now it's looking more like 15,000."

The Mustang Farmers Gin in Lomax is also exceeding its expectations for the season.

"We've done 13,843 bales so far," said gin spokesperson Cheryl Cook. "That puts us past where we were this time

last year.

"When you look at the weather in West Texas, we've had a little more help with things this year. We're a little behind right now, but that's not unusual when dealing with these kinds of conditions. A lot of the farmers have already gotten their crops completely stripped."

Farmer's Co-Op Gin in Stanton is also riding the wave of healthy production this season.

"We've baled right at 23,500 so far," said Jack Shephard, spokesperson. "We're right on schedule at this point. It's definitely going to be a good year. The weather conditions have been excellent for stripping the cotton. We expect to complete about 30,000 bales before the season ends."

Success for this year's cotton crop didn't begin at the gins, however. Local cotton farmer Horace Tubb has been a cotton producer for more than 60 years, and certainly isn't shy about the results of this season's crop.

"It's been excellent," said Tubb. "We've been stripping in Martin

County, and we're getting between 2.5 and 3.5 bales per acre from that area. We've also got some dryland cotton in Lomax which is producing around 2 bales per acre there, and that's excellent for dryland conditions."

"The price of cotton has fallen a little bit lately, but it's still good. I figure we'll make around 1,000 bales this season, so that should put some money in the bank."

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

GIBSON

Continued from Page 1A

Texas State Farm Bureau resolutions committee for a number of years.

Gibson and his wife, Paula, have three children, Braden, Brett and Katie.

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

Texas news briefs

Houston hospitals work with ISD to

keep kids learning

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston hospitals are partnering with the school district to make sure hospitalized children continue learning.

The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center has a classroom in the middle of its pediatrics unit.

M.D. Anderson, Texas Children's Hospital and 10 other hospitals work with the Houston Independent School District to provide the classrooms.

In between appointments and treatments the young patients study everything from spelling to science and math and even carve out time for art, music and P.E.

Neil Sen, 12, whose attended school at M.D. Anderson for two months, read through his science worksheet about acids on a recent day before he announced, "I want to be an inventor!"

Fair winners send

treats to troops in Iraq

DALLAS — U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Belshe missed the State Fair of Texas this year, but he'll get his fill of it soon.

A group of award-winning State Fair cooks has baked 50 dozen cookies and mailed them to Belshe and his fellow soldiers stationed in Iraq.

The cooks said sending the nearly 48-pound care package of high-ranking cookies and other goodies was the least they could

do for U.S. soldiers spending the holidays away from their loved ones.

"I hope this will give them some warm feelings about home, that they know we are thinking about them," said Donna Thomas, who contributed her sugar cookies, a second-place finisher at the State Fair, to the care package. "I hope it makes them feel a little better."

The group of 34 amateur cooks who donated treats to Operation Cookie met through State Fair cooking contests they've entered over the years. They said they are competitors during the fair's run, beginning in September, but they're friends all year.

Mad cow scare not seen as a boon by

poultry, pork producers

New concerns about U.S. beef safety don't offer any glee to producers of pork and poultry — they figure Americans' concerns about one food can easily translate to suspicions about others.

"This is not good for chicken," said Bill Roenigk, an official with the National Chicken Council. "Consumers should be and are concerned about their food supply. Anything that jeopardizes consumer confidence in the food supply is not good for us."

The beef industry took an early hit after an initial diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as mad cow disease, in a dairy cow slaughtered in

Two U.S. soldiers killed near Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi insurgents shelled a base northeast of Baghdad, killing two U.S. soldiers on a day of grenade, rocket and mortar attacks on the capital, the military said Friday.

Washington state earlier this month. British scientists confirmed the diagnosis on Thursday.

The largest importers of U.S. beef — Japan, Mexico and South Korea — have halted shipments, while others imposed temporary bans.

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*Pass Restricted

CINEMA 4

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*Cold Mountain (R)
Daily: 2:00, 5:10 & 8:20

*Mona Lisa Smile (PG-13)
Daily: 2:10 & 7:00

*Cheaper By The Dozen (PG)
Daily: 2:30, 5:00, 7:20 & 9:50

*Peter Pan (PG)

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LIGHTS

Continued from Page 1A

10 p.m. Those planning to drive through the display should enter the park through the Highway 87 entrance. The display is also accessible for walkers who would prefer to view the exhibits by foot.

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

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DECEMBER 26, 2003

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.

Chuck Williams
Publisher

Susanne Reed
General Manager

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

We salute:

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

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

This week we salute:

• The **CLASSICS** and **CAVALIERS**, student civic groups, on their canned food drive to benefit the Salvation Army.

• **BIG SPRING SYMPHONY AND CHORUS**, **THE BAUER ELEMENTARY FOURTH GRADE CHOIR** AND **JOYCE BRADLEY** on their wonderful holiday performance, "The Symphony is Christmas."

• The **COSSACKS MOTORCYCLE CLUB MEMBERS** and the groups that assisted them in raising funds to purchase and deliver toys and other items to children.

• **SPRING TABERNACLE CHURCH**, which gave away toys to almost 300 children this Christmas.

• Howard County Sheriff's Office award winners **CHIEF DEPUTY GARY PRITCHETT**, who was selected Deputy of the Year, and dispatcher **NICCI GRIGG**, named civilian Employee of the Year.

• **MEMBERS OF GIRL SCOUT UNIT 35**, who collected almost 200 gifts for the Big Spring Herald Toy Drive.

• **ALL GOOD LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE.**

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

LETTERS POLICY

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

- 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.

• 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

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 or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@crcom.net.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

Tipping my hat to the French and Germans

Well I am certainly glad to see that we are telling off the French, Germans and

Russians. I couldn't agree more with the Bush administration that those treacherous, undependable countries should be punished for their past cooperation with Saddam by being shut out of the \$18.6 billion in Iraqi reconstruction contracts. No contracts for quislings! Someone's got to uphold standards of morality and purity, and who better than us? As the president so often reminds us, this is a fight between good and evil.

I was particularly pleased when Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz took that sharp little dig at all three countries when he said a prime consideration for who gets the contracts was "protection of the essential security interests of the United States." And was there ever anything more inimical to our security than all those tons and tons of weapons of mass destruction we have found in Iraq? That'll teach those vodka-swilling Rooskies to think our security is not their affair. Way to go, Wolfie.

Of course, it was a little awkward that Wolfowitz gave the three Saddam-dealing nations that body slam just as former Secretary of State James Baker was setting out to ask them for money. That did sort of bring up Casey Stengel's plaintive question, "Doesn't anybody here know how to play this game?" But the beauty of our position is its moral clarity. Surely the French, Germans and Russians won't mind being cut out and dissed just when we're asking them for money — it would be so petty of them.

I was especially entranced to read about the moral case for stiffing these nations on the op-ed page of The New York Times in an

article by Claudia Rosett, senior fellow with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. It says on its website that the foundation is against terrorism, thus distinguishing it from all the foundations in favor of terrorism.

Rosett calls the three delinquent countries "the Axis of Avarice." Isn't that cute? In all fairness, the senior fellow reminds us: "Remember, plenty of money flowed through Saddam Hussein's Iraq ... many countries took part in that frenzy of lending, including Japan as the No. 1 sovereign lender. Then came Russia, France and Germany and, yes, the United States as No. 5." But surely you see the immense moral difference between being No. 5, as opposed to being 2, 3 or 4? All the difference in the world.

Rosett continues: "But in the 1990s, as the Iraqi dictator's depravities became increasingly evident to the rest of the world, that list narrowed." (Actually, his depravities had been evident to many of us as far back as the days when the Reagan administration was sending Saddam arms.)

The senior fellow continues: "Under the U.N.'s oil-for-food program, the despot got to tap his preferred business partners. ... What began as a relief program for Iraqis suffering under sanctions turned into a multibillion dollar contracting business flowing through the shrouded books of the United Nations. By the end, the Russians were selling the Baathist elite luxury cars, the French were providing broadcasting equipment for the Information Ministry, and the Germans and Chinese worked on the phone system. ... Old Europe's indignation over the (U.S.) list is a marvel of hypocrisy."

Speaking of marvels of hypocrisy, the U.N.'s books on who dealt with Iraq are not all that shrouded. For example, one of the disgusting companies actually making profits from dealing with the despicable dictator in the 1990s — long after his depravities had

become evident to even the less attentive sectors of the world — was, well, golly, look at this, Halliburton. Between 1997 and 2000, while Dick Cheney was CEO of Halliburton, the company sold \$73 million worth of oilfield equipment and services to Saddam Hussein.

At least Halliburton was not selling luxury cars to the Baathist elite. Halliburton, the oilfield equipment company, merely kept Saddam Hussein's oil fields pumping, the only thing that allowed the s.o.b. to stay in power. Halliburton cleverly ran its business with Saddam through two of its subsidiaries, Dresser Rand and Ingersoll-Dresser, in order to avoid the sanctions.

Unlike the Germans, the French and the Russians, Halliburton was not punished by the Bush administration for dealing with the dictator. Instead, it got the largest reconstruction contract given by this administration, with an estimated value between \$5 billion and \$15 billion. And the company got the contract without competitive bidding.

Halliburton has amply repaid the administration's faith. The Pentagon is now investigating the company for at least \$120 million in overcharges, including \$60 million for importing gasoline into Iraq and \$67 million on a food services contract. Among the allegations are that Halliburton had blood in its food service refrigerators and is serving our soldiers rotten meat.

I think the French will particularly enjoy being lectured on their hypocrisy, preferably by Cheney himself. It's the kind of thing sophisticated people especially appreciate.

To find out more about Molly Ivins and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creatorsyndicate.com.

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Hinckley may be innocent, but never free

You can't blame John Hinckley for wanting to go home for the holidays. You can't blame him for anything, in fact. That's the problem.

Even though Hinckley shot Ronald Reagan and three other people on March 30, 1981, the law says he cannot be blamed for that. A jury said he was not guilty by reason of insanity.

Most people can support that concept — as long as it is in the abstract. If you are not responsible for your actions through a mental disease or defect, then surely you should not be punished for them.

In our society, we cure sick people. We treat them therapeutically, not punitively.

Unless they shoot the president of the United States, that is.

Though John Hinckley is technically not a criminal, he certainly is treated like one. Hinckley has been committed to St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., since he was judged insane in 1982.

He is in St. Elizabeths for one purpose only: to be cured. When he is cured and, therefore, no longer a danger, he must be released. The law says so.

People who shoot other people and get convicted for it rarely serve as long as 21 years in prison. In fact, most murderers do not serve nearly that long. But Hinckley can be kept in St. Elizabeths forever.

Although it always raises a public outcry, over the last four years Hinckley has been allowed outside St. Elizabeths hundreds of times for brief trips while accompanied by hospital personnel. (He is also shadowed by Secret Service agents when he goes outside, who take careful note of his activities down to what kind of books he looks at in bookstores.)

Recently, a federal judge ruled that Hinckley will soon be allowed visits with his parents unsupervised by medical staff. But the judge imposed strict guidelines: His parents, both of whom are 78, must be with him at all times and all problems, even minor ones, must be reported. If there are any problems, Hinckley must be returned to the hospital immediately. The judge and prosecutors must be notified of any trips two weeks in advance, and a detailed itinerary must be provided.

This itinerary will also be provided to the Secret Service, which presumably will continue to follow him. (Reagan, as an ex-president, gets round-the-clock Secret Service protection.)

During his trips, Hinckley will be prohibited from talking to reporters. The trips will start out as daytrips, and if these go well, he will be allowed overnight trips. The overnight trips must be to a hotel suite with his parents, and he cannot leave the suite without one of his parents going with him. All these trips must be in the Washington area. The judge refused to allow Hinckley to visit his parents' home in Williamsburg, Va.

Even with all these restrictions, the judge's ruling has not been a

popular one. The talking heads on cable talk shows have protested vehemently, as has the Reagan family. The Justice Department has not said whether it will appeal the judge's ruling or not.

Contrary to popular belief, insanity is an extremely rare defense, used in only about 1 percent of all felony murder cases. It is successful only about 25 percent of the time.

It did not work for John Wayne Gacy, who strangled 33 young men and boys and buried 26 of them beneath the floorboards of his home in suburban Chicago. And it did not work for Jeffrey Dahmer, who dismembered and partially ate 15 young men and boys in Milwaukee.

Could anyone who performed these gruesome deeds really be sane? Their juries thought so, or at least the juries did not want to run the risk of ever putting either man back out on the streets (which is why most insanity defenses fail).

When Hinckley was successful with his insanity plea, it might have seemed like a good deal to him at the time. I doubt he feels that way today.

In the eyes of the law, John Hinckley is an innocent man. But that doesn't mean he is ever going to be a free man.

Roger Simon can be e-mailed at WriteRoger@aol.com. To find out more about Roger Simon and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creatorsyndicate.com.

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ROGER SIMON

St. Mary's E

Church

Everyone is attend worshi at St. Mary's th Morning pray said at 8 pand No Sunday s Sunday.

St. Mary's w New Year's Ev the Rector Wednesday at parishioners an Evening pray Monday throu at 5:30 p.m. in Chapel.

For more in about St. Episcopal Chu 267-8201 or visi site

www.stmarysb St. Mary's is 1001 South Goli

St. Paul Lu

Church

Bring in the with Jesus. Jol gregation for New Year's Ev service on Wed 11 p.m.

The mission o Lutheran Chu serve Jesus C word and deed the power of Spirit, proclai love of God so t one may have et

First Presby

Church

The scripture sermon the fir after Christma: 2:41-52. Worshi is held at 11

Rev. Matthew M ister of the chu present the serr

Sunday school 9:45 a.m., Tak held at 10:

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Church news

Family reunions are becoming more popular

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Everyone is invited to attend worship services at St. Mary's this Sunday. Morning prayer will be said at 8 and 10:30 a.m. No Sunday school this Sunday.

St. Mary's will have a New Year's Eve party at the Rectory on Wednesday at 10 p.m. All parishioners are invited.

Evening prayer is said Monday through Friday at 5:30 p.m. in St. Mary's Chapel.

For more information about St. Mary's Episcopal Church, call 267-8201 or visit our Web site at www.stmarysbst.org.

St. Mary's is located at 1001 South Goliad.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Bring in the New Year with Jesus. Join the congregation for a special New Year's Eve worship service on Wednesday at 11 p.m.

The mission of St. Paul Lutheran Church is to serve Jesus Christ in word and deed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the love of God so that everyone may have eternal life.

First Presbyterian Church

The scripture for the sermon the first Sunday after Christmas is Luke 2:41-52. Worship service is held at 11 a.m. The Rev. Matthew Miles, minister of the church, will present the sermon.

Sunday school begins at 9:45 a.m., Take Ten is held at 10:35 a.m.

Everyone is welcome at First Presbyterian Church located on Runnels between 7th and 8th streets.

Philadelphia Primitive Baptist Church

Elder David Machiavello, pastor, will speak from I John on "Joy in the Life of the Christian" Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the Philadelphia Baptist Church located at 201 East 24th Street.

Everyone is welcome. Weekly Bible study will resume at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7. Various biblical questions will be studied.

The annual New Year's Eve singing will be held from 7 p.m. to 12:01 a.m. Dec. 31 into the new year, 2004. Visitors are welcome.

Anyone having a question about the Bible or needing more information about the church can call Elder David Machiavello at 267-6543 or 267-7558.

Church news is due in by Wednesday for publication on the following Friday.

Story idea? Contact the Life desk with your story suggestion. 263-7331, ext. 236 or e-mail life@bigspringherald.com

Read us online: bigspringherald.com

(NAPSI) Families throughout the world are showing increased interest in catching up with loved ones and creating new memories at family reunions, and doing so in exotic locales.

According to the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), intergenerational travel is an important part of vacation planning and family reunion trips are up 35 percent. Dr. Larry Basirico, author of the Family Reunion Survival Guide, says there's a good reason for this trend.

"Destination reunions offer the advantage that they are very well planned," he explains. "They offer a full slate of activities and provide a common experience for people that is away from their everyday lives."

A survey sponsored by ASTA and Vacation.com found that family reunion travelers are choosing creative venues for their reunions. When asked where people are hosting reunions, respondents indicated cruise ships (52.8 percent) as the most popular, followed by all-inclusive resorts (19.8 percent).

Among other trends, respondents said grandparents are now initiating plans and reunions are often planned around milestone events like anniversaries and weddings.

Noting different generations' interests, Basirico



More and more families are planning their family reunions in interesting and respite type locations.

feels that having a travel agent involved with reunion planning is helpful.

"The value of using a travel agent is to be able to coordinate the details, the schedules, getting people to the right place, offering people the right activities and making them happy", says travel agent Jan Hammond.

Travel agents aren't alone in focusing on family travel. From hotel packages to Caribbean cruise international reunion programs, travel industry leaders have introduced programs to make family reunion travel easier and more memorable, by adding special amenities for guests.

Royal Reunions, for example, adds shipboard activities to bring the family together such as

family competitions, souvenir photos, in-state-room surprises, and passes to aqua-parks at the cruise line's private destinations.

"Three things make a successful reunion", adds Basirico. "Daily scheduled events, planned activities and activities that promote interdependence among family members."

A successful reunion can't be pulled off at the last minute-planning in advance is key. It's difficult to do all this on your own; that's where experts like travel agents come in.

They have the experience and the knowledge to match the destination with the interests of the family".

When planning a reunion, experts recommend families should

look for about 10 months to a year in advance.

To learn more about planning a "destination" family reunion, speak with a travel agent or try the Web site at www.TravelSense.org.

A growing number of families are holding their reunions in exotic locations, such as on a cruise ship or at a resort.

Keep alcohol moderate for New Year's Eve

Enjoy a New Year's Eve party without having alcoholic beverages as the center of attention.

Prepare plenty of foods so guests will not drink on an empty stomach. Avoid too many salty foods, which tend to make people thirsty.

Encourage group games that keep the focus on fun-not alcohol. Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol.

Offer a variety of non-alcoholic beverages for those who prefer not to drink alcohol. Host a contest to create non-alcoholic drink recipes. If preparing an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream faster with a carbonated base.

If some guests have too much to drink, drive them home or arrange for transportation.

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Chicken: versatile, tasty, nutritious

Braising, roasting or baking favorite winter-time recipes using chicken is easy, tasty and versatile for any menu.

In a braised dish, chicken parts are cooked while covered over very low, moist heat, allowed to simmer until meat loosens from the bones. Cooking should be done slowly, using enough liquid to provide a moist environment. When the chicken is cooked, it will pull away from the bone with no resistance. Cool the chicken slightly in the braising liquid before serving so that the juices will stay in the meat.

Crock-pot cooking is a familiar example of a cooking method that is perfect for the colder months.

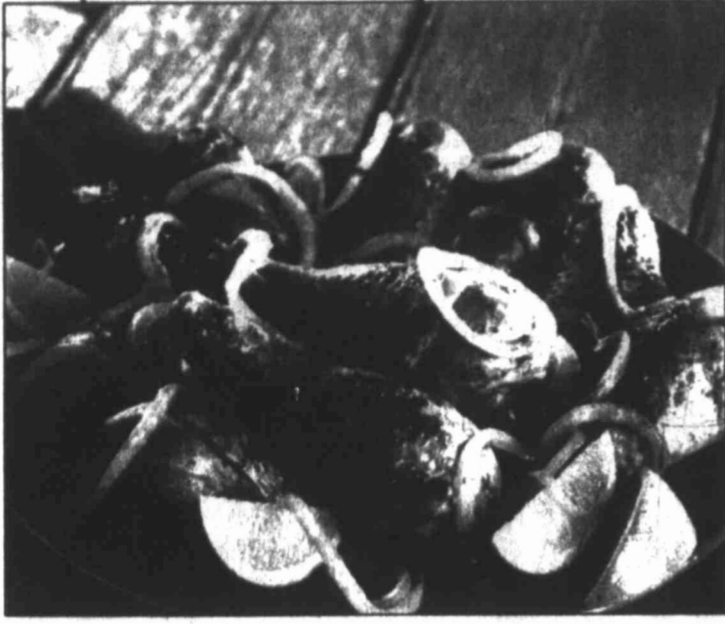
Braising and roasting meats like chicken are just as easy and give the same tangy results with much less cooking time.

Another advantage is when braising or roasting chicken, a larger quantity may be cooked than usually is eaten at one meal, leaving delicious leftovers that are the basis of future dishes.

Pan juices keep the chicken moist and provide the perfect gravy.

Roasting applies the opposite technique. The high heat quickly caramelizes the skin on the surface of the chicken, evoking rich juices and flavors. Very little special equipment is needed, just potholders and a roasting pan of the proper size.

A pan should have a flat bottom and be no more



Chicken is always tasty and healthy and is a versatile ingredient for almost any menu or entree dish.

than two and a half inches deep, to prevent steaming of the food.

The basic roasting time for chickens in this high-heat method is approximately 10 minutes per pound of meat.

The meat is done when the juices run clear when a knife is inserted into the joint between the thigh and the body.

Cuban-style braised chicken

eight to nine chicken drumsticks (about 3 pounds)
3/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
one teaspoon dried oregano
one teaspoon ground cumin
two cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup lime juice
one onion, medium-sized, thinly sliced
one tablespoon olive oil

In large zipper lock bag, combine salt, pepper, oregano, cumin, garlic, orange juice, lime juice and onion slices. Seal bag and shake to mix well. Add chicken, seal, shake well and refrigerate at least two hours and up to 24 hours.

Remove chicken from marinade and pat dry.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, warm olive oil. Add chicken and brown and all sides, turning frequently, about 10 minutes total. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover skillet and let chicken cook 10 minutes more.

Remove chicken and set aside on a plate. Pour marinade with onions into same skillet; increase heat to medium. When sauce simmers, return chicken to pan, along with any juices that have collected on the plate.

Cover skillet, reduce heat to very low and simmer for 20 minutes. Serves four.

Roast chicken with tasty glaze

whole chicken, cut into eight parts (three to four pounds)
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 tsp black pepper, divided
two cloves garlic, minced
one tablespoon olive oil
1/4 cup plus two tablespoons lime juice
3/4 cup guava jelly
3/4 cup guava nectar or juice
one tablespoon balsamic vinegar

one tablespoon Dijon mustard
one teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
one teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 cup salt-free chicken broth

In small bowl, make a paste by combining 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, oregano and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Rub spices between fingers to release flavors. Stir in garlic and olive oil. Rub paste over chicken pieces. Arrange chicken pieces in large non-corrosive baking dish.

Do not overlap chicken pieces. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons lime juice on top of chicken. Cover dish and refrigerate at least 6 hours and up to 24 hours. One hour before cooking, remove chicken from refrigerator. Preheat oven to 425.

Glaze

Make glaze by blending together in a small saucepan over medium heat guava jelly, guava nectar or juice, 1/4 cup lime juice, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, 1/2 teaspoon cumin, 1/2 teaspoon salt, thyme and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper.

Bring sauce to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes, until glaze is reduced to about one cup. Set aside.

Place chicken in preheated oven and roast for 15 minutes.

Reduce heat to 375; continue roasting for 30 to 35 minutes more, basting with glaze several times during the last 15 minutes of cooking. Transfer chicken to warmed serving platter; brush with glaze. Cover with foil and let rest.

Pour excess fat off roasting pan. Stir broth into roasting pan, place on stove top over medium heat and stir with wooden spoon, scraping up brown bits from bottom of pan.

Add remaining glaze to roasting pan. Bring mixture to low simmer. Strain and serve as gravy alongside chicken.



Serve tea anytime hot or cold and it's good for you, too.

Tasty tea is simply healthy

NAPSI—Most people try to lead healthy lifestyles, but it can be hard work!

Between crazy work schedules, driving the kids to-and-from practice and saving for college, few people realistically have the leisure time or extra money to go to the gym three times a week or shop for groceries at specialty health food stores.

Yet, keeping the family healthy remains a huge priority and there are simple ways to achieve this goal. From preparing balanced, low-fat meals, to climbing stairs at the mall instead of riding the escalator, everyone has a few easy tricks that add an extra boost of wellness to the daily routine.

Here's another valuable tip: drink more tea. Not only is it calorie-free, great tasting and about half the caffeine as a cup of coffee, but one serving of Lipton black or green tea contains about 190 mg of flavonoid antioxidants—compounds that are believed to fight free rad-

icals in your body.

That's more flavonoid antioxidant activity than certain fruits and vegetables! Though, be sure to eat those five servings of fruits and veggies each day, because tea is not a substitute for their nutrients.

Additionally, scientists are eagerly investigating the relationship between tea consumption and the reduction of disease risks, such as heart disease and stroke. And, though there isn't definitive evidence of this relationship just yet, researchers are encouraged by preliminary findings.

Of course, you always could eat three eggplants while chanting "ohm" as you contort into the Downward Dog yoga position, but that doesn't sound very simple.

To learn more information about tea and health, visit the Lipton Tea Web site at www.LiptonT.com.

Tea is a simple way to be good to yourself.

Do your ears hurt when flying?

Many people have problems with their ears when flying, especially if they have to take a trip while suffering from a cold or allergies.

To make air travel more comfortable during the busy holiday season, ear specialists at the House Ear Institute suggest chewing gum or yawning vigorously during the descent to stimulate swallowing and equalize pressure in the middle ear.

Give babies a pacifier or bottle, and give children something to chew on before take off and landing to encourage

swallowing.

If possible, avoid flying when you have an allergy attack, cold or sinus infection. The swelling in the mucus linings is aggravated by dramatic changes in cabin pressure, and you may experience extreme discomfort or pain.

If these symptoms persist after your trip, consult an ear specialist as you may have an ear infection.

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Israel promises retaliation for suicide bomb

JERUSALEM—Israel will target Palestinian retaliation for bombing that Israeli, senior sources said. Leaders of Hamas, ever, will be such strikes group has attacks, the so

Thursday's bombing car after an Israel in Gaza killed Islamic Jihad and two civilian violence came actively calm threatened to renew peace.

Defense Minister Mofaz and his manders decided to target militant Islamic Jihad radical Popula the Liberation Palestine — that claimed responsibility for Thursday's strike, said sources, who condition of a

Since the strike in Septe Israel has routed down and tant leaders — manner since Thursday's he strike, which top Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip (web sites). Fr

sion signaled a step up such a Israel's military Maj. Gen. Mosaid in an interlashed Friday t

which is responsible for the prime target strikes — h attacks inside response to attacks on its l

"It is not clear that a group I decides to strike within Israel, from the reality their organization danger," Yaalon

Due to Hamas Israel will not group, the sources said.

Hamas officials not available ment Friday.

Also Friday, diers shot at about 200 Palestinians a ers dem

against a security Israel is building the West Israel, wounded testers.

Rescue work Israeli protesters erately wounded fire, and a for lightly wounded ber-coated bull

The army said protesters were the fence, and opened fire warning shot get them off ture.

Israel says it is meant to be bombers, but dips deep into Bank, Palestinians a U.S. criticism.

In Gaza, thousands of P attended the the five people Thursday's air

"Our message Minister Ariel prepare coffin people because shaking reprim the way," an a tant shouted t

at the funeral Hameid, 39, a Jihad commander Gaza Strip.

Israel promises retaliation for suicide bombing

JERUSALEM — Israel will target and kill Palestinian militants in retaliation for a suicide bombing that killed four Israelis, senior security sources said Friday. Leaders of Hamas, however, will be exempt from such strikes because the group has halted its attacks, the sources said.

Thursday's suicide bombing came minutes after an Israeli air strike in Gaza killed three Islamic Jihad militants and two civilians. The violence came after a relatively calm period and threatened tentative steps to renew peace talks.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and his top commanders decided Friday to target militants from Islamic Jihad and the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — the group that claimed responsibility for Thursday's bombing, said security sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Since the start of fighting in September 2000, Israel has routinely hunted down and killed militant leaders — often in a manner similar to Thursday's helicopter air strike, which killed the top Islamic Jihad leader in the Gaza Strip (news - web sites). Friday's decision signaled Israel could step up such attacks.

Israel's military chief, Maj. Gen. Moshe Yaalon, said in an interview published Friday that Hamas — which has been responsible for most suicide bombings and been the prime target of Israeli strikes — had halted attacks inside Israel in response to Israeli attacks on its leaders.

"It is no coincidence that a group like Hamas decides to stop attacks within Israel, it comes from the realization that their organization is in danger," Yaalon said.

Due to Hamas' decision, Israel will not strike the group, the security sources said.

Hamas officials were not available for comment Friday.

Also Friday, Israeli soldiers shot at a crowd of about 200 Israelis, Palestinians and foreigners demonstrating against a security barrier Israel is building to separate the West Bank and Israel, wounding two protesters.

Rescue workers said an Israeli protester was moderately wounded by gunfire, and a foreigner was lightly wounded by a rubber-coated bullet.

The army said the two protesters were damaging the fence, and that it had opened fire only after warning shots failed to get them off the structure.

Israel says the barrier is meant to block suicide bombers, but its route dips deep into the West Bank, infuriating Palestinians and drawing U.S. criticism.

In Gaza, tens of thousands of Palestinians attended the funerals of the five people killed in Thursday's airstrike.

"Our message to (Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon ... prepare coffins for your people because our earth-shaking reprisals are on the way," an armed militant shouted to mourners at the funeral of Mekled Hameid, 39, a top Islamic Jihad commander in the Gaza Strip.



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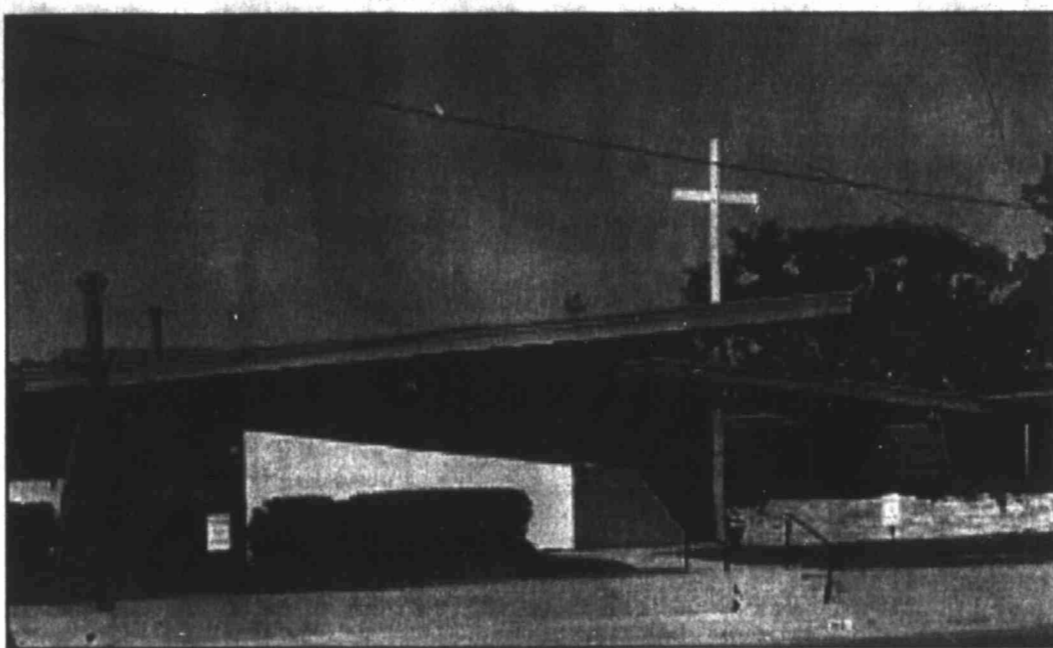
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Psalm 90:12

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James 1: 26

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Proverbs 24:3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1

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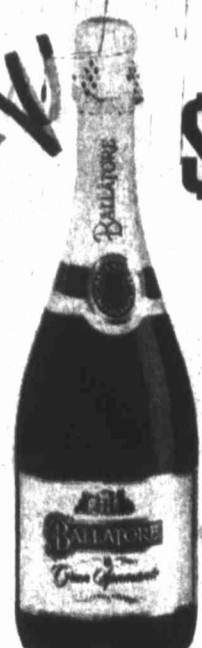
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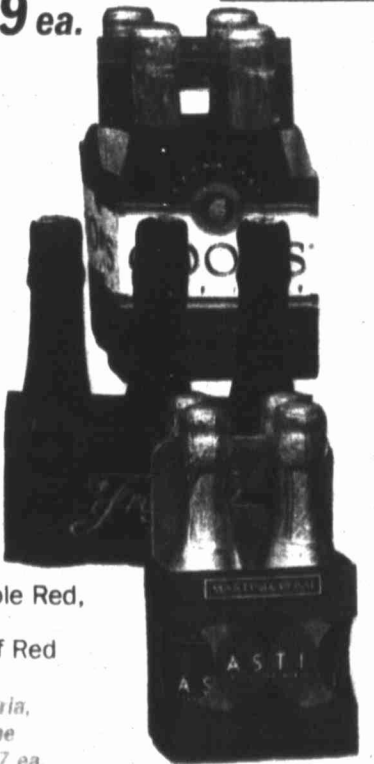
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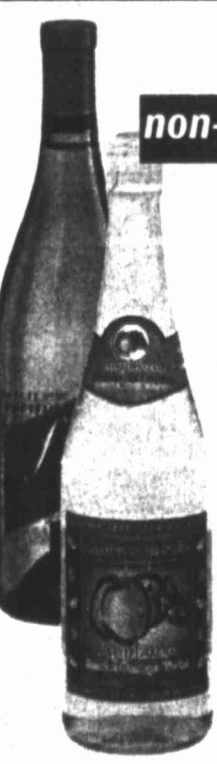
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| <p>Select
Brut - little or no sweetness
Extra Dry - less dry than Brut
Asti or Asti Spumante - sweetest of the sparkling wines</p> | <p>Chill
Champagne -
• should be well chilled
• store in a cool, dark place
• refrigerate upright for 2 hours or chill 30 minutes in a bucket.
• do not chill champagne in the freezer!</p> | <p>Pop
• never shake a champagne bottle
• point the cork away from people
• remove foil and wire hood
• hold cork firmly and turn bottle.
• the natural pressure in the bottle will push the cork out with a slight pop or sigh.</p> | <p>Clink
• it's customary to clink glasses after a toast is given
• this tradition is meant to ward off bad luck.</p> |
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Baylor tragedy overshadows Parcels' impact in Texas sports

The sports year in Texas got off to a rousing start with Bill Parcels saying on Jan. 1 that he had agreed to coach the Dallas Cowboys. Now it's late December and the Parcels-led Cowboys are going to the playoffs.

Wow, what a turnaround from three straight 5-11 seasons. Could there be a bigger story in 2003 in this football-mad state?

Unfortunately, yes. While the Cowboys' revival is impressive, the newsworthiness is trumped by the bizarre, tragic tale surrounding the Baylor basketball program, a series of events that are as baffling now as when they unfolded this summer.

A 6-foot-10 player missing, then found dead near campus. A teammate and former roommate accused of murder. The

respected coach resigning in shame after asking players to spread lies casting the deceased player as a drug dealer, those conversations coming to light because they were secretly recorded by an assistant coach.

Things like improper payments to players and mishandled drug tests seem tame by comparison. Those misdoings were revealed at the start of an ongoing internal investigation that could lead to severe punishment from the NCAA. That ruling, and the ongoing legal proceedings involving the case against Carlton Dotson, ensure that this story will linger well into 2004.

It's not fair to even try gauging the pain suffered by the families of all involved. Yet, since this still a sports story, the on-court impact can be gauged, at least anecdotally.

A LOOK BACK AT 2003 IN TEXAS

The Bears were expecting this season to be coached by Dave Bliss, with Patrick Dennehy and Lawrence Roberts at forward, and John Lucas III and Kenny Taylor at guard. Improvement from last season's 14-14 record seemed like a layup.

Instead, Dennehy is dead and those other players, Baylor's top three scorers last season, have transferred. Bliss is considered such a pariah that he fled to Colorado, but even there negative publicity forced him to quit helping his son's high school team.

Good thing other Texans provided plenty to cheer about this year:

Rice won the NCAA baseball title, earning the first athletic championship for a school long considered an academic winner.

Soon after, the San Antonio Spurs gave David Robinson the ultimate retirement present — an NBA title. They reached the finals by beating the Dallas Mavericks in an all-Texas conference finals.

Lance Armstrong kept the champagne spraying with his record-tying fifth straight Tour de France victory. It was by far his toughest as he overcame illness, two crashes and a near-miss to win by just 61 seconds.

There actually was some good news from college basketball, as the men's and women's teams from Texas made the Final Four.

From high school hoops, Robert Hughes of Fort Worth

Dunbar reclaimed his spot as the nation's winningest basketball coach with No. 1,275, then won a state championship.

The biggest news out of Fort Worth, though, came from the Colonial Country Club.

Annika Sorenstam became the first woman in a PGA Tour event since Texas' own Babe Zaharias in 1945. Although she missed the cut by five strokes, she performed admirably under a worldwide spotlight. More people probably remember her two rounds than who won the event.

Emmitt Smith would be happy to forget what happened when he returned to Texas Stadium in October, eight months after being released by the Cowboys. Playing for the Arizona Cardinals, he lost one yard on six carries and left with a broken shoulder blade.

What team is afraid of the 'Boys

IRVING (AP) — Every week this season, coach Bill Parcels has asked the Dallas Cowboys the same question: What team scares you?

His point was to build their confidence. He wanted to make them look around the league and realize they're as good as any team, or at least most teams, which meant they were good enough to make the playoffs.

If worked, of course. Rather than the usual crutch of "us against the world," Parcels built a mental edge based on self-confidence that helped the Cowboys shed their losing ways. They're preparing for the finale Sunday knowing they still have a chance to win the division.

Now, though, it's time to turn the question around. Is any playoff team afraid of the Cowboys?

Running back Troy Hambrick thought about that Monday, then flashed a devilish grin.



Dallas Cowboys

"I don't think anybody out there is scared of us," he said. "We've got Quincy Carter at quarterback. We've got Troy Hambrick at running back and he can't run by anybody. He's one-dimensional."

His sarcastic barbs echo what folks have been saying since August. He can say it jokingly now because the Cowboys are 10-5 and are already in the playoffs.

Yet, as far as the team has come, an inspection of their playoff path reveals a club that's is far from a juggernaut.

- The two-game winning streak the Cowboys are riding was built against teams with no chance of making the playoffs. The zero-touchdown, one-field goal showing the defense has posted in that span came against quarterback Tim Hasselbeck in his third career start and Jesse Palmer in his second.

- Dallas has beaten only two teams that currently have winning records, Philadelphia and Carolina.

- Dallas also has beaten only two teams that were above .500 at kickoff: Carolina and the New York Giants, who were 1-0 at the time and have since plummeted to 4-11.

- Five of the eight teams the Cowboys have beaten are last in their divisions.

Historical note: Remember the 1998 squad, which also bounced back from a losing record to make the playoffs in their first season under a new coach? Chan Gailey's debut club went 10-6 and won the division by going 8-0 against the NFC East and 2-6 against the rest of the league.

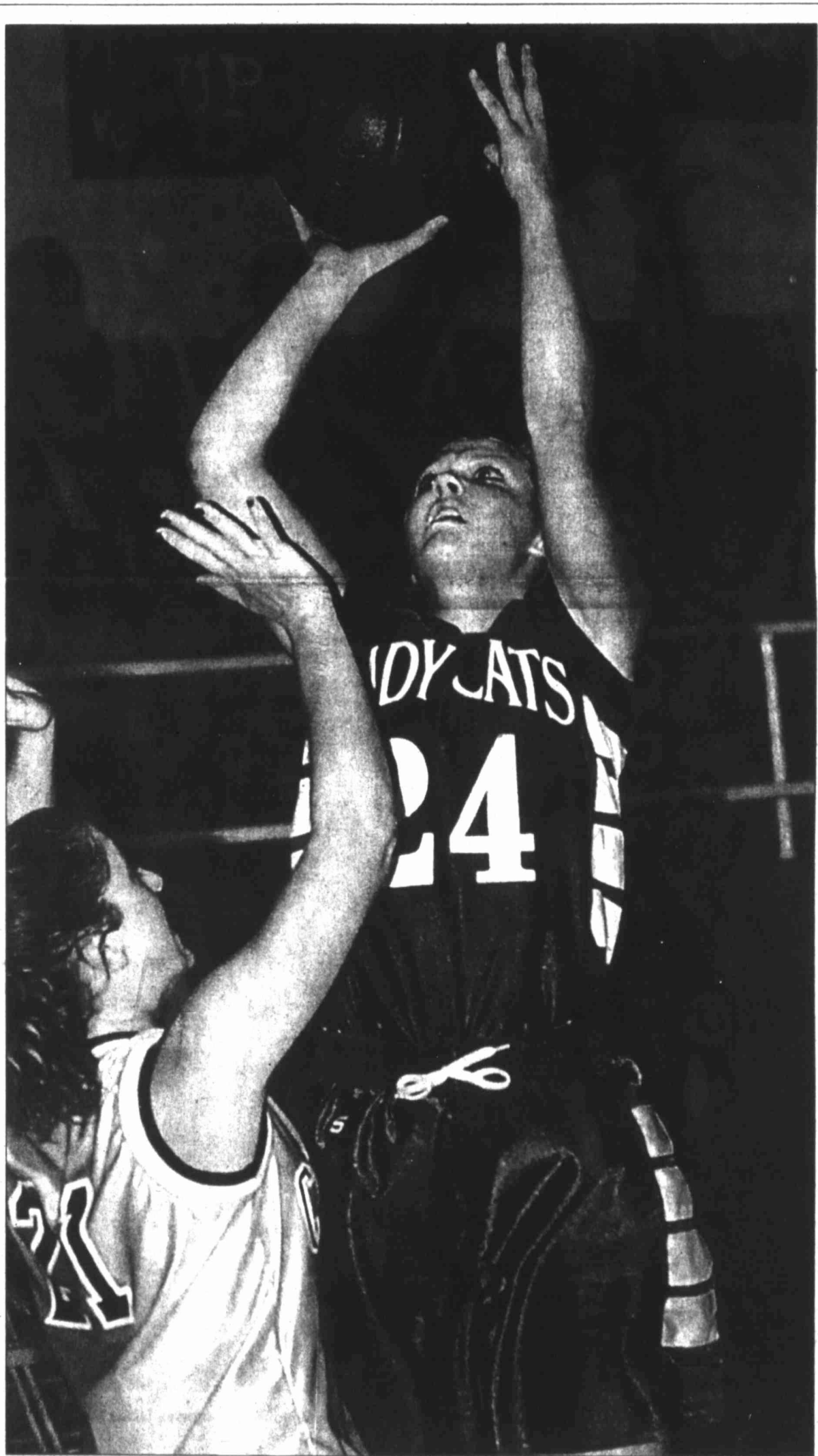
Newman wins driving honor

NEW YORK (AP) — Ryan Newman was honored as Driver of the Year in 2003 after a season in which he won eight races and 11 poles in NASCAR's Winston Cup Series.

This was only the second time in the award's 37-year history the honor did not go to a series champion. Matt Kenseth won this year's Cup title. Bill Elliott received the award in 1985 despite finishing second to Darrell Waltrip in the points.



HERALD photos/Bruce Schoolers
Josh Pedigo and the Big Spring Steers will play in the Lamesa tournament beginning Monday.



HERALD photos/Tommy Wells
Westbrook freshman Allison Bray shoots over the top of a Klondike defender during the Lady Cats' loss last Friday. Bray and the WHS girls will return from the Christmas holidays on Jan. 2 when they travel to Ira to face the Lady Bulldogs.

Texas says A-Rod will remain with Rangers

ARLINGTON (AP) — Texas Rangers officials say Alex Rodriguez will be back with the Rangers next season.

The Tuesday deadline for a deal with Boston passed without a trade of the American League MVP, and Rangers owner Tom Hicks said talks with the Red Sox are finally over.

"It is time for the Texas Rangers to look forward to the 2004 season with Alex Rodriguez as our shortstop and team leader," Hicks said. "As

we explored recent opportunities, we always said he would not be traded unless it made our team better, faster. Alex is the best player in baseball and we are excited to have him as a leader in the clubhouse and on the field."

Texas had proposed sending Rodriguez to Boston for Manny Ramirez, but talks collapsed last week after the players' association rejected a proposal by the Red Sox to cut \$28 million to \$30 million off A-Rod's record

\$252 million contract.

"Alex wants to compete in the postseason, but he also wants to help Texas be a champion and be a part of what we are doing here," Hicks said. "From our conversations I know he loves Texas and he's happy being here."

There did not appear to be any talks as the deadline approached.

"I know of nothing going on," Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras.

Texas and Boston had talked for weeks of a possible trade.

Hawaii trips Houston in 3OT, 54-48

HONOLULU — Bounced and booed in the final two regular-season games, Timmy Chang found redemption in the Hawaii Bowl.

Chang came off the bench and threw for 475 yards and five touchdowns to lead Hawaii to a wild 54-48 triple-overtime victory over Houston in a Hawaii Bowl that ended with a nasty brawl Thursday night.

Two of Chang's scores came in OT as he completed 26 of 42 passes and was selected the game's MVP. The junior also moved into third place on the NCAA career passing list with 12,814 yards.

But it was Michael Brewster's 8-yard touchdown run in the third overtime that gave the Warriors (9-5) the victory.

Shortly after Hawaii stopped Houston on fourth down in the third OT, the Warriors poured onto the field and several scuffles broke out.

Players were swinging helmets, throwing punches and kicks. No major injuries were reported.

"You don't want a game to end like that, but emotions are so high like that when people lose, they're going to want to fight," said Hawaii's Kelvin Millhouse, who intercepted two passes. "They were talking with us, messing with us the whole game. I don't think they liked us. I don't think we liked them very much either."

Coaches and police broke up the brawl after several minutes, and Houston was escorted to its locker room.

"The referees let it get out of control during the game by not taking control of some of the taunting and some of the things that were going on," Hawaii coach June Jones said. "I told them in the middle of the third quarter, 'If you don't get control of this game we've got a problem.'"

Houston (7-6) took advantage of a clock management mistake by Hawaii to tie it at 34 with 22 seconds left in regulation.

Fans were filing out of Aloha Stadium late in the fourth, but the Warriors failed to run out the clock.

Houston used its last timeout with 1:07 left, but the Warriors passed on third down from the Cougars 12 instead of running the ball and the clock.

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That's Racin'

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Go online and check out www.thatstracin.com for the latest information and news on stock-car racing, updated daily.

"I fully intend to become the best driver I can be for this organization, and to do so, logging mile after mile under extreme, competitive conditions will take me to this personal goal."

— Greg Biffle, on running the full schedules of both the Nextel Cup and Grand National series for Roush Racing in 2004.

Diversifying racing

Despite challenges, efforts to attract minority drivers to NASCAR continue

BY DAVID POOLE
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The one. On Dec. 1, 1963, Wendell Scott won a 200-lap NASCAR Grand National race at Jacksonville, Fla. Buck Baker was originally ruled the winner, but Scott protested the scoring. Officials eventually found an error and named Scott the winner.

It has been 40 years since that historic stock-car racing event. Scott is still the only person other than a white man to win a race in NASCAR's top series.

During the 2003 NASCAR season, Bill Lester was the one — the only black driver in any of NASCAR's three national series. Unless something changes before February, there will be no black drivers in the Nextel Cup, Grand National or Truck series next year.

"The problem with the diversity issue in NASCAR is that we've been dealing with 'ones,'" said Greg Calhoun, a businessman from Montgomery, Ala., and a member of NASCAR's Diversity Council. "We need more Bill Lesters out there, so that if a driver like him loses a ride it won't be a big story. It should be about a group, so that if one falls out, it won't be the end of the world."

During the week NASCAR celebrates its season with the Winston Cup awards ceremony in New York, there are signs it is taking a new approach to the issue with which it has had perhaps the least success in its remarkable rise since the days Scott was driving.

Calhoun is part of that new approach. He's heading a new NASCAR-backed Drive for Diversity, which has taken applications from minority drivers and crew members for the past month.

For the next few weeks, the program will pick four drivers to compete at short tracks across the Southeast. The idea is to start them out at the same level where such drivers as 2003 Cup champion Matt Kenseth began — allowing them to learn their craft without the pressures of stock-car racing's major series crashing in on them from the start.

NASCAR is working with corporate sponsors to line up support for the Drive for Diversity. It is working, too, with former NFL star Reggie White, who in partnership with Joe Gibbs Racing, is starting a team with a similar strategy. White's team plans to put two drivers in Late Model competition at short tracks in 2004 and move up as talent develops.

"A lot of people want to see a black guy on the track," Calhoun said. "I want to see black guys who will be out there and compete. We are going to be part of history."

However, in 40 years of history since Scott's victory, progress in diversity has been limited.

Willy T. Ribbs had three starts in the Cup series in 1986, and a year in the Truck series. Shawna Robinson, with eight Cup races in the 2001 and 2002 seasons, came as close as any woman has in two decades to making it in "The Show." Carlos Contreras, from Mexico, has competed in the Grand National and Truck series.

There are those who would argue that NASCAR has no responsibility to do anything other than remove any institutional barriers that would prevent Lester or another minority driver from picking himself up and finding his own way into a ride.

Too many people use such rationalizations to mask the ugly stench of racism, and the desire to keep NASCAR a bastion of white dominance in professional sports. Even those who have convinced themselves they are merely seeking a meritocracy are being short-sighted.

A farmer doesn't wait on nature, hoping the winds will blow seed into his fields. He clears the land, cultivates and fertilizes the soil, plants seed and nurtures it. Only then, and only if he has done his job well, does a harvest come.

There is no readily available crop of young, talented minority drivers. NASCAR has been waiting too long — 40 years, in fact — for an answer to the diversity question to simply show up.

Calhoun and White now join others who

have been trying to plant seeds so true diversity might grow. If things go as planned, their efforts will put at least six minority drivers into the short-track mix next year.

Odds that one Cup race winner will someday come from any group of six drivers are too high to compute. But it's a start.

Through programs such as the educational scholarship component of Dodge's diversity program, and through the determination of some people of color who have worked their way into jobs in the sport, the NASCAR garage is no longer as monochromatic as it was 10 or even five years ago.

Jim Hunter, NASCAR vice president for corporate communications, says Brian France, NASCAR's new chief executive officer, wants "to see NASCAR as a truly American sport across the full spectrum of America," describing it as France's "vision."

Another vision for NASCAR is of a competitive black driver, which could do for the sport what Tiger Woods has done for golf, and what Venus and Serena Williams have done for tennis. There is nothing wrong with that. A big part of NASCAR's role is to keep stock-car racing healthy and help it grow. A successful diversity program would do both.

"Diversity is going to be an endless pursuit," France said. "We want everybody in this country, every man and woman, to be a NASCAR fan. If we can put initiatives forward to help make us more attractive to more people, that's important."

"I also am the chairman of our diversity council, and it's an issue I take personally. I think diversity is a long-term pursuit that will help make NASCAR more attractive to everyone."

A decade from now, as the 2013 champion is being crowned and someone is writing about the 50th anniversary of Wendell Scott's victory at Jacksonville, will NASCAR be any closer to France's vision of a more diverse sport?

A decade should be plenty of time for the sport to reach that goal. But four decades have passed since Dec. 1, 1963. In that context, 10 years seems like a short time. So short, in fact, that to get there so soon, the sport can't afford many mistakes.

Perhaps not even one.



Robinson



Contreras

POLL POSITION

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

How many Nextel Cup races do you plan to attend in 2004?

Cast your vote at:

www.thatstracin.com

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION

When will you start getting really excited about the 2004 season?

Number of votes: 3,659

Response	Percent
When we get to the final 10 races in the proposed playoff points system	30.6%
I'm excited now	20.7%
During Speed Weeks at Daytona	22.7%
Not until testing starts in early January	12%
At the green flag for the Daytona 500	5%

RACIN' NOTES



Richard Childress and driver Kevin Harvick.

Childress weighs in on playoff system proposal

Team owner Richard Childress, who won six Winston Cup championships with Dale Earnhardt under the points system in place since 1975, said he was hesitant about a proposed playoff format for NASCAR's top series, but has since gained a better understanding of it.

By mid-January, NASCAR plans to announce whether it will adapt a 26-race "regular season" and 10-race playoff format. Only the top-10 drivers in points after 26 races would be eligible to race for the championship over the final 10 races.

"From a purely selfish standpoint I would prefer the system stay the same," said Childress, who won Cup titles in 1986, '87, '90, '91, '93 and '94 with Earnhardt, the late seven-time champion. "When I first heard about it around the time of the (Cup awards) banquet in New York, I didn't think much of it."

Childress said he recently spoke extensively with NASCAR officials, looking for answers to several questions he had about the proposal.

"I think I have a better understanding now of what NASCAR is thinking. Sometimes you have to step back and take a look at the big picture," he said.

"I can certainly see where the added media exposure and excitement surrounding a playoff atmosphere would help grow the sport and continue its success."

Childress said many questions remain about the proposal.

"I'm not saying that I'm high on it right now. All I'm saying is that it makes a little bit more sense once you get a better understanding of it, which I was able to do," he said.

Childress maintains he doesn't have a problem with some changes to the points system. He said he was also "well aware" of the overwhelming negative response fans have to the playoff plan.

Nextel, which takes over sponsorship of the Cup series in 2004, has been meeting with NASCAR over the proposal. Many fans have mistakenly cited Nextel as the reason for the change, when in fact it has been heavily promoted by new NASCAR chairman Brian France.

Childress said one of his main concerns regarding the plan has to do with "locking in" only 10 drivers to compete for the title.

"I mean, look at Terry Labonte this season. He worked his butt off to get that 10th spot in points in the last race of the season. Getting in the top 10 and going to New York for the banquet has always been a big deal in our sport," Childress said.



NASCAR Truck series driver Bill Lester climbs into the No. 8 Dodge truck in preparation for a 2002 qualifying race at Texas Motor Speedway.

NASCAR's playoff proposal isn't catching on with racing fans

From the looks of various polls conducted on racing Web sites, it appears that NASCAR is going to have a big selling job on its hands if it decides to use a "postseason" plan to pick its Nextel Cup champion.

At every opportunity provided them, fans have roundly rejected the idea of using points scored in just the season's final 10 races to determine a champion.

One of the fans' main objections seems to be the idea of "locking in" the top 10 after 26 races and having only those drivers contend for the title over the final 10 events. They feel that a driver who finishes strongly ought to have a chance to finish the season in the top 10.

In the 29 seasons the current system has been used, however, only 33 drivers who were not in the top-10 with 10 races to go finished there. Only

one driver, Kurt Busch in 2002, earned a top-five points finish after being outside the top 10 with 10 races to go. Busch finished third. And the deepest any driver has come from with 10 races to go to earn a top-10 finish was 16th. That has been done four times, including by Bill Elliott in 2003.

If NASCAR decides to adopt some variation of this 26-10 plan, it could very well include a provision for a driver to earn his way back into the top 10 after not being there through 26 races — some form of a "wild-card" playoff berth. NASCAR isn't expected to announce a decision on whether such a plan will be adopted until mid-January.

Jerry Nadeau's long road back

Jerry Nadeau got back in a stock car earlier this month for the first time since being seriously injured in a crash during practice May 2 at Richmond (Va.) International Raceway.

"What's important is it gave me a baseline to know where I am and what I have to do," Nadeau said of the session at Concord (N.C.) Motorsport Park. "I learned a lot about myself and how far I have come since the accident. I know ... it's going

to take time. I know I have a brain injury that I have to let heal and I am not rushing it."

While the crash certainly altered the course of Nadeau's racing career, the driver also said it changed him in other ways, too.

"I want to tell everybody who has children to spend more time with them, play with them and be part of their lives," said Nadeau, who this week will celebrate his 10-month-old daughter Natalie Kate's first Christmas with his wife, Jada. "You never know when your day will come."

"I have been blessed to be here. I don't know how else to say it. I had a very serious accident and was lucky to survive. This is going to be a very special holiday for us. I am here to enjoy these precious moments of life."

When Nadeau raced Formula Opel series in Europe, one of his teammates was Tony Renna, the driver who died recently in a crash during testing at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Nadeau and his father went to Florida to visit Renna's parents



Nadeau

after the driver's death.

"Some people might say I had an unfortunate year," Nadeau said. "I look at it so much differently. We had a healthy daughter come into our lives and I survived a serious accident. I feel extremely blessed."

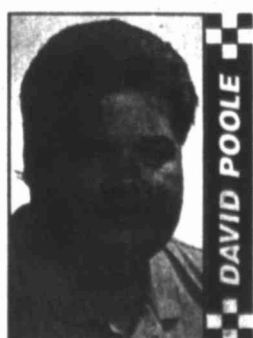
SI takes measure of race fans

In its annual post-season NASCAR issue, Sports Illustrated magazine includes results of a survey of nearly 1,400 race fans conducted at various tracks around the country. Some of the more interesting results include:

■ The fans' three favorite tracks are Bristol, with 22 percent; Daytona, with 19 percent; and Lowe's Motor Speedway, with 13 percent.

■ More than half of the fans, 57 percent, attend two to four races per year. And 48 percent of them travel 200 miles or more to attend a race, with 25 percent traveling 500 miles or more.

■ An amazing 19 percent of fans said they had spent \$1,000 or more on NASCAR merchandise in the past year, while 97 percent of the fans said they'd bought at least one piece of merchandise in the past year.



DAVID POOLE

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CARPET CLEANING	ATTENTION - THE BIG SPRING HERALD APPRECIATES YOUR BUSINESS Here are some helpful tips and information that will help you when placing your ad. After your ad has been published the first day we suggest you check the ad for mistakes and if errors have been made we will gladly correct the ad and run it again for you at no additional charge. If your ad is advertised not printed your advance payment will cheerfully be refunded and the newspaper's liability will be for only the amount actually received for publication of the advertisement. We reserve the right to edit or reject any ad for publication that does not meet our standards of acceptance.	WILL CLEAN YOUR HOME OR OFFICE. For more information Call Sandy or Jesse 263-2377	WOW! Save You Money By Advertising Your Business in Our Professional Service Directory! Call 263-7331 for more information	JOHNNY FLORES ROOFING Shingles, hand nailed Hot Tar & Gravel. All types of repairs. Work guaranteed!! Specialized Hot Tar Roofs Free Estimates & Surrounding Areas 267-1110	SOUTHWESTERN A-1 PEST CONTROL Since 1954 263-6514 2008 Birdwell Lane Max F. Moore www.swa1pc.com mm@swa1pc.com	We Can Save You Money By Advertising Your Business in Our Professional Service Directory! Call 263-7331 for more information.

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HELP WANTED

Experience Mechanic needed at Natural Gas Plant North East of Big Spring. Fax resumes, (432)399-4290 or mail to: 11703 E. FM 846, Coahoma, TX 79511.

GAS PLANT "A" OPERATOR needed at natural gas plant, NE of Big Spring, 12 hr. shift. Fax resumes, (432)399-4290 or mail to: 11703 E. FM 846, Coahoma, TX 79511.

IMMEDIATE OPENING for clerk/cashier/cook. Apply at 315 E. FM 700. Neighbors Convenience Store.

Need truck driver, 2 yrs. experience. Run 48 states. Good driving record. Call Gerald King, 394-4037 after 5:00.

Warehouse/Delivery needed to move furniture. Good driving record required. Must be 21. Paid vacation & holidays. Apply in person, Credit World 1611 Gregg.

JOBS WANTED
Certified Nurses Aid will sit for Elderly. Good References. Call 432-264-2951

PETS
AMERICAN STAFFORDSHIRE TERRIER
Champ, sired male, 8 wks, shots & wormed. Only 1 left (Blue Brindle). Companion & family protector. Call 432-393-5352

LOST AND FOUND
Found 2 male dog's around Lomax & Elbow area. Call 432-398-5252 to identify

Barcelona Apartments
"Call For Move-In Specials"
All Bills Paid
530 Westover Rd. 263-1252

ON THE FARM

SE/4 Section 21, Blk. 33, T-2-N, T & P, Ry. Co. Survey, Howard Co. FSA Farm No. 2056. Cotton base acres 151.1. FSA yield 563 lbs., 1/4 mineral, some royalty. 160 acres. \$800/acre or \$128,000. Call 432-268-3110

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT
1 Bdrm Duplex, 106 16th. Refrigerated air, stove & refrigerator furnished. \$225/mo \$100/dep. Call 432-268-8353

1514 E. Hwy 350. Large building with 3 offices & lots of storage on fenced 4 acre lot. \$650/mo. plus dep. Westex Auto Parts, Inc. 432-263-5000.

2 & 3 BDRM Houses for Rent. CH/A. No Pets. No HUD. 432-263-5818 or 213-0820

2BR, 1 bath, 1102 Lancaster. No pets. Call 432-267-3841 or 270-7309

2BR, 1 bath, 1103 Stanford. No pets. Call 432-267-3841 or 270-7309

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

3 Bdrm, 1 1/2 bath, 4207 Parkway. No pets. Call 432-267-3841 or 270-7309

3705 Connally. Clean 3 bdr, 2 bath, garage, CH/A, stove & refrigerator furnished, fenced yard. \$450/mo. \$200/dep. Call 432-267-1643

3BR, 1 bath, 107 Colby. Call 432-267-1643 or 270-7309

\$50 MOVE-IN SPECIAL
One and Two Bedroom Apartment home available. Starting from \$335.00 per month

*FREE CABLE
*On site Laundry Facilities
*Covered Picnic area with BBQ Grills
*Playground for the Kids
*Central Air & Heat

SUNSET RIDGE APTS
2911 W. HWY 80
432-263-2292

Executive 3 Bedroom, 1 1/2 bath, 2 car garage. Great location. \$850/mo. Call 432-263-2382

BY JOYCE JILLSON

Kwanzaa begins today under the creative, philanthropic

Aquarius moon. It's a buoyant day to sing, dance and extend friendship to an array of people. The Aquarius moon and Venus have an eclectic influence, opening our eyes to what we may have been afraid to see before. Mercury is still retrograde so communication isn't the easiest.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). This is the perfect day to establish, strengthen or at least think about your purpose. Also, goal setting is lucky now. Decide your destination, whether it's a trip to Australia, a new car or a credit card paid in full.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Be good to yourself! Instead of spending downtime working like a busy bee at home, make dates with yourself for special treats — and then keep them. An offer to attend a social event is not to be turned down!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your creative juices are flowing freely. Good fortune is a possible outcome of every arrangement now because you believe in the strength of your talent. People are amazed by your simple solutions to complex problems.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Everything seems to live up to your expectations. When you are feeling as secure as you are, you cannot avoid dynamic love. Decide now how deep you'd like to go with this, or suddenly, you're walking down the aisle.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Once again, your high profile makes it impossible for people not to take notice of your every move. Much is expected of you but nothing that you are incapable of. Drop co-dependent tendencies, especially those involving finance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're appointed to a new post, so to speak. Review standards for running a successful operation, whether it's a family, a homestead or a business. Opportunities come later because you put the word out now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A control issue continues to try your patience, but leave the children out of it. Start the communication with a partner, and soon, you'll have useful agreements. Don't expect your first go-around to yield results!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may feel you're



Joyce Jillson

Tomorrow's Horoscope

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NATIONAL ADVERTISING

■ "GOVT POSTAL JOBS" PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT US\$15LD
UP TO \$29.16 PER HOUR FREE CALL/APPLICATION INFORMATION NOW HIRING 2003! FEDERAL HIRE-FULL BENEFITS. PAID TRAINING 1-800-892-5549 EXT. 95

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■ \$\$\$ UP TO \$529 WEEKLY! Mailing letters from home. Easy! Any Hours! Full/Part-time. No experience necessary. U.S. Digest 1-888-389-1790 24 hours.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 59 TEXAS PROPERTY CODE, A-AMERICAN SELF STORAGE, WHICH IS LOCATED AT 314 E. FM 700, WILL HOLD A PUBLIC AUCTION OF PROPERTY BEING SOLD TO SATISFY A LANDLORD'S DEBTS. SALES WILL BE AT 11:00 O'CLOCK A.M. ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27TH AT A-AMERICAN SELF STORAGE. PROPERTY WILL BE SOLD TO HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH. SELLER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO NOT ACCEPT ANY BID AND TO WITHDRAW PROPERTY FROM SALE. PROPERTY TO EACH SPACE MAY BE SOLD ITEM BY ITEM. IN BATCHES, OR BY THE SPACE. ALL SALES ARE SUBJECT TO TEXAS STATE SALES TAX. SALE IS ON THE CONTENTS OF TENANT Robert Anderson CONSISTING OF Misc Household items, 35 1/2 Everglade outboard motor TENANT Teresa Calderon CONSISTING OF T.V. misc items. TENANT Ma Id Robey CONSISTING OF Table, misc items. THIS DATE: DECEMBER 11, 2003 #4074 December 19 & 26th, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICE
Invitation to Bid The Sands Consolidated Independent School District will receive bids for an insulated metal building. The bid should include cost to pour a foundation and build a 40'x50'x9' insulated metal building. It should also include 1 single standard metal door and 1 set of standard double metal doors. All bids must be in by January 9, 2003. All bids should be addressed to the Superintendent of Schools at P.O. Box 218, Ackerly, TX 79713. The Sands CISD reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids and to waive any all formalities or to accept any part of this bid deemed to be most advantageous to the district. #4073 December 26, 2003

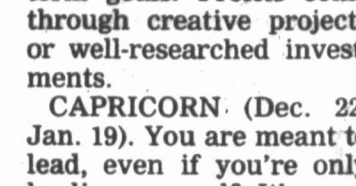
PUBLIC NOTICE
ATTENTION COX COMMUNICATIONS SUBSCRIBERS
Beginning on February 1, 2004, the following new one-time service charges will be in effect (these charges will not affect your current monthly cable bill) for Big Spring residential customers. Pre-wired home initial installation (analog or digital) will change from \$45.00 to \$31.00. Un-wired home initial installation will change from \$45.00 to \$49.99. Additional outlet (2 or more) installation (analog or digital) will change from \$14.95 to \$18.99. Additional outlet installation (analog or digital) and/or activation requiring an additional truck roll will change from \$24.95 to \$28.99. All prices quoted do not include franchise fees and/or sales tax. Inquiries concerning these changes or any other cable-related issue can be made at Cox Communications, 2006 Birdwell Ln, Big Spring, TX 79720 or by calling 267-3821. #4071 December 26, 28 & 29, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICE
ATTENTION COX COMMUNICATIONS SUBSCRIBERS
Beginning on February 1, 2004, the following monthly service rate changes will be in effect for Big Spring residential customers. Limited Basic will change from \$16.00 to \$17.15 and Expanded Basic will change from \$23.95 to \$24.84. Converter rental charges (analog and digital) will change from \$3.70 to \$3.99. In addition, the Channel 9 Guide Magazine monthly purchase amount will change from \$1.99 to \$2.50. All prices quoted do not include franchise fees and/or sales tax. Inquiries concerning these changes or any other cable-related issue can be made at Cox Communications, 2006 Birdwell Ln, Big Spring, TX 79720 or by calling 267-3821. #4072 December 26, 28 & 29, 2003

WFAA Daily

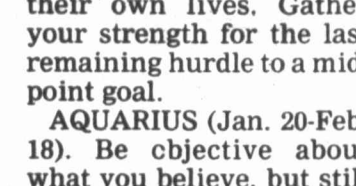
6:00 PM	News (C)
7:00 PM	George L. Manned-H
8:00 PM	Hope & F. Life-Born
9:00 PM	2020 (C)
10:00 PM	News (C)
11:00 PM	Ent. Tonight
12:00 AM	Live (C)
12:30 AM	Cornish

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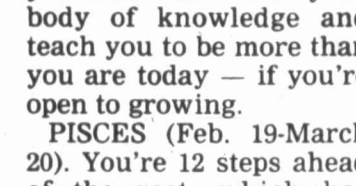
"Is it too early to list to SA"

BC



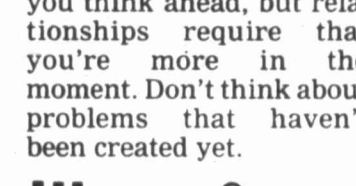
"HA"

WIZARD



"I SE BY YO APPENDE SCA DR. PHIL WAS Y SURGE"

AGNES



"SIGH... I LOOKED HIGH AND LOW, GAW I FOUND NO AN TO SHOWER US W RICHES BEYOND N"

HI AND LA



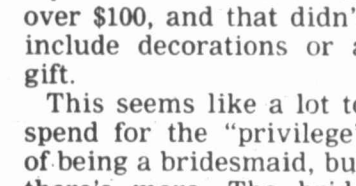
"WHERE AR YOUR PARE"

MR. HOUS



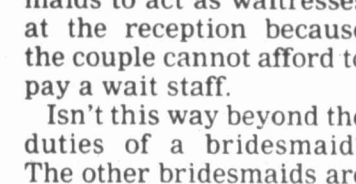
"SNUFFY SI"

HENRIE NEW DI OLD FL



"BEETLE B."

I HAVE TO LEAVE EARLY FOR CAM



"G"

HILLSIDE PROPERTIES
Homes With Alarm Systems
2 - 3 - 4 - 5, Even 6 Bedrooms Available
Rent - Rent-to-Own or Buy With Owner Financing
Swimming Pool - Basketball & Volleyball Courts
24 Hour Emergency Maintenance
2501 Fairchild Phone 263-3461

Big Spring and Howard County agree... the Big Spring Herald is a MUST READ before they spend their money.

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It Pays to Advertise in the Big Spring Herald Every Day.

BIG SPRING HERALD

FRIDAY

WFAA Daily

6:00 PM	News (C)
7:00 PM	George L. Manned-H
8:00 PM	Hope & F. Life-Born
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BEETLE B.

I HAVE TO LEAVE EARLY FOR CAM

FRIDAY

WFAA (2)	KMID (3)	UNI (4)	KPEJ (5)	KOSA (7)	KTLE (8)	KWBQ (9)	WTBS (11)	KMLM (12)	KOCV (13)	DISC (20)	AMC (21)	TNT (23)	BET (24)	DISN (27)	ESPN2 (28)	ESPN (29)	USA (30)	TMC (35)
Dallas	Midland	Spanish	Odessa	Odessa	Talento	Midland	Atlanta	Odessa	Odessa	Discovery	Classics	Atlanta	Black Ent.	Disney	Sports	Sports	New York	Premium
6:30 AM News (CC)	News Wheel-Fortune	Amar Ora Vez	King of the Hill	News Ent. Tonight	Pasion de Gavilanes	News Seinfeld (CC)	News Vela John Hage	News-Lehrer	American Chopper	Law & Order (CC) (DVS)	Live How I'm Living	Thurs-Raven Lizzie McGuire	NFL Live	Bowling Green vs. Northwestern College	Law & Order: Special Victims	Bogus Journey		
7:30 AM George Lopez Married-Kellys	George Lopez Married-Kellys	Vejo de Novia	Funnist Holiday Moments	Amor Arcadia (CC)	Amor Descarado	Dastine NBC (CC)	Movie: Update/Israel Pichman	Wash. Week West-Fortune	Harley-Davidson	Movie: The Day the Earth Stood Still	Movie: Legends of the Fall (CC)	Parsons (CC) Parleys (CC)	Inspector	NBA Basketball	Movie: Cruel Intentions (CC)	Movie: The Others (CC)		
8:30 AM Hope & Faith Life-Bonnie	Hope & Faith Life-Bonnie	Te Amare en Silencio	Christmas Moments	Kennedy Center Honors	El Alma Herida	Movie: Abs Ventura: Pat	Light of the Southwest	Now With Bill Moyers (CC)	MythBusters (CC) (DVS)	Fall (CC)	Soul Food (CC)	Gadget (CC) Movie:	New Jersey Nets at Detroit Pistons (CC) NBA	Football Insight Bowl -- Virginia Tech	Movie: Stakeout (CC)			
9:30 AM 20/20 (CC)	20/20 (CC)	Casos de la Vida Real	70s Show Raymond	Celebration of Performing	La Presencia de Anita	Detective (CC)	Movie: Lethal Weapon (CC)	Great Projects: The Building	More Than Human (CC)	855 Movie: An American Werewolf in Paris (CC)	Movie: Legends of the Fall (CC)	Nightly News Music Special	Kim Possible Proud Family	Basketball: Timberwolves at Trail Blazers (CC)	Law & Order: Special Victims	Movie: Stakeout (CC)		
10:30 AM News (CC)	News Final Score	Primer Impacto Noticias Univ.	70s Show Raymond	News Late Show	Noticias Laura	News Tonight Show (CC)	Hour of Healing	Charlie Rose (CC)	Harley-Davidson	10:30 Movie: Army of Darkness Crypt Tales	Movie: The Bridges of	Midnight Love	Even Stevens Smart Guy	NBA Fastbreak NFL Live	Movie: Stakeout (CC)	Another Stakeout (CC)		
11:30 AM Ent. Tonight Jimmy Kimmel Live (CC)	Nightline Jimmy Kimmel Live (CC)	Los Melches	Becker (CC) Spin City	(CC) Late Late Show (CC)	Al Rojo Vivo	Late Night (CC) (DVS)	15 Movie: Payback (CC) (DVS)	Sign Off	Rev. J. Hansen Carmie Davis	Update/Israel Decker-LaG.								
12:30 AM Live (CC) Oprah Winfrey	Jimmy Kimmel Live (CC)	Angela	Blind Date	Street Smarts	Show (CC)	Merla Calista Corte-Familia	Fraser (CC)											

DENNIS THE MENACE



THE FAMILY CIRCUS



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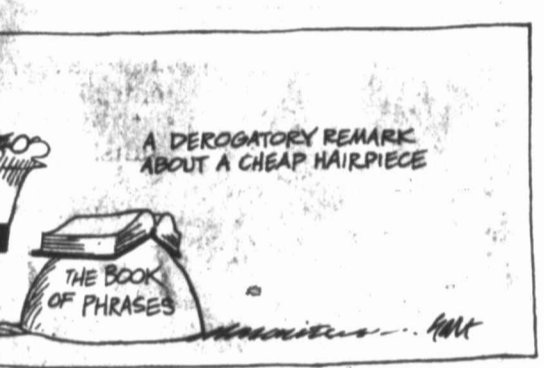
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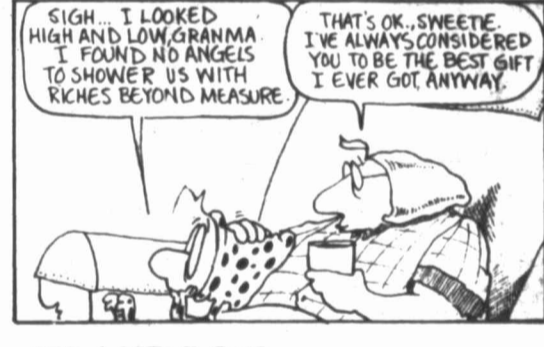
AGNES



HI AND LOIS



MR. HOUSEWIFE



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Dec. 26, the 360th day of 2003. There are five days left in the year. This is the first day of the weeklong African-American holiday Kwanzaa. This is Boxing Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 26, 1776, the British suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War.

On this date:

In 1799, former President George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

In 1893, Chinese leader Mao Zedong was born in Hunan province.

In 1917, during World War

Newsday Crossword

HUNDREDFOLD INFLATION by F. Piscop
Edited by Stanley Newman

61 Horned goddess
62 Knock flat
63 Seed-to-be
64 Mail away
65 Potato features
66 Drive off

DOWN

1 Pullman bed
2 Hilo hello
3 Drink noisily
4 Heed the alarm
5 Fall bloomer
6 Tree found in dry areas
7 Idle or Ambler
8 Add later
9 Pass out
10 Hand over

11 Limburger quality
12 Met star
13 Shoebox letters
21 Dress part
22 Retailer J.C.
27 tube
29 Have the blahs
30 Skip over
31 Cornmeal product
32 Analogy words
33 "Fast!" on a memo
34 In under the tag
35 Piercing tools
36 Bungles
37 King Arthur's paradise
39 Belfry denizen

40 The Washington Monument et al.
45 Brewer's grain
47 Gettysburg victor
49 Can't stomach
50 Close, as a deal
51 Actress Berry
52 Ford of the '50s
53 Tijuana tender
54 The Haj novelist
55 Greatest part
56 Watch part
57 Gad about
58 Nothing

Answer to previous puzzle

SCREW	AWOL	EGGS
ARENA	GEM	UANA
LAUGHTRACK	AGES	
ESSO	RENEE	TWAS
SHERRIES	ERR	
GAP	HANDING	
WAFER	CLODS	TEL
OSU	ECHOLON	ERE
WIN	BEADY	APRON
SANDIER	ERR	
YET	REPEALED	
ALFA	ATARI	TYRO
ROAD	COMIC	STRIP
LACE	ROBE	ALICE
OMEN	ENOS	DECAY

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IN THE NEWS

Death toll may hit 10,000 in Iran

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A severe earthquake devastated the historic city of Bam in southeast Iran on Friday, and a preliminary estimate said the death toll could reach 10,000.

Hasan Khoshrou, a legislator for Kerman province where the quake occurred, said there was still no precise number of dead from the magnitude 6.7 quake, but officials working in Bam had given him that figure.

"The quake hit the city when most of the people were in bed, raising fears that the death toll may go higher," he said.

Officials surveying the city of 80,000 people from helicopter said about 60 percent of the city's houses were destroyed, Khoshrou said. Water, power and phone lines were cut. The earthquake struck at about 5:30 a.m.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported the quake's magnitude was 6.7, capable of causing severe damage. It reported an aftershock of magnitude 5.4 about two hours later.

Authorities in Bam, 630 miles southeast of the capital Tehran, put out a call for blood donations.

"Many people have died," Kerman province Gov. Mohammad Ali Karimi told state media. "Many people are buried under the rubble."

Relief teams set up their headquarters in a public square in Bam because their offices in the governor's building had been ruined, Karimi told state radio.

Jetliner crashes during takeoff

COTONOU, Benin (AP) — A jetliner clipped a building during takeoff and crashed into the sea off the West African nation of Benin on Thursday, killing dozens of Lebanese workers on their way home for the holidays.

A witness said 90 passengers were dead, while a doctor said 57 had been taken to a hospital morgue and more bodies were being retrieved from the water.

The chartered Boeing 727 bound for Beirut had just lifted off from the seaside airport in Cotonou, Benin's commercial capital, said Jerome Dandjinou, a senior airport security official.

"The back of the plane hit a building at the end of the runway. There was a fire and an explosion was heard," Dandjinou told The Associated Press. "The plane exploded and the debris fell into the water."

Airport officials in Beirut said the plane was chartered from United Transit Airlines; but officials in Guinea, where the plan began its trip, identified the company as Union des Transports Africain. Air France said the company was unrelated to the former French airline UTA, which was absorbed by Air France a decade ago.

It was unclear how many people were on the plane. Benin's transport minister, Ahmed Akobi, said there were 156 passengers and an unknown number of crew, while an official with UTA said 253 people were on board.

Poison gas creates 'death zone'

CHONGQING, China (AP) — Clouds of poison gas from a burst well left a "death zone" of villages strewn with bodies in China's southwest, with at least 191 people killed and 41,000 forced to flee, news reports said Friday.

Gas spewed from the well in the Chongqing region as technicians prepared an emergency effort to seal it with cement. They were supposed to make the attempt Friday but put it off until Saturday to let rescue officials focus on rushing food and water to the evacuees.

More than 290 people were hospitalized, many of them children, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Newspaper photos showed children with red faces and their eyes inflamed from chemical burns.

The gas well burst Tuesday in the remote mountain town of Gaoqiao, releasing a cloud of natural gas and hydrogen sulfide, according to state media. Xinhua said the disaster occurred when a drilling accident broke open a gas well.

"The poisonous gas hovering in the air made an area of 25 square kilome-

ters (10 square miles) a death zone, as many villagers were intoxicated by the fumes in their sleep," the China Daily newspaper said. Hardest-hit was the village of Xiaoyang, adjacent to the gas field.

Search continues in California

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP) — Rescue crews slogged past fallen trees and boulders in an overnight search for at least ten people trapped when a mudslide triggered by heavy rains swept over a foothill forest recently scorched by wildfire.

Traveling by foot because a road bridge was washed out, one team climbed up the steep terrain Friday and another descended it in an effort to reach the Saint Sophia Camp in Waterman Canyon, just north of San Bernardino.

Fourteen other people staying at the Greek Orthodox youth camp had been rescued by late Thursday, and ten victims covered in mud were treated at a hospital for minor injuries, authorities said.

Streets and homes flooded in San Bernardino and elsewhere, while power outages and other mudslides were also reported after a storm dumped more than 3 1/2 inches of rain on some of the areas hit hardest by a series of massive Southern California wildfires that started two months ago.

Wildfires make the region's mountains much more prone to mudslides because they burn off vegetation that normally would help shore up steep terrain.

Fiery crash kills man, two children

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, Fla. (AP) — A man drove his car into his in-laws' house in a fiery Christmas Day crash, killing himself and his two children minutes before he was supposed to turn them over to his estranged wife, according to media reports.

Shahab Behzadpour, his 3-year-old son, Sammi, and 6-year-old daughter, Nikki, died in the crash in Altamonte Springs, a northern Orlando suburb.

Behzadpour, 46, and his wife, Hope Custodio, were undergoing a bitter divorce. Court records show she had accused him of abuse, and on Friday she won a restraining order for him to stay away from her, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

But the couple had shared custody of the children and he was supposed to let them spend Christmas afternoon with his wife, relatives and neighbors told WKMG-TV of Orlando.

Behzadpour's Ford Crown Victoria hit a pillar at the front of Custodio's parents' house, in the gated community of Brantley Estates, and exploded into a fireball.

Custodio's brother Alex Custodio told WFTV-TV of Orlando that he believed his brother-in-law intentionally rammed the house, and that Behzadpour had threatened to harm himself and the children in the past.

Officials seek source of infection

WASHINGTON (AP) — Authorities are looking for the source of infection for the first case of mad cow disease in the United States now that a British laboratory has provided initial independent confirmation of the disease.

Scientists at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Weybridge, England, told the Agriculture Department on Thursday that they agree with the reading of U.S. tests on the stricken Holstein cow.

Those tests led U.S. officials to preliminarily conclude that the animal had the brain-wasting disease.

"We are considering this confirmation," said USDA spokeswoman Alisa Harrison, adding that the English lab still would conduct its own test using another sample from the cow's brain.

Federal officials were trying to find the herd the cow was raised with, since the cow likely was sickened several years ago. The disease is spread by eating feed that includes parts from an infected cow. The incubation period in cattle is four to five years, said Dr. Stephen Sundlof of the Food and Drug Administration.

Security enhanced

WASHINGTON (AP) — Homeland Security officials have enhanced their ability to monitor the air for biological warfare agents in 30 cities, one of several ways the government is preparing for possible terrorist strikes.

The alert also has activated special disaster response teams, while officials have been conferring with foreign governments to prevent terrorists from boarding international flights.

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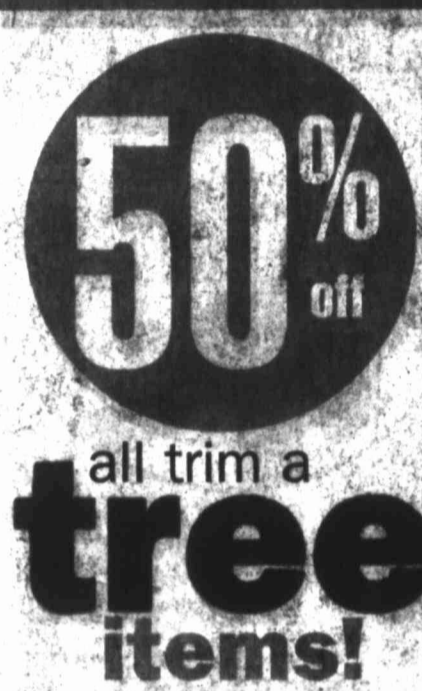
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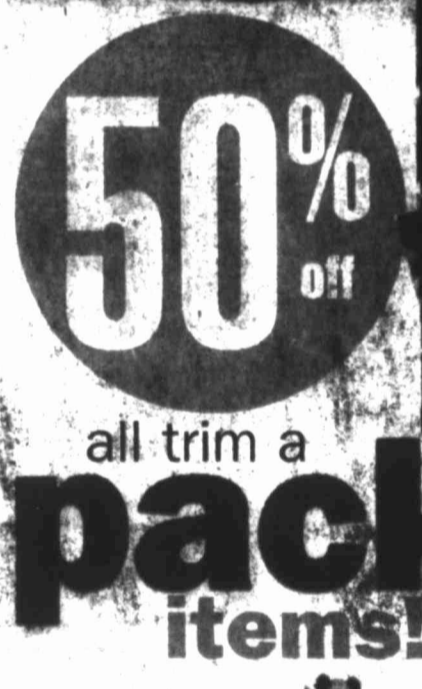
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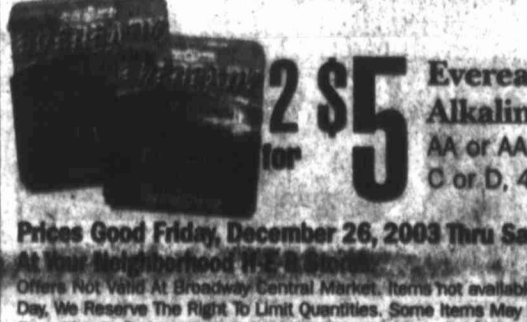
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