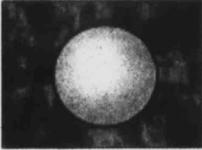


TUESDAY

December 28, 2004

WEATHER

Tonight:



TONIGHT 40°-42° TOMORROW 68°-70°

BRIEFLY

Relay for Life meeting slated

The community startup meeting for Relay for Life which was postponed earlier this year has been set for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4 at the First United Methodist Church's Garrett Hall. The meeting is open to anyone interested in Relay for Life, the annual American Cancer Society fundraiser. Underwriters, sponsors and team captains are especially urged to attend.

INSIDE

Cocaine toxicity cause of death

The September death of a 33-year-old Stanton man has been ruled an accident following the release of toxicology reports that determined the cause of death as acute cocaine toxicity.

Page 3A

COMING

THIS WEEKEND



Donating an organ is the equivalent of giving life, or at least greatly improving the life of someone in need of a healthy kidney, liver, lung, heart and pancreas. While 85,000 Americans await life-saving transplants, at least 400,000 people have received a donated organ over the last 50 years.

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Vol. 101, No. 26

Find us online at: www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us, please call 263-7331. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call 263-7335 before 7 p.m. weekdays and from 8 a.m. to noon Sunday.

Tidal waves death toll reaches 40,000

By ANDI DJATMIKO

Associated Press Writer

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — The death toll from epic tidal waves that rocked 11 countries rose to 40,000 people on Tuesday after Sri Lanka and Indonesia significantly increased their confirmed deaths.

Medical supplies, food aid and water purification systems poured into the region, part of what the U.N. said would be the biggest relief effort the world has ever seen. Millions remained homeless. Rescuers struggled to

reach remote locations where thousands more were likely killed by the deadliest tsunami in 120 years. Bodies, many of them children, filled beaches and choked hospital morgues, raising fears of disease across the region.

Sri Lanka on Tuesday raised its death toll past 18,700. In Indonesia, the country closest to Sunday's 9.0 magnitude quake that sent walls of water crashing into coastlines thousands of miles away, the count rose to 15,000, a number the vice president said could rise

further.

"Thousands more cannot be reached in some isolated and remote areas," said Purnomo Sidik, the national disaster director.

Some 4,400 died in India; 1,000 perished in Thailand. The Red Cross said malaria and cholera could add to the toll.

Desperate residents on Indonesia's Sumatra Island — 100 miles from the quake's epicenter — looted stores Tuesday. "There is no help, it is each person for them-

See TOLL, Page 3A



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins
Howard County Deputy Sheriff Mark Hall and Dispatcher Jennifer Burger show off the awards they recently received from the sheriff's office. Hall was named Deputy of the Year, while Burger received the Civilian of the Year award.

Local peace officers recognized

Hall, Burger receive sheriff's office awards

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Recognition for hard work is one thing, but when it comes from your peers it's even sweeter.

That's exactly what Howard County Sheriff's Deputy Mark Hall recently found out, as he was named Deputy of the Year by his fellow co-workers at the sheriff's office.

"I was really shocked," said Hall after receiving the award. "I was surprised. There were a couple of other deputies that I expected to win the award, so it came as a total surprise."

Hall, who has been a deputy with the sheriff's office for eight years, said he spends the majority of his time on patrol, and with an enormous number of square miles to cover, it's anything but a 9 to 5 job.

"We're set on an eight-hour schedule, but it's pretty rare that you get to go home after eight hours," said Hall. "Just because your shift is over doesn't mean you get to go home. We're so short-handed we have to just carry over and cover the shifts."

"I handle basic patrol duties, which means we answer calls that we're dispatched to. It could be anything from a cow in

"There were a couple of other deputies that I expected to win the award, so it came as a total surprise."

—Deputy Mark Hall

the road or someone shooting at someone else. You never really know what you're going to get. I spend the majority of my time in my car driving around, driving through neighborhoods and trying to keep an eye on things."

Hall said he has been around law enforcement all his life, but it wasn't until a friend became a deputy with the Howard County agency that he realized what he wanted to do.

"My stepfather, J.D. Carter, worked for the police department here in Big Spring for 20 years, retiring in 1989," said Hall. "Then he worked with the sheriff's office for a little while as a reserve deputy. When I was real little, I went with him a lot to the firing range because he was a firearms instructor. But I really wasn't interested in it. Then a friend of

See DEPUTY, Page 5A

Working together

Combined city-county law enforcement facility could be real possibility

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

More than a year after Howard County commissioners began considering a new county jail facility, it appears the process will begin anew — with a few new players involved.

Commissioners discussed the need for a new jail facility during their Monday meeting, which included a presentation from Big Spring Mayor Russ McEwen, who volunteered the city's participation in the process.

"The city is extremely interested in involving itself. Not in the construction, obviously, because we want to get out of the jail business," said McEwen. "It doesn't make any sense in a county our size to have two separate jails. The police department is in a position where they

Howard County Jail Average Daily Population

2000 - 41 inmates
2001 - 41 inmates
2002 - 54 inmates
2003 - 59 inmates
2004 - 66 inmates (year to date)

Jail capacity: 49 inmates
Estimated cost of a new jail facility is between \$6.6 million (43,500 square feet) and \$7.5 million (49,020 square feet).

are currently bursting at the seams, and we're going to have to address that.

"If you would consider it, we would love to be in a position where we might consider having joint offices and have everyone under one roof," McEwen told commissioners. "It makes sense to me. If all law enforcement was under one roof, it seems to me like they would have better coordination and joint dispatch."

McEwen suggested to commissioners there is a

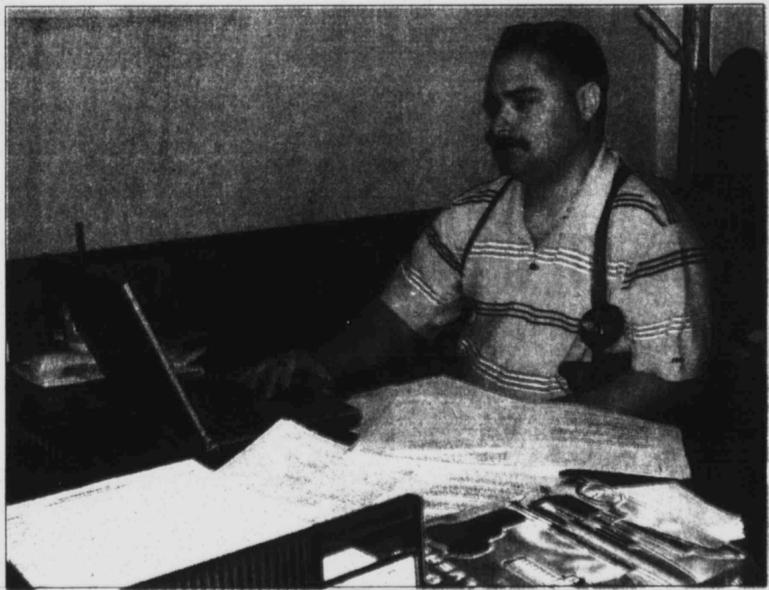
See COMBINED, Page 3A



McEWEN



LOCKHART



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins
Cpl. Brian Gordon, who was recently appointed to the Big Spring Police Department's street crimes division, was named the Officer of the Year recently.

Cpl. Gordon enjoys work as an officer

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

After nearly a decade with the Big Spring Police Department, Cpl. Brian Gordon recently received the ultimate praise from his fellow officers and police department employees when he was voted BSPD Officer of the Year.

"It's something where you try to work and be the best officer you can and something like this happens — it's just overwhelming."

—Cpl. Brian Gordon

"I was extremely surprised. I wasn't expecting it at all," said Gordon, who was recently assigned to the department's street crimes division. See OFFICER, Page 5A

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Obituaries

Mildred Menser



Mildred Menser, 83, of Coahoma died Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004, in a Big Spring hospital. Funeral services will be held at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2004, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Elwin Collum, pastor of First Baptist Church of Coahoma officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

Mildred was born June 15, 1921, in Coahoma and married W. Leon Menser Aug. 26, 1939, in Coahoma. He preceded her in death Nov. 23, 1990.

Mrs. Menser was born and raised in Coahoma and her parents were Howard and Mary Reid. She graduated from Coahoma High School and was a lifelong resident of Coahoma. Mrs. Menser had worked in the Coahoma Post Office for 25 years before she retired. She enjoyed painting as a hobby for many years.

She was a member of First Baptist Church of Coahoma and a member of the Order of the Eastern Star No. 67.

Survivors include one son, Tommy Menser of Waxahachie; one daughter and her husband, Jerriann and Lee Lott of Conroe; a sister, Sandra Dunzel of Weatherford; a brother, Wallace Reid of Coahoma; four grandchildren, Kamrine, Kristin, James and Joe; two great-grandchildren; and one special nephew and his wife, Ronnie and Carol Reid of Coahoma.

She was preceded in death by her parents, one brother and one sister.

The family suggest memorials be made to the First Baptist Church of Coahoma P.O. Box 376, Coahoma 79511.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring.

Paid obituary

Clara A. Dierschke



Clara A. Dierschke, 88, of St. Lawrence passed away in a Stanton care center Saturday, Dec. 25, 2004. Rosary will be at 7 p.m. today, Dec. 28, 2004, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel in Big Spring. Mass of the Christian Burial will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2004, at the St. Lawrence Catholic Church in St. Lawrence with the Rev. Bernard Getigan officiating. Burial will follow in the St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Clara was born Jan. 31, 1916, to Joseph and Annie Fayte Malinak in Shiner. She graduated from Shiner High School. Clara was a leather tooler for many years, working on saddles and other leather goods.

She married Bernard "Ben" Dierschke Dec. 28, 1949, in Shiner. To this union one son, Alan, was born. Ben and Clara lived and farmed in the community of St. Lawrence. Ben preceded her in death Aug. 5, 1996.

She enjoyed baking, raising a garden and listening and dancing to polka music. Clara was a member of the St. Lawrence Catholic Church and the St. Theresa Alter Society.

Besides her husband and parents, one brother, Ed, preceded her in death.

Survivors are her son, Alan J. Dierschke of St. Lawrence; one sister, Adel Kruse of Victoria; one brother and sister-in-law, Frank and Floy Malinak of Marietta, Ga.; two sisters-in-law, Cora Dierschke of San Angelo and Elizabeth Truman of Houston; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers will be Bob Fulton, Chris Hirt, Mike Batla, Wayne Jansa, David Weishuhn and Kervin Frysak.

Memorials can be made to the Glasscock County Volunteer EMS, P.O. Box 55, Garden City 79739 or to a charity of choice.

Alan would like to thank all of the staff at Stanton Nursing and Rehabilitation Center for the care they gave Clara during her stay there.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at www.npwelch.com.

Paid obituary

Conny Wade



Conny Wade, 81, of Big Spring died at 1:38 a.m. Monday, Dec. 27, 2004, at Mountain View Lodge. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at St. Mary's Episcopal Church with the Rev. James Liggett officiating. Burial will be at Trinity Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

He was born June 17, 1923, in Coolidge to Dudley and Ethel Wade. He married Norma Esch May 25, 1946, in Waco. She preceded him in death Sept. 12, 1998.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served in World War II in the Pacific Theater. Conny was an electrical engineer, working at Texas Electric until beginning work at Cosden Feb. 21, 1956, and worked there for 32 years.

He also operated a TV repair business. Conny loved fixing and repairing anything. He also enjoyed building and had built their home. Conny had been a resident of Big Spring for more than 50 years and was a member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

He is survived by three daughters, Marilyn Wade of San Antonio, Polly Lancaster and her husband, Steve of Big Spring and Cindy Pierce and her husband, Terrell of Odessa; four grandchildren, Michelle Robinson and her husband, Ben of Tustin Ranch, Calif., Allen Baker of Alamogordo, N.M., Todd Lancaster and his wife, Paige of Granbury and Justin Pierce of Odessa; two great-grandchildren, Chace Baker and Beau Baker, both of Alamogordo, N.M.; one sister, Margie Radke and her husband, Lonnie of Hewitt.

Pallbearers will be Carl Bradley, Gloria Bain, Bob Federman, Wayne Burns, James Pedigo, Roe Fulgham and Spencer Wolfe. Honorary pallbearers are all of the staff at Mountain View Lodge.

The family suggests memorials be made to St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1001 Goliad, Big Spring.

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

Paid obituary

Sheriff's report

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

- **ARSENA REGINA TURNER**, 22, was arrested Monday by DPS on a charge of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

- **THOMAS WILLIAM MURPHY**, 25, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on charges of bondsman off of bond for failure to identify as a fugitive from justice - giving false information, violation of a promise to appear and open container.

- **ROY D. STEWART**, 51, was arrested Monday by DPS on charges of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, fraudulent use/possession of identifying information, credit/debit card abuse, tampering with governmental records and license/seal defraud/harm.

- **JOHNNY RAY TORRES**, 23, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license suspended/invalid.

- **BRANDI LYNN MAYO**, 21, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of aggravated robbery.

- **MARIO RAYOS**, 36, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of robbery.

- **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 100 block of Riva Ridge.

Police blotter

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

- **LAVON RENE HAGGARD**, 36, of 806 San Antonio, was arrested Sunday on local traffic warrants.

- **SHANNON ELEANOR LANG**, 19, of 504 Jeffery, was arrested Monday on charges of burglary of a building (four counts) and a local traffic citation.

- **JIMMY ANTHONY CANTU**, 18, of 1500 E. 11th Place, was arrested Monday on a charge of failure to identify.

- **CLIFFORD LEON ANGLIN**, 20, of 304 W. Fourth Street, was arrested Monday on a charge of evading arrest and Howard County warrants.

- **TIMOTHY DONALD TAYLOR**, 46, of 1019 Ridgeroad, was arrested Monday on a parole violation.

- **LARRY DALE KING**, 21, of 4201 Oak, was arrested Monday on a charge of failure to identify.

- **JOE DEWAYNE WOODRUFF**, 33, of 1202 E. Third Street, was arrested Monday on charges of violation of a protective order and assault with intent to cause bodily injury - family violence.

- **ASSAULT/FAMILY VIOLENCE** was reported in the 1200 block of Third Street.

- **ASSAULT/CLASS C** was reported:
 - in the 300 block of 11th Place.
 - in the 1200 block of Sycamore.

- **BURGLARY OF A BUILDING** was reported in the 2500 block of Gregg Street.

- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported:
 - in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20.
 - in the 1200 block of Third Street.

- **EVADING ARREST OR DETENTION** was reported in the 500 block of Westover Road.

- **FAILURE TO IDENTIFY** was reported:
 - in the 1500 block of Sycamore.
 - in the 2900 block of Highway 80.

- **THEFT** was reported in the 800 block of Interstate Highway 20.

- **VIOLATION OF A PROTECTIVE ORDER** was reported in the 1200 block of Third Street.

Weather

Tonight...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s. South winds 10 to 15 mph...Wednesday...Partly cloudy. Highs near 70. South winds 10 to 20 mph.

Wednesday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 40s. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Thursday...Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. Highs in the mid 60s. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph.

Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows near 40.

Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs near 60.

Friday night...Partly cloudy. Lows near 40...New years day...Mostly cloudy. Highs near 60.

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

Sunday...Mostly cloudy. Highs near 60.

Sunday night...Mostly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s.

Monday...Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s.

Bulletin board

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

TODAY

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

- A Stitchin' Time Club meets at 3:30 p.m. at Primitive Baptist Church, 201 E. 24th St. Everyone is invited to learn and share sewing skills, and portable sewing machines are welcome. Call Kay Sikes at 394-4835 for more information.

- The Multiple Sclerosis Support Group meets at 7 p.m. in the College Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 1105 Birdwell Lane. For more information, call Tracey Pounds at 268-4948.

- Wednesday

- Thursday

- Friday

These are fifth weekdays for December and no meetings are planned. To have a meeting placed in Bulletin Board for these days, contact 263-7331, ext. 236.

MONDAY

- District Committee Lone Star of Big Spring meets at noon at 610 Scurry.

- Senior Circle meets at 4 p.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for Sit and Be Fit Chair Aerobics. Those 50 years and older are invited to attend. Call 268-4721.

- Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. 21 meets at 5 p.m. in the Dora Roberts Rehabilitation Center, 306 W. Third for weigh-in. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Call 1-800-392-8677 or 263-0391 or 263-1758.

- Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) No. TX 1756 meets at 5:30 p.m. Monday in the 11th and Birdwell Lane Church of Christ. A different program is offered every week, and anyone 7 years old or older is welcome to attend. Please enter through the northwest door. Call 263-2786 for more information.

- Evening Lions Club meets at 6:30 p.m. in La Posada Restaurant.

- Big Spring Chapter and Council RAM meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Masonic building at 221 1/2 Main St.

- Howard County ARC meets at 806 E. Third in the Bingo Hall. Call 264-0674 for more information.

TUESDAY

- Intermediate Line Dance classes begin at 9 a.m. in the Spring City Senior Citizen's Center. Call 267-1628.

- Coahoma Senior Citizen luncheon is set for 11 a.m. in the Coahoma Community Center.

- Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

- A Stitchin' Time Club meets at 3:30 p.m. at Primitive Baptist Church, 201 E. 24th St. Everyone is invited to learn and share sewing skills, and portable sewing machines are welcome. Call Kay Sikes at 394-4835 for more information.

- VFW Post 2013 meets at 7 p.m. in the VFW Hall, 500 Driver Road.

- Sheriff's Posse meets at 7 p.m. in the clubhouse on the Andrews Highway.

- Alzheimer's Association, the Greater West Texas Chapter meets at 2 p.m. in the Howard County Library conference room, 500 S. Main.

Lottery

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 4-6-18-35. Bonus Ball: 2.

Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: 0.

Number matching four of four: 12. Prize: \$878.

Number matching three of four, plus Bonus Ball: 23. Prize: \$56.

Number matching three of four: 847. Prize: \$20.

Number matching two of four, plus Bonus Ball: 579. Prize: \$20.

Number matching one of four, plus Bonus Ball: 3,400. Prize: \$7.

Number matching Bonus Ball alone: 5,938. Prize: \$5.

Estimated jackpot for Thursday night drawing: \$350,000.

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 10-17-32-36-37.

Number matching five of five: 1.

Prize per winner: \$37,520.

Winning tickets sold in: Houston.

Matching four of five: 107. Prize: \$158.

Matching three of five: 3,789. Prize: \$10.

Matching two of five: 37,511. Prize: \$2.

Next Cash 5 drawing: Tuesday night.

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 9-1-6

BIG SPRING HERALD

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Susanne Reed
John A. Moseley
Angie Worley
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Dianne Marquez

Publisher/Advertising Manager.....Ext. 250
Managing Editor.....Ext. 230
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BY THE MONTH HOME DELIVERY: Evenings and Sunday, \$8.65 monthly; \$93.42 yearly (includes 10% discount for yearly).

MAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$12.50 monthly Howard & Martin Counties. \$13.25 elsewhere.

Take note

□ SENIOR CITIZEN'S NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE Dec. 31 at the Spring City Senior Citizens. Monroe Casey's "Prowlers" will be playing from 8:30 p.m. until to midnight. There will be free party favors and black-tie attire will be served. Tickets are \$10 per person of \$15 for two people. All senior citizens are invited. There will be no alcohol and no smoking.

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COMBIN

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lot to be gained by lishing local li ment — both Spring Police l and Howard Sheriff's Office central locatio jail to serve cics.

"We're not want to insi selves into tion," said Mc we'd like to input just in a we can do to r sible — to he for this thing don't need to t business.

"If we were one roof and together, ther tremendous the taxpayers County and th Spring. And I'm looking fo a position wh do that."

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"I'd love to a joint com committee could get to police chief couple of co and a couple members," sa "That way w out what w have input in is literally a c time opport just don't wa it up."

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"We're goi right this Lockhart. "W have to figu problems as but we don't like we did l end up with more than work."

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lot to be gained by establishing local law enforcement — both the Big Spring Police Department and Howard County Sheriff's Office — in one central location, with one jail to serve both agencies.

"We're not saying we want to insinuate ourselves into your situation," said McEwen, "but we'd like to have some input just in asking what we can do to make it possible — to help you pay for this thing because we don't need to be in the jail business.

"If we were all under one roof and did it all together, there are some tremendous savings to the taxpayers of Howard County and the city of Big Spring. And that's what I'm looking for — to be in a position where we can do that."

Commissioner Bill Crooker agreed, saying the idea of the city and county working together on the project makes sense.

"I feel that this is definitely something both the city council and the commissioner's court need to explore together, and work our way through these ideas and thoughts that are presented," said Crooker. "It makes a lot of sense to me."

McEwen suggested the commissioners form a joint commission, which would include officials from the city and county, to explore the idea further.

"I'd love to see us form a joint commission or committee where we could get together the police chief, sheriff, a couple of commissioners and a couple of council members," said McEwen. "That way we can figure out what we need and have input into that. This is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I just don't want us to pass it up."

County Judge Ben Lockhart agreed, saying commissioners are dedicated to making upcoming discussions more productive than those that began more than a year ago.

"We're going to do this right this time," said Lockhart. "We're going to have to figure out some problems as we go along, but we don't want to do it like we did last time and end up with nothing after more than a year of work."

One of the key elements in designing a new facility will be a needs analysis performed by the Texas Jail Commission, and while one was performed in 2003, Sheriff Dale Walker said his office will request a new assessment immediately.

"In 2003 we requested a needs analysis for our jail from the Jail Commission," said Walker. "It showed a projected growth and needs based on our area's statistics."

"The Jail Commission put out a report earlier this year that due to cuts to the state budget, they

are going to be forced to charge counties for reports and studies that are above and beyond the normal inspection reports. That's expected to begin Jan. 1, so we'll request another needs analysis now to try to avoid that fee."

Walker said he favors a central law enforcement facility and jail, but added careful consideration of not just present situations, but also future situations, will be vital.

"I'm all for everyone working together," said Walker. "And we're certainly doing that now. I think we've proven that. But understand also that some people believe that's sort of a double-taxation and stepping on toes in the city and we don't want to do that. I think it's clear from the mayor that they want to do this and we're willing to work with them all the way."

"By working together now and beginning with the process, we have a better understanding of everybody's needs. Right now we work well together. Twenty years from now no one can really say, but that jail or that building will still be there. So if it's built, it needs to be built with consideration to space and distance between city and county operations — so we can both run independently under the same roof."

Several presentations have been made to the commissioner's court concerning the construction of a new jail facility over the past year, including feasibility studies by architects Norris Fletcher and Phil Furqueron.

"Option 1, which is the 160-bed facility expandable to a 212-bed facility including furniture, fees, necessary testing and all of the project construction related costs, you're looking at \$6.6 million," Fletcher told the court during a meeting in October of 2003. "For the 212-bed facility, it's \$7.5 million."

"We're looking at a sheriff's office administrative area of 6,586 square feet. That involves the sheriff's offices and patrol offices, and that would stay the same with either option one or two. Inmate housing for option one is 20,550 square feet, and option two is 25,560 square feet. That includes the actual cell areas, multi-purpose rooms, all of which are necessary with the detention of inmates. We're looking at option one being 43,509 square feet overall, or option two, which is 49,020 square feet."

Commissioners requested a rough timeline for the design and construction of a new facility be drawn up by Furqueron for future meetings.

Autopsy: Wiltsie died of acute cocaine toxicity

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

The September death of a 33-year-old Stanton man has been ruled an accident following the release of toxicology reports that determined the cause of death as acute cocaine toxicity.

An opinion released by a board of five forensic pathologists with the Lubbock County Medical Examiner's Office blamed ingested cocaine for the death of Robert Charles Wiltsie, who died shortly after being taken into custody by the Big Spring Police Department Sept. 2.

"Antemortem blood toxicology was positive for cocaine and cocaine metabolite," read a report issued by the examiner's

office. "The autopsy revealed portions of plastic within his (Wiltsie) stomach."

Justice of the Peace Bennie Green said he has ruled the manner of death as accidental.

"The deceased placed multiple plastic wrappers containing cocaine in his mouth and swallowed them," said Green. "I've ruled it an accidental death because it wasn't any type of suicide attempt or anything like that. It was an attempt to conceal, to hide the cocaine from officers."

Wiltsie, 33, of Stanton collapsed while he and another Stanton man were being booked into the Big Spring City Jail by a Comptroller of Public Accounts officer on a charge of use of dyed

fuel in a taxable manner.

According to police officials, reports indicated that Justin Scott, an officer with the Comptroller's Office, stopped a pickup truck at the intersection of West Fourth and San Antonio streets just before 9:30 a.m. Sept. 2, on the suspicion it was being operated on "dirty fuel."

While questioning the driver, 39-year-old Tracy Lynn Kruse of Stanton, Scott reportedly observed the passenger in the vehicle swallow something. The passenger, Wiltsie, had locked both doors to the truck in an effort to keep officers at bay.

Big Spring police officers were called for back up and transported the two men to the police department, where they

were booked at the request of Scott.

Authorities believed Wiltsie had ingested a quantity of a controlled substance during the traffic stop, but the Stanton man repeatedly denied doing so when questioned by officers.

After he collapsed, Wiltsie was transported to Scenic Mountain Medical Center where efforts to revive him were unsuccessful.

The Texas Rangers were immediately called in to investigate Wiltsie's death in accordance with Big Spring Police Department policy.

Ranger Jeremy Wallace, who is in charge of the investigation, was not available for comment following release of the toxicology report.

TOLL

Continued from Page 1A

selves here," district official Tengku Zulkarnain told el-Shinta radio station.

The disaster could be the costliest in history, with "many billions of dollars" of damage, said U.N. Undersecretary Jan Egeland, who is in charge of emergency relief coordination. Hundreds of thousands lost all they owned, he said.

In Galle, Sri Lanka, officials used a loudspeaker atop a fire engine to tell residents to place bodies on the road for collection. Muslim families used cooking utensils and even their bare hands to dig graves. Hindus in India, abandoning their tradition of burning bodies, held mass burials.

Soldiers and volunteers in Indonesia combed through destroyed houses to try to find survivors — or bodies. The toll in Thailand included at least 700 foreign tourists.

Stories of survival emerged amid the devastation.

A blond-haired 2-year-old found sitting alone on a road in Thailand and taken to a hospital was reunited with his uncle, who saw the boy's picture on the hospital's Web site.

"When I saw Hannes on the Internet, I booked an air ticket to come here in less than five hours," said a man who identified himself only as Jim. Hannes Bergstroem's mother died in the tsunami; his father was in another hospital, the Swedish paper Aftonbladet reported.

In Malaysia, a 20-day-

old baby was found floating on a mattress soon after the waves hit Sunday. She and her family were reunited.

The geographic scope of the disaster was unparalleled. Relief organizations used to dealing with a centralized crisis had to distribute resources over 11 countries on two continents.

Helicopters in India rushed medicine to stricken areas. In Sri Lanka, the Health Ministry dispatched 300 physicians to the disaster zone by helicopter.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said the United States was sending helicopters. An airborne surgical hospital from Finland arrived, and a German aircraft was en route with a water purification plant.

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Cleta Plew, 96, died Sunday. Funeral Services will be at 11:00 AM Tuesday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Trinity Memorial Park.

Conny Wade, 81, died Monday. Funeral Services will be at 2:00 PM Wednesday at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Burial will be at Trinity Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 6:00 until 8:00 PM Tuesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Milini Turner, 51, died Monday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Susanne Reed
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Now's the time to sign up as a CASA volunteer

Are you or someone you know looking for a chance to give something of yourself to the community? Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of West Texas will begin a new training opportunity for Howard County volunteers on Jan. 10.

CASA volunteers are selected by a judge to be an advocate for a child involved in a legal child abuse or neglect case. The CASA volunteer provides the court officer with information concerning the well-being of the child and the best option for safety and stability within a home environment.

With the guidance and support of case managers, volunteers serve as the court's eyes and ears to help the judge decide whether a child should stay with the parents, be placed with relatives or be freed for permanent adoption. The goal is a safe, stable home for every child.

Each year in Howard County, more than 50 children are abused and neglected by their families and end up without a home to call their own. Currently there are more than 20 cases pending in Howard County that need a volunteer to speak up for a child.

CASA volunteers help make a difference by making sure the abuse and neglect that the children originally suffered at home doesn't continue at the hands of the system.

The program requires 30 hours of training during a two-week schedule, and a commitment of about eight to 10 hours per month, depending on the case.

This service is vitally important to the well-being and success of abused children in Howard County, and CASA volunteers are urgently needed.

So, if you would like to become a CASA volunteer, now is the time to call 263-4162 or 432-683-1114.

We believe you'll be glad you did. Most certainly a child that's been abused or neglected will be.

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 Managing Editor John A. Moseley at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@crcom.net.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

LETTER POLICIES

- 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 editor@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

We have what it takes to make a difference, Lord, when we trust in You.

Amen

Inside report: Byrd's nuclear option

A scenario for an unspecified day in 2005: One of President Bush's judicial nominations is brought to the Senate floor. Majority Leader Bill Frist makes a point of order that only a simple majority is needed for confirmation. The point is upheld by the presiding officer, Vice President Dick Cheney. Democratic Leader Harry Reid challenges the ruling. Frist moves to table Reid's motion, ending debate. The motion is tabled, and the Senate proceeds to confirm the judicial nominee — all in about 10 minutes.

This is the so-called "nuclear option" that creates fear and loathing among Democrats and weak knees for some Republicans, including conservative opinion leaders. Ever since Frist publicly embraced the nuclear option, he has been accused of abusing the Senate's cherished tradition of extended debate. In truth, during six years as majority leader, Democrat Robert C. Byrd four times detonated the nuclear option to rewrite Senate rules.

Thus, Frist would set no precedent, would not contradict past Republican behavior and would not strip the GOP of protection as a future Senate minority. The question is whether Republican senators will flinch from the only maneuver open to confirm Bush's judges.

The unprecedented Democratic plan to filibuster judicial nominations that do not meet liberal specifications has exceeded all expecta-

tions. None of 10 filibustered Bush appellate court nominees has been confirmed, and another six are all designated filibuster victims. This is intended to have a chilling effect on Bush in filling Supreme Court vacancies.

All 16 of these nominees are dead under present procedures. Even with the net gain of four Republican senators in this year's elections, Frist falls short of the 60 votes needed to cut off debate. After early skepticism, I have come to agree with Frist's conclusion that the old-fashioned filibuster-breaker of round-the-clock sessions is a non-starter. Today's Republican senators lack the will to undergo this ordeal. They would have to maintain a heavy presence on the floor while a single Democrat could hold forth.

Frist drew a line in the sand Nov. 11 in addressing the conservative Federalist Society: "One way or another, the filibuster of judicial nominees must end." The way he indicated was a rules change — the nuclear option.

That generated speculation that, when the new Senate convenes on Jan. 4, the Republican leadership will propose a rules change. Reid, the Senate's reigning master of parliamentary tactics, has promised to "screw things up" by bringing the chamber's activities to a standstill. Frist would only tell me he wants "a full set of options, ready and available." However, Senate sources believe Frist will bide his time on opening day and wait to make a point of order to change the rules.

This is precisely what Byrd did as majority leader, as explained in an article by Martin Gold and Dimple Gupta to be published in

the January issue of the Harvard Journal on Law and Public Policy. They wrote that Byrd "developed four precedents that allowed a simple majority to change Senate procedures governing debate without altering the text of any standing rule." In each case, Byrd successfully overcame dilatory tactics by the Republican minority.

It remains an open question whether Frist can mobilize Republicans as effectively as Byrd commanded Democrats to get even 51 votes. The "New England Three" of liberal Republican senators from Maine and Rhode Island may vote no. John McCain and Chuck Hagel have misgivings, with Hagel recalling the dark Republican days of the '70s when only a handful of Republican senators stood up against the Democratic tide.

Most worrisome to Frist is criticism from respected conservative voices — George F. Will and the National Review — that the nuclear opposition undermines a bulwark of limited government. But Republicans never have employed the filibuster to block liberal judges. The failure to confirm Lyndon Johnson's nomination of Abe Fortas as chief justice was caused not by a Republican filibuster (as is now claimed), but by inability to get a majority of votes in a heavily Democratic Senate. Using the filibuster to block judges is something new, and the Frist scenario looks like the only way to end it.

To find out more about Robert D. Novak and read his past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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ADDRESSES

• GEORGE W. BUSH

President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

• JOHN CORNYN

U.S. Senator
Washington, DC 20510-4305
Phone: 202-224-2934

• RANDY NEUGEBAUER

U.S. Representative (19th Cong. District)

1510 Scurry
Big Spring
Phone: (432) 264-0722

• RICK PERRY

Governor
State Capitol, Room 2S.1
Austin, 78711
P.O. Box 12428
Phone: (512) 463-2000

• KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

U.S. Senator
703 Hart Office Building
Washington, 20510
Phone: 202-224-5922

• PETE LANEY

State Representative
Texas 85th District
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, 78768
Phone: (512) 463-0604

• KEL SELIGER

State Senator
401 Austin, suite 101
Big Spring, 79720
(432) 268-9909

HOWARD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

OFFICE — 264-2200.

BEN LOCKHART, COUNTY JUDGE — Home: 263-4155; Office: 264-2202.

EMMA BROWN — Home: 267-2649.

JERRY KILGORE — 263-0724; Work (Jerry's Barbers): 267-5471.

BILL CROOKER — Home: 263-2566.

GARY SIMER — Home: 263-0269; Work (Ponderosa Nursery): 263-4441.

Land of the second chance?

In this year's State of the Union speech, President Bush extolled America as the "land of the second chance." It's a crying shame that his record granting presidential pardons and commutations — only 31, with the four pardons announced this week — belies that generous sentiment.

At the heart of the issue is how this country chooses to treat people who have broken the law.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, some 39 percent of high-school seniors said they had used drugs in the previous year.

Most of them won't get caught, and most will go on to become productive citizens. Some of them will become involved in drug dealing, and some will go to prison.

The average sentence for a federal inmate is now 50 months, double what it was 20 years ago, according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

America's war on drugs has taken an ugly turn. Federal mandatory-minimum sentences have become so warped that some first-time non-violent drug offenders are serving sentences longer than those that violent killers often serve.

I realize that some readers have no problem with sentencing first-time non-violent drug offenders to decades behind bars. They don't differentiate between violent career criminals and young people with murky futures who embark on a path more dangerous to themselves than to others.

The lock-them-up-and-throw-away-the-key crowd doesn't notice people who committed crimes but then became positive forces within their community. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger pardoned on

Wednesday three such men — one convicted of burglary and driving under the influence of drugs, another for two counts of selling a controlled substance, and the third for possession of marijuana for sale and transportation of a controlled substance decades ago. All three served their time, and then turned their lives around and became contributing members of society.

Bush has cleared 31 ex-cons' records by issuing pardons — that's less than half the 77 pardons issued by his one-term father. The number of federal prisoners now stands at a record — more than 180,000 — yet Bush has commuted a measly two sentences.

A first-time non-violent offender named Clarence Aaron is sitting in an Atlanta prison sentenced to life without parole, that is, life until he dies a natural death without taking another breath as a free man. Aaron has served 11 years of his sentence — yet Bush has not lifted a pen to free him. Then, there's Chrissy Taylor, who at age 19 was sentenced to 19 years and seven months for buying legal drugs for her 35-year-old boyfriend's illegal drug operation. As the group Families Against Mandatory Minimums writes, Chrissy "was barely an adult when this happened, and she will be 36 years old before she gets any kind of second chance."

Unless the president frees her. When Bush was running for reelection, his low pardon record was at least politically understandable. In the last two decades, presidents and presidential hopefuls only have been hurt when they've used their clemency power. Bush, too, was burned: As Texas governor, he pardoned a man with a misdemeanor drug charge, only to see the man re-enter the justice system as a deputy constable who was arrested for stealing cocaine.

Re-election is no longer a factor for Bush. And because the

Department of Justice is big enough to screen applicants thoroughly, Bush needn't worry about releasing the wrong convict.

"When you think of the enormous good that could be done with the (pardon) power, and what the (constitutional) framers thought about it as a test of presidential mettle and integrity, you can see that it is a truer measure of presidential courage than almost anything else the president does," Margaret C. Love, the pardon attorney under Presidents Bush pere and Bill Clinton, wrote on the Sentencing and Law Policy blog.

Mary Price of FAMM figures "we could probably come up with 40 names" for Bush of inmates whose sentences should be commuted.

San Diego attorney Sam Sheldon helped win a pardon for first-time non-violent offender Serena Nunn, whom President Clinton pardoned in July 2000. Instead of completing a 16-year prison sentence, Nunn graduated from Arizona State University with honors and "just finished her second year yesterday" at the University of Michigan.

"The people I worked with didn't believe me," Sheldon said when he warned them about draconian federal drug sentences — and they were lawyers. They didn't come around until Nunn's judge signed a letter urging that her sentence be commuted.

Now, Nunn is about to become an attorney. She got her second chance — thanks to President Clinton.

E-mail Debra J. Saunders at dsaunders@sfchronicle.com. To find out more about Debra J. Saunders, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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OFFICER

Continued from Pa

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OFFICER

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sion. "It's an honor. It's something where you try to work and be the best officer you can and something like this happens — it's just overwhelming."

Gordon said he made the decision to become a peace officer in high school, trying to avoid what he describes as a "desk job."

"I've been with the Big Spring Police Department since May of 1995," said Gordon, who graduated from South Plains College with an associate's degree in law enforcement.

"It was something I had always wanted to do. I had a great-grandfather that was in law enforcement, but my interest in the field was really what made me want to be a police officer."

Gordon said the face of law enforcement has changed immensely over the past 10 years, and while the idea of catching criminals was what

drew him to the occupation, there's still a lot of "desk work" involved.

"In just the amount of time that I've been here (with the Big Spring Police Department), there has been a really dramatic change between the way I started out doing things and the way we do them now," said Gordon. "There have been a tremendous number of changes just in the way the paperwork is handled, going from hand-written reports to computer-generated reports. The new racial profiling laws have also brought about a lot of changes. With all of the updates to the laws just since I started, it's represented a very dramatic change."

"The paperwork involved in our job is amazing. A lot of people think we go out and write tickets all day and throw people in jail and that's the end of it — but it's not. That's only about 10 percent of our job, while the other 90 percent is time spent typing reports, doing paperwork or testifying in court."

Gordon said several recent

attacks on fellow police officers are a major concern for the police department, but for the most part, it's all in a day's work.

"You have to take it a day at a time," said Gordon. "You're always watching out for potential threats. Unfortunately there are people out there that want to attack officers or just don't want to go to jail or play by the rules. But we have to go on with our daily routines knowing the threat exists and continue on with our jobs."

Also receiving awards from the BSPD were Sgt. Tony Everett for supervisor of the year; Ann Reed, civilian of the year; and Lt. Robert Fitzgibbons, Jerry G. Edwards Award for Professionalism. Officer Scott Knight received a letter of commendation for saving the life of a motorist trapped in a burning car.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

Lawmakers propose cell phone limits

HOUSTON (AP) — Several lawmakers have filed bills for the upcoming legislative session that would restrict the use of cell phones by drivers.

Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, and Rep. Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio, have proposed legislation that would allow only handsfree cell phones while driving, except for calls to emergency responders.

Under Menendez's bill, violators could pay fines ranging from \$25 to \$200.

Similar laws have been enacted in New Jersey, the District of Columbia and New York, although complaints arose after New Yorkers began ignoring the law shortly after enactment as law enforcement grew lax, said David Strayer, a member of the University of Utah's psychology faculty.

Ellis admitted talking on the cell phone was a distraction for him a few years ago when he nearly crashed into another vehicle.

"I almost hit somebody when I was on the phone," Ellis said. "I think that driving with a cell phone to your ear sometimes can be as hazardous as driving while you're drunk. This phone can be as mind-altering as alcohol."

Sen. Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, took a different approach with his cell phone bill. He is seeking to ban the use of all telephones while driving for those under 18 with restricted licenses for novice drivers.

Seliger's approach shows promise, since similar restrictions regarding operating hours and number of passengers have reduced fatalities for beginning drivers by as much as 50 percent, Strayer said.

DEPUTY

Continued from Page 1A

mine went to work here at the sheriff's office, and I got to ride with him a little bit and I got interested in it. So I made the decision to go to the academy."

While the decision to become a deputy may have only taken a few minutes to make, Hall said the reality of attending police academy classes in Midland while working a full-time job was anything but easy.

"I was working a full time job while I was going to the academy because I couldn't afford to just take three months," said Hall. "It was pretty tough. When I first started, it was pretty easy to do because I wanted to do it

so badly. I really enjoyed it, but I was only getting two or three hours of sleep each night and having to drive to Midland every day.

"I was working for a construction company at the time. I would go to work at about 6 a.m. and then work through lunch. After about eight hours I would have to go straight to the academy in Midland, where I would get out of class at about 11 p.m. That put me back in Big Spring at about midnight, and I would get up the next morning and do it all over again. It was great, but toward the end I was getting pretty cranky," he said with a laugh.

Hall said the job itself hasn't changed much over the past eight years, but the sheer volume of

calls he and other deputies respond to certainly has.

"We're a lot busier now," said Hall. "We get a lot more calls than we did when I first started. It seems like we get a call for every little thing. People expect us to be miracle workers, and if there's even the slightest problem they call us. A lot of calls are from people who are mad at one another and just want to try to use us as a tool for revenge."

"We have a lot of fun though. We have a really good bunch of people here at the sheriff's office and there have been a lot of changes made. Being so short-handed can make it tough at times."

Add increased calls to the enormous area the sheriff's office covers, and

Hall said you have a recipe for tough situations for deputies in need of help.

"We have such a big area to cover," said Hall. "With the police department, if they need assistance for anything their help is maybe a minute or two away. If we need help and call for backup out there, it may be 20 to 30 minutes before someone can get there. And with the rural areas, a lot of times our radios don't work. So when you're out there, you may be by

yourself. That makes it a challenge."

In addition to naming the Deputy of the Year, the Howard County Sheriff's Office also awarded its annual Civilian of the Year to Dispatcher Jennifer Burger, who said she was shocked to receive the prestigious award.

"I was shocked. It's such a big award," said Burger. "I was so shocked I cried in front of everyone. It's a great honor."

Burger said being the eyes and ears for deputies

in the field can be very tough at times, but it offers its own kind of reward.

"At times it's nerve-racking — knowing that you're responsible for their safety out there — and in an emergency-type situation it can be very frustrating," said Burger. "It's also very rewarding."

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

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* R.S.V.P. Christmas Council Party
Gale's - 3:00 pm

December 22 • Wednesday
* Stretch & Tone - 11:00 am
* Senior Appreciation Day - 11:30 am

December 23 • Thursday
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* Coffee @ Gale's - 10:00 am

December 24 • Friday
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December 25 • Saturday
Christmas Holiday - Merry Christmas!

December 26 • Sunday
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December 27 • Monday
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December 28 • Tuesday
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December 29 • Wednesday
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* Senior Circle Office Closed

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Sewing implements bring on a case of hives

I come from the generation that breaks out into hives at the sight of a sewing implement.

During my formative years, VELCRO was discovered and hotglue, as well as iron-ons, were really getting popular.

This is why I believe in safety pins.

These little things serve a boatload of purposes.

If a person actually does sew these days, I think they are very accomplished indeed.

Of course, since I have a bad attitude toward the whole needle/thread thing,

I say pish posh and buy everything ready made.

Unfortunately, buttons still fall off of clothing, and rips and tears do occur. I have tried, in vain, to put a safety pin

in the holes of a button. Safety pins are awesome, but they aren't magic.

Rips and tears can sometimes benefit from the pin, but then there are those other times when only a sewing machine will suffice.

In high school, I took Home Ec as an elective. Our assignment for the semester was to pick out a pattern and materials, bring them to school and sew our project.

Knowing that I wasn't a seamstress, my mom helped me pick out a very simple vest.

I bought trim and thread and straight pins and I was set.

Without too much stress, I cut out the vest. Days later, I had it all sewn together.

Trim time. I had picked out the tiniest of trim and it was sheer torture trying to sew it around each edge.

My deadline of six weeks was fast approaching and I still hadn't finished my vest.

With only about two weeks to go, I asked my teacher if I could start

all over. She very kindly said I could and I tossed it in the trash can.

There was one guy in our class, (the best tailor of all of us) and he found my garment in the trash and picked it up. He took it to the teacher and said, in his slow drawl, "Mrs. Hensley, someone threw their bonnet in the trash."

I was humiliated. Not only was my vest a complete failure, it looked like a bonnet!

I made another stab at it and bought thicker trimming and I finished up my project on time. She gave me an 80 because I had worked so hard.

I made a couple of attempts to sew later in life, but all were equally as stressful.

That is why I'll stick with safety pins.

Christy Alton is mother of two, works full time and is married to her park ranger, Ron. She writes this column for her friends and family and for the Big Spring Herald.



CHRISTY ALTON

Satellite broadband improves productivity for small businesses

(NAPSA) — There's a big myth that many small business owners come up against: "If I can't get cable or DSL, I can't get high-speed Internet (also known as broadband)."

If that were true, it would mean that some businesses could not get the broadband Internet access they need to remain competitive in today's marketplace.

According to the Small Business Association, 73 percent of small businesses have some type of Internet access, with 58 percent of them subscribing to high-speed Internet.

Small and medium businesses use high-speed Internet to improve customer communications, grow their sales revenue and improve overall pro-

ductivity. Businesses can receive and quickly respond to orders online, conduct research, purchase inventory, access electronic documents from suppliers, and receive large e-mail attachments.

As these applications become more prevalent and customers become increasingly reliant on the Internet for purchasing and communications, experts say businesses without broadband access will struggle to compete.

"Fortunately, there are other affordable and reliable alternatives such as satellite-to get business-quality broadband," says David Shiff, vice president of Hughes Network Systems.

The good news is that more and more business-

es are discovering they can get the service they need via satellite.

"I was extremely frustrated because we didn't think high-speed Internet was available in our region," said David Geiger, who is a parts and service manager for a small business called CKS

"And almost all of my suppliers and manufacturers had gone to online Web ordering and reporting in the last few years." Geiger is not alone.

Tens of thousands of small and medium enterprises have discovered that satellite is an affordable and effective high-speed Internet solution

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Region 18 material available for viewing

Video and audio-visual material used in local classrooms is available for viewing Jan. 27 by parents and other interested adults at the Region 18 Education Service Center.

The session is 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at the center, which is located at

2811 LaForce Blvd., Midland International Airport.

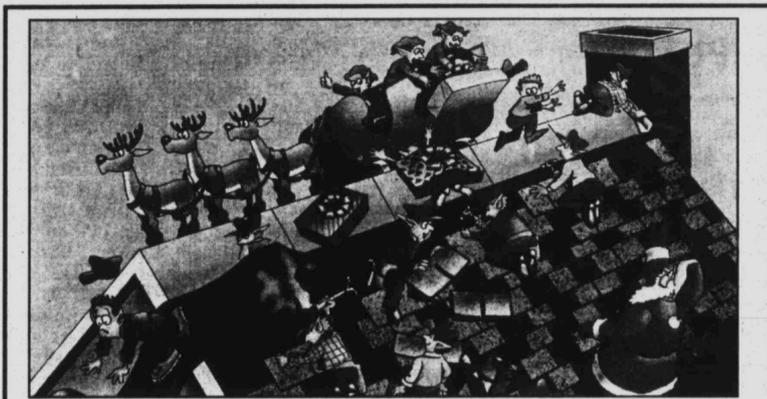
Anyone interested in previewing material should notify the center at least five days in advance.

Specific titles may be requested.

In the event a film is not

available on this date, the person making the request will be given a date on which it may be seen.

Persons wishing to request preview of the films may call Pam Winn, media supervisor of the education service center, at 432-567-3260.



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IN BR

Lady Steer
tourney op
ABILENE — Lady Steer's Lady Eagles saw their record fall to 2-10 on the Monday night 35 loss to Abilene Lady Eagles, opening round of the Abilene Invitational Basketball Tournament. The Lady Steer's double-digit loss was the first since the game with Ritchey, who led the team with eight points. Spring, while Dunn had scored 10 points. The Lady Steer's scheduled to play Burnett in a consolation bracket game at 10 a.m. today.

Brown gets contract, i
ANAHEIM, (AP) — While preparing for the Rose Bowl at the University of California, Brown is working up a contract with a coach Mack Elwood. "We like what we've got," Texas Tech Director DeLoraine told the Associated Press on Monday. Brown, who has done a wonderful job with the program, would be a later in the season. Brown would raise on a salary of \$1 million per year, one of the highest in the country. Brown's contract also could be extended. Brown discussed details of the contract but said he was "excited" about the deal. "We have accomplished what we've set here," Brown said. Brown will coach the two teams in the Rose Bowl, a better place than the University of Texas. Although I have been critical of five-game losses to Big 12 schools, Oklahoma, Texas Tech has won a lot of games the last few years. Brown's sons and regular fixture on the Top 10 Associated Press list during his year tenure.

Vols' QB for Cotto
IRVING — Tennessee's quarterback out for the Cotto Junior Ring will start as Saturday's game against Texas Tech. The Vols' fresh Schaeffer will return to play for the first time since he was sidelined in South Carolina. But Schaeffer has been unable to play in Texas because of a sick with flu. The Vols' man QB — hasn't been separating from against North Carolina in the Cotton

IN BRIEF

Lady Steers drop journey opener

ABILENE — Big Spring's Lady Steers saw their record drop to 2-10 on the season Monday night with a 61-35 loss to Abilene's host Lady Eagles in the opening round of the Abilene Invitational Basketball Tournament.

The Lady Steers' only double-digit scorer in the fray was Raegan Ritchey, who finished the game with 11 points. Carmen Lewis added eight points for Big Spring, while Valerie Dunn had seven.

The Lady Steers were scheduled to take on Burnett in a consolation bracket game at 10:30 a.m. today.

Brown gets new contract, raise

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — With Texas preparing for its first Rose Bowl appearance, university officials are working up a new contract with a raise for coach Mack Brown.

"We like what we've got," Texas Athletic Director DeLoss Dodds told the Associated Press on Monday. "He's done a wonderful job with the program."

Dodds said details would be announced later in the week but Brown would get a raise on a salary that currently pays him slightly more than \$2 million per year. He is one of the highest paid coaches in college football. Brown's assistants also could get a raise.

Brown declined to discuss details of his pending contract extension but said he was "excited about the talks."

"We haven't yet accomplished everything we've wanted to here," Brown said at a Rose Bowl ceremony for the two teams at Disneyland. "There's no better place to coach than the University of Texas."

Although Brown has been criticized for a five-game losing streak to Big 12 South rival Oklahoma, Texas (10-1) has won at least 10 games the last four seasons and has become a regular fixture among the Top 10 in the Associated Press rankings during his seven-year tenure.

Vols' QBs out for Cotton Bowl?

IRVING — Both of Tennessee's freshman quarterbacks may be out for the Cotton Bowl. Junior Rick Clausen will start as planned in Saturday's game against Texas A&M (7-4).

The Vols (9-3) had hoped freshman Brent Schaeffer would be able to play some after returning for the first time since breaking his collarbone Oct. 30 at South Carolina.

But Schaeffer has been unable to practice in Texas because he is sick with flu-like symptoms.

The Vols' other freshman QB — Erik Ainge — hasn't played since separating his shoulder against Notre Dame on Nov. 6. He will not play in the Cotton Bowl.

Parcells ready for changes, not necessarily at QB

By JAIME ARON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING — With the Dallas Cowboys eliminated from the playoffs, coach Bill Parcells said Monday he's going into the last game ready to take a look at some players who haven't played much this season.

Even at quarterback? "I'm going to think that over," Parcells said. "I'll let you know Wednesday what I'm going to do exactly."

Parcells said "there's a chance"

Vinny Testaverde will remain the starter, which means there's also a chance Tony Romo or Drew Henson will play Sunday night on the road against the New York Giants.

There's no chance of a Romo-Henson rotation.

"I couldn't practice both of them enough," he said. "That wouldn't be fair. I think what I'll do is practice one of them and then decide what we'll try to do."

Henson has taken snaps in three games, even starting on Thanksgiving. Two weeks ago he

was dropped to No. 3, a move Parcells insisted was merely rotating the backups, not a demotion.

Once Romo became No. 2, Parcells said he was looking for the right situation for the second-year quarterback to make his NFL debut. That hasn't happened and now his window of opportunity may have closed.

Parcells could go back to Henson, saying it is his turn in the rotation. He noted Monday that "Henson had a really good week of practice on the scout

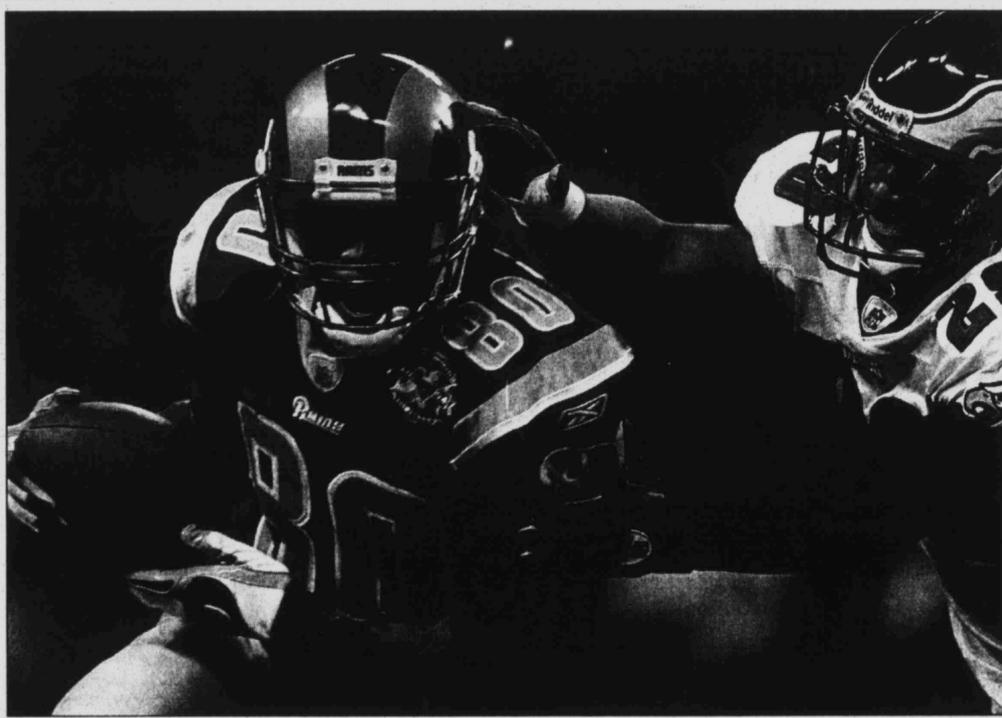
team last week, probably his best of the season."

Then again, Parcells also said that Romo "was well-prepared."

"Tony was mentally ready to play if he had to," Parcells said. "So we'll see."

Parcells has started breaking in different players on the offensive line, at linebacker and in the secondary. He's considering more this week, but those moves can't match the attention paid to the quarterback depth chart.

See COWBOYS, Page 2B



The Eagles' Roderick Hood tries to stop the Rams' Isaac Bruce after Bruce caught a pass in the second quarter of their game in St. Louis on Monday night.

KRT photo/Eric Mencher/Philadelphia Inquirer

Rams keep playoff hopes alive topping punchless Eagles, 20-7

By BARRY WILNER

AP Football Writer

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis Rams still have high playoff hopes. The Philadelphia Eagles just hope the playoffs get here before anyone else goes down.

By beating the Eagles' junior varsity 20-7 Monday night, the Rams (7-8) ensured their season finale against the New York Jets wouldn't just be meaningful for the opponent. Behind rookie Steven Jackson's best performance of his brief pro career, St. Louis stayed alive for the NFC West crown or for a wild-card berth.

"It was a statement game for me," Jackson said after rushing for 148 yards and a 5-yard touchdown before bruising his right knee in the fourth quarter. "It was a must-win game. I wanted to come out and run the ball pretty hard when I had the opportunities. I wanted to make up for lost time."

Jackson, a first-round draft choice and the first running back selected last April, missed the last two losses that dropped the Rams to the edge of elimination. A previous knee injury sidelined him two weeks ago, then coach Mike Martz

didn't use him last week.

But Martz turned to the youngster immediately against Philadelphia (13-2), and it paid off.

In a stark departure from his passing persona, Martz — perhaps sensing it would be Jackson's night — called 10 running plays on the opening drive that covered 73 yards. Jackson ran for 46 yards and Marshall Faulk for 27 on the march.

Jackson also had a 43-yard run in the second period on a drive that ended with Jeff Wilkins missing a 44-yard field goal.

"That first series, we were handing the ball to him and he's running through them, around them, every which way you can," Martz said. "He's a terrific back and it afforded us the ability to go down and not throw the ball one time. When you've got a guy playing like that — spectacular."

If the Rams (7-8) beat the Jets on Sunday and Seattle loses to Atlanta, St. Louis will win the NFC West. If the Seahawks win and take the division, St. Louis can make the playoffs by winning and having Minnesota lose at Washington, or by Carolina and New Orleans tying.

A win for the Jets would put them into the AFC playoffs.

"After all the drama we've been through this year, to be in position to potentially get into the playoffs, how awesome is that?" Martz said. "We will show up next week and lay it all out there."

The Eagles, who own home-field advantage for the NFC playoffs, didn't lay it out Monday night because they didn't need to. Perhaps spooked by the ankle and leg injury that has sidelined star receiver Terrell Owens, they weren't about to jeopardize other stars in a game that meant nothing to them.

Running back Brian Westbrook, their prime offensive threat with Owens out, was scratched, along with starting tackle Tra Thomas. Donovan McNabb played one series, when the Eagles got their only points. Defensive end Jevon Kearse never got onto the field and most of the starters were gone by halftime, if not sooner.

"You have to make a decision and there have been some good ones that have gone this route and there have been some bad ones that have

See RAMS, Page 2B

A record even Manning can't touch until February

The big question won't be answered until the playoffs begin and even the NFL's biggest control

freak is helpless to do anything about that at the moment.

But the record came exactly the way Peyton Manning wanted it — in the flow of a game, with the clock ticking down, and something left to play for. And by now, you're probably familiar, too, with a few of the details in what sounded like a harmonic convergence Sunday under the big top in

Indianapolis.

How Colts owner Jim Irsay dispatched his private jet to pick up Manning's snowbound parents in Memphis and whisk them back to Indy in time to see the final 9 minutes of the game and overtime. And how Archie and Olivia Manning's middle son sidled over to wide receiver Brandon Stokley with a minute left in regulation, called a play the Colts had never used in a game, then called a dummy audible at the line to confuse the Chargers and almost everyone else in the building, and then threw the ball toward the end zone even before Stokley made his final cut at the 5.

"The ball was on me so quick, I'm just glad I was able to get my hands up," Stokley said. "I

didn't have time to think about it.

"It would have been embarrassing, to turn around and get hit with it in the face."

The best thing from Manning's standpoint, however, wasn't the perfect timing, even though he conceded, "I was afraid I might have thrown it too early."

No, the best part was that touchdown pass No. 49 of the season, the one that put Dan Marino in Manning's rearview mirror, came with the Colts still needing a 2-point conversion to force the extra period, putting off the celebrations until later. Those didn't commence until Manning had engineered a 61-yard drive in overtime to set up Mike Vanderjagt's field goal that secured Indianapolis' eighth

straight win and the No. 3 seed in the AFC for the playoffs.

"I think Johnny Unitas would have been proud of that drive," Manning said afterward, which is as much celebrating as he allowed himself.

Just seven seasons into a career, Manning's link to some of the greatest quarterbacks ever is already secure. By just about any measure, he's off to the best start of any passer in history. What remains to be seen, though, is whether Manning winds up linked with prolific Hall of Famers like Marino, Fran Tarkenton and Jim Kelly or consistent Super Bowl winners like Joe Montana. Championships are an

See LITKE, Page 2B

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UConn falls from Top 10; New Mexico makes debut in AP women's hoops poll

By **CHUCK SCHOFFNER**
AP Sports Writer

Connecticut's long run is over. The dominant program in women's basketball over the last decade no longer is a Top 10 team.

On a day that New Mexico joined the AP poll for the first time, Connecticut dropped to 11th after splitting two road games, ending a run of 199 straight appearances in the Top 10.

The last time the Huskies were ranked this low was the week of Jan. 25, 1994. They moved to ninth the following week and had been in the Top 10 in every poll since until Monday. UConn won five national championships along the way, including the last three.

Connecticut (5-2), which had been eighth, lost at Arizona State 61-50 last week, then beat Colorado State 63-44 two days later. Not since the 1992-93 season had the Huskies lost twice in the first six games.

During its long stint in the Top 10, Connecticut spent 94 weeks at No. 1 and rarely was out of the top four.

"It has been as big a struggle as anytime I've been at Connecticut," coach Geno Auriemma said last week.

Although ranked teams were involved in just 18 games last week, that was enough to produce some significant changes in the poll.

LSU remained unanimous at No. 1 in the voting by a nationwide media panel, but Duke replaced Stanford at No. 2 and Baylor moved up to third, its highest ranking ever. Michigan State joined the Top 10 for the first time.

New Mexico has gained national attention under

coach Don Flanagan by winning consistently and drawing huge crowds to The Pit and the Lobos finally squeezed into the poll, joining at No. 25.

"It's a compliment to these players and our program," said Flanagan, whose teams have made seven straight post-season-tournament appearances. "It says a lot about our schedule and the early success that we've had."

Arizona State returned at No. 21 after a one-week absence, while Houston and UCLA dropped out.

LSU (11-0) completed a long road trip with a 72-52 victory at UC Santa Barbara last week and received all 45 first-place votes, the fourth straight week the Lady Tigers were unanimous.

Stanford (8-1) lost at Tennessee on a last-second shot in its only game last week and dropped to fifth, enabling Duke (11-1) to climb one spot to second. Duke finished the pre-Christmas portion of its schedule with an 81-31 rout of Ball State.

Baylor (9-1), fifth last week, jumped past Texas into the No. 3 spot, just one point ahead of the Longhorns. The Lady Bears have won nine straight since a 71-70 loss to LSU in their opener.

Texas held at No. 4 and Stanford was fifth, followed by Notre Dame, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio State and Michigan State. The Spartans moved up from 11th, which had been their highest ranking previously.

Minnesota was 12th and Texas Tech 13th. Then it was Boston College, Vanderbilt and Georgia, followed by Maryland, Iowa, DePaul and Purdue.

Arizona State, Kansas

COWBOYS

Continued from Page 1B

That's been the main issue surrounding the team since October, when it began to look like the Cowboys weren't going to make the playoffs. Parcells stuck with Testaverde anyway, insisting that the 41-year-old gave Dallas the best chance to win. And with five games left, the Cowboys had a realistic chance to get in.

They blew it, though, by losing at home to New Orleans on Dec. 12.

"Had we won that game, I would have been disappointed if we didn't make

it," Parcells said Monday. "I think that's where the season, the real season, got away from us. There are other games you can look at and say they could have gone a different way as well. It doesn't make any difference; that New Orleans loss was the one that hurt us the most."

Dallas still was mathematically alive the last two games, helping Testaverde remain the starter. In a quirk befitting this season, the Cowboys were eliminated Sunday about the same time Testaverde threw a 39-yard touchdown pass to rookie Patrick Crayton with 30 seconds left to beat Washington 13-10. Fans jeered Testaverde

every time he came out for a series. There were many anti-Testaverde signs and even chants of "Ro-mo" after an interception. Parcells said Monday that Testaverde frustrated him during the Redskins game, too, but said the winning throw was the kind of thing he's seen Testaverde do.

"You have to step up, see it and throw it accurately with not too much air under it and put it in the right spot or else our receiver is going to have to come back for it, get pushed out or, worse yet, get tackled in bounds," Parcells said. "It's not so much why I trust him, that's just some of the things that he can do that

I'm not sure others would do under the same circumstances."

The pass capped a 75-yard drive that started with Dallas trailing by four with 1:25 remaining and no timeouts left. Add in the rough treatment Testaverde endured from the home crowd and Parcells considers it a good lesson for his young quarterbacks to have witnessed.

"I think probably the best thing that happened to them was having Testaverde here," Parcells said. "They have seen it all now. They have learned and watched him work. It couldn't be a better laboratory for anyone."

RAMS

Continued from Page 1B

gone this route," coach Andy Reid said after his team's six-game winning streak was snapped. "So I

don't think there's any answer. I think you look at past history when I've been here, so I made that decision to rest some guys."

The second-string defenders couldn't handle Jackson or quarterback

Marc Bulger, who also missed the Rams' last two games with a shoulder problem.

Bulger was sharp, going 20-for-27 for 233 yards, and hit Isaac Bruce for a 7-yard touchdown.

Martz revealed after the

game that Bulger has been playing hurt since the season opener.

Philadelphia managed only 155 yards against the 24th-ranked defense, 63 on the McNabb-led drive to Freddie Mitchell's 7-yard TD catch.

LITKE

Continued from Page 1B

unyielding measure in a team game like football, where even the quarterback can only do so much. Marino couldn't will himself a running game — ever — and John Elway had to wait until he was 37 for all the other pieces to fall into place.

Manning has been a staple on rotisserie league teams since he strolled into the league — he's having arguably the best season ever while pulling the strings for one of the most productive offenses ever. But as a student of the game, Manning knows that for

all the glossy numbers Marino put up, his predecessor is still most remembered for never passing his team to a Super Bowl win. Maybe that's why, for all his impressive work in the pocket, Manning does just as much maneuvering in interviews.

He put the team's goal to win a championship at the top of his priority list when he reported for training camp and he's managed to keep it there, no matter how much the hype focused on his individual performances. Manning shares the credit every bit as deliberately as he shares the ball, having learned that the fastest way to improve on a 2-4 record in the

playoffs is to have his teammates as prepared and motivated as he is.

And so it should have come as no surprise that Dominic Rhodes, the part-time running back who returned a kick 88 yards in the final quarter to make the comeback against the Chargers possible, said afterward, "As much as it's his, I feel like it's my record, too."

"When I get old, in my 50s or whatnot, I'll say I was on that team when he threw that touchdown. I was a part of everything he's done, and we've done," Rhodes said. "It's a special feeling."

Even Manning couldn't deny that much.

"It's an individual thing, but it meant a lot

to a lot of people. And that," he said, "means something to me."

But it will mean much more if the Colts are still playing when February rolls around.

"We are happy about the regular-season records," Indianapolis coach Tony Dungy said, staying on message. "But we are looking for the big prize once the playoffs start."

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at jlitke@ap.org

TOP 25

Continued from Page 1B

Gonzaga plays No. 3 Oklahoma State in Oklahoma City. On Friday, No. 22 Cincinnati faces No. 1 Illinois in Las Vegas. On Saturday, No. 9 Georgia Tech is at No. 2

Kansas in a rematch of last season's St. Louis regional final, which Georgia Tech won 79-71 in overtime. The last of the ranked matchups is Sunday when No. 5 Wake Forest is at No. 25 Virginia in an Atlantic Coast Conference game. The ACC has seven

ranked teams for the fifth straight week, again matching the record for most schools from one league in the Top 25. Besides the two playing Sunday, the other ACC teams are North Carolina, Duke, Georgia Tech, North Carolina State and Maryland.

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Bedtime Stories

I AM THE NEW YEAR!



I will come visit you many times. I will give you the chance to be a good little boy or girl each time. Are you already a good little boy or girl? I thought so! Your parents told me you are. You are really nice.

When I come, I will bring new flowers. Will you stop and smell my flowers? Will you look at the beauty in them? Will you really see the prettiness of what I have worked so hard to show you?

When I come, I will bring new baby horses. Do you like horses? Do you think I do a good job of making baby horses cute? Have you ever ridden a horse? I make them soft and gentle so you can pet them. I make them big and strong so they can carry you on their backs, if you would like to ride them. Have you ever petted a baby horse? Have you ever ridden a big horse? I bring big horses. I bring small horses. I bring horses of many colors. Which color do you like best?

When I come, I will bring new baby birds. Do you like birds? Do you have a pet bird? I will bring many different kinds of birds. I will bring many different colors of birds. The birds will all sing different songs. Do you like to hear the birds singing? Which bird do you like best of all? I bring big birds. I bring small birds. And I also bring birds of many colors. Do you like the colors I choose? Which is your favorite color of bird?

When I come, I will bring new trees. Do you like trees? Do you like the shade of a big tree in the summertime when it is hot? Do you like to climb on a big tree's branches? Do you like to see little squirrels scampering up a big tree, jumping from branch to branch? Do you like the fruit I will put on a tree? Do you like the sound of the wind whistling through my trees? Do you have a tree in your yard?

When I come, I will bring new rain. Do you like rain? Do you like to see it falling from the sky? Have you ever played in the rain on a warm day? Sometimes, I will make the rain fall softly, just so you can play in it. Sometimes, I will make it rain hard, so the trees and animals can have a nice drink of water, because they love water just like you do!

When I come, I will bring along the most important thing in the world. Do you know what the most important thing is? It is something that no amount of money can buy, but it is free, and you can give it away forever, to everyone you know, and you will never run out! Have you guessed what it is? You had a lot of it this year. You gave a lot of it away to your family and friends. They also gave you the same thing back!

This thing is called love! Do you know what love is? Do you know how you feel whenever your parents hug and kiss you? It makes you feel good, doesn't it? That is love! Do you know how you feel when you hug and kiss your parents and friends? That is a good feeling too, isn't it? That is love! Do you pet a little puppy and watch his tail wagging? When he wags his tail, he is telling you he loves you, too!

If you like to smell my flowers, or see their beauty, that is love! If you ever see a baby horse, and want to pet him, that is love! If you watch birds and like to hear them singing, and you think their colors are pretty, that is love! If you like to play in a soft rain and watch the little trees growing into big trees, and watch the little squirrels scampering along their branches, that is love!

And when I come, I will bring new promises of a better year for you. I will try to make you just a little bit happier. I will try to make you smile just a little bit more.

I will always come. Will you always be just as sweet as you are right now, for I need your help each year. If you will help me, the both of us can make this world even happier. Hug someone new this year. Give your family and friends a little extra hug this year. Will you do this for me? I knew you would!

I will come again next year, and I will ask you if you if you helped me make this year a happy one. And I know that your answer will be "yes."

I wish you a very prosperous and



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THIS NEWSPAPER is not responsible for the specific content of the National Classified ads. Before investing money in a business/employment opportunity with which you are unfamiliar, please call the National Better Business Bureau at 703-276-0100 or visit www.bbb.org

Help Wanted

ASSISTANT MANAGER needed at local Retail Company. Salary, health insurance and 401k. Average 48 hrs. weekly including nights until 7:00 pm. with alternating week-ends. Please send Resume and References to: P.O. Box 462, Big Spring, Tx. 79721.

Assistant Manager trainee. Must have good driving record, 21 yrs old, motivated, paid vacations, retirement, health insurance, salary. Apply in person, **Credit World**, 1611 Gregg. No Phone Calls Please.

Help Wanted

ATTENTION STUDENTS PT HOLIDAY WORK
Can be perm., Great Pay, Flex. Sched. sales/service, no exp. nec. All ages 18+ condition apply (432)699-6782.
www.workforstudents.com
<<http://workforstudents.com>>

CARPENTER NEEDED for Resident & Light Commercial remodeling. Must have carpenter & painting experience, transportation to and from work. Call (432)267-2296.

MODERN HOME Health Agency with new and exciting programs for excellent patient care and outcomes is searching for RN's to join our team. We offer our employees excellent family oriented hours, great pay, health insurance plan with dental and life insurance, 401k, mileage, and paid time off. We are currently offering a \$5000 sign on bonus. Please apply at: Best Home Care, 111 E. 7th., Suite C, (432)263-3851.

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The holidays are here-give yourself the gift of more time off! But call now; positions are limited!

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EOE. Subj to d/s.
Class A & 6 mos. exp. req.

Help Wanted

MANAGER FOR new storage facility. Experience not required, short training period. Good wage, plus bonus based on profits. Send resume to: c/o P.O. Box 1431/113, Big Spring, TX 79721-1431.

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NEED EXPERIENCED Lube Tech/Porter. Apply in person only at Service Department Pollard Chevrolet, Buick & Cadillac, 1501 East 4th.

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Must be 18
Monday-Saturday
Apply in person,
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2401 Gregg

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Miscellaneous

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8	:30	Accord
9	:30	20/20 Spe
10	:30	News (CC)
11	:30	Ent. Tonight
12	:30	Live (CC)

DENNIS



"YEAH, MOM RE AS MUCH AS M"

BC



"THANKS FOR VERY MERR CHRISTMAS"

WIZARD



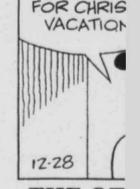
HE WAS OVERWEIG WASN'T HE

AGNES



A MIGHTY TRY WAS REVEALE INTO ME LAST NIGHT. A MIGHTY TRUTH I WAS TOLD TO SHAR WITH YOU.

HI AND



WHAT'S CHIP DOIN FOR CHRIS VACATION

THE OT



AN INVITATION DONNA AND ERNIES NEW YEAR PARTY

SNUFFY



STILL A-FEE OF FALLIN



BEETLI

12-28

Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Venus runs out ahead of Mercury, and our hearts take the lead over our logical brain. So if you already know you have a tendency to be a fool for love, this is the time to ask friends what they honestly think — before you make any rash decisions. On the brighter side, if you've been finding it hard to forgive someone, compassion wins out.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Sweet harmony guides your day as you reach an accord with your wife, your mother or a maternal figure and go to your neutral corners. Now, you can be super-productive and whip through that to-do list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Have a chat with the gardener, the hairdresser or someone else who grooms you or your home — but wait until after noon. You'll be better able to articulate your needs, and that person will be more receptive to your suggestions.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Every song on the radio will seem to speak directly to you. This is a prolific time for Gemini poets, songwriters and romantics. Words of love roll easily off the tongue — or out of the pen if you prefer.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There is a light at the end of this tunnel! You feel a surge of confidence as you glimpse it. Any unfinished business can be completed. Messes can be cleaned up. You're capable of more than you previously thought.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The drama increases on your life stage, and you may feel as if you're flying without a net. Rest assured that a stabilizing force will protect you from any rough landings. The universe has got your back.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're liable to feel a bit irked by someone, particularly if that person throws

your daily routine out of whack. Stall for time. If you still feel the same way in a couple of hours, share your concerns.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Use your natural sense of fair play to mediate a discussion between folks taking pro and con positions. You'll come out looking like a hero as long as you stay neutral. Another Libra helps.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Others are drawn to you by your passion and mystery, but be careful of their motives. Your intuition is in high gear right now, so if something feels fishy, make a call to your gut, and go with whatever it has to say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Passion is on the menu, as is a taste for telling it like it is. You express your affection with flair and vim. Teachers, lawyers and politicians can win over the other side by making their case with enthusiasm.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your family is your strength, and you are theirs. Reminiscing about the past fills your heart with tenderness and love. A nice dinner can do wonders for your spirit. Include at least two of your favorite comfort foods.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Social butterfly that you are, you're probably spreading yourself too thin. You're torn between focusing on your own needs and keeping a commitment you made to a friend. Sleep in late tomorrow if you possibly can.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The focus is still on your relationship, but now, the perspective has shifted from your partner to you. You're a natural-born negotiator, so say what you really feel, and try to find common ground. It's closer than you realize.

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Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: I have been married for 25 years and love my husband dearly. Three months ago, "Nelson" was offered a good job in Maryland. However, it meant we had to move five hours from my children and grandchildren, and it is tearing me apart. I thought I would be able to handle the distance, but I can't.

My daughter is now separated from her husband, and I feel I should be there for her and the children. My husband has said that if I am so unhappy, he will give up the job and we will move back. But, Annie, I know that he is enjoying his new position, and I don't want to make him move.

I am depressed. I cry a lot. I have gotten a job in a large office, but I still am lonely for my family and friends. I said I would give it a year, but it is so much harder than I thought. Please tell me what to do. — My Heart is in New York

Dear N.Y.: Of course it's hard to move away from the home you've known and the family you cherish. Moving is highly stressful under the best of circumstances. However, you need to give Maryland more of a chance.

Maryland is not that far away from New York. Can you save up mileage so you can visit your daughter perhaps one weekend a month (more often if you can afford it)? Have you joined a church or synagogue where you can become involved in its activities? Does your new apartment, condo or neighborhood have a social committee? These efforts will provide a distraction from your unhappiness and allow you to make new friends. Please hang in there a little longer before giving up.

Dear Annie: I was raised not to make noise when I eat. I don't smack, crunch or chew with my mouth open.

I realize some foods make noise, like crackers or cucumbers, but in my group of friends, there is a woman who crunches the

ice in her drink. This is like nails on a blackboard to the rest of us. The subject has been brought to her attention, but she told us in no uncertain terms that she liked to crunch ice and doesn't plan to stop.

We realize this is not an earthshaking problem, just an annoying one. Now what do we do, other than dissolve the group get-together, which we really don't want to do? Ear plugs? — Deafened in South Carolina

Dear S.C.: Your friend may have an iron deficiency. One of the symptoms is the desire to crunch ice. Really. Tell her you are worried about her health and suggest she talk to her doctor. Beyond that, there's not much you can do to dissuade her from crunching.

Dear Annie: You printed a letter from a woman who said her co-workers treated the new supervisor terribly. This woman works for a state agency. Heavens, she's working with a bunch of children, paid by your taxes to run a department.

I am Canadian, and we're doing our darndest to root out bad employees in government positions. You said to let the supervisor handle these juvenile employees. My answer is to go above his head and ask for a private meeting with the head honcho to spill the beans. Something has to break here, and staying silent is the worst possible solution for all, including the taxpayer. — Nepean, Ontario

Dear Ontario: You may be right, but we believe the new supervisor should be granted the opportunity to assert his authority and deal with the situation on his own before bringing in the big guns. Asking the higher-ups to deal with this assumes the supervisor cannot handle his staff, and this will undercut whatever respect he could earn if given the chance.

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Real Estate for Sale

C-CITY LAKE Home, 4 Bedroom, 3 bath. Deeded land on large lot, fenced, newly remodeled. Call (432)263-7373 or 263-6824 after 5:00 pm.

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FOR SALE by Owner: Owner financing provided. Low down payment, low monthly, 3 bedroom, 500 1st St - Coahoma. Call Kelly 432-425-9994.

FOR SALE by Owner: Owner financing provided. Low down payment, will work with income tax refund, low monthly, 3 bedroom, 1321 Mulberry. Call Kelly 432-425-9994.

FOR SALE by Owner: Owner financing provided. Low down payment, will work with income tax refund, low monthly, 3 bedroom, 1216 Ridgeroad. Call Kelly 432-425-9994.

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SALE/LEASE: 7906 South Service Road (Sand Springs). 4 Bedroom, 2 bath, CH/A on 13 acres. \$37,800.00 or \$450.00 a month. Call (325)695-6100 after 6:00 p.m.



SPACIOUS TWO-STORY home. 2150 sq. ft. 3 bedroom, 2 baths, office, 2 living areas, ash cabinets, fireplace. Gazebo, 2 storage bldgs., 3/4 acre, secluded. Lovely yard. \$110,000. Call (432)263-4080.

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1903 GREGG St. for rent. Great office or retail space. \$375/month plus deposit. Call (432)213-2681.

2/2/3 near Elbow School. Country home, good water, quiet and shady, large grounds. Forsan ISD. \$650 month, \$650.00 deposit. 1 yr lease. Call (512)755-1697.

2604 ENT. 3 Bedroom 2 bath, New paint/ carpet. References. \$400. month, \$250 deposit. HUD accepted. Call (432)267-7449.

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4207 PARKWAY. 3 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath. Call (432)267-3841 or 517-0642.

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900 SCURRY. 3/1 Apartment. CH/A, washer, dryer hookups. Appliances furnished. \$385.00 month, \$200.00 deposit. No HUD. Call (432)213-2681

BIG SPRING Building for Rent. Busy Location on Gregg Street, 12,000 square feet, \$5,000.00 per month. Call (505)318-3378

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NICE CLEAN open space, large 1 room apartment. Stove and refrigerator furnished. \$250.00 month \$100.00 deposit. Call (432)263-4528, (432)296-0277 or 296-1523.

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1505 TUSCON. Four bedroom, two bath, CH/A. Call (432)270-3848.

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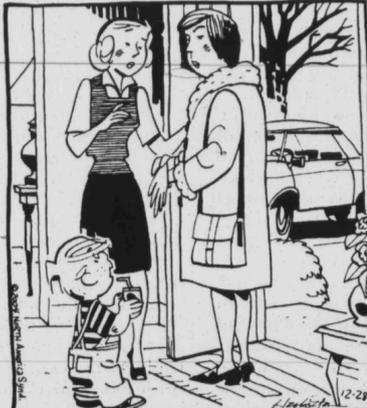
12-28

TUESDAY

DEC. 28

	WFAA (2) Dallas	KMID (3) Midland	UNI (4) Spanish	KPEJ (5) Odessa	KOSA (7) Odessa	KTLE (8) Telemundo	KWES (9) Midland	WTBS (11) Atlanta	KMLM (12) Odessa	KOCV (13) Odessa	DISC (20) Discovery	AMC (21) Classics	SPIKE (22) Spike TV	TNT (23) Atlanta	BET (26) Black Ent.	DISN (27) Disney	ESPN2 (28) Sports	ESPN (29) Sports	TMC (25) Premium
6 :PM	News (CC) Whee-Fortune	News (CC) Whee-Fortune	La Mujer de Madera	Malcolm-Mid- Raymond	News Ent. Tonight NCIS (CC)	Anita No Te Rajes	News Seinfeld (CC)	Raymond Raymond	Booker John Hagee	News-Lehrer	American Chopper		(CC)	Law & Order (CC) (DVS)	Live BET Style	Sister, Sister That's-Raven	College Basketball	Football: Independence	(CC)
7 :PM	My Wife-Kids George Lopez	My Wife-Kids George Lopez	Rubi	Billionaire: Quest for Best	The Amazing Race 6 (CC)	La Mujer en el Espejo	Father of Pride Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Update/Israel Final Exodus	Nova: Elegant Universe	Poisonous Women (CC)	Movie: The Sea Chase		Law & Order (CC) (DVS)	The Parkers Behavior	Movie: Model Behavior	College Classics	Bowl -- Iowa State vs.	Movie: The Big
8 :PM	Accord- Jim Rodney (CC)	Accord- Jim Rodney (CC)	Amor Real	House (CC)	The Amazing Race 6 (CC)	Gitanas	Father of Pride Sex and-City (CC)	Sex and-City	Light of the Southwest	Frontline (CC)	Mummy Autopsy		Movie: A View to a Kill (CC)	Law & Order (CC) (DVS)	BET Comedy Awards	(CC)	College Basketball	Miami-Ohio College	
9 :PM	2020 Special Edition	2020 Special Edition	Veremos Todo con Niurka	Malcolm-Mid- 70s Show	Judging Amy (CC)	Te Voy a En- senar a Querer SVU	Law & Order: Men in Black (CC)	10 Movie: Men in Black (CC)		Independent Lens (CC)	World Biker Build-Off	Movie: In to a Kill (CC)		Charmed (CC)		Lizzie McGuire Sister, Sister	All-College Classics	Football: Insight Bowl --	The Dangerous Lives of Altar
10 :PM	News (CC) Nightline	News (CC) Nightline	Primer Impacto Noticiero Univ.	70s Show Raymond	News Late Show	Noticias Laura	News The Tonight- (CC)	10 Movie: The 6th Day	The Hour of Healing (CC)	Charlie Rose (CC)	Mummy Women (CC)	Movie: Ham's Way (CC)		Law & Order (CC) (DVS)	Nightly News BET Style	Even Stevens Boy World	SportsCenter	Notre Dame vs. Oregon	Boys 45 Movie: Party Monster (CC)
11 :PM	Ent. Tonight Jimmy Kimmel	Extra (CC) Jimmy Kimmel	Los Moches Becker (CC)	Becker (CC) Becker (CC)	(CC) The Late Late Show (CC)	Al Rojo Vivo- Late Night (CC)	Show (CC) Late Night (CC)	10 Movie: The 6th Day	Joe McGee Rabbi Richman	Sign Off	Mummy Autopsy	Movie: For Your Eyes (CC)		The X-Files (CC)	Midnight Love	Proud Family That's-Raven	(CC) NBA Fastbreak	State (CC)	Party Monster (CC)
12 :AM	Live (CC) Oprah Winfrey	Live (CC) Paid Program	Alma Rebelde	Spin City Dharma-Greg	Show (CC) The Insider	Maria Celeste Corte-Familia	Fraser (CC)	(CC)	Final Exodus Update/Israel		World Biker Build-Off	Only (CC)		The X-Files (CC)	Club Comic View	Km Possible Lizzie McGuire	NFL Live NFL's Greatest	SportsCenter (CC)	Movie:

DENNIS THE MENACE



"Yeah, Mom really loved your gift, but not as much as what she exchanged it for."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

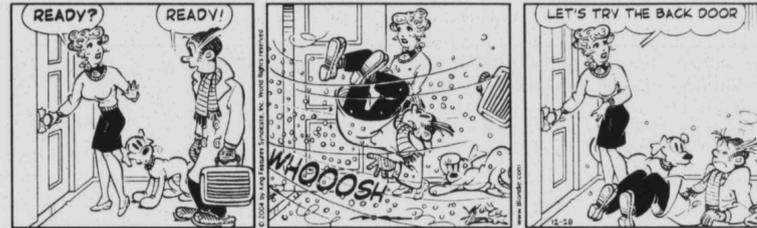


"Brr! I wouldn't want to live in Celsius!"

HAGAR



BLONDIE



BC



WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



HI AND LOIS



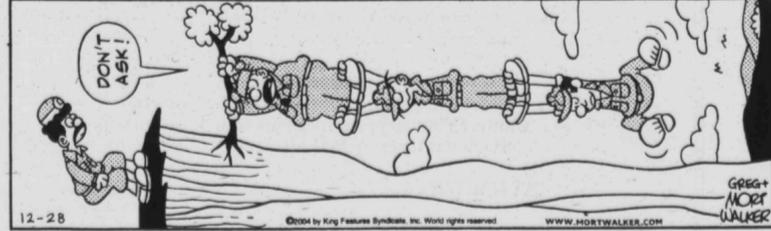
THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEETLE BAILEY



This Date In History

By the Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 28, the 363rd day of 2004. There are three days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 28, 1945, Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance.

On this date: In 1694, Queen Mary II of England died after five years of joint rule with her husband, King William III. In 1832, John C. Calhoun became the first vice president of the United States to resign, stepping down over differences with President Jackson.

In 1846, Iowa became the 29th state to be admitted to the Union.

In 1856, the 28th president of the United States, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, was born in Staunton, Va.

In 1897, the play "Cyrano de Bergerac," by Edmond Rostand, premiered in Paris.

In 1917, the New York Evening Mail published a facetious essay by H.L. Mencken on the history of bathtubs in America.

In 1937, composer Maurice Ravel died in Paris.

In 1944, the musical "On the Town" opened on Broadway.

In 1973, Alexander Solzhenitsyn published "Gulag Archipelago," an expose of the Soviet prison system.

In 1982, Nevell Johnson Jr., a black man, was mortally wounded by a police officer in a Miami video arcade, setting off three days of race-related disturbances that left another man dead.

Ten years ago: CIA Director R. James Woolsey resigned, ending a tenure that was shadowed by the Aldrich Ames spy scandal. President Clinton nominated Dan Glickman to be agri-

culture secretary, succeeding Mike Espy.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Lou Jacobi is 91. Bandleader Johnny Otis is 83. Former United Auto Workers union president Owen Bieber is 75. Actress Dame Maggie Smith is 70. Rock singer-musician Charles Neville is 66. Rock singer-musician Edgar Winter is 58. Rock singer-musician Alex Chilton (The Box Tops; Big Star) is 54. Actor Denzel Washington is 50. Country singer Joe Diffie is 46. Country musician Mike McGuire (Shenandoah) is 46. Actor Chad McQueen is 44.

Answer to previous puzzle

STAR	STOP	SHAPE
CUBA	TAME	NOSEY
ALOT	AREA	AMPLE
RIVERBANK	PESTS	
PEDAL	SLAP	
RENT	ATLAS	
SPACE	OOPS	ALTO
ARCH	ANDS	AUR
PERU	SOAR	TEENS
PERCH	YMCA	
CHEF	ALOFT	
CACHE	OLDSCHOOL	
EVOKE	RIOT	ACTI
NEVER	CALL	RUES
TREYS	ERLE	ASST

Newsday Crossword

ON THE JOB by Shirley Soloway
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS**
- 1 Church service
- 5 Gaudy trinket
- 11 Common article
- 14 In the matter of
- 15 New York lake
- 16 Vote in favor
- 17 Campfire reciter
- 19 Cherry seed
- 20 Italian isle
- 21 1550
- 22 Stockholm resident
- 24 Gives approval
- 26 Evolution advocate
- 27 Respond
- 30 Not so many
- 31 They convened in NYC in 2004
- 32 Thrill ride offerings
- 35 Singer Simone
- 38 Devastate
- 40 Lessen in intensity
- 41 Attempt
- 42 Teacher in Siam
- 43 Discourages
- 45 CBS logo
- 46 Carpenter's pin
- 48 Need for water
- 50 Cooking enticements
- 52 Flaming felony
- 54 Permissible
- 55 To and
- 56 Make a choice
- 60 Choose, with "for"
- 61 Vodka plus orange juice
- 64 Prefix meaning "recent"
- 65 Act that precedes the headliner
- 66 Cairo's waterway
- 67 Make a goof
- 68 Contract certifier
- 69 Model Macpherson
- DOWN**
- 1 Not fem. or neut.
- 2 Hammett hound
- 3 "Quit that!"
- 4 The blues
- 5 "I ___ Rhythm"
- 6 Foe
- 7 Joins, as metal
- 8 Fish feature
- 9 Summer quaff
- 10 Capital of Poland
- 11 Obsolete office machine
- 12 Fictional Alpine girl
- 13 "Thanks, I've already ___"
- 18 "Uh-oh!"
- 23 Small songbirds
- 25 Video game parlors
- 26 Sahara and Gobi
- 27 Taj Mahal town
- 28 Person, place, or thing
- 29 Image consultant
- 30 Big party
- 33 Biblical brother
- 34 Sinking ship deserter
- 36 Votes opposite
- 16 Across
- 37 Help a hoodlum
- 39 Ashley Judd's mom
- 44 Blacksmith, at times
- 47 Holmes cohort
- 49 Like some skates
- 50 Sans company
- 51 Less green, as fruit
- 52 Sports site
- 53 Oarsman
- 55 Worry
- 57 Nefarious
- 58 Alcatraz unit
- 59 Beech or birch
- 62 Naval noncom: Abbr.
- 63 Not at all humid

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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Especially for kids and their families
The Mini Page

By BETTY DEBNAM

Presidents and First Ladies ...

White House Couples as Kids

Hey, kids! You or one of your classmates might become president of the United States someday!

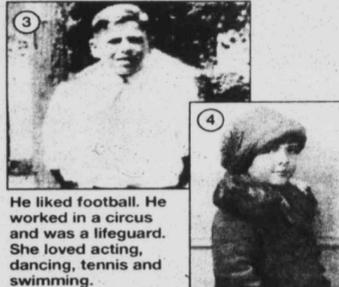
Here are mini facts about some of our country's presidents and first ladies when they were growing up. Can you match the childhood pictures with the adults?



He learned to read by the time he was 3. He was in the school band and had a jazz group. She loved school and was a Girl Scout. She enjoyed swimming, volleyball, tennis and skating.



He played Little League baseball and took part in Cub Scouts. She liked teaching her dolls to read. She was a Girl Scout.



He liked football. He worked in a circus and was a lifeguard. She loved acting, dancing, tennis and swimming.



He liked marbles and baseball. Her real name was Claudia, but everyone called her by her nickname.



The Mini Page thanks Lee Ann Potter, head of education and volunteer programs at the National Archives, and Ben Irwin of the staff of the Office of Presidential Libraries, National Archives.

Site to see: www.archives.gov

Answers: 1. Nancy Reagan; 2. Hillary Clinton; 3. Bill Clinton; 4. Laura Bush; 5. George W. Bush; 6. Lady Bird Johnson; 7. Lyndon Johnson; 8. Nancy Reagan.

Go dot to dot and color.

Rookie Cookie's Recipe
Pineapple Cheese Casserole

You'll need:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 (20-ounce) cans pineapple chunks, drained (save juice)
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup Ritz crackers, crushed
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

What to do:

1. Combine the sugar and flour in a large bowl.
2. Add 6 tablespoons of pineapple juice and then the cheese. Mix well.
3. Stir in pineapple chunks.
4. Pour into a greased 9-by-13 casserole dish.
5. Top with crushed crackers and pour butter on top.
6. Bake uncovered in a preheated 375-degree oven for 25 minutes. Serves 8.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

A Kid's Guide to the White House

Kids! You're Invited to the White House

A Kid's Guide to the White House is a terrific behind-the-scenes look at a very special house. Written with the cooperation of the White House Historical Association, the book is full of fun information, photos (some in full color) and puzzles that kids of all ages will enjoy!

To order, send \$9.95 plus \$3.25 for postage and handling for each book. Send check or money order (funds only) payable to: Andrews McMeel Universal, P.O. Box 6814, Leawood, KS 66206. Please send _____ copies of A Kid's Guide to the White House (item #2153 2) at \$13.20 each, including postage and handling. Toll free number 1-800-591-2037. www.smartwhitehouse.com

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Gus Goodsport's Report
Supersport: Alonzo Mourning

Height: 6-10 Birthdate: 2-8-70 Weight: 261

Alonzo Mourning is back, making baskets, grabbing rebounds and blocking shots. That's amazing, considering the New Jersey Nets center had a kidney transplant last December and wasn't expected to play pro basketball again. The courageous "Zo" wears a specially designed device to protect his kidney area.

Mourning, 34, naturally isn't the same dominating player who made the NBA All-Star Team seven times and twice was named NBA Defensive Player of the Year. But he's making a solid contribution while playing a little more than half of each game.

"Zo," who is married and the father of two children, has made contributions off the court as well. He has helped raise several million dollars for various charities, including those that benefit children. His wife, Tracy, also started a mentoring program for youth. Every NBA team and town needs a Mourning — on and off the court.

Meet Stephen Hillenburg

Stephen Hillenburg, 43, is a cartoonist and creator of the popular cartoon character "SpongeBob SquarePants." When he was a boy, he loved watching movies about the adventures of undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau. This sparked his interest in ocean life.

At 15, Stephen liked to dive off the coast of California. He studied marine science at Humboldt State University. Later he taught marine biology to children at the Orange County Marine Institute. His young students especially liked learning about undersea creatures.

Stephen also enjoys art and got a master's degree in experimental animation. Then he got a job with the Nickelodeon show "Rocko's Modern World." One day, for fun, he drew a square, funny-looking sponge cartoon character — and created Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants!"

MIGHTY FUNNY'S Mini Jokes

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

Ralph: What did the baby corn say to the mama corn?
Dave: "Where's my popcorn?"

Gretchen: How do you fix a broken tomato?
Francesca: With tomato paste!

Alvin: What would you get if you crossed an onion and a potato?
Diane: A potato with watery eyes!

Be a Matchmaker

Answers: 1. Jimmy Carter; 2. Rosalynn Carter; 3. Harry Truman; 4. Bess Truman; 5. Franklin Roosevelt; 6. Eleanor Roosevelt; 7. Dwight Eisenhower; 8. Mamie Eisenhower; 9. John Kennedy; 10. Jacqueline Kennedy; 11. George H.W. Bush; 12. Barbara Bush.

White House Kids TRY 'N FIND

Words and names that remind us of some presidents are hidden in the block below. Some names are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: BENJAMIN, FRANKLIN, RUTHERFORD, GROVER, ANDREW, WILLIAM, ZACHARY, JIMMY, RICHARD, MILLARD, MARTIN, ULYSSES, JOHN, RONALD, GEORGE, JAMES, THOMAS, THEODORE, BILL.

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W I L L I A M D H Y K I A A L
G E O R G E O B S C M L S M I
D L A N O R L S Z T A M I I M
G R O V E R E B I L L Z I N R
X J A M E S N I T R A M F J I

Mini Spy ...

Mini Spy and her friends are visiting George Washington's birthplace. See if you can find:

- question mark
- whale
- letter D
- cat
- pencil
- horseshoe
- seahorse
- ruler
- word MINI
- exclamation mark
- funny face
- number 7
- caterpillar

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