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SPRING**

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Big Sky — Big Heart — Big Spring

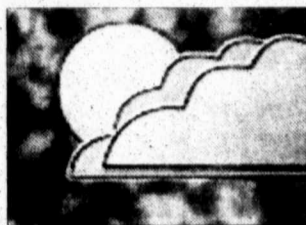
50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

FRIDAY

March 4, 2005

WEATHER

Tonight:



TONIGHT TOMORROW
41°-43° 62°-64°

BRIEFLY

Court closed

The Big Spring Municipal Court will be closed the week of March 7 through March 11.

Blood drives set

Several places in Big Spring will have blood drives this month. Among them are:

- Cornell Corrections, 3711 Wright Ave., from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. March 9. To sign up call Tina Word at 264-0060.
- Lakeview Headstart, 1107 W. Seventh, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. March 11. To sign up, call Joann or Delores at 267-7452
- Leonard's Prescription Pharmacy, 701 Scurry (new building) from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. March 12.
- United Blood Services Bloodmobile. To sign up, call Tina at 267-2771.

WEEKEND



Cover Story: From minus 75 in McGrath, Alaska, to 124 degree in Yuma, Ariz., the United States has its share of extreme weather. So what are the sunniest, cloudiest, wettest, driest, foggiest, and windiest places in America? Which places get the most snow, hail, hurricanes, tornadoes and lightning?

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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.

County's top spellers headed to regional bee

By STEVE REAGAN
Staff Writer

Four Howard County students will try to spell their way to a trip to the nation's capital when they compete in the Regional Spelling Bee Saturday in Lubbock.

The regional bee, sponsored by the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday at Texas Tech University's International Cultural Center.

Four county students won local-level competitions to qual-

ify for the regional bee. They are: Katrina Petrowski, a fourth-grader at Marcy Elementary who will represent Big Spring Independent School District; Nick Sevey, a seventh-grader at Coahoma Junior High; Laura Spence, a seventh-grader



Petrowski



Sevey



Spence



Sikes

at Forsan Junior High School, and Rebecca Sikes, 12, who will represent the Big Spring Homeschool Coalition.

This marks the second straight year that Sevey, the son of Roby and Jan Rios, has qualified for the regional bee. He punched his

ticket to this year's event when he correctly spelled "siesta" to outlast Chance Hart at the Coahoma ISD Spelling Bee Feb. 7.

Petrowski, the daughter of Joe and Lisa Petrowski, earned her spot at the regional bee Feb. 10 when she correctly spelled "absorb" to outlast Kentwood Elementary's Hannah Spence in the eighth round of the Big Spring ISD contest.

First-time regional qualifier

See BEE, Page 5A



KRT photos/Bo Rader, Wichita Eagle
Virgin Atlantic CEO Sir Richard Branson sprays pilot Steve Fossett with champagne after Fossett landed at the Salina's airport on Thursday. Fossett is the first person to fly solo around the world without refueling.

Non-stop

Fossett completes solo around-the-world flight

By JOE STUMPE

Knight Ridder

SALINA, Kan. — Steve Fossett set the GlobalFlyer down under a picture-perfect Kansas sky Thursday afternoon, becoming the first person to make a solo non-stop flight around the world.

The radically designed jet landed at 1:50 p.m. CST — 67 hours and two minutes after take-off — to the cheers of thousands of people at Salina Municipal Airport.

They erupted again when Fossett stepped from the tiny cockpit, waved to the crowd and hugged his wife, Peggy.

"I'm really a lucky guy now," a smiling Fossett told the crowd. "I got to achieve my ambition."

Gray stubble covered Fossett's jaw and his lips were cracked from dehydration. At one point he seemed to try to shake the effects of being cooped up in a cockpit for nearly three days out of his limbs. But otherwise the 60-year-old adventurer, clad in a silver flight suit, seemed remarkably unfazed by his feat of endurance.



"I was in control and able to make rational decisions," he said.

However, Fossett said he will probably sleep a full day, "might like a shower" and wanted something other to eat than the dozen sport shakes he survived on while in the air.

"It's good nourishment but I'd rather have a nice dinner," he said.

See FLIGHT, Page 5A

Little change, lots of heart

Coahoma youth reaching out to tsunami victims

By STEVE REAGAN

Staff Writer

COAHOMA — When Coahoma Elementary School students saw photos of the devastation wreaked by the tsunami that hit portions of Asia last December, they decided the least they could do was cough up some Coke money to help the victims.

So they started donating their loose change to a worthy cause. A quarter here, a nickel there, the occasional dime thrown in for good measure — it all began to add up.

According to teacher Joyce Baumann, sixth-grader Skyler Coates was the originator of the loose-change idea.

"After seeing the pictures and hearing reports of the destruction in Sri Lanka as a result of the tsunami, Skyler suggested to our principal, Patricia Bennett, that students and teachers donate any loose change they had to the victims of the disaster," Baumann said.

For about three weeks, Coahoma Elementary students and staffers dug into their pockets and donated their spare change to help people they would never meet. Officials used a thermometer graph to chart the school's progress, setting \$1,000 as the goal.

Bennett said student efforts went beyond what might be expected.

"I'm just very proud of them," she said. "Some of the teachers let the students go to the juice machine during the day and buy some juice. Well, some of the students ended up donating their juice money. We even had one student donate some of her birthday money."

Although teachers and other staff personnel pitched in, Bennett said most of the donations came from the students. Children brought in plastic bags full of change, which the sixth graders would count using a change-rolling machine.

Thanks to everyone's efforts, the thermometer blew its top. Baumann reported that the drive eventually net-

See CHANGE, Page 5A

Prospector's Club to host annual show this weekend

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

They may just look like rocks to most people, hardly worth a second glance. But for members of the Big Spring Prospector's Club, they're a treasure just waiting to be discovered, as the group gets ready to hold its 36th Annual Gem and Mineral Show this weekend.

Lola Lamb, who serves as secretary-treasurer for the Prospectors, said demonstrations are a major part of the Gem and Mineral Show, which is slated for 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday at the Howard County Fair Barn.

"You take just an ordinary

INFORMATION

What: Big Spring Gem and Mineral Show.

Where: Howard County Fair Barn, off FM 700.

When: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

rock and you slab it," she explained. "Then you put it into jewelry. That's just one of the processes people will get to see at the show. We'll also have another gentleman there doing wire wrapping, and if you pick out a stone or gem, he'll mount it

See GEMS, Page 5A

Martha Stewart at home under watchful eye of feds

By JIM FITZGERALD

Associated Press Writer

KATONAH, N.Y. (AP) — Martha Stewart staged a tightly choreographed and low-key return home from prison early Friday, arriving at the \$16 million New York estate where she will remain under the watch of federal authorities while trying to revive her home-making empire.

Stewart was driven to the 153-acre estate 40 miles north of midtown Manhattan after landing about 2 a.m. at Westchester County Airport in a private jet.

She later was seen walking around inside her Winter Home with her daughter, Alexis.

For the next five months, Stewart must wear an electronic ankle so authorities can track her every move. But she is allowed to receive her \$900,000 salary again and can leave home for up to 18 hours a week to work, shop or run other approved errands.

Her journey home began about 12:30 a.m. Friday, when two dark-windowed sport utility vehicles slipped out the gates of the women's prison in Alderson, W.Va., and drove to a nearby airport.

See STEWART, Page 5A

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House Democrats float their own school finance proposal

By APRIL CASTRO

Associated Press Writer
AUSTIN (AP) — Dozens of House Democrats on Thursday unveiled an alternative to the Republican-drawn school finance proposal expected to be debated next week by the full chamber.

As the clear minority party, Democrats would have to sway several Republicans with the plan's promises of more money for bilingual and hard-to-educate students, teacher pay raises and more property tax relief. The GOP controls the House, 87-63.

"It is a responsible approach to the continued improvement of our schools," said Rep. Jim Dunnam of Waco, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

The Democrats' plan puts "money where it's needed, in areas where we have high concentrations of kids in poverty and areas where we have bilingual kids," said Rep. Scott Hochberg, D-Houston.

Among the Democrats' top priorities: bringing teacher pay, which now ranks 38th in the nation, to the national average by 2007. That would cost an estimated \$2.5 billion.

"Like all Texans, we want the best teachers in our classrooms," said Rep. Yvonne Davis, D-Dallas. "Our plan is designed to raise teacher salaries and give them real incentives to stay in our schools."

The competing plan also proposes \$650 million to reinstate a health care stipend to all school per-

sonnel, rather than just to teachers. Property taxes would be reduced by a lesser amount, offering instead an increased homestead exemption of \$45,000. That system would free up more money to flow into the classrooms, Hochberg said.

The structure of the funding formulas and taxing options does not significantly change, he said. The tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee approved a measure Wednesday that replaces a reduction in school property taxes with a new business tax on wages and a number of other new taxes.

Democrats have insisted that partisan politics have no place in their plan. But, peeling Republicans away from the current

leadership on top issues has been rare.

"I think that this plan looks like the education community wrote it," said Brock Gregg, a lobbyist for the Association of Texas Professional Educators. "It encompasses all things, and I hope the legislature will look at it not as a partisan issue, but as what is good for kids."

ATPE and other education advocates in the state assailed the original House plan, mostly for not including a teacher pay raise and not closing the gap between property wealthy and poor districts.

"Here we are 50 years after Brown versus Board of Education and the bill that has been laid out to you is still separate but unequal," said Rep. Rene

Oliveira, D-Brownsville. "We're not going to tolerate that."

Republican House Speaker Tom Craddick on Thursday reaffirmed his support for the House plan, which will go before the full body for consideration and a vote next week.

Rep. Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville. "We're not going to tolerate that."

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Hitch (PG-13)
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\$4.00 ALL MATINEES,
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Bills would create parity for physical, mental health coverage

By KELLEY SHANNON

Associated Press Writer
AUSTIN (AP) — Health insurance policies regulated by the state would have to offer mental health treatment and medications equal to their regular medical coverage under proposals before the Texas Legislature.

A House Republican and a Democrat filed similar bills on the issue this week.

Parity in mental health coverage would benefit businesses as well as consumers because of improved employee productivity and reduced absenteeism resulting from mental health problems, said Rep. Joe Nixon, R-Houston, as he introduced his bill Thursday.

"This is very much a pro-business issue," Nixon said.

Rep. Garnet Coleman, a Houston Democrat who

has battled mental illness and has pushed mental health bills for several legislative sessions, filed a similar bill Tuesday.

"Insurance providers cover heart disease no matter how many heart attacks a person has," Coleman said. "A person that has a life threatening or inhibiting mental illness deserves the same coverage, quality attention and care."

In 1994, after his father's death, Coleman said he sank into depression and was hospitalized. He was diagnosed as having bipolar disorder and underwent treatment.

Coleman also has filed a bill that would require health plans to cover self-inflicted injuries by minors in the course of a suicide attempt or due to a serious mental illness.

Many insurance policies limit mental health coverage. Mental illness costs the state up to \$16.6 bil-

lion each year in lost productivity and family revenue, according to the Mental Health Association in Texas.

Some small businesses and some major corporations whose policies are not regulated by the state but by federal law would be exempt under Nixon's bill.

"We can do what we can," Nixon said. "We have to take the steps that we have the ability to control."

The mental health plans of about 6 million Texans are subject to state regulation, he said. About 60 percent of health plans in Texas are regulated by the state, said Melanie Gantt, public policy director for the Mental Health Association in Texas.

Maureen Hackett, wife of Anadarko Petroleum Inc. chief executive Jim Hackett, appeared with Nixon at a Capitol news conference to tell of the

mental health parity in health plans introduced at Anadarko and other Houston companies.


"People are showing up at work. They're staying at work. They're enjoying work. They're able to enjoy a normal life," said Maureen Hackett, a volunteer at the Mental Health Association of Houston.

Coleman, who showed up at Nixon's news conference and accused him of "stealing" his bill, said he hopes Nixon works hard for its passage.

"I welcome people, converts, to this issue," Coleman said. "I would never, ever stand in the way of good public policy."

Nixon said he would be glad to have Coleman's support for his bill.

"Happy to have him on board," Nixon said.

Guess Who's
50 Today!!
Isn't That Half A Century?

Happy Birthday David
Yes You're Getting Older!!!
From Your Favorite Brother!

Rural roads see double rate of deaths

By SIOBHAN McDONOUGH

Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — People are being killed on rural, non-Interstate roads at more than double the rate for all other routes, a private group says, blaming narrow roads, sharp curves and a lack of money for safety improvements.

More than half of traffic deaths — 52 percent — in the United States between 1999 and 2003 happened on rural, non-Interstate roads and highways, according to a study released Thursday by The Road Information Program. Traffic on these roads accounted for only 28 percent of travel.

In 2003, there were 2.72 deaths per 100 million miles traveled on non-Interstate rural roads compared with .99 deaths per 100 million miles on all other roads.

"Rural drivers are being put at an unacceptable risk because many of these roads lack desirable safety features," said Frank Moretti, research and policy director of the private transportation research group.

Narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, pavement drop-offs and roadside hazards such as trees and utility poles, are dangerous for drivers.

The majority of rural traffic accidents happen when motorists leave their lane and either strike something off the road, or collide with a car traveling in the opposite direction, the study said.

The study reported an average of 22,127 traffic fatalities each year on

rural, non-Interstate roads between 1999 and 2003; in that same period, there was an average of 42,301 people killed each year in traffic accidents on all roads.

From 1990 to 2003, the fatality rate on roads other than non-Interstate rural routes decreased by 32 percent.

Moretti said money for road safety projects is badly needed to make rural roads safer.

Congress is currently working on reauthorizing a new long-term federal surface transportation program, which may increase funding available for safety improvements. The current program expires at the end of May.

The study also found: —Arizona, Florida, South Carolina, Montana and Kentucky had the highest rates of traffic fatalities per 100 million miles of travel on rural, non-Interstate roads.

—The states with the largest number of rural, non-Interstate traffic deaths between 1999 and 2003 were Texas, California, Florida, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

—Between 1990 and 2002, vehicle travel on rural roads increased by 27 percent and commercial truck travel on rural roads increased by 32 percent.

—About 60 million people live in rural communities, or 21 percent of the

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FLIGHT

Continued from Page 1A

Fossett's flight was the culmination of five years of planning and work, much of it by chief designer Jon Karkow of Scaled Composites, a California firm. The GlobalFlyer is made almost entirely of lightweight composites; fuel comprised 86 percent of its weight at take-off, filling long wings and boom tanks.

Fossett shattered the old speed record for an unrefueled circumnavigation of the globe that was set by the two-person Voyager craft in 1986. That flight took nine days.

But what really captured the attention of the public was the fact that he did it alone — albeit

with an experimental aircraft and large support crew piloted by Virgin Atlantic airline owner Richard Branson.

Fossett, 60, said his biggest challenge was "lack of sleep and being on duty all the time." He said he'd grabbed about a dozen naps of one to three minutes each during the 23,000-mile flight. He drank 12 canned sport shakes and about two liters of water.

Twice, he thought the outcome was in doubt — once when the jet's global positioning device went out temporarily, and again when an apparent loss of 2,600 pounds of fuel was discovered. One possible explanation for the loss is that the fuel leaked out of vents in the fuel tanks.

But Karkow said the jet still

had about 1,100 pounds of fuel left when it landed.

The scene surrounding Fossett at the Salina airport was one like no one remembered.

Branson, the English billionaire, pumped his fist at the crowd from the back of a pickup and swung a huge black-and-white checkered "finish" flag; later he sprayed Fossett with a magnum of champagne, before Fossett took the bottle and enjoyed two hearty drinks.

A media mix including network correspondents, European journalists and local journalists filled two large platforms.

Fossett and Branson both earned cheers from the crowd by mentioning the key role that Kansas State University's Salina aviation program and

the airport had played in the record-setting effort. A marching band from Salina South High stepped onto the tarmac and serenaded Fossett.

Fossett, a millionaire businessman with other world records in aviation, ballooning and sailing, seemed reluctant to attach too much significance to his latest feat, saying, "I would do these things if no one was paying attention."

But others were not shy with superlatives.

"This is a monumental achievement in aviation," said David Hawksett, a writer for the Guinness Book of World Records who flew to Salina to watch Fossett's return. "Steve's amazing."

Hawksett said Fossett's solo flight would be listed as a "sig-

nificant first" in the book, along with such events as the Apollo 11 moon landing and Sir Edmund Hillary's ascent of Mount Everest.

Richard Ionata of the National Aeronautic Association, who was there to certify Fossett's speed record, agreed with that assessment, saying Fossett must possess "an incredible physiology."

"It's pretty impressive," said Paolo Nespoli, an Italian astronaut who attended along with astronauts from NASA. "I was thinking how it must be to fly all this time in a cooped-up space. I don't think I'd be able to do it."

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said Fossett's flight adds to the state's rich lore of aviation history.

STEWART

Continued from page 1A

There, Stewart casually dressed in a gray and white poncho, dark jeans and ankle boots, smiled and waved to supporters as she walked across the runway and boarded the plane for New York.

"The experience of the last five months ... has been life altering and life affirming," Stewart said in a statement issued on her Web site. "Someday, I hope to have the chance to talk more about all that has happened, the extraordinary people I have met here and all that I

have learned."

Stewart, 63, who also has homes in Connecticut, Maine and the Hamptons, chose the Katonah estate, which she bought in 2000 for \$16 million, to be her prison until August.

Besides running Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. and writing a column for her magazine, Stewart can prepare for the two television shows that she'll be starring: a revival of her daily homemaking show and her version of NBC's "The Apprentice" hosted by development billionaire Donald Trump.

Stewart hopes to turn

around the fortunes of a company that produces everything from television shows and magazines to bed sheets and bakeware. In 2004, the company suffered a loss and its revenues sagged, but the stock price rose considerably during her prison stint as investors bet on a Stewart comeback.

Her contract with her company says her salary, which was suspended while she was behind bars, will get reinstated during home detention. Details about where Stewart will work will be determined in the next few days at a meeting

with her probation officer.

While in home confinement, Stewart will be free to entertain colleagues, neighbors, friends and relatives — as long as they're not criminals. Convicted felons aren't allowed to consort with other convicted felons.

"Right now, as you can imagine, I am thrilled to be returning to my more familiar life," Stewart said in the statement. "My heart is filled with joy at the prospect of the warm embraces of my family, friends and colleagues."

"Certainly, there is no place like home."

CHANGE

Continued from Page 1A

ted \$1,039.40 for the relief efforts.

Bennett said the money will be eventually turned over to the Red Cross, one

of the main agencies spearheading disaster relief efforts.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com

BEE

Continued from Page 1A

Spence, the daughter of Paul and Beth Spence, won the Forsan bee on Feb. 7 after runner-up Evan Burton misspelled "alligator." Spence correctly spelled that word, then won the competition by spelling "dragnet."

Sikes finished as runner-up at the Homeschool competition to Cassandra Sulatan when she misspelled "scenario," but a

scheduling conflict has forced Sulatan to forego the regional bee, opening a spot for Sikes.

The Howard County quartet will compete against 21 other spellers who qualified for the regional bee. At stake is a trip to the national spelling bee, scheduled for May 31-June 2 in Washington, D.C.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com

GEMS

Continued from Page 1A

into a ring or necklace while you're there at the show. None of it is soldered. It's all wrapped with the gold wire."

Shoppers will get the chance to sate their rock and gem appetites as well, thanks to a number of vendors from Texas and abroad.

"We have vendors coming from all over the state, and a few from out of state," said Lamb. "When you come in the front door we'll have a desk set up so we can give everyone that comes in a ticket for a door prize. We'll be having a door

prize drawing every hour. There will also be tickets to vote for what you think is the best the best display case."

Lamb has been helping to coordinate the show for many years now, and said there will be something for everyone in the family.

"Admission is free," said Lamb. "We'll have dealers and demonstrations, and the spinning wheel will also be there for the children. We'll also have a snack bar and plenty of displays of work done by people locally, as well as some of the vendors."

"A lot of people probably don't realize what can be inside what appears to

be an ugly old rock. There will be plenty of displays showing what is actually inside a rock, and how it's worked into jewelry.

Several people at the show will be working with the stones so people can see the process they go through first hand."

And while door prizes and plenty of beautiful stones for sale are a major draw each year, Lamb hopes residents who have been bitten by the rock bug will use it as an opportunity to learn about her club.

"It's a hobby, but it's also an ongoing process," she said with a smile. "You learn something new everyday, not only from other club members,

but also when you go to a show or you pick up the rock and gem magazine. It's a learning process, and most rockhounds like to share their knowledge with other people."

"My favorite part of the club is the collecting and the mystery of it. Sawing a rock in half and seeing what's inside is quite an experience, because you can't tell what a rock looks like just by the outside of it. It's fascinating to see how pretty it is on the inside sometimes," she said.



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36th Annual Gem and Mineral Show

March 5 and 6, 2005

Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Howard County Fair Barn

Big Spring, Texas

Dealers, Demonstrators,

Displays, Spinning Wheel,

Prizes, Snack Bar,

Jewelry Repair

Stone Setting

FREE ADMISSION

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Church News

Cornerstone Church

Sunday the Rev. Robert Owens from the Every Nation Ministries church in Reno, Nev., is the featured speaker.

Cornerstone Church, an Every Nation Ministries church, formerly Morning Star International, invites children entering kindergarten through fourth grade to Sunday children's activities. Sunday, the children will see a play on the story of Zacchaeus. The children have a special Easter program planned for the morning worship service March 27.

Cornerstone, located at the corner of 12th and Owens streets, offers a family atmosphere of praise and worship. Morning worship begins at 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday worship is at 7 p.m. Childcare is available for newborns through preschool. Call Pastor Craig or Cherise Felty at 263-3072 with any questions.

Calvary Baptist

Calvary Baptist Church welcomes all those who are looking for a place to worship. Calvary Baptist Church is located at 1200 W. Fourth Street. Preaching services are at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday, Sunday school is at 9:45 a.m. and Wednesday Bible study is at 5 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

The Rev. Dr. Alan Abel has a Bible study class

Sunday mornings in the annex after church based on the book, "The Screwtape Letters," by C.S. Lewis. Dr. Abel is a great communicator and this promises to be lots of fun. Call 267-7163 for more information.

There is a noon ladies Bible study group Wednesday. The study group is reading and discussing "The Jesus I Never Knew," by Phillip Yancey. All are welcome. For more information or to enroll in the class, call the church office at 267-7163.

Big Spring ... a great home town. St. Paul ... a great home church!

Life Church

Life Church at 600 E. FM 700, offers two morning worship services Sunday, first at 8:30 a.m. and again at 10:30 a.m. Children's Ministries are available during both services for ages 0-12.

East Fourth Street Baptist Church

East Fourth Street Baptist Church, 401 E. Fourth Street, invites the Big Spring community to the Christ in the Passover, Jews for Jesus presentation at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Passover is one of the most significant of all the Jewish holidays, and it was celebrated by the most significant Jew of all time - Jesus. Come see and hear Jews for Jesus unfold the story of redemption from the Exodus to Calvary in Christ in the Passover. Admission is free.

East Fourth Street

Baptist Church, 401 E. 4th St., offers these opportunities for Christian growth and service for Sunday: 9:45 a.m. Sunday school; 11 a.m. morning worship; 4:45 p.m., youth, Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors, Mission Friends and Mission Babies; 5 p.m. choir practice; 6 p.m. evening worship/opportunity meeting; 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jews for Jesus; 7 p.m. March 11, Girls in Action lock-in. Call 267-2291 for more information.

First United Methodist Church

The Rev. Lee Emerson will officiate and preach Sunday. Holy Communion will be observed. A special offering for the One Great Hour of Sharing will be taken. Worship services are at 8:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m.

Sunday school classes meet at 9:45 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal is at 2 p.m. Children's Choir rehearsal is at 4 p.m. The monthly prayer meeting is at 5 p.m.

The Adult Mission Team will leave for Dangriga, Belize, today and will return March 12. The team will help in the construction of a parsonage.

The Youth Mission Team will travel to Juarez, Mexico, Monday through Friday and help with construction of a house.

Orders for Easter lilies are being taken. A donation of \$13.50 makes it possible for the worship committee to order the lilies. Deadline for orders

is March 18. Fill out the insert in the bulletin and place it in the offering or call the church office.

Make reservations now for the Passover Seder Celebration, which is March 24 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The cost of reservations is \$5 which will be offered back that evening.

First United Methodist Church is located at 400 Scurry. For more information on any of these programs, call the church office at 267-6394.

Birdwell Lane Baptist Church

Everyone is invited to Birdwell Lane Baptist Church, located at 1512 Birdwell Lane. The church exists for the purpose of the church members to glorify Jesus Christ and be a blessing to individuals and families. This is a friendly church family.

Church members are hosting Central West Texas Independant Baptist Fellowship and Big Country Baptist Fellowship from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. Monday and from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Tuesday.

Sunday worship services are at 10:55 a.m. and at 5 p.m.

Midweek services are at 7 p.m. Wednesday. For information, call 267-7157 or 267-8214.

Coahoma United Methodist Church

Coahoma United Methodist Church, 401 N. Main has Sunday school at 9:45 a.m. and Sunday service at 11 a.m.

Easter season dates are: Palm Celebration Service at 11 a.m. March 20 in the sanctuary. There will be a children's performance; Maundy Thursday Service at 6 p.m. March 24 in the sanctuary; Good Friday Service at 6 p.m. March 25 in the sanctuary; Easter Sunday Sunrise March 27; Easter egg hunt, sponsored by the youth, during the Sunday school hour, 9:45-10:45 a.m. All children are invited to participate; Easter worship at 11 a.m.

Episcopal Church shortly after relocating here. He will serve in this position for one year.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

Everyone is invited to attend worship services at St. Mary's Sunday. Holy Communion will be celebrated at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday school for all ages begins at 9:30 a.m.

St. Mary's Lenten program continues this Wednesday. This year, there will be a view and discussion series on short videos from Pioneers of the Spirit. The All-Parish Meatless Pot Luck Supper is at 6 p.m. We will end with a brief service of Compline.

During Lent, St. Mary's will have Stations of the Cross at 5:30 p.m. Fridays in the church. Everyone is invited to this time of devotion.

For more information about St. Mary's Episcopal Church, call 267-8201 or visit our Web site at www.stmarysbst.org. St. Mary's is located at 1001 S. Goliad.

Friends of Unity

The Rev. Jim Sims, minister for Unity Church of West Texas in Odessa, will be speaking at the 1 p.m. service Sunday. He will be available for spiritual counseling as well.

Thanks to bulb planting last fall, daffodils are blooming at the Railroad Plaza, where the Unity Center is located. All services and meetings are open to everyone.

See CHURCH NEWS Page 8A



Leford

Northwest Texas Greater Fort Worth District Lay Organization

The Northwest Texas/Greater Fort Worth District Lay Organization held election of officers for the 2005 conference year in Abilene. Dr. Keith Leford was elected as first vice president of the district.

Leford and his wife, Willia moved here from Detroit, Mich., in April 2003. He is currently employed as an OB-GYN with Scenic Mountain Medical Center. As a lifetime AME, the Leford's joined Baker's Chapel African Methodist

EAST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH



Courtesy photo

A special Tuesday service begins at 7 p.m. at East Side Baptist Church with "The Warren Family."

These performers have been singing gospel music for many years.

Regular services are 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday. Nursery is provided for 4 years olds and younger. Call 267-1915.

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The reason why talk is cheap is because the supply exceeds the demand.

Randy Cotton
Pastor

Sunday 11:00 a.m. Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Service broadcast Morning Worship.....11:00 a.m.
over KBYG 1400 AM Evangelistic Service....6:00 p.m.
on your dial Wednesday Service.....7:00p.m.

A Pastor's Message

Pray! Because I'm a pastor, people often ask, "Would you pray for me?" or, "Would you pray for my sister, who's sick?" To such requests, I almost always respond, "Certainly - let's pray right now."

What continues to baffle me is the number of persons who, when I respond to their request with the offer of immediate prayer, back off. "Oh, I didn't mean right now." Some of them even seem embarrassed. "You mean, actually pray right here, right now?"

I'm always a bit surprised at folks who ask me for prayer, then don't seem to really want what they've requested. Perhaps the root of this dilemma is that many people conceive of prayer as formal and ritualized, something done only behind stained glass windows while kneeling on a pew or cushions.

Long ago, I learned that prayer is simply conversing with God. Since God is available everywhere and at any time, initiating a conversation with God is as simple as addressing Him. One of the greatest examples of prayer to be found in holy scripture is David, the writer of many



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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
The moon enters Capricorn, stimulating an afternoon business rush.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You press the "reset" button on your life. Review your past lists, diaries and goals to see if they still apply.

can't insulate you from feeling shaky in an unfamiliar territory. You're disarming when you make a silly mistake. Use it to your advantage.
GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You are exciting, unpredictable and eccentric. Treat relationships like gold.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You hate being forced to choose, but you must make a decision to be fair to all. It's easy for you to see clearly what others miss. If you've gone back on a promise, there's a chance to make amends tonight.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Let yourself be inspired by someone - a Leo is a good candidate!

ing is particularly effective but wouldn't work for anyone else. Know that you are unique, and be bold! TAURUS: A stylish gesture clinches a romantic arrangement. GEMINI: The last thing you think will happen in your love life is the first thing that will. CANCER: Friends could set you up with great success. LEO: You could date someone not of your generation and learn much in the process.

matically sort through lots of good offers. PISCES: You know what a loved one longs to hear, so why make him/her wait any longer?
COUPLE OF THE WEEKEND: Capricorn is usually the romantic pursuer, even if it's the other person who is making all of the obvious moves. This clever sign knows how to manipulate a romantic situation so it feels like the seduced is actually the seducer!

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

Annie's Mailbox ®: Advice for those in need

Dear Annie: For the past year, I have been dating "Patrick," a wonderful man who loves me and my children. The problem? He has an ongoing friendship with his ex-wife and the man she left Patrick for.



KATHY MITCHELL MARCY SUGAR

"Della" and her new husband call us at least once a week to get together, and then she reminisces about their entire 32-year marriage - the places they went, the people they knew, the things they did. The first few times, I sat and listened, but I've since let Patrick know I feel uncomfortable

during their walks down memory lane. He assures me they are just friends

and has promised to focus less on the past. Recently, Patrick announced to Della that we are engaged. She cried and privately told me she felt jealous. Something seems not quite right about this situation. Though they both say they are just friends, she still acts like a possessive wife. She calls Patrick and confides about her problems with her husband, and I recently was upset to learn that Patrick told her about a little spat we had. Patrick says he wants to stay on friendly terms

with Della because they have grown children together. I do not want to spend the rest of my life feeling like The Other Woman. Any insight you can offer would be greatly appreciated. Please Help Me, I've Fallen in South Dakota. Dear S.D.: It's nice for ex-spouses to remain friendly, but Patrick's relationship with Della is overly chummy. They should not be sharing confidences about their respective significant others. And since Della has made it clear she still carries a minor torch for her

ex, this closeness is asking for trouble. Patrick needs to create some distance from Della so your upcoming marriage will have a chance to cement itself. Insist that these get-togethers dwindle down to a few times a year, and tell Patrick that there will be no more conversations with his ex-wife about your relationship unless you initiate them. Dear Annie: I have been married for 22 years, and my in-laws still treat me like poor Cinderella. My biggest issue is the gifts from my mother-in-law, "Alice."

bride, making the task more manageable. But we agree, you shouldn't invite more people than you are willing to thank properly. Dear Annie: I am writing about the letter from "Ex-Law Enforcement Civilian in Sacramento, Calif.," who was bullied at work by two women. Believe me, this is not an isolated case. Our son took his life after many months of harassment at his place of employment. No one knew how bad it was.

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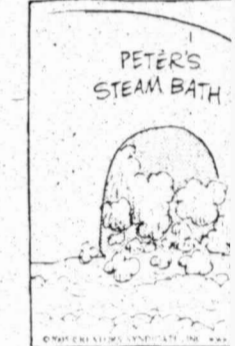
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