

# BIG SPRING HERALD

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

## INSIDE

Alabama players celebrate after their win over Texas Tech  
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## County seats draw last-minute filings

Several locally contested races to be on the ballot for March primaries

By THOMAS JENKINS  
Staff Writer

The Precinct 4 seat on the Howard County Commissioner's Court drew a last-minute candidate before filing closed Monday afternoon, bringing the number of contested local races for the March primaries to four.

Walter Brumley Jr. filed his candidacy to run on the Republican ticket in March,

putting himself head-to-head with fellow GOP candidate Roy D. Beauchamp. The winner from that ballot will face off against incumbent Gary Simer, who failed to draw an opponent on the Democratic ballot.

Simer isn't the only commissioner who will have to go to the polls in 2006, as the race for County Commissioner Precinct 2 has drawn two candidates, incumbent Jerry

Kilgore and challenger Kathy Lusk, both Republicans. The two will face off in the March primaries, with the winner going unopposed in November.

The race for Howard County Judge has drawn five candidates, as local accountant Mark Morgan will face off against incumbent candidate Ben Lockhart in the Republican primary. On the other side of the ticket, Democratic candidates Woody

Jumper, Ron L. "Smurf" Sawyers and Mark Barr will vie for their party's nod for the November election.

The race for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1 Place 2, saw some last minute filings, as Bobby Roever filed on the Democratic ticket and Robert G. "Bob" Smith filed on the Republican ticket Monday afternoon.

See CANDIDATES, Page 3A

## Who filed?

A look at who filed in non state- or nation-wide races that will be on the March primary ballots for Howard County.

**District Judge**  
R-Robert H. Moore III (I)  
D-None

**District Clerk**  
R-Colleen Barton (I)  
D-None

**County Judge**  
R-Ben Lockhart (I), Mark Morgan  
D-Woody Jumper, Ron L. "Smurf" Sawyers, Mark Barr

**County Clerk**  
R-None  
D-Donna Wright (I)

**County Treasurer**  
R-Teresa Thomas (I)  
D-None

**County Surveyor**  
R-None  
D-Michael McBrayer

**Commissioner Pct. 2**  
R-Jerry Kilgore (I), Kathy Lusk  
D-None

**Commissioner Pct. 4**  
R-Roy D. Beauchamp, Walter H. Brumley Jr.  
D-Gary Simer (I)

**Peace Justice, Pct. 1 PL. 2**  
R-Kathryn Wiseman (I); Laura Jeanne Wilson; Robert G. "Bob" Smith  
D-Bobby Roever

**Peace Justice, Pct. 2**  
R-Quail Dobbs (I)  
D-None

**Constable, Place 1 (unexpired term)**  
R-None  
D-Bill Holden

**Texas House District 85**  
R-Jim Landtroop; Drew Mouton  
D-Joe Heflin

**U.S. House District 19**  
R-Randy Neugebauer (I)  
D-Robert Ricketts  
L-Fred Jones

R - Republican, D - Democrat, L - Libertarian, I - incumbent

## Strayhorn running as Independent

By APRIL CASTRO  
Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN — Comptroller and gubernatorial hopeful Carole Keeton Strayhorn turned her back on the Republican Party Monday, announcing she'll seek the state's top job as an independent candidate.

The move allows Strayhorn, 66, Strayhorn to escape a potentially ugly battle against Gov. Rick Perry before the March 7 GOP primary election.

Known as "One Tough Grandma," Strayhorn has been a harsh critic of Perry's leadership over the past couple of years. Monday's announcement all but guarantees Perry will be the Republican candidate on the November ballot.

"I am a Republican," she said Monday, with husband, Ed, and three granddaughters at her side. "But I know we must set partisan politics aside and do what's best for Texas. That is why I am running for governor as a Texas independent."

Robert Black, a campaign spokesman for Perry, said the switch to independent is a concession that Strayhorn could not win the GOP primary and called the move "transparent political opportunism."

"Carole Strayhorn's decision to leave the GOP is a direct response to Governor Perry's strong leadership and support and an admission that she would have been defeated in the upcoming GOP primary by those who know her best: Texas Republican voters," Black said.

See STRAYHORN, Page 3A



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins  
Jacob Rios, a contractor with Southwest Masonry, bricks the outside of the new Visual and Performing Arts Center at Howard College Tuesday morning. The center is expected to be completed by mid-April.

## Chili cook-off time

### Fund-raiser will help Children in Need

Special to the Herald

Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie No. 3188 is soliciting chili cooks for their annual chili cook-off.

"Experience is not necessary," said Landon Sturdivant, Fraternal Order of Eagles member. "We just want as many cooks as possible to come out and participate in this worthy fund-raising event."

The Fourth Annual Chili Cook-off will be Saturday beginning at

8 a.m. at the Eagles building, 703 W. Third.

The pits and chili pots fire up at 8 a.m., followed by judging at noon.

Cost is \$10 per chili team, and \$5 for people entering the area to sample the chili.

Proceeds from the tasting and entry fees benefits the West Texas Centers for MHMR Children In Need fund. The fund helps purchase school supplies, clothing, tuition for summer

camp and helps meet other financial needs of special children who are receiving services from West Texas Centers for MHMR.

West Texas Centers for MHMR is the state-designated mental health authority for 23 counties in rural West Texas. Mental health and mental retardation services are provided to more than 2,000 consumers and their families each month.

Many of the children served by

the center need more services and goods than state funding will provide, said Shelley Smith, West Texas Centers for MHMR CEO.

"During the past three years, the Big Spring Fraternal Order of Eagles has held this benefit and to date has raised \$13,000 for this worthy cause," Sturdivant said. "Last year we were able to raise a record \$5,000."

For more information, call 432-263-6862.

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## Leadership Big Spring applications available

Special to the Herald

The Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce is up and running for 2006 and first on the agenda is the Leadership Big Spring program.

The first class will be held Thursday, Feb. 9, at 8:30 a.m. in the chamber board room.

Leadership Big Spring is a nine-month program, held every second Thursday of the month, February through December except for June

and July.

"Those who have demonstrated management and leadership ability, have shown an interest in community affairs and have time and talent to offer the community are invited to apply," said Debbye ValVerde, chamber executive director. "We are certain someone in your organization or in your acquaintance will be able to profit from this excellent opportunity."

The program takes partici-

pants on tours which integrate them with all aspects of Howard County life: Industry, government, medical, agriculture, education and more.

"Employers, if you have a new employee who has just moved into town, this would be a great opportunity for them to meet people and to get involved in our community," said ValVerde.

Leadership skills are also taught as a part of the program, which is coordinated

by Joann Knox.

"She is very outgoing and really gets the class involved," said ValVerde.

Cost is \$300, which includes transportation, meals and books for the leadership skills portion. Deadline to sign up is Jan. 25.

"If you did not receive an application please contact the chamber office at 263-7641 and we will be glad to get one out to you," said ValVerde.

Applications can also be picked up at the chamber.

# Obituaries

## Paul Joseph Leuschner



Paul Joseph (P.J.) Leuschner, age 70, of Big Spring passed away Friday, Dec. 30, 2005, in Lubbock. Rosary will be recited at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tours. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:15 a.m. at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Tours with Msgr. Isidore Rozycki as celebrant. Burial will follow in Waco Memorial Park.

The family will receive visitors from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. today at Aderhold Funeral Home in West.

Mr. Leuschner was born Oct. 6, 1935, the son of Carl A. and Christine K. (Glatter) Leuschner. He graduated from Waco High School and then attended Durham Business College, Tarleton State University and Baylor University.

Paul served his country in the United States Navy in the Pacific aboard three Destroyers named the Perkins, the Mansfield and the Frank E. Evans, attending rank of Sonarman First Class Petty Officer.

After leaving the Navy, he entered Civil Service at James Connally Air Force Base as a Navigational Trainer Analyst. Because of base closure in 1966, he was transferred to Webb Air Force Base as an Airborne Electronics Technician.

In 1972, Paul transferred into the recreational department as Bowling Facilitator at Webb Bowling Lanes. In 1976, after notification of base closing, he transferred to Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, working as manager of the New Bi-Centennial 32 Lanes.

In 1980, he returned to Sheppard Air Force Base, where he managed the golf course and then later took on the 488-acre recreation job for fishing and camping, before retiring in 1990 after 32 years of service.

Paul enjoyed spending time with his family, playing golf, fishing and bowling, helping other people, and especially loved his two grandchildren.

Paul was a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Big Spring, Masonary Faith Lodge No. 1158 in Wichita Falls, Scottish Rite in Fort Worth, Muskat Shrine in Wichita Falls and VFW Post No. 1145 in Wichita Falls.

His parents and one son, Danny Leon Leuschner all preceded him in death.

Survivors include one son, Michael Paul Leuschner of Big Spring; two grandchildren, Alex Leuschner and Bradie Leuschner, both of Big Spring; two brothers, Carl Leuschner and wife, Virginia of San Antonio and Gene Leuschner of Affton, Mo.; one sister, Kay Leuschner of North Padre Island; and several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Pallbearers will be Carl Paul Leuschner, Patrick Leuschner, Noah Leuschner, Patrick Leuschner Jr., Ken Bolfing and Bill Sparks.

Memorials may be made to Shriner Children's Hospital.

You are invited to share your thoughts and memories about Paul in our guest book found at [www.aderholdfuneralhome.com](http://www.aderholdfuneralhome.com).

Aderhold Funeral Home in West is in charge of arrangements.

*Paid obituary*

## Wanda Mize McGee



Wanda Mize McGee, 62, of Big Spring died Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006, at her residence. Graveside funeral services are 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2006, in Mount Olive Memorial Park with the Rev. Darrell Hendrickson, pastor of First Church of God, officiating.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. today at the funeral home.

She was born Dec. 1, 1943, in Roscoe and married Rodger Mize Oct. 31, 1959, in Sweetwater. He preceded her in death in February of 1996. She then married Virgil McGee Dec. 1, 1997. She owned and operated the Vogue Beauty Salon from 1978 until retiring in 1999. She was a member of First Church of God.

Survivors include her husband, Virgil McGee of Big Spring; two daughters, Starla Ayala and husband, Adrian and Cindy Mize and friend, David Wheeler, all of Big Spring; two brothers, Leonard Brown of Calgary, Alberta, Canada and Jerry Wayne Horton of Mesquite; four sisters, Mary Thompson of Munday, Annie Mae Ausburne and Lola Oden, both of Sweetwater and Nina Mannuzza of Big Spring; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

She was also preceded in death by her parents, one sister and a beloved son, Rodger Mize. The family suggests memorials to a favorite charity.

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

## Weather

- Tonight...Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 30s. West winds 10 to 15 mph.
- Wednesday...Partly cloudy. Cooler. Highs in the mid 60s. North winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the northeast in the afternoon.
- Wednesday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 30s.
- Thursday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 60s.
- Thursday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 30s.
- Friday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 60s.
- Friday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 30s.
- Saturday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 60s.
- Saturday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the lower 30s.
- Sunday...Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 60s.

## Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:  
 Winning numbers drawn: 3-6-17-23-29.  
 Number matching five of five: 1.  
 Prize per winner: \$29,704.  
 Winning tickets sold in: Victoria.  
 Next Cash 5 drawing: Tuesday night.

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:  
 Winning numbers drawn: 10-20-23-26. Bonus Ball: 22.  
 Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: none.  
 Number matching four of four: 4. Prize: \$2,221.  
 Estimated jackpot for Thursday night drawing: \$225,000.

## Take Note

**HANGAR 25 AIR MUSEUM IS COLLECTING RECIPES** to be included in a 2006 cookbook which will display memories of Big Spring over the years. Share your memories and your recipes. Contact the Hangar at 264-1999 for recipe forms.

**HOME HOSPICE HAS COOKBOOKS** with nearly 500 recipes on sale for \$18 with proceeds to benefit Hospice House. Recipes submitted by volunteers, coordinators and owners of Home Hospice. Call Sherry Hodnett at 264-7599 for more information.

## Ben Sparks



Ben Sparks, 66, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 31, 2005, in a local hospital. Funeral services are 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 5, 2006, at the St. Thomas Catholic Church with the Rev. Felix Cubelo officiating. Interment will follow in Mount Olive Memorial Park. A vigil will be held at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2006, at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel.

He was born June 1, 1939, in Pampa and married Christine Ramirez Feb. 18, 1977, in Big Spring. Ben had been a resident of the community since 1975 and had worked for Cornell Corrections since it opened. He was a member of St. Thomas Catholic Church, serving as a lay minister, Eucharistic minister and lecturer.

Survivors include his wife, Christine Sparks of Big Spring; four sons, Randy Sparks of Big Spring, Clint Sparks, Mark Sparks and wife, Kathy and Tracy Sparks, all of Phoenix; two daughters, Tonia Sparks and Stephanie Sparks, both of Big Spring; and nine grandchildren.

The family suggests memorials be made to Cal Farley's Boy's Ranch, P.O. Box 1890, Amarillo 79174.

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

## Lottie Crittenden



Lottie Crittenden, 84, of Lubbock, formerly of Ackerly, died Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006, in Lubbock. Graveside funeral services are 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 5, 2006, at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park.

She was born Nov. 19, 1921, in Toyah and married E. E. "Gene" Crittenden March 20, 1938, in Coahoma. He preceded her in death Aug. 9, 1982. She came to Big Spring in 1927 and moved to Vealmoor in 1945, then to Ackerly in 1963. She had owned and operated Lottie's Cafe in Ackerly for 15 years.

Survivors include a daughter, Charlsa Nichols of Shawnee, Okla.; four granddaughters; 10 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

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

## Freddy Pruett O'Bannon



Freddy Pruett O'Bannon, 93, of Midland died Sunday, Jan. 1, 2006, in Midland. Graveside services are 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2006, at the Garden City Cemetery with the Rev. Monroe Peeters officiating.

The family will receive friends today from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the funeral home, 3800 N. Big Spring St. in Midland.

She was born June 4, 1912, in Mound and married Malcolm W. O'Bannon March 12, 1931, in Hamilton County. He preceded her in death in August of 1980.

She and Malcolm moved to Glasscock County in 1937. She worked as the Glasscock County Treasurer for six years and helped her husband, who was a government trapper. She was a member of First Baptist Church of Garden City.

Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, Wilma and Dick Cunningham of Midland; son, Malcolm Marion O'Bannon of Midland; two granddaughters; one grandson; nine great-grandchildren; and seven great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Malcolm O'Bannon, her mother, Eva Thompson Pruett, her father, James Calvin Pruett, brothers, Baylor Pruett and Clyde Pruett and sisters, Faye Gardner and Elizabeth Cox.

The family suggests memorials be made to First Baptist Church of Garden City or a charity of your choice.

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

## Leroy Aldridge

Leroy Aldridge, 77, died Monday, Jan. 2, 2006, at the Parkview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Funeral services are pending with Myers and Smith Funeral Home.

# Police blotter

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

- JOHNNY RAY PAYNE**, 26, of 1509 Stadium, was arrested Monday on a charge of resisting arrest.
- LISA RUBIO**, 38, of 3911 Hamilton, was arrested Monday on a Howard County warrant and two local warrants.
- RUFUS ANDREW DAVIS**, 35, of 1006 S. Nolan, was arrested Monday on a charge of burglary of a habitation.
- RAFEL LOPEZ**, 61, of 508.5 Father Delaney, was arrested Monday on a charge of public intoxication.
- LEONARDO TALAVERA**, 46, of 404 E. Sixth Street, was arrested Monday on charges of no insurance and running a stop sign.
- DONNA STRAIT**, 33, of 1512 Sycamore, was arrested Tuesday on a Gonzales County warrant, eight local warrants and three local citations.
- THEFT** was reported in the 1200 block of 11th Place.
- RESISTING ARREST, SEARCH OR TRANSPORTATION** was reported in the 1500 block of Stadium.
- BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported in the 900 block of 16th Street.
- ASSAULT/CLASS C** was reported in the 1900 block of Highway 87.

# Sheriff's report

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity between 8 a.m. Monday and 8 a.m. Tuesday:

- JOSE ALFREDO MELENDEZ**, 22, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on a motion to revoke probation for driving while intoxicated.
- RUBEN CISNEROS**, 29, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on a capias warrant for possession of marijuana under two ounces.
- LISA JEANINE RUBIO**, 38, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on a bondsman off bond warrant for theft by check.
- CODY LEE WEATHERS**, 28, was arrested by sheriff's deputies on charges of contempt of court and disobedience of a court order.
- ISREAL MIRAMONTES**, 22, was transferred to county jail from BSPD after being arrested on a charge of theft.

# Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service reported the following activity between 8 a.m. Friday and 8 a.m. Monday:

- MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of Hillside. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 2000 block of Alabama. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 1400 block of Settles. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 1900 block of North Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 1700 block of Morrison. Service was refused.
- STRUCTURE FIRE** was reported in the 700 block of Edwards.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 100 block of North East Ninth. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 1200 block of East Third. One person was transported to VAMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 300 block of West Fifth. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 400 block of Aylesford. One person was transported to VAMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported 13 miles south of Big Spring on Highway 87. Three people were transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 1400 block of Apron. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 600 block of McEwen. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 1000 block of Sycamore. One person was transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 500 block of Washington. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 700 block of North East 12th. Service was refused.
- MEDICAL** was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported at the intersection of Third and Gregg. Two people were transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA** was reported in the 600 block of Interstate 20. One person was transported to SMMC.

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# Abramoff facing additional federal charges; guilty plea expected

**By MARK SHERMAN**  
Associated Press Writer  
WASHINGTON — Lobbyist Jack Abramoff will plead guilty to federal charges in Washington and Miami, clearing the way for him to cooperate in a massive government investigation of influence peddling involving members of Congress, lawyers said Tuesday.  
Prosecutors were filing conspiracy, fraud and tax evasion charges against the embattled lobbyist, a Justice Department

official said.  
Abramoff was scheduled to appear at a hearing in U.S. District Court here later Tuesday, said department spokesman Bryan Sierra. Abramoff was expected to plead guilty to three charges as part of his agreement.  
Abramoff was then to plead guilty to two criminal charges in Florida stemming from a 2000 purchase of a fleet of gambling boats, said Neal Sonnett, his attorney there.  
Abramoff will plead guilty to two of the six charges in a federal indictment, Sonnett said.  
U.S. District Judge Paul C. Huck has scheduled a telephone status conference for later Tuesday. Four other charges in Florida will remain pending.  
Any such plea agreement likely would secure the Republican lobbyist's testimony against several members of Congress who received favors from him or his clients.  
The Justice Department is believed to be focusing on as many as 20 lawmakers and aides.  
Pressure had been intensify-

ing on Abramoff to strike a deal with prosecutors since former partner Adam Kidan pleaded guilty earlier this month to fraud and conspiracy in connection with the 2000 SunCruz boat deal in Florida.  
Abramoff's cooperation would be a boon to an ongoing Justice Department investigation of congressional corruption, possibly helping prosecutors build criminal cases against up to two dozen lawmakers of both parties and their staff members.  
The continuing saga of

Abramoff's legal problems has caused anxiety at high levels in Washington, in both the Republican and Democratic parties.  
White House spokesman Scott McClellan could not confirm Tuesday whether Abramoff ever met President Bush. When asked at the White House about this, the spokesman said that "what he is reportedly acknowledged doing is unacceptable and outrageous."  
"If laws were broken, he must be held to account for what he did," McClellan said.

## AstroWorld sale features unique items, nostalgia

HOUSTON (AP) — Six Flags AstroWorld will auction off loads of the shuttered amusement park's equipment in an opportunity for collectors to acquire some one-of-a-kind artifacts of Houston history.  
The three-day auction starts Friday at the former park, which closed its doors in October after 37 years. Organizers say the generations of memories formed at the park have fueled interest in the chance to purchase the memorabilia and equipment.  
"I just want something to remember the park by," said Danny Hinojosa, a former AstroWorld employee

who wants to snag some of park's benches. "It was more than just a job. It was more like a family."  
Many of the rides and some of the equipment were transferred to other Six Flags parks. But there's still enough stuff to pack several buildings at AstroWorld. The leftover items range from old amusement ride signs to industrial sewing machines, golf carts, disco balls and a waist-high double ketchup dispenser on wheels.  
Anthony Piccola, a former AstroWorld purchasing manager who is coordinating the auction, said he receives about 350 e-mails daily about the sale. Many inquiries are

about specific items, such as one potential bidder who wants antique taxi No. 14 because that's where he popped the question to his now-wife.  
Other items that have attracted the most attention are the signs for Greased Lightning and Thunder River. Piccola said. Signs showing height requirements for certain rides have also been popular.  
Auctioneer Kenneth Dixon, owner of Tri State Auction of Mississippi, said he expects novice seekers to go for items like the old park signs, while other participants might value more utilitarian equipment like stainless steel tables.

## Mining executive discouraged by air tests in mine where 13 workers trapped

TALLMANSVILLE, W.Va. (AP) — Rescuers trying to reach 13 trapped miners punched a hole into the mine early Tuesday, but a company executive said he was "very discouraged" by air quality tests.  
Carbon monoxide levels measured 1,300 parts per million, exceeding the 400 parts per million maximum safe level, said Ben Hatfield, chief executive officer of mine owner International Coal Group Inc.  
"We are very discouraged by the results of this test," Hatfield said.  
Still, Hatfield said the trapped miners could still be alive.  
"They could be in another location or they

could be barricaded somewhere," Hatfield told reporters.  
The test results were announced after crews drilled the hole. They also sent a camera down the 6 1/4 inch hole to look for signs of life, and planned to move in a camera-equipped robot, Gov. Joe Manchin said.  
After the test, family members, who had been optimistic and talkative earlier, retreated into a nearby church without making any comments.  
The blast occurred at about 6:40 a.m. Monday, trapping the miners 260 feet below the surface of the mine, located about 100 miles northeast of Charleston.  
Earlier Tuesday, res-

cues had penetrated more than 9,000 feet into the Sago coal mine but were ordered to return to the surface Tuesday before the drilling crew punched into the mine.  
Officials thought the workers should be removed in case the drilling caused a buildup of carbon monoxide that could endanger the rescuers, Hatfield said.  
Four co-workers tried to reach the trapped miners immediately after the explosion but stopped because of contaminated air. The blast knocked out the mine's communication equipment.

## CANDIDATES

Continued from Page 1A  
Smith and Roever join Republican candidates Kathryn Wiseman, incumbent, and Laura Jeanne Wilson in the race.  
Several incumbent officials have filed for re-election and are currently unopposed, including

District Clerk Colleen Barton; County Treasurer Teresa Thomas; Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2 Quail Dobbs; County Clerk Donna Wright; and County Surveyor Michael McBrayer.  
The District 85 seat on the Texas House of Representatives, currently held by Democrat Pete Laney, who recently announced he would not run for re-election, will also be up for grabs in

2006.  
The race has drawn three candidates, including Big Spring businessman and attorney Drew Mouton, who announced his candidacy on the Republican ticket last week.  
Mouton will be challenged in the March primary by fellow GOP candidate and Plainview businessman Jim Landtroop. Joe Heflin, county judge of

Crosbyton, recently filed to run on the Democratic ticket, and is unopposed.  
The race for the District 19 seat on the U.S. House of Representatives has drawn three candidates as well.  
Incumbent Republican candidate Randy Neugebauer is set to defend his seat against the lone Democratic nomination, Robert Ricketts,

as well as Libertarian candidate Fred Jones.  
All three candidates failed to draw an opponent for the March primaries.  
Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

**MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL**  
24th & Johnson 267-8288  
Lillian Gould, 78, died Sunday. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday at Stevens Funeral Home Chapel, Coleman with burial at the Brown Ranch Cemetery in Coleman.  
Leroy Aldridge, 77, died Monday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

## STRAYHORN

Continued from Page 1A  
Strayhorn filed her declaration of intent to run as an independent with the state's Secretary of State's office on Monday, the deadline to enter the 2006 elections.  
If elected, Strayhorn would be the first independent Texas governor since Sam Houston.  
"Texas belongs to no special interest group, no special political credo, no special individual," she said.  
Kinky Friedman, the kooky mystery writer and musician, also is seeking the Governor's Mansion as an independent.  
To be listed as an independent candidate on the November ballot, one must gather 45,540 signatures in the spring from registered voters who didn't vote in either the Democrat or Republican primary or any primary runoff in April. The day after the primary election, independent candidates have 60 days to gather signatures, less if either race results in a runoff. The Secretary of State's office must then verify the signatures, which will be disqualified if they appear on more than one petition.  
Strayhorn continued her criticism of Perry, blaming him for creating partisan division in Texas politics and for repeatedly failing to fix the state's public school funding problem.  
"He has given us higher property taxes, bigger government, higher insurance rates, toll roads, has abandoned our border and ignored our

broken schools," Strayhorn said.  
Both are former Democrats who switched to the GOP in the 1980s as the party rose to political dominance.  
Strayhorn announced last summer that she would challenge Perry. She was elected as the state's first woman comptroller in 1998. As comptroller, Strayhorn is the state's chief financial officer and controls how much money is available for lawmakers to spend.  
Before being elected comptroller, she served on the three-person Texas Railroad Commission, a statewide-elected post.  
Two of her four sons serve in President Bush's administration. Scott McClellan is White House press secretary, and Dr. Mark McClellan is administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services. One of her sons, Brad, serves as her campaign manager. The other son, Dudley, is assistant general counsel for the State Bar of Texas.  
Strayhorn also has five granddaughters.  
The former Austin mayor married her high

school sweetheart Ed Strayhorn in January 2003.  
In the Democratic race, the main candidates are former Congressman Chris Bell and former Texas Supreme Court Justice Bob Gammage.  
While Strayhorn insists she's still a Republican, the Texas GOP disagrees.  
"Today the truth has come out: Carole Strayhorn is no Republican," said Tina Benkiser, chairwoman of the Republican Party of Texas. "Grassroots Republicans should be outraged that Carole Strayhorn has lied, deceived and now abandoned the very people who put her in office all for her own selfish ambition."  
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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

Candidates,  
let's stick  
to the issues

Now that we have the list of candidates for the March primaries, our plea would be "keep it clean and stick to the issues." That's wishful thinking, of course, in the governor's race, where incumbent Rick Perry, a Republican, and his key challenger, former-Republican-turned-Independent Carole Keeton Strayhorn, have been slinging slop for several months already.

There are actually four Republican candidates for governor: Perry, Christian conservative activist Larry Kilgore, rancher Robert "Star" Locke and private security consultant Rhett Smith. On the Democrat list are Felix Alvarado, a middle school assistant principal; Bob Gammage, a former state supreme court justice; Rashad Jafer, a retail chain store manager; and Chris Bell, a former congressman. Others are James Werner, a software sales analyst running as a Libertarian, and host of Independents, including Marcus Matthew Cherry, William Gilbert Jean, author and jokester "Kinky" Friedman and the aforementioned Strayhorn.

Locally, there are a few races in the primaries — starting with Texas House District 85, where local attorney Drew Mouton and Plainview businessman Jim Landtroop will be squaring off.

The bid for Howard County judge has the potential to be somewhat volatile. On the Republican ticket are incumbent Ben Lockhart and accountant Mark Morgan. Facing off on the Democratic Ticket are Mark Barr, Woody Jumper and Ron L. "Smurf" Sawyers.

Three other local races in the Republican Primary are the one for county commissioner of Precinct 2 with incumbent Jerry Kilgore being challenged by Kathy Lusk; peace justice Precinct 1, Place 2 with incumbent Kathryn Wiseman facing a bid from Laura Jeanne Wilson and Robert "Bob" Smith; and the commissioner of Precinct 4 seat with incumbent Roy D. Beauchamp being contested by Walter H. Brumley Jr.

The U.S. House District 19 election won't get heated up — if at all — until the run toward November as neither incumbent Republican Randy Neugebauer nor Democrat challenger Robert Ricketts have opponents in the primary.

What we hope is that candidates will run on their merits with central issues such as the budget, proposed jail facility and the like taking center stage. That's almost always the case here in Howard County. Rarely do we see personal attacks, and we hope it stays that way.

That said, good luck to the candidates. Let the campaigning begin!

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@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.  
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• 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

Libs take credit for Bush poll climb

It is amusing to watch liberals try to explain away the recent upswing in President Bush's approval rating, from around 39 percent to 47 percent. Sure enough, they've figured a way to attribute the turnaround to a validation of their positions rather than his policies.

They are promoting the idea that President Bush's popularity increase is due to his admission of "mistakes" on Iraq. But this is merely wishful thinking.

Ever since President Bush attacked Iraq, Democrats have been castigating him for doing it and for how he's handled the operation every step of the way. After all, their best political hope is either that we fail in Iraq or, if we succeed, that they can somehow taint the effort from its inception by showing he lied to get us into an unnecessary and costly war.

Their persistence finally paid off as the public — treated to almost exclusively negative reporting from the mainstream media (MSM) along with the Democrats' ceaseless naysaying — grew nervous about the war and lost some confidence in President Bush.

Alas, the worm is turning. Despite all their propaganda to the contrary, the burgeoning Iraqi constitutional republic in the heart of the Arab Middle East — as a direct result of the president's policies — is a profoundly positive development.

And to the Democrats' and MSM's everlasting frustration, President Bush has stubbornly refused to admit he lied about WMD for the simple reason that he didn't. So what are these poor liberals to do when things are

starting to go north for Iraq and President Bush and south for them?

Well, one option would be to admit they were wrong. They're particularly fond of demanding the president admit his mistakes. So why don't they just concede he wasn't lying about WMD and that his vision for Iraq appears to be paying off?

The answer is that it would render them even more irrelevant and further diminish their political prospects. A better solution would be to pretend the president's turnaround vindicates their policies rather than his.

How can they pull that off? Simple: Just portray his recent speeches as *mea culpas* on Iraq and appropriate his renewed popularity for themselves. It's sort of a clever conversion of the adage "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" to "If you can't beat him, pretend he joined you."

As Exhibit A for the liberal prosecution, I cite the recent "Meet the Press" episode during which Tom Brokaw opined that "one of the reasons the president's doing better in the national polls" now is that he's admitting his "mistakes" about Iraq.

As Exhibit B, see the Dec. 29 Washington Post story reporting that President Bush's upsurge is due to a two-pronged strategy of "lash(ing) out at war opponents in Congress" and his adoption of a "humbler assessment of events on the ground in Iraq that included admissions about how some of his expectations had been frustrated."

As Exhibits C through ZZZ, I refer you to numerous TV and radio programs in which liberals have echoed the theme that Bush is now admitting his mistakes concerning Iraq.

Nonsense. The president has never claimed personal inerrancy. He has just refused to admit he lied about WMD or that he was

wrong to have gone into Iraq, even knowing what we now think we know about their WMD.

As Exhibit 1 for the president's defense, I offer the president's Dec. 19 press conference where he was gratefully asked, on the heels of the historic Iraqi election, to name his biggest mistake.

He pointed out that he refused to take the bait the last time the question was asked because he believed the MSM were trying to get him to admit it was a mistake to go into Iraq. President Bush said, "And it wasn't a mistake to go into Iraq. It was the right decision to make."

He then went on to discuss other decisions involving Iraq, some of which might have been mistakes and some of which probably weren't.

It's rather pathetic for Democrats and the MSM to argue that the president's rising poll numbers can be traced to his acknowledgment of errors. It's not as if the public has been sitting around stewing about his alleged stubbornness. If a disinclination toward repentance caused a president's popularity to decrease, then President Clinton would have been the least popular president in history.

No, President Bush's popularity is returning because his Iraq policies are bearing fruit and he is fighting back in a systematic and sustained way against his partisan accusers. The public is finally hearing him defend himself with well-earned righteous indignation. It's a beautiful thing.

To find out more about David Limbaugh, please visit his Web site at www.davidlimbaugh.com. And to read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2005 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.



DAVID LIMBAUGH

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Time for minimum wage increase

2006 makes the ninth year in a row the federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$5.15 an hour. It's bad economics, it's bad policy, it's stupid, it's unfair, and it's high damn time to do something about it. It is also, as Sen. Edward Kennedy says, a moral issue.

The Democrats have a new strategy that may finally get the Republicans off the pot. They're working to get a minimum wage increase on state ballots, including Ohio, Michigan, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Arkansas and Montana. The theory is that putting a minimum-wage increase on the ballot does for Democrats what putting on an anti-gay marriage proposition does for Republicans — it gets out the base.

Of the seven states with the best chance to have minimum wage ballot initiatives, five were decided by less than 10 percentage points in the most recent presidential election. In theory, this should scare the happy pappy out of the Republicans, who will then vote to increase the minimum wage the first chance they get in Congress, thus assuring an increase either way. Clever, eh?

The last minimum wage increase dates to September 1997, and inflation has since eroded the wage's buying power to its second-lowest level since 1955, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Republican opposition to an increase is based entirely on ideological grounds. Many Republicans keep saying increasing the minimum wage will hurt small business, for which there is no evidence, and cause people making the minimum wage to be laid off. But again, there is no evidence. Time after time, round

after round, these same arguments, which are demonstrably false, keep getting repeated. It is really quite painful, since the economic effects of a minimum wage increase have been documented so often.



MOLLY IVINS

If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968, when it was \$1.60 an hour, it would be \$7.60 an hour today, according to the AFL-CIO. A year-round, full-time worker would have to make \$7.74 an hour just to be at the poverty level for a family of three — \$2.59 above the current minimum wage. The gap between middle-class workers and those making the minimum wage is the largest on record.

Of course, we all enjoy reading about the record Christmas bonuses various CEOs, top executives and board members have voted themselves lately. The business pages are just a jolly recap — no one ever gets coals and switches when they set their own salary. Here's to starting 2006 off with this simple bit of fairness.

Well, nothing like getting to the end of the year to give us occasion to pause in wonder that we have once again survived even in the face of fresh heights of human stupidity. From the day Sen. Bill Frist, M.D., successfully diagnosed Terri Schiavo by watching her on videotape ("She certainly seems to respond to visual stimuli," he said. Her autopsy later revealed she was blind) to the happy day Veeper Cheney told us the Iraqi insurgency was in its last throes, it's been just one delightful episode after another. Truly, I do

not understand how people can become discouraged about our national life, when players like Jack Abramoff, Tom DeLay and Ralph Reed face just deserts.

For a new standard in graciousness, who can forget Barbara Bush speaking of refugees from Hurricane Katrina stashed in the Astrodome: "What I'm hearing, which is sort of scary, is they all want to stay in Texas. Everyone is so overwhelmed by the hospitality. And so many people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them."

Sure, Katrina was awful, but it brought Michael heckuva-job-Brownie Brown to our attention, so we got to read his inspiring e-mails — such as, "I am a fashion god."

For those who have been wondering where all the heroes are, let me recommend Russ Feingold, John Murtha and Cindy Sheehan. Isn't it amazing how often all you have to do to be a hero to is to stand up and tell the truth?

With those few, shining exceptions, we can bid adieu to 2005 without great regret. Or, as Texas Gov. Rick Perry said to a reporter earlier this year, "Adios, mo-fo."

Apology: I bit on a bad story in my Dec. 20 column. The tale of the UMass-Dartmouth student who was visited by the feds for checking out Mao's "Little Red Book" has turned out to be a hoax. So sorry.

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

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## Bird Poop



A pelican similar to the one found on I-20 West. Courtesy photo

Unable to conceal her excitement, the teacher's aide greeted my return from lunch with "There's a pelican in your bathroom!"

Numerous songbirds and birds of prey had previously been brought to my office during the noon hour. Some of the birds demanded immediate attention; others were dropped off as a matter of convenience. All could stay in boxes in the bathroom until the end of the school day.

If it had been the fall of the year, I would not have been so amazed. However, it was the third of May. Most of the pelicans migrating through the Big Spring area were seen on area lakes in October or November.

Even stranger was the fact that the pelican had been noticed while walking in front of the abandoned Stucky's on IS 20 west of town. The closest body of water in that area was Four Mile Lake, which parallels the interstate and railroad tracks.

Numerous pelicans rest and feast on the aquatic life in the lake during their fall migration. The pelican's companions had left the lake and continued their journey to the south.

For some reason, perhaps this bird stayed in the area, found enough food and broke its wing as it decided to seek food elsewhere. Another possibility was that it was injured during the spring migration. A passing motorist caught the pelican and delivered it to the school.

One of the largest water birds with a wingspan of up to 9 feet, a pelican can easily eat 5 pounds of fish a day. With that in mind, my husband and I transported the bird to Midge Erskine, who had a licensed wildlife center in Midland.

The wing could be set, but the bird would never be able to endure the rigorous flying required during migration. After a lengthy rehab, arrangements were made with the Fort Worth Zoo to accept the pelican.

Leaving early one morning, we drove to Midland to get the bird for its journey to the zoo. Only after staying in quarantine would the pelican be placed with two other non-releasable pelicans that had broken wings: one had been found in Grapevine Lake, the other was walking in the middle of the street in downtown Fort Worth.

Before we loaded the bird into a carrier, we noticed it had just swallowed a trout for its morning appetizer. This was to become a real test of our SUV's flow through ventilation system. The pelican seemed to enjoy the trip, but about Abilene, a distinct aroma filled the vehicle.

It seemed with every mile it became more pungent. Partially digested fish may be fine for young pelicans feeding from their mothers' pouches. For us, however, it was a test of our endurance in trying to help wildlife. The zoo was a welcome sight and their veterinarian immediately took the pelican to the quarantine area.

As we drove back to Big Spring, we felt so privileged to have handled a pelican. Just to hold a wiggling, 25-pound bird with enormous flapping wings and thrashing feet had been a challenge.

Little did we know that the following year, in November, another pelican would be found at the same location.

*Bebe McCasland is federally and state licensed to rehabilitate wild birds.*

## Support groups

### TUESDAY

• The Multiple Sclerosis Support Group meets at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the College Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 1005 Birdwell Lane. Call Tracey at 263-4948 for more information.

### THURSDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Non-smoking closed discussion meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

### FRIDAY

• AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

### SATURDAY

• Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 615 Settles 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m.

### SUNDAY

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

### MONDAY

• Encourager's Support Group meets the first and third Monday each month. For more information, call 398-5522.

I swore I wouldn't do it again last year, and I meant it. However, despite my best efforts, here I am once again, on the precipice of making New Years resolutions.

Of course, the real question isn't whether or not I'll take on a number of lost causes in the hopes of making 2006 better than 2005, but which ones will I focus on for the next 365 days. OK, so my track record dictates at least the next 30 days, but who's counting, right?

Much like a constitutional amendment election — and garnering about as much attention — I'm setting up my mental ballots to weed out the really dumb resolutions from the innocuous, maybe even worthwhile resolutions.

Here's a look at my resolutions ballot as it stands now:

I should try to get in better physical shape. Yeah, this one seems to carry over from year to year, and I think it's safe to say I've yet to fulfill it. Of course, I have found some consolation in it.

One of my friends is a health nut. He drinks the energy and meal replacement shakes and spends approximately a third of his life sweating in a gym, pumpin' iron in what us non-athletes consider total overkill.

He has this same resolution on his list, so I'm pretty sure this one's futile.

On the other hand, I know a guy who had a heart attack not too long ago — while he was channel surfing. So maybe this one's not such a bad idea. I'd hate to buy the farm in the middle of watching Family Guy.

I should stop watching the Chappelle Show so much. OK, so



THOMAS JENKINS

maybe I can watch it all I want, but I definitely need to stop quoting it so often.

Don't get me wrong, it's one of the funniest shows on TV. However, the last time I yelled out "is this the five o'clock free crack giveaway?!" people kind of looked at me funny. I guess not everyone knows who Tyrone Biggums is.

I should try to be more considerate of other people's feelings. Especially my Republican friends, who's allegiance to President Dubya is frightening at best.

Of course, you could look at this resolution from the other side of the spectrum, because it would

ly comes down to my being physically repulsed by smoking and dipping snuff. You can thank my cousin for that one. He yelled "catch!" across a parking lot one day and the item that landed in my hands was his used, soggy, spit-laden snuff. I still can't stand him.

I should respond to my snail-mail as quickly as I respond to my e-mail. This one's here as nothing more than filler, 'cause I can already tell you it's never going to happen. Maybe I should put getting everyone I deal with proficient with e-mail on my list.

I should stop checking my fantasy football scores every five minutes. Of course, our league's

season ended this week, leaving me near the bottom of the heap and already jonesin' for the 2006 season. For those who don't already know, fantasy football is extremely addictive and populated by over-militant football junkies who not only have last year's stats memorized, they have them tattooed to the back of their heads. Who could ask for more, right?

I should be nicer to the poor, idiotic numbskulls that cut me off in traffic. I can just smile and wave, donning my best "sorry about that fella" apologetic look and drive on like nothing happened. I'd say that's a pretty drastic change from my normal horn-blowing reaction.

This resolution would last about 30 minutes.

Wish your favorite resolutions luck, people! It's 2006!

*Thomas Jenkins, a South Carolina transplant still fumbling through a case of Texas culture shock, is a Staff Writer for the Big Spring Herald by day and rock guitarist for local band Rustic Circle by night. Contact Jenkins at 263-7831 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com*

# Some not-so-new resolutions for 2006

most likely help me avoid a Texas-sized butt-whoopin' from the right side. Resolution or self preservation? I'm not quite sure yet.

I should try to respect classic rock again. Yeah, this one's a definite long shot. Anyone who knows me knows full well how sick I am of classic rock, especially when it comes to its apparent monopolization of the rock-oriented radio stations in the Lone Star State.

However, it's important not to forget where we come from, whether it's our heritage or our music. Do Alice In Chains or Nirvana qualify as classic rock yet? That would definitely help me out on this one.

I should help the people I care about stop smoking or using tobacco products. Of course, there's quite a bit of confusion over exactly how to accomplish this resolution since my idea of helping someone beat withdrawals is chaining them to a wall for a couple of weeks. Of course, there is the whole "illegal restraint" thing to deal with later.

Again, here's a resolution that's disguised as an attempt to help my fellow man when it most like-

## Bulletin Board

### TODAY

- Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- The Big Spring Symphony Association's January board meeting is in the BSSA office, 808 Scurry, at 5:30 p.m.
- League of Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 6 p.m. in the board room of the YMCA. For more information, contact Jennifer Patton at 714-4185 or 263-6351 or 816-6962.
- Texas Motorcycle Rights Association meets at 7 p.m. in the Spanish Inn. The public is invited. Call 268-6421 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.
- Gospel Singing in the Kentwood Activity Center at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.
- Concerned Citizens for Big Spring meets at 7 p.m. in the meeting room of the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.
- Order of the Eastern Star No. 67 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 221 Main.

### WEDNESDAY

- Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.
- Senior Circle meets at 10:30 a.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.
- Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

- Line dancing begins at 1 p.m. at the Spring City Senior Citizen's Center in the Industrial Park. Call 267-6966 or 267-1628.
- Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge at 703 W. Third.

### THURSDAY

- Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.
- Coffee Club meets at 10 a.m. in Gale's Sweet Shoppe.
- Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.
- Genealogy Society of Big Spring meets at 7 p.m. in the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.
- Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

### FRIDAY

- Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.

### Family Medical Center Spotlight

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# Firefighters still battling blazes across Texas

By SHEILA FLYNN

Associated Press Writer

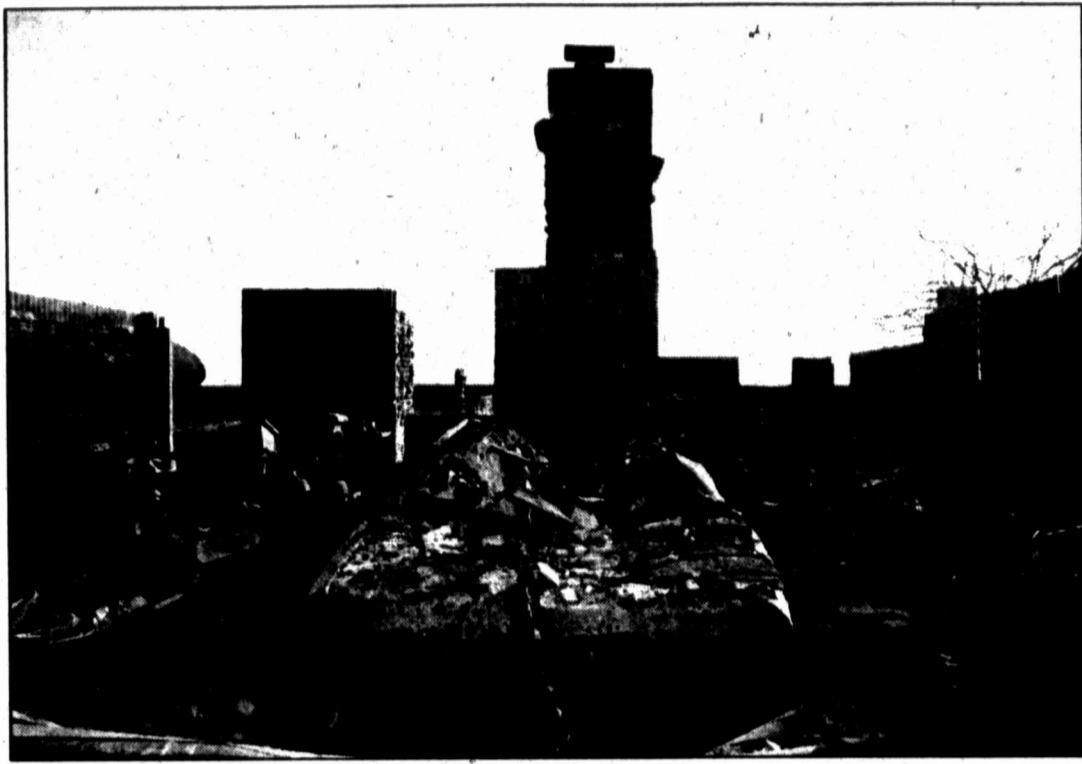
RINGGOLD — Carol Ezzell shook her head in disbelief Monday as she stood between the burned-out shell of her mother-in-law's home and the charred remains of a landmark grocery store her husband's family started in the '50s.

A New Year's Day grass fire, one of dozens in drought-stricken parts of Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, destroyed most of this ranch and cattle town of about 100 residents near the Oklahoma border, burning about 50 homes and 40,000 acres as the wind swept the fire 13 miles from Ringgold to Nocona.

"It didn't take 30 minutes," said Ezzell of the blaze, which destroyed all but seven buildings on the town's Main Street, including the post office, as well as livestock and hay fields.

As the wall of fire moved through town, the wind caused what Ezzell described as little fire tornadoes. "It was just turning, and every time it would make a loop it would just leap" and begin burning somewhere new.

Gov. Rick Perry traveled to Nocona and Ringgold Monday to survey the damaged area, near Wichita Falls, where 3,200 residents were evacuated Sunday ahead of the fires.



Charred remains of a car are all that remain at this home in Ringgold Monday. A fire swept through the town on New Year's Day and devastated about 80 percent of the town.

uated Sunday ahead of the fires.

Since the rash of wildfires began in December, fires have consumed more than 215,000 acres, destroyed more than 250 homes and left three people dead, according to figures from the Forest Service.

"Yesterday was a tough day in Texas. We had over 50,000 acres of land burned. That was an extraordinary day in the history of this state," Perry said.

"There has been no loss of life here," he told a

handful of Nocona residents, but "a number of businesses and people who have lost everything that they have."

Perry declared Texas a disaster area last week because of the fires and drought, and he said the declaration will help people to receive federal aid to rebuild. He said without federal Homeland Security money, which helped buy some equipment now being used to fight the wildfires, the damage may have been much worse.

If fires had occurred two

years ago "it would have been a substantially different story," Perry said.

No deaths were reported as a result of the nearly 60 fires that began burning Sunday, which prompted evacuations and road closures in North and West Texas. Weary firefighters — including crews from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee and Wisconsin — continued to work Monday to contain several of those fires.

State authorities dispatched more helicopters and airplanes to battle a 35,000-acre blaze near the small towns of Carbon, Gorman and Desdemona, Texas Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver said. By Monday afternoon, firefighters had beaten back the blaze to just a few hundred of acres of mostly open ranch land, said Mark Pipkin of the Eastland

## Fighting the flames

A look at the major grass fires in Texas, according to the Texas Forest Service:

— A 35,000-acre fire in Eastland County, about 125 miles west of Dallas, was still burning Monday afternoon. The fire destroyed 35 structures and a church, forced evacuation of the towns Carbon, Gorman and Desdemona and essentially destroyed the tiny community of Kokomo, which lost at least eight homes. Firefighters were using two Chinooks and seven Blackhawk helicopters to dump water on the blaze, which had beaten back to just a few hundred acres of mostly open ranch land. Two firefighters suffered minor injuries.

— A 40,000-acre fire was burning near Ringgold and Nocona. Three firefighters and two civilians were injured. Thirty-two homes were destroyed and eight were saved. Four helicopters were handling the blaze.

— Crews contained a fire that burned 1,800 acres northeast of Mineral Wells. Fifteen homes, 14 outbuildings and 12 vehicles were destroyed. One horse and one cow were killed. Two firefighters were injured. One suffered second-degree burns and another smoke inhalation.

— A 40,000-acre fire in Sterling County northwest of San Angelo was still burning. No structural damage was reported. Two minor injuries were reported.

— A 6,700-acre fire in Donley County threatened about 70 homes. Planes were sent to determine the extent of the damage.

— Total across Texas: More than 100,000 acres and more than 50 homes have been burned since Sunday.

Source: The Associated Press

Fire Department.

Eastland City Manager Don Wilson said officials will investigate the cause of the fire that he said started near a hunter's tree stand near Rising Star.

A 40,000-acre fire in Sterling County near San Angelo and a 6,700-acre fire threatening 70 homes in the Panhandle county of Donley also continued to burn, Forest Service spokesman Tom Valluzzi said.

More than 520 firefighters are on the ground helping the thousands of local and volunteer fire-

fighters, Perry said. Texas has 97 aircraft fighting the blazes, along with the 88 bulldozer crews and 32 fire engines fighting the fires from the ground, he said.

In Kokomo, a tiny rural community between Abilene and Fort Worth, the church and community center were a heap of smoldering bricks and twisted metal.

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Diana De Luca bails water from her canoe before ferrying residents back across the flooded Neeley Road to their homes in the Guerneville Park development in Guerneville, Calif., Monday.

## Flooding soaks California towns

(KRT) — California's first big rainstorm of the new year departed the region Monday, soaking the southern San Francisco Bay area, washing out a section of Highway 9 in the Santa Cruz Mountains and making life miserable for thousands still left without power for a second day.

And with another winter storm expected to hit the Bay area today or Wednesday, northern Bay residents hurried to clean up from the massive weekend flooding that soaked downtowns in wine country from Napa to San Anselmo.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in seven north Bay counties as the rain-swollen Napa and Russian rivers slowly subsided Monday. Late in the day, he stopped in Napa to inspect the damage from what a city spokesman called a "historic flood" that damaged more than 1,500 homes and businesses.

But to the south, there was only scattered damage in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties, even though Monday's storm dropped 1-1/2 inches of rain on the Peninsula and San Jose, and more than

three inches in the mountain town of Ben Lomond.

Meanwhile, about 20,000 utility customers in the two counties remained without power, and some frustrated residents said they had gone without heat or phone service for days.

"I haven't had a phone in three days," said Emily Cress of Boulder Creek, adding that the timing was awful because her sister died three days ago and it's been hard to communicate with family members.

Utility officials said

they hoped to restore service to most customers by Tuesday.

Caltrans officials said a section of Highway 9 south of Felton will be closed indefinitely because the roadway collapsed in the rain. The road normally carries about 6,500 cars a day between Santa Cruz and Felton.

And in the low-lying Alviso section of San Jose, residents reported several buildings flooded when a system of municipal pumps and storm drains failed to operate.

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### Coahoma finishes fourth at Big Lake tourney

By STEVE REAGAN

**Staff Writer**  
COAHOMA — Now that they've shook off the rust from the Christmas break, the Coahoma Bulldogs look to further fine-tune things before heading into district basketball competition.

The Bulldogs tuned up for the second half of the basketball season by placing fourth in last weekend's Reagan County basketball tournament in Big Lake.

Coahoma opened tournament play with a convincing 43-26 victory over Irion County.

All-tournament pick Kamrun Green led the way with 12 points, while Curt Lang and Patrick Croft added 7 points each.

The Bulldogs found the going rougher in the second round, but held off a late rally to take a 49-47 victory over Christoval. Green again led the scoring with 12 points, while Jason Gonzales had 11 points and Colter Morgan



added 10 points.

In the semifinals, a scoreless first quarter proved too much for the 'Dogs to overcome as they dropped a 48-23 decision to Ballinger.

Croft led Coahoma with

10 points in that contest.

In contrast to the semis, the third-place game against Fort Stockton was a back-and-forth affair, with the Bulldogs coming out on the short end of a 42-40 score. Green again led Coahoma, this time with 9 points.

"We were trying to get our legs back after Christmas," head coach Kim Nichols said. "I thought the kids played well. We had every chance in the world to win the third place game,

but it didn't work out ... But I was pleased with our effort."

The 'Dogs (7-10) return to action tonight when they host Midland Christian in the elementary gym.

Game times are 5 p.m. for the freshmen, 6:30 p.m. for the junior varsity and 8 p.m. for the varsity.

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

### IN BRIEF

#### Football banquet

The Big Spring ISD football banquet will take place Jan. 12 in the high school cafeteria.

The public is invited to attend and tickets may be purchased in advance from Kay Cook at the ATC by calling 264-3662 or from Gene or Lana Piercefield at 816-1134. The cost is \$10.

#### Capers officially

##### gone in Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — Dom Capers was fired as coach of the Houston Texans, one day after the team finished with the league's worst record.

The Texans, who hired former NFL coach Dan Reeves as a consultant last month, will keep general manager Charley Casserly.

Houston's season ended Sunday with a 20-17 overtime loss in San Francisco that left the Texans with a 2-14 record — the worst in the team's four-season history.

#### Packers fire coach

##### Mike Sherman

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — The Green Bay Packers fired coach Mike Sherman, a day after finishing their worst season in 15 years.

The Packers beat the Seattle Seahawks Sunday, but still finished with a 4-12 record.

Sherman was just 2-4 in the playoffs despite winning three consecutive division titles for only the fourth time in team history.

Sherman, who signed a two-year contract extension in August, said throughout the year he wasn't concerned about his position and didn't feel he was coaching for his job.

#### Martz out as coach

##### of St. Louis Rams

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Mike Martz was fired as coach of the St. Louis Rams after a 6-10 season in which he missed the final 11 games because of a heart ailment.

The Rams started the season 2-3 before Martz was sidelined with an infection of the heart lining. Assistant Joe Vitt replaced him for the rest of the season, which ended Sunday with a 20-10 win over Dallas that left the team at 6-10.

#### Haslett done after

##### season of turmoil

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Saints fired coach Jim Haslett, the day after ending a 3-13 season overshadowed by the hurricane that devastated New Orleans and forced the team to abandon the city.

Haslett, the 2000 NFL Coach of the Year in his first season, was leading the Saints to the only playoff victory in franchise history. He was 45-30-1 in three seasons with the Saints and had a 10-1 record with the team in 2004.

### West Virginia tames Bulldogs in Atlanta

• Mountaineers prove they belonged in BCS game after big victory

By PAUL NEWBERRY

**AP Sports Writer**  
ATLANTA — West Virginia proved to be a worthy member of the Bowl Championship Series.

The way those two freshmen played in the transplanted Sugar Bowl, the Mountaineers may want to aim higher next season.

Steve Slaton rushed for a record 204 yards, Pat White ran the offense to perfection and No. 11 West Virginia held on for a 38-35 upset of eighth-ranked Georgia in the first Sugar Bowl played outside of New Orleans.

The Mountaineers (11-1) came in as the representative of the beleaguered Big East, which has been derided as an unworthy member of the Bowl Championship Series since powerhouses Miami and Virginia Tech bolted for the Atlantic Coast Conference.

But West Virginia's performance against Georgia — champion of the powerful Southeastern Conference and playing just 75 miles from its campus — proved the Mountaineers are one of the country's top teams.

That doesn't figure to change next season now that Slaton, a true freshman, and White, a red-shirt freshman, have a full year under their belts.

"We just have to take it step by step," Slaton said. "I think we can compete next year for the national championship, but I don't want to say too much now."

West Virginia jumped to a 28-0 lead on the Bulldogs (10-3) by the opening minute of the second quarter. The de facto home team made a game of it, but Slaton and White — with help from a fake punt in the closing minutes — made sure Georgia didn't come all

the way back.

"We played a great football team," Bulldogs coach Mark Richt said. "They executed beautifully. If I was not coaching against them, I really would have enjoyed watching it."

Slaton wasn't even the Mountaineers' best freshman runner in fall camp and didn't crack the starting lineup until the sixth game. Georgia certainly had no answer for the speedy back, who squirted through big holes and left defenders such as All-American safety Greg Blue in the dust on a pair of 52-yard touchdown runs.

Slaton scored three TDs in all and eclipsed the previous Sugar Bowl rushing record, a 202-yard performance by Pitt's Tony Dorsett in a national championship-clinching victory over Georgia in 1977.

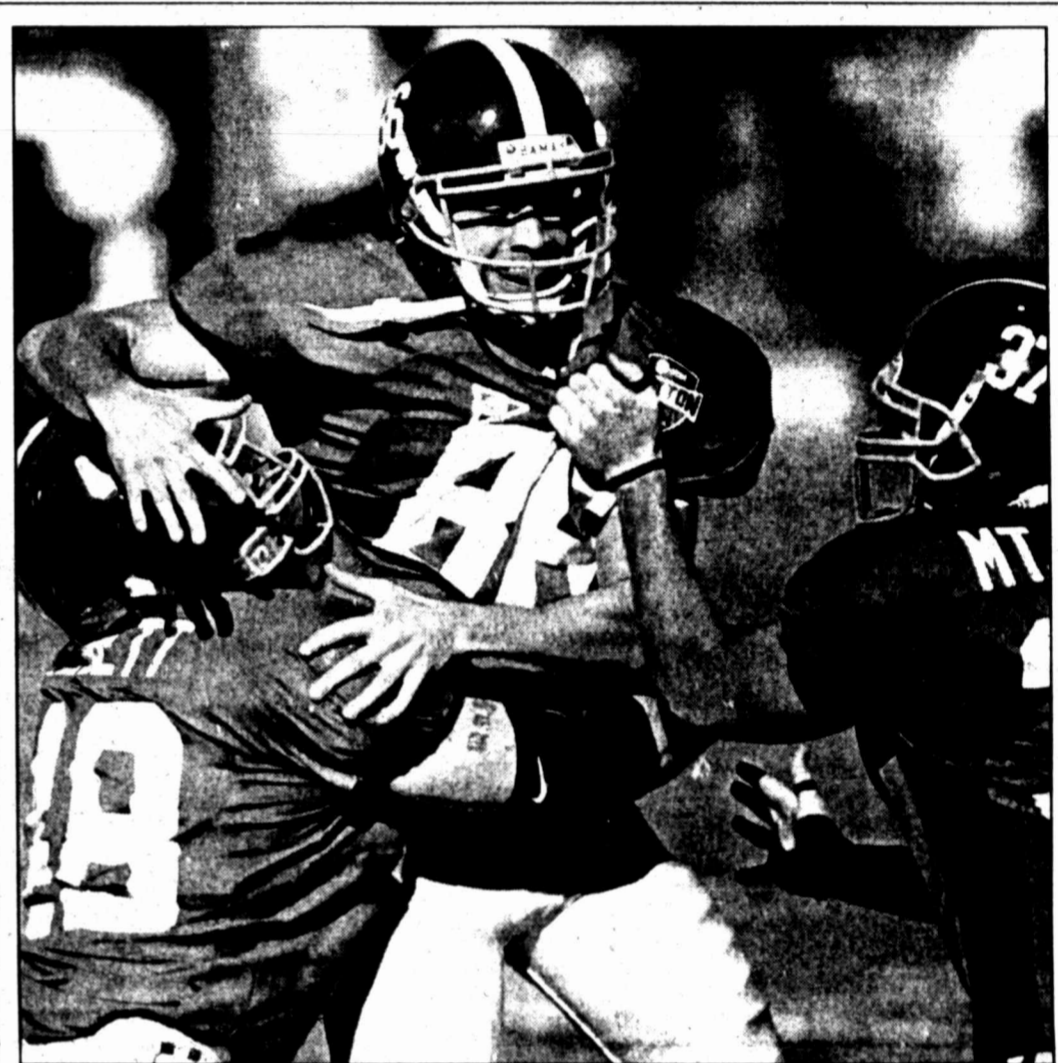
"It was just our speed," Slaton said. "They couldn't match up with us."

The Mountaineers rushed for 382 yards against a team that was allowing just 124 per game. White had 77 yards on the ground (along with completing 11-of-14 passes for another 120 yards). Fullback Owen Schmitt, a transfer from Division III Wisconsin-River Falls, had a 54-yard run that set up a field goal.

"I think we took to heart some of the criticism of our league and the fact that no one was predicting us to win," West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez said. "Basically, we were playing in their home environment, their home state."

The Mountaineers saved their biggest surprise for the end. Georgia was poised to get the ball back when West Virginia dropped back to punt on fourth-and-6 at the Bulldogs 48. Phil Brady hauled in the long snap but took off running, gaining 10 yards on the fake and a first down that

See SUGAR, Page 2B



KRT photo/Ron Jenkins, Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
Alabama kicker Jamie Christensen, center, celebrates with teammates Kyle Bennett, left, and Matt Miller, after his game winning kick against Texas Tech in the AT&T Cotton Bowl in Dallas Monday. Alabama won 13-10.

### Bama defense shuts down Tech, Tide grab win on FG

By PAUL J. WEBER

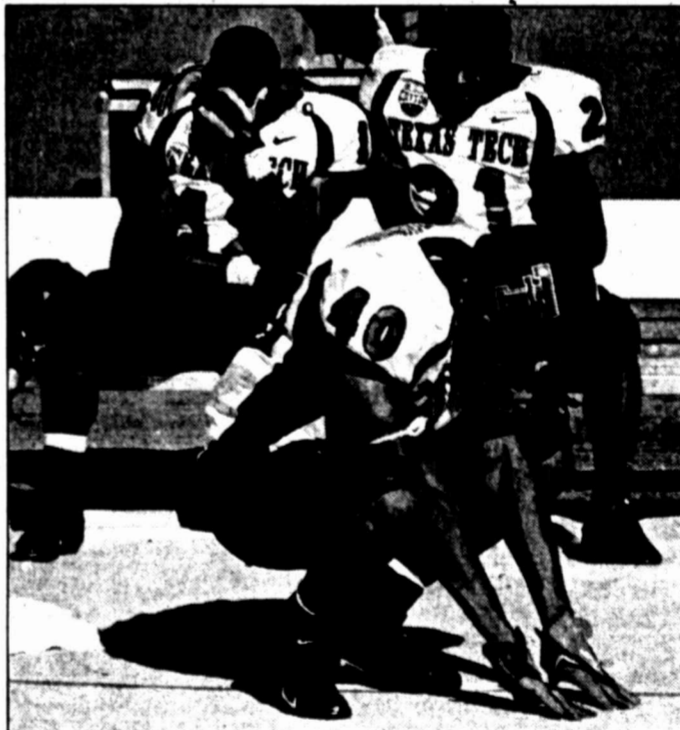
**Associated Press Writer**  
DALLAS — Jamie Christensen predicted he'd kick the winning field goal for Alabama.

He just never said anything about how it would look.

Christensen's low and wobbly kick from 45 yards out somehow twirled far enough to sneak inside the goalpost as time expired, giving No. 13 Alabama a 13-10 victory over No. 18 Texas Tech in the Cotton Bowl Monday.

Ugly as it was getting there, the end was uplifting — just like the journey for Alabama's seniors, who endured three coaching changes, NCAA probation and

See TECH, Page 2B



KRT photo/Sharon M. Steinman, Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
Texas Tech's Clifton Eddington (40) kneels in front of the bench as teammates Taurean Henderson, left, and Shannon Woods sit dejected on the bench after Alabama kicked a field goal to win the game, 13-10, during the AT&T Cotton Bowl in Dallas Monday.

### Smith, Ginn Jr. lead Buckeyes to fourth consecutive bowl victory

• Irish defense gave up 617 yards in loss to No. 4 Ohio State

By BOB BAUM

**AP Sports Writer**  
TEMPE, Ariz. — Big-play offense and brutal defense. Fourth-ranked Ohio State had it all in the Fiesta Bowl.

The Buckeyes overwhelmed No. 5 Notre Dame 34-20 on Monday night with scoring plays

of 56, 68, 85 and 60 yards. So much for the plodding but powerful Buckeyes of the past.

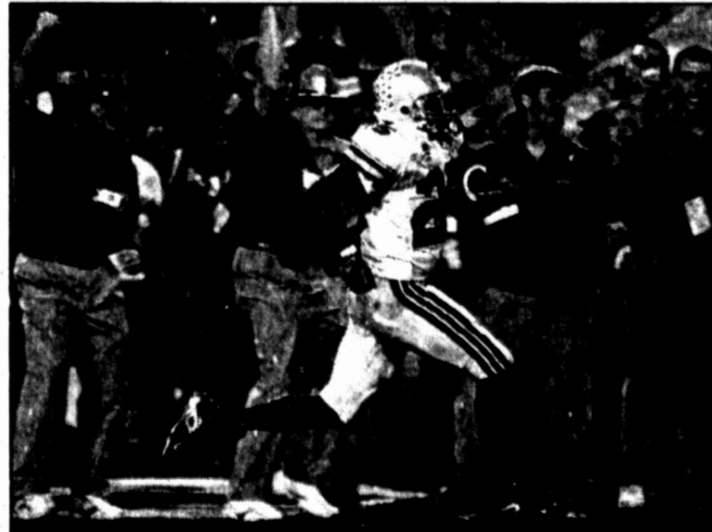
"I had a lot of fun," said Ted Ginn, who scored on a 56-yard pass from Troy Smith and a 68-yard end around. "I try to go out and play hard and play fast and do everything right."

Irish coach Charlie Weis, architect of a Notre Dame turnaround in just one season, didn't have

the defensive speed to slow down the Buckeyes. Ohio State coach Jim Tressel praised offensive coordinator Jim Bollman.

"Coach Bollman and his staff worked long and hard for a month, watching where we thought we could make some big things happen," Tressel said. "I thought they had a tremendous plan, and our guys executed it so

See FIESTA, Page 2B



KRT photo/Bob DeMay, Akron Beacon Journal  
Ohio State's running back Antonio Pittman races 60 yards for a score late in the fourth quarter against Notre Dame. Ohio State defeated Notre Dame 34-20 at the Fiesta Bowl at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz., Monday.

TECH

Continued from Page 1B

the Mike Price scandal before leading the Crimson Tide (10-2) to their 28th season of double-digit wins.

"When you go through some tough times together, you find out a lot about each other," said Alabama coach Mike Shula, whose team ended the regular season with two losses. "There's a lot of different ways you can go, and this team pulled together. And this was the result of it: 10 wins."

It was the most dramatic finish in the 70-year history of the Cotton Bowl since Joe Montana's game-tying touchdown pass as time expired in 1979, when the extra point put Notre Dame past Houston 35-34.

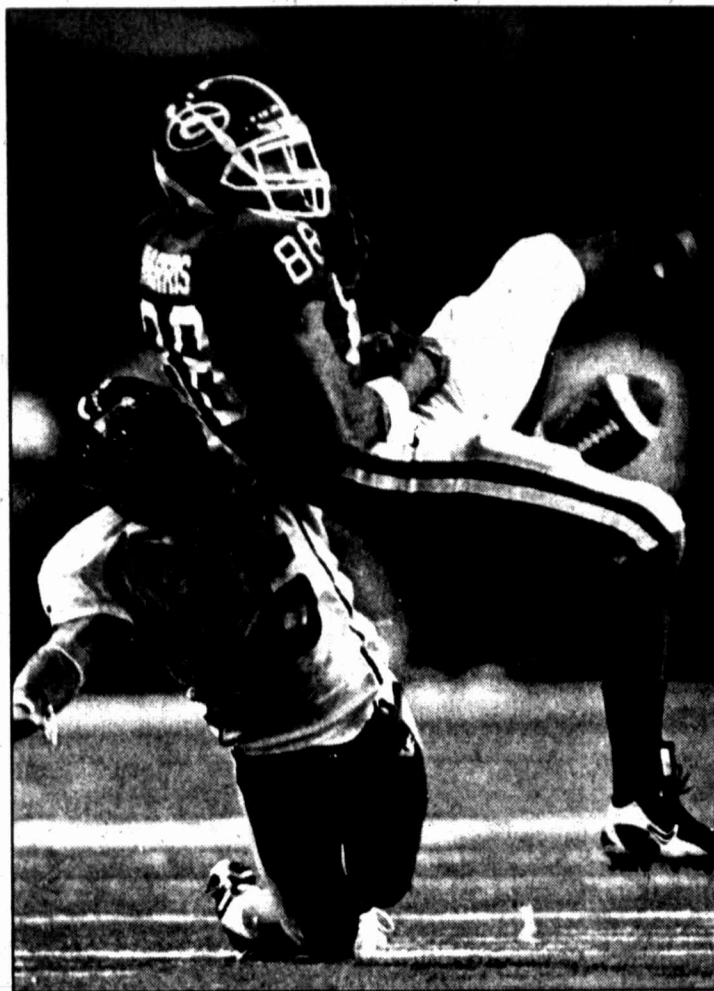
Christensen, a sophomore who'd won consecutive games in October in the closing seconds, said he didn't doubt the kick's accuracy despite its peculiar trajectory. Confident his approach was flawless, Christensen only wondered about distance and whether he could tell freshman kicker Andrew Friedman he was right all along.

With Alabama leading 10-3 in the second half, Christensen laid out for Friedman how the game would end.

"I told him if they score a touchdown, I'm going to kick the game-winning field goal," said Christensen, who earlier missed a 39-yarder and had a 38-yard attempt blocked. "He said they weren't going to score a touchdown. I said, 'We'll see.'"

He was right. Texas Tech (9-3), flustered by Alabama's constant pressure and resilient man-to-man coverage, finally got the ball into the end zone with 2:56 remaining on Jarrett Hicks' 12-yard touchdown pass from Cody Hodges.

The drive came after Hodges sat out the previous series because of a sore right knee.



KRT photo/Nick Oza, Macon Telegraph  
West Virginia's Anthony Mimms tackles Georgia's Kenneth Harris at the Nokia Sugar Bowl in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Ga., Monday. West Virginia defeated Georgia, 38-35.

SUGAR

Continued from Page 1B

essentially sealed the victory.

"We didn't think they would do that," Richt said. "Give them a lot of credit. It takes a lot of nerve to do that."

The last of Slaton's touchdowns gave the Mountaineers a seemingly comfortable 38-28 lead with 8 1/2 minutes to go. D.J. Shockley brought Georgia back with his third touchdown pass, a 43-yarder to Bryan McClendon with 5:13 left, but the Bulldogs never got the ball back.

The teams combined for 1,003 yards, much of it coming in a wild first half that ended with the Mountaineers holding a 31-21 lead.

"West Virginia did a heck of a job jumping on us," Richt said. "The only consolation is we didn't lay down and die."

The 72nd Sugar Bowl was shifted to Atlanta after Hurricane Katrina

slammed into New Orleans, flooding the Big Easy and leaving the Superdome in no shape to host a Pop Warner game, much less a major bowl.

While poignant, the Sugar was the least heralded of the BCS bowls, a distant fourth to the Fiesta matchup between Notre Dame and Ohio State, the Joe Paterno-vs.-Bobby Bowden showdown at the Orange and, of course, the national championship game between No. 1 Southern Cal and No. 2 Texas at the Rose Bowl.

But the Fiesta — a 34-20 romp for Ohio State — didn't come close on the excitement meter. And both the Orange and Rose will be hard-pressed to produce a game this thrilling.

Darius Reynaud also scored two touchdowns for the Mountaineers, who won for only the second time in their last 13 bowl appearances. They had lost their two previous trips to the Sugar Bowl.

Wiskey sends Alvarez out with big win

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Brian Calhoun rushed for 213 yards and Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez got a win in his final game as the Badgers defeated No. 7 Auburn, 24-10, in the Capital One Bowl.

Calhoun, a junior considering a leap to the NFL, carried 30 times and scored on a 33-yard run in the fourth quarter. John Stocco threw for 301 yards and two touchdowns for the Badgers (10-3).

The Tigers (9-3) were held scoreless in the first half for the first time this season and finished with only 236 yards.

It was a fitting farewell for Alvarez, who led Wisconsin to eight bowl wins in 16 seasons and now will focus on his duties as athletic director.

No. 12 Virginia Tech 35, No. 15 Louisville 24 (Gator Bowl)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Marcus Vick threw two touchdown passes and James Anderson returned an interception 39 yards for a score to lead Virginia Tech.

The Hokies (11-2) scored on three consecutive possessions in the second half, rallying from a 17-10 deficit to take a 28-24 lead.

No. 16 Florida 31, No. 25 Iowa 24 (Outback Bowl)

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Chris Leak threw two touchdowns — passes to Dallas Baker and Florida held on for the win against the Hawkeys.

Leak threw for 277 yards and Baker finished with 10 catches for 147 yards for the Gators (9-3), who led 24-7 at halftime. Vernell Brown returned an interception 60 yards for a touchdown.

Drew Tate threw for 346 yards and three touchdowns for Iowa (7-5).

FIESTA

Continued from Page 1B

well." So make it four straight bowl wins for the Buckeyes, three at the Fiesta.

Suspended from last year's Alamo Bowl for taking \$500 from a booster, Smith earned a measure of redemption with an offensive MVP performance, hooking up on a pair of long touchdown passes.

Santonio Holmes set a Fiesta Bowl record with an 85-yard TD catch for the Buckeyes (10-2), then said he was forgoing his senior season to enter the NFL draft.

Darius Walker scored all three touchdowns for Notre Dame (9-3). The Irish fell to 13-14 overall in bowls, a disappointing end for Weis in his first year as their coach.

Smith completed 19 of 28

passes for a career-high 342 yards and ran for another 66 in 13 attempts.

The junior from Cleveland capped his performance with a pair of third-and-long completions on the Buckeyes' final scoring drive. Antonio Pittman, who rushed for 136 yards on 21 carries, broke free on a 60-yard touchdown run to seal the victory with 1:46 to play.

Ginn caught eight passes for 167 yards. He zigzagged into the end zone on his long run to help the Buckeyes take to a 21-7 halftime. Holmes caught five passes for 124 yards.

Ohio State had a Fiesta Bowl-record 27 first downs. The Buckeyes' 617 yards were third-most in the bowl's 35-year history.

The intricate, efficient offense Weis brought with him from the New England Patriots sputtered early before the Irish mounted a come-

back that cut the lead to seven in the fourth quarter.

A.J. Hawk, Ohio State's Lombardi Award-winning linebacker and the game's defensive MVP, sacked his girlfriend's brother, Quinn, twice.

Hawk also ran down Quinn to stop a third-down play early in the fourth quarter.

Quinn, a third-team all-American behind Matt Leinat and Vince Young of Texas, was 29-of-45 for 286 yards but no touchdowns.

The teams met for only the fifth time in their storied histories, and for the first in a bowl game.

A crucial play came when a video replay nullified what would have been an Ohio State turnover in the third quarter.

With Notre Dame trailing 21-13 and the Buckeyes driving, Smith threw over the middle to Anthony Gonzalez, who

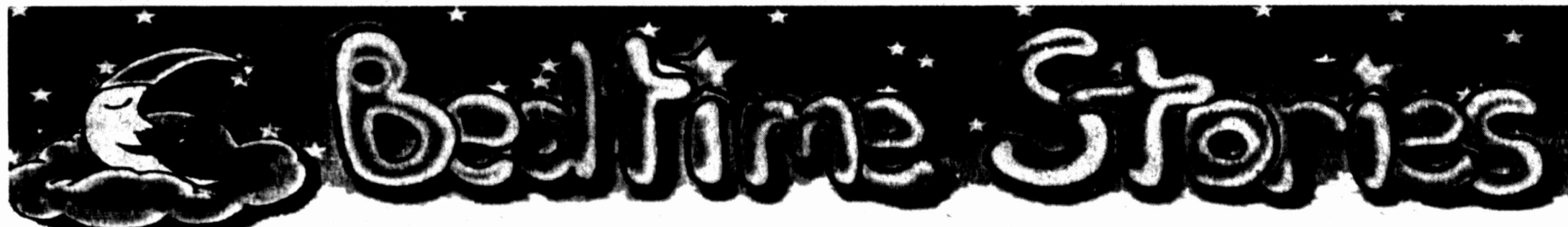
dropped the ball at the Irish 12. Tom Zbikowski picked it up for Notre Dame and ran 88 yards to the end zone. An illegal block would have brought it back to the Buckeyes 21, but a video review of the play determined Gonzalez juggled the ball and it was ruled an incompletion.

"That was THE play," Weis said. "What I said to the official on the field is I hope your guy upstairs was right because that changed the whole complexion of the game."

Josh Huston kicked a 40-yard field goal and Ohio State led 24-13 with 2:20 to go in the third quarter.

Huston's 26-yard field goal with 10:12 to play made it 27-13.

Notre Dame mounted its best drive, 80 yards in 13 plays, to cut the lead to 27-20. Walker's 3-yard run was ruled a touchdown after another video review with 5:27 left.



THE WESTON FLYER

When Weston was a very little boy of only one year old, all he wanted to do was race up and down the hallways of his home. He just loved to run, and run fast. He would try to run faster than his bigger sister, but he could never run faster than she could! For she was much bigger than Weston, and she would always be bigger because she was much older than he. That didn't matter to Weston, for he just always knew that he would run faster someday! But, the day never did come! Every time they raced, his sister always ran faster.



race his father. He wanted to run faster than his father, and beat him in a race. But, that day never came! One time, when Weston and his father were racing around the outside of their home, his father let him win, as all fathers do, sometimes. Weston knew that his father was not running as fast as he could go, and had really let him win. That was fun for Weston, but not as much fun as it would have been if he had really won the race. His father could always run faster, because he was much bigger than Weston!

When Weston was a little boy of seven years old, all he ever wanted to do was run faster than all his schoolmates and friends. Weston was much bigger now, but so were his friends! Race after race, Weston's friends and schoolmates always ran faster! Was Weston ever going to win a race? Do you think Weston will ever win a race? Remember, this is a bedtime story! And bedtime stories always have a happy ending, don't they? Or, do they?

When Weston was a bigger boy of eleven years old, all he ever wanted to do was win a race. Just any old race

would be fine! Just one race! He tried running faster than his sister again. She beat him! He tried running faster than his father again. His father beat him! He tried running faster than his friends and schoolmates again. They all beat him! Will Weston give up?

NEVER!

For Weston knows that he will never win that one race if he gives up and stops trying. Weston will never give up! Good for Weston!

When Weston was an even bigger boy of fifteen years old, all he wanted to do still, was go faster than somebody! Anybody! And that is when he got that beautiful bike for his birthday! It was a "Western Flyer" bike, too! What a bike it was! Weston loved that Western Flyer. He rode that bike everywhere! He rode it to school! He rode it to his friend's homes! He even rode to his favorite fishing hole!

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Here is where this story gets really good for Weston!

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He had noticed that if he changed the fenders on that bike, then, it would probably go even faster! He noticed that if he changed the handlebars on his bike, then he could pedal it even faster! He had noticed a lot of things he could do to



Finally the day came when Weston had finished changing his bike to make it go as fast as it could possibly go. He decided to try it, and see if he could go really fast! He did! It did! That Western Flyer was really flying now! Weston had never gone that fast before! And he loved it! He loved going fast! He

loved his Western Flyer even more now!

Weston's sister had a shiny bike. Weston's father had a shiny bike. All of Weston's friends and schoolmates had shiny bikes, too! Can you guess what's going to happen next? Will Weston ask all of them to race him? Of course he will!



They all met at the city park that day, with their shiny bikes. The park had lots of safe bike paths for this race. They all lined up at the very beginning of the bike path. Weston's mother, Amy, blew the starting whistle. Off they went! Weston started off really fast! Then, he went even faster! Then, he went as fast as that Western Flyer could ever go!

Pretty soon, Weston could no longer even hear the other bikes behind him. He had ran faster than all of the others. He could no longer even see the others! He still peddled the Western Flyer

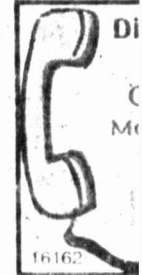
faster than he had ever done before. Weston always wanted to win just one race! And he was not going to slow down now! Not now! He could see the finish line! Closer and closer! All he could think of was he is going to win his first race, today!

When Weston crossed that finish line, all you could see was his great big smile! He had won a race, finally! What a race it had been, too! Later, as the other racers came across the finish line, they all gathered around Weston. They were so proud of him! Not because he had won this race, but because he never made excuses for not winning all the other races, nor did he cry and complain. He just kept trying! He would not give up! He won his race!

From that day on, every time Weston's family, or friends, or schoolmates, saw Weston riding that bike, they would wish they had one just like that "Western Flyer."

GOOD NIGHT!

Annou



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### Announcements

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### Garage Sales

**AVON CLEARANCE SALE!**  
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8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Credit cards and checks accepted!

### Help Wanted

**Assistant Manager/Collector** Security Finance is now taking applications. We offer benefits, competitive pay, and advancement opportunities. Apply in person at 501 E. 3rd.

**BUSY COLLISION** repair shop in need of estimator and/or bodyman. Must have experience and tools. Benefits available. Call (432)263-7306.

**CANTEEN CORRECTIONS** now hiring for 8 Positions. Starting pay is \$9.37. Training provided, 3 day work week. Must pass criminal and credit check. Pick up application at 2004 First Ave. Building #48 or Texas Work Force. Call (432)263-2366.

**DOWN HOLE Pump Repair/Delivery Person.** Experience Preferred, but will train. Salary D.O.E. Full Benefits Package. Send Resume to P.O. Box 2234, Big Spring.

### Help Wanted

**CLERICAL POSITION** available. Bilingual required. Temporary position of approximately four months. Job will include filing, answering telephone, and computer data entry. For interview call (432)264-7563.

**COAHOMA ISD** is accepting applications for building custodian. Applications are available at the Administration Office, 600 North Main. Applications accepted until the position filled. Coahoma ISD is an equal opportunity employer.

### COMMERCIAL CARPENTER NEEDED

Interior trim and finish out carpenter needed immediately for construction project in Big Spring. Call Sandy at (432)264-9894 or (325)656-5273 (cell). Equal Opportunity Employer.

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**DRIVERS BE HOME DAILY.** Coastal Transport is a leader in transport of LPG Asphalt & Petroleum Products. Coastal serves high profile accounts & needs dedicated professionals to join our growing team in Big Spring. Quality 23 with class A & One year driving experience. Call Jay at 888-527-7221.

**DRUG SCREEN** Compliance is looking for a Collector. Salary DOE. Qualified candidates should apply in person at 501 Birdwell #17, Big Spring. EOE.

Full-time Cook needed at **SWCID**, 3200 C Ave. Apply in person, January 3rd, 4th & 5th from 1:00-5:00 p.m. No Phone Calls Please.

**HELENA CHEMICAL** is now hiring for a Liquid Plant Management position. Excellent benefits, excellent pay. Apply in person to Helena Chemical, 100 S. St. Peter, Stanton, Texas.

**HELENA CHEMICAL** is now hiring class A-CDL driver. Excellent benefits, excellent pay. Apply in person to Helena Chemical, 100 S. St. Peter, Stanton, Texas.

**HUSBAND/WIFE TEAM** needed as Dorm parents for basic Child-Care Facility. Salary plus room & board, benefits. Call Texas Pythian Home, 8:00-5:00, Monday-Friday (817)594-4465 or visit our web site www.pythianhome.org

**NEED MATURE** person to do light cooking & cleaning from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Part-time. Call (432)267-1872.

### Help Wanted

**IMMEDIATE OPENING** for part-time Laundry attendant. Work 7 days- 7 days off. Must have own car. Apply 1208 Gregg Street or 208 11th Place.

### MIDWESTERN SERVICES, Inc.

Tank Cleaners needed. In & out of state travel & work 60+ hrs. per week Transportation to and from job site. Hotel paid & \$175 a week per diem. Hourly wage & bonuses. 100% drug free. EOE. Apply at 749 South County Rd. 221, Snyder, Texas.

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Is Under New Ownership and is seeking professional, enthusiastic and caring individuals, to fill the following positions:

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### Help Wanted

**REPORTER/ EDITORIAL** Staff needed. Temporary, approx. 3 month. Experience in writing, reporting and Quark Preferred. Part or Full time. Call Bill McClellan, Big Spring Herald after 10:30 am (432)263-7331.

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**Ab-Tex Beverage Ltd.** requires individual to complete a drug screen and work assessment test. Possess or able to obtain a Class A CDL. Beverage sales experience a plus. Comprehensive benefit program. Please apply in person: Ab-Tex Beverage Ltd. 3611 Hwy 87 North Big Spring, Tx 79720 EEO/AA Employer

### WAREHOUSE/ DELIVERY

Wanted for local Rental Store. Benefits include paid vacation, retirement & health insurance. Requirements are back ground check, drug screening, good driving record and be at least 21 years old. Apply in person, Credit World, 1611 Gregg.

### WAREHOUSE/ PLANT WORKERS NEEDED BIG SPRING AREA

Immediate openings for long term employment. Requirements are: experience working in a warehouse or a plant environment. Some forklift experience helpful. Positions are for cotton seed plant located in Big Spring. Contact Kelly Services of Midland at (432)689-9801 Never an applicant fee. Equal Opportunity Employer

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TUESDAY

Table with 24 columns (WFAA, KMI, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KOCV, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN, SCIFI) and 6 rows (6-12) listing TV programs and their channels.

DENNIS THE MENACE



"MAY I TAKE YOUR ORDER?" "YOU BETCHA. DID YA THINK WE WERE JUST WINDOW SHOPPING?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I heard that out of the corner of my ear."

HAGAR



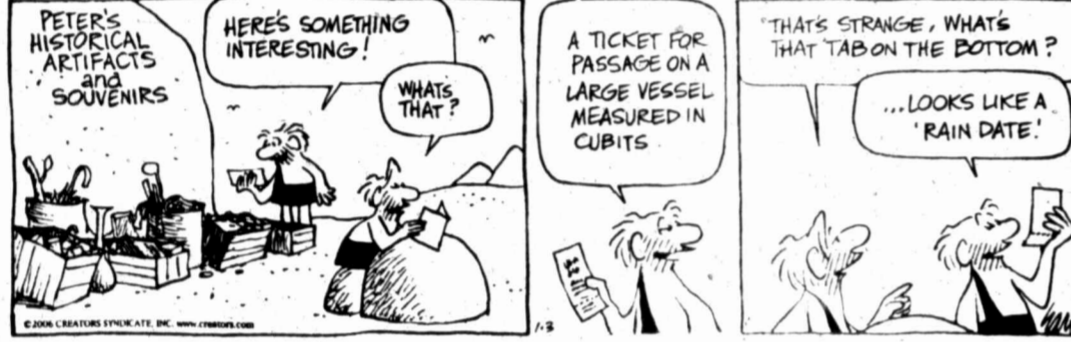
"WHAT IS THE SECRET TO A PERFECT MARRIAGE?" "MARRY A MAN WHO DOESN'T EAT TOO MUCH, DOESN'T DRINK, GAMBLE OR STAY OUT LATE OR MAKE A MESS, AND YOU HAVE A PERFECT MARRIAGE!" "WE'LL TAKE TWO"

BLONDIE



"I NEED TO GO TO THE MALL FOR A NEW CELL PHONE" "WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ONE YOU'VE GOT, DEAR?" "I'M TIRED OF THE COLOR" "THE COLOR?" "YOU KNOW, I COULD USE A NEW ONE, TOO. LET ME GET MY PURSE"

BC



"PETER'S HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS AND SOUVENIRS" "HERE'S SOMETHING INTERESTING!" "WHAT'S THAT?" "A TICKET FOR PASSAGE ON A LARGE VESSEL MEASURED IN CUBITS" "THAT'S STRANGE, WHAT'S THAT TAB ON THE BOTTOM?" "...LOOKS LIKE A 'RAIN DATE'."

WIZARD OF ID



"ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A FIVE-STAR RESTAURANT?" "WHY DO YOU ASK?" "THERE ARE CRAYONS ON TOP OF THE PLACE MATS"

AGNES



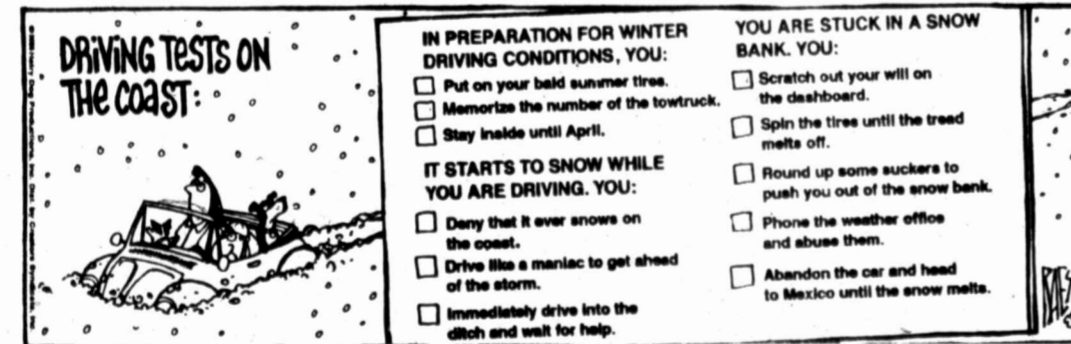
"WE NEED A NATURAL WONDER IN OUR COUNTY" "WHAT'S A NATURAL WONDER?" "SOMETHING LIKE A BIG HOLE, OR A RIVER THAT RUNS UPHILL OR A TWELVE-MILLION-FOOT-HIGH CLIFF THAT LOOKS LIKE A BUG, OR A HAUNTED WAX MUSEUM." "WE HAVE A VERY CONSISTENT RAIN FALL AVERAGE" "THAT'S NOT GONNA SELL POSTCARDS, SWEETIE"

HI AND LOIS



"YOU'RE ON A DIET?" "YEAH, I HAVE TO LOSE TEN POUNDS BY THE END OF THE MONTH" "I PLAN TO GAIN IT ALL BACK ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY"

THE OTHER COAST



"DRIVING TESTS ON THE COAST:" "IN PREPARATION FOR WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS, YOU: Put on your bald summer tires. Memorize the number of the towtruck. Stay inside until April." "IT STARTS TO SNOW WHILE YOU ARE DRIVING, YOU: Dary that it ever snows on the coast. Drive like a maniac to get ahead of the storm. Immediately drive into the ditch and wait for help." "YOU ARE STUCK IN A SNOW BANK, YOU: Scratch out your will on the dashboard. Spin the tires until the tread melts off. Round up some suckers to push you out of the snow bank. Phone the weather office and abuse them. Abandon the car and head to Mexico until the snow melts."

SNUFFY SMITH



"ARE YA STICKIN' TO YO'RE DIET AN' WEIGHIN' YO'RE PORTIONS, LOWEEZY?" "YEP, BUT IT DON'T ADD UP, DOC!!" "HOW CAN TWO POUNDS OF CHOKLIT WEIGH TEN POUNDS ON MY HIPS?!"

BEEBLE BAILEY



"WHAT'S WRONG WITH LT. FUZZ?" "HE'S HAVING A BAD DAY, SIR" "GREGG JACK WALKER" "HE GARGLED WITH AFTERSHAVE, SPRAYED DEODORANT ON HIS HAIR, PUT HAIR CIL ON HIS FACE, AND SWALLOWED HIS TOOTHPASTE!"

This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 3, the third day of 2006. There are 362 days left in the year. Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 3, 1777, Gen. George Washington's army routed the British in the Battle of Princeton, N.J. On this date: In 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. In 1868, the Meiji Restoration re-established the authority of Japan's emperor and heralded the fall of the military rulers known as "shoguns." In 1938, the March of Dimes campaign to fight polio was organized. In 1947, congressional proceedings were televised for the first time as viewers in Washington, Philadelphia and New York got to see some of the opening ceremonies of the 80th Congress. In 1959, President Eisenhower signed a proclamation admitting Alaska to the Union as the 49th state.

In 1961, the United States severed diplomatic relations with Cuba.

In 1967, Jack Ruby, the man who shot accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, died in a Dallas hospital.

In 1990, ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega surrendered to U.S. forces, 10 days after taking refuge in the Vatican's diplomatic mission.

In 1993, President Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a historic nuclear missile-reduction treaty in Moscow.

In 2000, the last new daily "Peanuts" strip by Charles Schulz ran in 2,600 newspapers.

One year ago, President Bush tapped his father, former President Bush, and former President Clinton to help raise tsunami relief funds.

Today's Birthdays: Record producer Sir George Martin is 80. Actor Robert Loggia is 76. Actor Dabney Coleman is 74. Journalist-author Betty Rollin is 70. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby Hull is 67. Singer-songwriter-producer Van Dyke Parks is 63. Musician Stephen Stills is 61.

Rock musician John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin) is 60. Actress Victoria Principal is 56. Actor-director Mel Gibson is 50. Actress Shannon Sturges is 38. Jazz musician James Carter is 37. Contemporary Christian singer Nichole Nordeman is 34. Actor Jason Marsden is 31. Actress Danica McKellar is 31. Actor Nicholas Gonzalez is 30. Singer Kimberley Locke ("American Idol") is 28. Actor Alex D. Linz is 17.

Thought for Today: "To have reason to get up in the morning, it is necessary to possess a guiding principle. A belief of some kind. A bumper sticker, if you will." — Judith Guest, American author.

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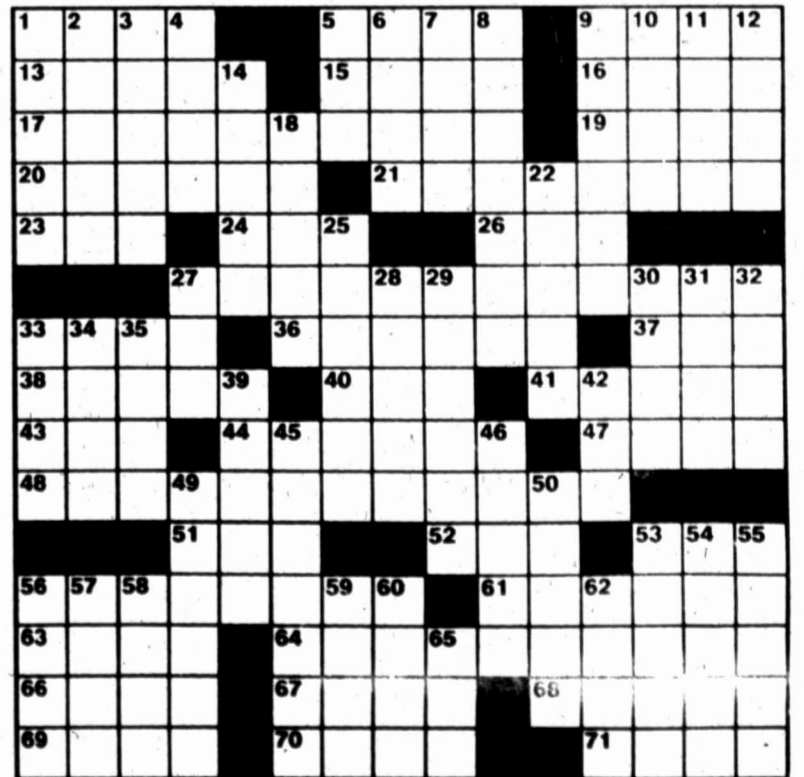
Answer to previous puzzle

Word search grid with words: SPIT, NAPES, STAR, LENA, IDEAL, OILY, USER, AORTA, URSA, STRONGSUIT, NEON, HOTTEA, NEED, TROT, EBBED, SASH, AURA, LIETO, OSCAR, COB, STEAM, ATARI, HOES, ERLE, RINDS, PLUS, YEAR, NOSHOW, SLAB, SOLIDSTATE, POLO, SOUSA, ASHE, ANDY, EMCEE, STEP, SEAS, TYKES, HERS

Newsday Crossword

IN THE CAR by Sally R. Stein Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- ACROSS: 1 Eyelid attachment, 5 limited, 9 Butter substitute, 13 Fireplace residue, 15 Electricity carrier, 16 Cream of mushroom, e.g., 17 Inspirational leaders, 19 Golf-course vehicle, 20 Country in eastern Europe, 21 High-pitched voices, 23 Early afternoon, 24 Swelled head, 26 Atmosphere, 27 Radio broadcast, 33 Soft shine, 36 New Jersey's largest city, 37 Twosome, 38 Purple flower, 40 Put on, as clothes, 41 Treat with contempt, 43 mode (65 Down order), 44 Capital of Croatia, 47 In addition, 48 Inequality, 51 Perform on a stage, 52 NBC satire series, 53 Enterprise (Star Trek vessel), 56 Naval fleet, 61 Enter, as a building, 63 Very much, 64 Punishment for a student, 66 Titled British woman, 67 Prefix for freeze, 68 Rock singer John, 69 Fox Sports alternative, 70 Wall St. org., 71 Catch sight of, DOWN: 1 Lariat, 2 Colorado resort, 3 Be generous, 4 Chef's seasoning, 5 Shoemaker's tool, 6 Name of 12 popes, 7 Therefore, 8 Lose hope, 9 Wilde and Hammerstein, 10 Bank offering, 11 Money in Madrid, 12 Makes a decision, 14 Enjoyer of 2 Down, 18 Heathen, 22 Puts in jeopardy, 25 Feeling tense, 27 Former global airline, 28 Taken an oath, 29 Some French Impressionist paintings, 30 Admired one, 31 Yours and mine, 32 It's forbidden, 33 Feeling pleased, 34 "Hi-\_\_\_, Hi-Lo", 35 Norwegian royal name, 39 Prague native, 42 Coolidge nickname, 45 Craftsperson, 46 Pig out, 49 "\_\_\_ your seat belts", 50 Single-handedly, 53 Groups of soldiers, 54 Bend down, 55 \_\_\_ and Cher, 56 Walk through water, 57 "That's too bad!", 58 Win easily, 59 Measly, 60 Former Mach 2 fliers: Abbr., 62 South Pacific spot, 65 Key lime or Dutch apple



everyone is

2006

This year, year past, best result effort. Hard a virtue, work — the you align what is n and flow nature's Flowers pen — the , and they This is the lects seem this year. meant to 10 weeks ting ready ; things rtain way rself in the 'cumstance ouldn't be the way ntly are). an idea at month, act ly open — you should llow your ved ones giveness in happier if t. Family art of your Necessary could edling or e called to ghly tense ation in ions are mantic in be sure to ort squared mmer). PROFILES: re brewing "Mini Me" Troyer. In ery serious ersonal life ment is en though ve met her will finally tin Powers" for good by all with a g dramatic

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box is written Mitchell and r. longtime Ann Landers

CREATORS INC.

MENTS

Options

SECURITY DEP. 263-1282

Wacky Facts

■ Jan. 18 is Pooh Day. (It's "Winnie the Pooh" author A.A. Milne's birthday.)  
■ Bees need to visit about 2 million flowers to make just 1 pound of honey.  
— World Almanac for Kids



# KID NEWS

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Chatter Box

"It tasted like chicken. It was kind of like licking the back of your hand. It felt like the same thing."  
— Matt Damon, on licking a frog for the movie, "The Brothers Grimm," in Entertainment Weekly.

In The News



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GEORGIA AQUARIUM

The new Georgia Aquarium's cruise ship-shaped tanks hold 8 million gallons of water.

New aquarium is home to more than 100,000 fish

Ralph and Norton can grow to be 40 feet long and live in a tank as large as a football field. What are they? They're the only two whale sharks on display at a North American aquarium.

You can see Ralph and Norton at the world's largest aquarium, the new Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta. The aquarium's cruise ship-shaped tanks hold 8 million gallons of water and will be home to about 100,000 fish! The aquarium opened to the public in November.



AN AWESOME AQUATIC ABODE

The aquarium was designed to look like a giant ship breaking through the waves. It has 60 different aquatic habitats and five galleries, each with a unique theme. About 2.4 million visitors are expected each year. They can gaze through the aquarium's curved acrylic windows or touch a rough starfish or slippery stingray at interactive stations and touch tanks.

"We want to be the world's most engaging aquarium," said Jeff Swanagan, the aquarium's executive director.

WORLD'S LARGEST FISH

Ralph and Norton arrived in June from Taiwan. At that time, they were 15 feet long and 13 feet long, but they could grow to more than 40 feet! Whale sharks are the world's largest fish. Three full-time veterinarians will be on hand to make sure Ralph, Norton and all the aquarium's sea life is healthy. Students from the University of Georgia will help run the aquarium and conduct research at the onsite animal hospital.

A GENEROUS GIFT

The aquarium was paid for almost completely by a \$200 million gift from Bernie Marcus, co-founder of The Home Depot Inc., and his wife, Billi. "It's going to be the most unique aquarium in the world," said Marcus, 76. Marcus said the aquarium is a "thank you" note to the city of Atlanta and state of Georgia, where the Home Depot first opened for business. — Jill Egan

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PHOTO COURTESY MEGHAN LUECKE

Meghan Luecke, center, was volunteering at San Francisco's Hamilton Family Center when she got the idea to start a weekly cooking program for the children there.

## That's the SPIRIT

For many kids, volunteering is an ideal way to celebrate the season

BY EMILIE LE BEAU / CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Meghan Luecke had just started volunteering at a homeless shelter for families in San Francisco when she told a little girl how much she loved to bake cookies. "I could tell she didn't know what I was talking about; she said she had never made cookies before," Meghan says.

Meghan, then 14, of San Francisco, hit the grocery store and returned to the shelter the following week with cookie-baking basics.

"The kids were thrilled and so full of questions," she says. "They had never seen raw eggs."

Three years later, Meghan was still cooking with kids at the Hamilton Family Center. She started a weekly cooking program called Kids Are Cookin', and even wrote a recipe book so other kids could start similar programs. "I couldn't live in the midst of so much homelessness and not volunteer," she says.

It isn't just the holiday season that is inspiring this generosity of spirit. From cooking to collecting donations, kids are giving their time and energy more than ever. High school volunteering is at its highest point in 50 years.

And there's evidence volunteering has a long-term impact on society: Kids who volunteer when they are young grow up to be the most generous adults, reports the Independent Sector, a group that represents numerous charities.

WAYS TO HELP

But it is the season for giving, and Jena Sims is grateful for holiday shoppers — they help her fundraising efforts for the American Cancer Society. She sells personalized Christmas ornaments for \$10 each, and last-minute shoppers help her sales. "People run out of gift ideas and [the ornaments] are something original," says Jena, 16, of Winder, Ga.

In the last five years, Jena has raised \$75,000 for cancer research through ornament sales, fundraising events and a team of energized helpers. Every cent is donated to cancer research.

Jena says she won't stop until there is a cure. "I lost both my grandfathers to cancer," she says.

Jena also says she visits cancer patients in the hospitals to show support. "A lot are going through treatment ... they are glad someone is coming to visit them," she says.

Getting into the hospital is a challenge since many don't allow kids or teenagers. "A lot of times you get rejected," she says. "You have to be ready to get rejected, keep going and not stop."

Fear of rejection may be one reason some kids don't sign up for service. "There can be some very bad experiences," says Arthur Blaustein, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley and author of "Making a Difference: America's Guide to Volunteering and Community Service" (Jossey-Bass, \$12.95).



Jena Sims

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Researching an organization can help a kid decide whether a group has the right opportunities. "It's very important to have the right match. People are disappointed if they just shuffle paper," Blaustein says.

For some kids, behind-the-scenes work can be just as exciting. Cameron K. helps prepare and pack shoeboxes filled with toys, toiletries and candy for Operation Christmas Child. The group is hoping to send seven million shoeboxes to children in 95 war torn or impoverished countries.

"I think it's good for children to have these things and know somebody cares about their needs," Cameron says. "I think it shows kids can help."

Kids can help others, and Blaustein says volunteering even helps the volunteers. "It makes you feel really good about yourself," he says. "It's a very positive experience. It's good for the kid, it's good for the people who they are serving."

YOU CAN DO IT

There are plenty of ways you can make a difference through service or fundraising. Here's how you can get going:

- Research an organization you'd like to help. Want to work with injured animals? Make sure they allow volunteers to get close to the critters.
- Don't give up. So you e-mailed the volunteer coordinator but never heard back. Don't assume there's not a need for help. "They are too swamped sometimes to respond to volunteer inquiries," says Meghan.
- Ask for help, especially if you're starting your own volunteer organization. "Always be open to suggestions and creativity," Meghan advises.

SERVICE WITH SINCERITY

Volunteering is the right thing to do, except if it's done for the wrong reasons. Signing up for service just to meet a cute date is "very suspect," says professor Arthur Blaustein.

Sometimes kids are pushed into service by school requirements or

overbearing parents. Using community service to win awards or create a cool resume doesn't help and "isn't the best way

to do it." Instead, Blaustein says, social services don't always reach every American. Volunteering is a way kids can fill in the gaps and help others.

ONLINE HELP

Want to bake, sell or stuff shoeboxes? More information on Kids Are Cookin' is online at [www.kidsarecookin.com](http://www.kidsarecookin.com). Ornaments benefiting cancer research are at [www.ornaments4cure.org](http://www.ornaments4cure.org), and shoebox donations at [www.samaritanspurse.org](http://www.samaritanspurse.org).

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