

Blood drive visits campus
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PC Magazine goes digital
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THURSDAY, JAN. 8, 2008
VOLUME 83 ■ ISSUE 71



(INSIDE)
CONFERENCE PRIDE
SEE PAGE 8

(INBRIEF)

STATE

UT pushing to modify top 10 percent rule

AUSTIN (AP) — The University of Texas at Austin has “lost control” of its admissions policy and wants to change the law that guarantees automatic entry to students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their high school class, UT President William Powers said Wednesday.

Powers said a record 81 percent of the Texas freshmen entering the university this fall gained admission through the so-called “top 10 percent rule.” Unless the Legislature changes the policy during its upcoming 2009 session, Powers said the state’s premier university soon would have no room to admit any

NATION

Man allegedly threatens to bomb LA jetliner

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A man who allegedly claimed to have a bomb aboard a jetliner and lunged for a door after it landed in Los Angeles was tackled by other passengers and held for questioning Wednesday, authorities said.

Delta Air Lines Flight 110 from Atlanta was only minutes from landing at Los Angeles International Airport shortly before 10:30 a.m. when the man “jumped up and started running ... (and) yelled ‘I’ve got a bomb,’” passenger Bruce Worrilow told Fox 11 News.

WORLD

Iraqi cleric urges attacks on US troops over Gaza

BAGHDAD (AP) — Anti-U.S. cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on Wednesday urged reprisals against American forces in Iraq to protest Israel’s Gaza offensive, as Arab anger grows over civilian deaths in the Palestinian territory.

The strongly worded statement signaled a threat by al-Sadr’s militia fighters to renew violence against American troops after months of relative calm.

It was unclear, however, just how much influence the once-powerful Shiite leader — who is believed to be in Iran — still has. His fighters have been hit hard in U.S.-Iraqi military operations over the past year.

DEATH TOLL

4223

U.S. military deaths in Iraq since fighting began

SOURCE: Associated Press, confirmed by the Department of Defense

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CBO projects \$1.2 trillion deficit for 2009

By ANDREW TAYLOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal budget deficit will nearly triple to an unprecedented \$1.2 trillion for the 2009 budget year, according to grim new Congressional Budget Office figures.

The eye-popping estimates reflect plummeting tax revenues because of the recession and about \$400 billion spent to bail out the financial industry and take over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Last year’s deficit was \$455 billion.

The CBO estimate released Wednesday also sees the economy shrinking by 2.2 percent this year and recovering only slightly to grow by 1.5 percent in 2010. It foresees the unemployment rate eclipsing 9 percent early next year unless the

Obama administration steps in. “The recession — which began about a year ago — will last well into 2009,” the CBO report says. The agency said that “ongoing turmoil in the housing and financial markets has taken a major toll on the federal budget.”

The dismal figures come a day after President-elect Barack Obama warned of “trillion-dollar deficits for years to come.”

CBO’s figures don’t account for the huge economic stimulus bill Obama is expected to propose soon to try to jolt the economy.

The shrinking economy has led to a sharp drop in estimated tax revenues of \$166 billion from 2008 levels, which is largely responsible for the deficit, along with big outlays from the Wall St. bailout.

The agency expects the \$700 billion bailout to actually cost taxpayers \$189 billion, with the costs

reflected in its estimates for this year and next. CBO estimates take into account the net value of the assets the government holds from financial institutions.

Under Treasury Department accounting, the bailout spending is reflected only as the government makes the payments; as of mid-December, those disbursements totaled \$238 billion. Exposure to the taxpayer stemming from the Federal Reserve Board’s extensive interventions in the financial markets — such as acquiring 80 percent control of insurance and financial giant American International Group Inc. — are not reflected in the estimates.

The CBO report also said the federal takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac last year added \$240 billion to this year’s deficit.

Obama and Congress are promising quick enactment of the economic recovery plan, which will

blend up to \$300 billion in tax cuts with big new spending programs and could cost up to \$775 billion over the next few years.

Obama said the flood of red ink probably won’t affect that measure but could crimp other items on his agenda.

“Despite the record deficits facing us, our number one task is an economic recovery package,” said House Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt Jr., D-S.C. “With Americans concerned about their jobs, their homes, their retirement and their children’s future, our economic situation is so severe that stabilizing the economy must take precedence over short-term deficits.”

The \$1.19 trillion 2009 figure shatters the previous record of \$455 billion, set only last year. It also represents more than 8 percent of the size of the economy, which is higher than the deficits of the

1980s. The 2009 budget year began last Oct. 1.

Just in September, CBO predicted a 2009 deficit of \$438 billion, but revenue projections have dropped by \$362 billion on top of the approximately \$400 billion federal intervention in the financial system.

Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky called the budget figures “a stunning and sobering reminder that Congress must strengthen its efforts to be good stewards of the taxpayers’ money.”

CBO predicts the deficit will come under relative control within a few years, dropping to the \$250 billion range by 2012. But such predictions depend on the expiration of President Bush’s tax cuts at the end of next year; Obama has promised to renew most of them except for those aimed at people making more than \$250,000 a year.

SELF-EXTINGUISHING

Texas ushers in new year with fire-safe cigarette legislation

By TINA L. ARONS
FEATURES EDITOR

Smokers may be in for a surprise the next time they light up.

Laws requiring stores only sell fire-safe cigarettes went into effect Jan. 1 in five states, including Texas — a mandate lawmakers and advocates hope will reduce the number of cigarette-related fire deaths.

Lorraine Carli, a spokesperson for the National Fire Protection Association, said cigarettes cause fires that result in as many as 900 deaths per year.

“Our goal is to reduce cigarette fires, the

leading cause of home fire deaths,” she said.

Fire-safe cigarettes, which are designed to go out if they are dropped or set aside, are engineered to decrease the risk of fire, Carli said. Thicker bands of paper are placed around the cigarettes to form “speed bumps” that slow down burning.

Thirty-eight states have passed legislation for fire-safe cigarettes, she said. Some states’ laws will not go into effect until 2010.

Michele Casanova, the district manager for Nothin’ Butt Smokes in Lubbock, said fire-safe cigarettes do not cost more than traditional cigarettes and the packaging looks the same.

Consumers can tell the difference between fire-safe and traditional cigarettes by inspecting the barcode, she said. The fire-safe cigarettes will be labeled with the letters “FSC.”

But the changes may not be all for the better.

The new Texas law

bans retailers from ordering cigarettes without the fire-safe label and requires them to sell their old inventory before the end of the year, Casanova said, which may decrease Nothin’ Butt Smokes’ sales by up to 25 percent.

Also, critics have expressed several concerns.

Although a Harvard School of Public Health study reported there were no substantial differences in toxicity when key indicators were measured for fire-safe cigarettes and its illegal counterparts, critics expressed other concerns about changes in taste and cigarettes extinguishing before a smoker is done smoking it.

Casanova said she has heard many complaints about a smoker who pauses to laugh and finds his or her fire-safe cigarette has gone out.

Cigarette consumers need to learn to adapt, she said, and “sometimes it’s mind over matter.”

“It’s just one of those things,” Casanova said. “You just have to roll with the punches and go with it.”

Garett Nelson, public information officer for Lubbock Fire Department, said any reduction in deaths caused by cigarette fires will be significant.

A woman was found dead after what officials believe was a cigarette-caused fire in her trailer home in Slaton about two weeks ago, Nelson said.

Making cigarettes burn slower and self-extinguish makes a difference, he said, because it takes time for the heat from a cigarette to get a fire started.

Nelson said Lubbock follows the national trends with about 10 percent of fires in the city created by cigarettes.

Lubbock has approximately 350 structure fires per year, he said.

The National Fire Protection Association

CIGARETTES continued on page 6 >>>

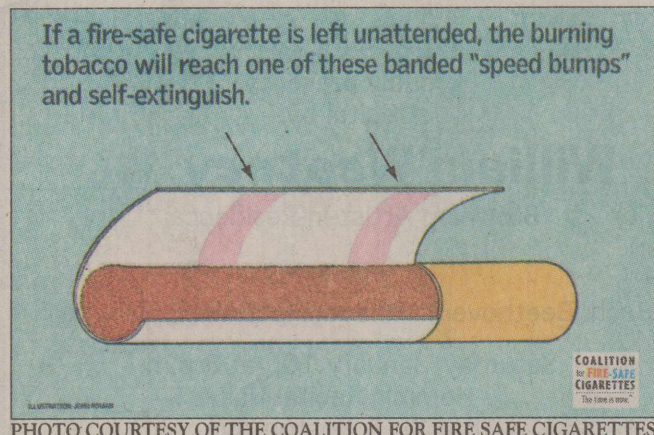


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE COALITION FOR FIRE SAFE CIGARETTES

ADDITIONAL FACTS	
34 percent of deaths caused by cigarette fires are children of the smokers	
25 percent are neighbors or friends	
14 percent are spouses or partners	
13 percent are parents	

Gaza fighting rages despite cease-fire proposal

By IBRAHIM BARZAK and STEVEN GUTKIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel resumed its Gaza offensive Wednesday, bombing heavily around suspected smuggling tunnels near the border with Egypt after a three-hour lull to allow in humanitarian aid. Hamas responded with a rocket barrage.

Despite the heavy fighting, strides were made on the diplomatic front with the U.S. throwing its weight behind a deal being brokered by France and Egypt.

While the Security Council failed to reach agreement on a cease-fire resolution, Egypt’s U.N. Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz said representatives of Israel, the Palestinians and Hamas have agreed

to meet in Cairo Thursday for talks brokered by Egypt.

Israeli airstrikes killed 29 Palestinians on Wednesday after leaflets were dropped warning residents to leave the area “because Hamas uses your houses to hide and smuggle military weapons.”

The casualties brought the total Palestinian death toll during Israel’s 12-day assault to 688 and drove home the complexities of finding a diplomatic endgame for Israel’s Gaza invasion. Ten Israelis have been killed, including three civilians, since the offensive began Dec. 27.

More than 5,000 people have fled the border area, seeking refuge at two U.N. schools turned into temporary shelters.

The fury of the renewed fighting made it appear each side was scrambling to get in as many hits as possible before a truce could materialize.

“I feel like the ground is shaking when we hear the shelling. People are terrified,” said Fida Kishta, a resident of the Gaza-Egypt border area where Israeli planes destroyed 16 empty houses.

In Turkey, a Mideast diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly said that country would be asked to put together an international force that could help keep the peace. And diplomats in New York worked on a U.N. Security Council statement backing the cease-fire initiative but failed to reach agreement on action to end the violence.

“We are very much applauding the efforts of a number of states,

particularly the effort that President (Hosni) Mubarak has undertaken on behalf of Egypt,” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said. “We’re supporting that initiative.”

The army, which has refused to allow journalists into Gaza, permitted two TV teams to accompany soldiers on patrol for the first time. The footage showed soldiers walking through a deserted street in an unidentified location in Gaza.

The Israeli military correspondent who accompanied the soldiers said they were concerned about Hamas booby-traps. He said they were shooting through walls, throwing grenades around corners, going from house to house looking for Hamas gunmen and using bomb sniffer dogs. Buildings showed bullet and shrapnel marks. “We used a lot

of fire,” said an officer in the group, Lt. Col. Ofer.

Hamas, meanwhile, fired rockets, though at a slower pace than previous days, hitting the towns of Ashkelon and Beersheba with the sort of longer range missiles never seen before this war.

Despite the violence, a surprise announcement in Paris on Wednesday put a spotlight on diplomacy.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority had accepted the cease-fire deal, but he made no mention of Hamas, without whom no truce could work. The Palestinian Authority controls only the West Bank while Hamas rules Gaza — two territories on opposite sides of Israel that are supposed to make up a future Palestinian state.

TODAY	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny
High 67 Low 37	High 73 Low 29	High 51 Low 25	High 57 Low 29	High 56 Low 30

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WORLD EVENTS IN BRIEF

US General: Anbar lacks support of Iraq government

BAGHDAD (AP) — The top American commander in the former insurgent stronghold of Anbar said Wednesday the Shiite-led government should have poured reconstruction money into the Sunni region after Sunni fighters joined forces with U.S. troops to chase al-Qaida out of the western province.

Marine Maj. Gen. John F. Kelly told The Associated Press that his greatest "mission failure" was his inability to bring together the government in Baghdad and the Sunnis in Anbar to take advantage of the steep decline in violence.

"What the Iraqi government in Baghdad should have done is said,

"Anbar is getting peaceful, let's commit," Kelly told the AP in a telephone interview from his headquarters southwest of Baghdad, as he begins to make preparations to hand over command of 23,000 Marines next month to Maj. Gen. Richard T. Tyron.

"It drives me to distraction," he said. "I would count it as a mission failure."

12 deaths blamed on snow and cold across Europe

MILAN, Italy (AP) — Freezing temperatures and exceptional snowfall caused travel delays Wednesday across Europe and were blamed for at least 12 deaths, including that of a man in Milan who was crushed when a canopy col-

lapsed under the weight of snow.

In Poland, the Interior Ministry said at least 10 people have frozen to death due to temperatures reaching minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 25 Celsius).

Italian police said a Milan businessman standing on his balcony was killed when the snow brought down a canopy and part of a wall. A 47-year-old Serbian was found frozen to death in his home in the town of Zagarolo, east of Rome.

US: Troops kill 32 insurgents in east Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — U.S.-led forces raided a Taliban bomb-making cell in eastern Afghanistan, killing 32 insurgents in a battle with scores of armed militants who shot at them from rooftops and alleyways, the military said Wednesday.

The firefight broke out Tuesday in Laghman province when as many as 75 armed militants converged on the

troops, who were searching a number of compounds in the area, the military said in a statement. The 32 insurgents were killed when coalition troops returned fire.

The troops destroyed two caches of weapons and roadside bomb-making materials that were too unstable to move to another location, the statement said.

The firefight came ahead of an ex-

pected influx of 20,000 American troops into Afghanistan to combat a Taliban insurgency that has sent violence skyrocketing in the last two years.

More U.S. troops — 151 — died in Afghanistan in 2008 than in any other year since the 2001 invasion to oust the Taliban, and U.S. officials have warned the violence will probably intensify in the coming year.

NKorea sets March date for parliamentary elections

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea announced Wednesday it will hold long overdue elections in March amid indications the impoverished regime plans to fill parliament with finance-savvy legislators and has named new Cabinet ministers with economic know-how.

With foreign aid drying up amid a global economic crisis and a diplomatic standoff with South Korea, North Korea is turning inward to find a way out of economic hardship, analysts say.

Elections for seats in the Supreme People's Assembly — postponed last year amid speculation

about leader Kim Jong Il's health — will be held March 8, state-run media said.

The poll, held every five years, last took place in August 2003 and had been due again in 2008 — around the time South Korean and U.S. officials say the 66-year-old Kim suffered a stroke.

Putin orders halt in gas supplies to Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has ordered Gazprom to stop all shipments of natural gas to Europe through Ukraine.

Russian gas already is not getting through the pipelines that cross Ukraine. Gazprom has blamed Ukraine, saying Russia has delivered the gas but

Ukraine has shut down the pipelines and is stealing gas intended for Europe.

Ukraine insists that Russia stopped supplying the gas Wednesday morning.

Putin told Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller to go ahead and stop deliveries. He said this should be done "publicly

and in the presence of international observers."

Sixteen countries have stopped receiving Russian gas or have seen a sharp drop in supplies.

Europe depends on Russia for a quarter of its gas, 80 percent of which goes through Ukraine.

SURE SHOT

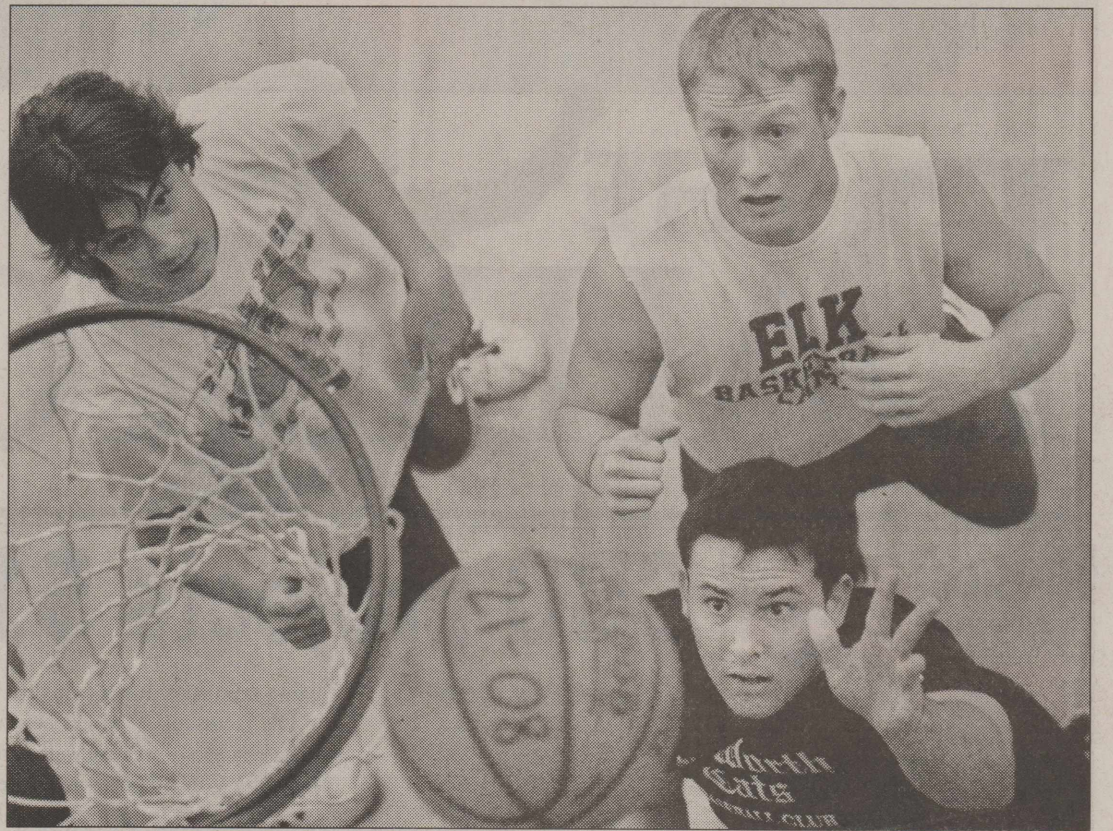


PHOTO BY KARL ANDERSON/The Daily Toreador

TRAVIS RHOAD, LEFT, a junior finance major from The Woodlands and Brant Cummings, a sophomore exercise and sport sciences major from Stratford, watch Trevor Holly, a sophomore business major from Hazel, shoot a basketball Wednesday in the Robert H. Ewalt Student Recreation Center.

Richardson adviser worked for firm feds probing

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — One of Gov. Bill Richardson's close friends and advisers worked as a consultant for the California firm at the center of a federal pay-to-play probe that derailed the governor's appointment as commerce secretary.

Mike Stratton's consulting firm worked for CDR Financial Products to advise on business in New Mexico at the time the company was hired to work on bond deals with the New Mexico Finance Authority.

Federal investigators are now scrutinizing whether CDR's work, for which it earned nearly \$1.5 million in fees, was influenced by political contributions that CDR and its chief executive David Rubin made to Richardson's political committees.

Stratton, a longtime Democratic political consultant, has been friends with Richardson for more than 25 years. He advised Richardson — and raised money for him — during the governor's failed bid for the 2008 presidential nomination.

Stratton did not immediately return telephone messages Wednesday.

Richardson said Wednesday there was no wrongdoing in how the state awarded the work to CDR.

"In my view, the state and its officials have done nothing wrong. They behaved with the best of intentions and the best conduct," Richardson said at a news conference in Albuquerque.

Stratton worked for CDR as a business development consultant until at least 2007, CDR spokesman Allan Ripp said. He was not sure exactly

when Stratton started working for the company, but said it was in the early 2000s. Richardson took office in January 2003.

Stratton's consulting had "not anything to do with political contributions," Ripp said.

CDR and Rubin contributed \$110,000 to Richardson political committees in 2003-2005.

The largest contribution was made in 2004 and helped pay expenses for some of Richardson's staff and supporters at the Democratic National Convention. Stratton worked with the governor during the convention, helping Richardson carry out his role as convention chairman.

The \$75,000 contribution was made June 18, 2004, just days before CDR was awarded a no-competition state contract to reinvest bond escrow proceeds.

The Finance Authority's chief financial officer recommended CDR for the work in a memorandum dated June 23, 2004, and the authority's board approved the selection June 30.

Bill Sisneros, executive director of the Finance Authority, said he received numerous telephone calls from Stratton's firm in June 2004.

Joan Coplan, a senior consultant for Stratton and Associates, had telephoned him repeatedly about the opportunity for reinvestment of the bond proceeds held in escrow and the authority's possible use of CDR. Stratton's firm was "kind of pitching their guy" for the escrow reinvestment, he said.

"The only person that was lobbying the Finance Authority was Michael Stratton's office," Sisneros said.

The escrow restructuring was ap-

proved by the authority's board as a "sole source procurement" of services with CDR — with no competitive bid process before the firm's selection. Sisneros said the agency needed to act fast before the reinvestment was precluded by a change in federal regulations.

Sisneros said it was a "market driven transaction" — not influenced by Stratton's firm or the governor's office. No one in the governor's office contacted him about the possible transaction with CDR.

"Nobody ever instructed me to use them," he said.

Sisneros said federal investigators have questioned him about his contact with Richardson's former chief of staff, David Contarino, on the CDR deals. Sisneros said he had discussed the escrow reinvestment plan with Contarino but was not instructed to hire CDR.

"Even to this day I've never had a conversation with Gov. Richardson about CDR," Sisneros said.

Richardson on Wednesday praised Contarino as "an outstanding public servant" and said he had the "utmost integrity, talent and he's responsible for some of the successes of our administration."

In a statement e-mailed to the AP, Contarino it was part of his job to be involved in many of the administration's economic and financial initiatives.

"In all of my actions, I acted appropriately and I am confident that the investigation will bear out that fact," Contarino said.

CDR had previously been selected through a competitive process to help assemble a bond financing deal for a \$1.6 billion state transportation package.

Rubin also made a \$25,000 donation to a Richardson committee in late October 2003, when the Legislature was debating the transportation construction program.

That contribution went to the Moving America Forward committee, which the governor had formed to increase voter registration among Hispanics and American Indians. Rubin also gave \$10,000 to Richardson's re-election campaign in 2005.

The \$75,000 contribution went to a little known committee called Si Se Puede! Boston 2004 Inc. At the time of the convention, the largest amount of money raised by the committee came from CDR and other companies that helped put together the complex bond financing package for the transportation program.

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ODDBALL DAILY

Weighty load: Police say man steals \$800 in change

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The payload was hefty — and the payback painful. Police say a robber broke a window at a Salt Lake City home and made off with a paint bucket full of \$800 in change. Officers soon stopped a 48-year-old man holding a bucket of coins and carrying a crowbar in his pants. He was charged Tuesday with several misdemeanors.

Gulp! Mexico tells citizens to swallow their gum

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The country that gave the world chewing gum is getting gummed up: The average square yard (meter) of Mexico City sidewalk has 70 blobs of discarded chew. Now Mexico is responding with innovations ranging from expensive sidewalk steam-cleaners to natural chewing gum that breaks down quickly. It's even telling its citizens (gulp!) to swallow their gum. The general in the war on discarded chewing gum is Ricardo Jaral, Mexico City's director for conservation of public spaces. He bemoans the blackened gobs that mar the newly restored 700-year-old downtown area, whose rough, porous paving stones serve as stubborn gum traps. Jaral has purchased 10 German-designed machines that treat sidewalks with steam and chemicals, and plans a large-scale cleanup starting Feb. 1. He is also looking to launch a public-awareness campaign. "When you finish chewing a piece of gum, you either have to put in a piece of paper and deposit it in a trash receptacle, or swallow it," Jaral said.

Police: Mexican woman in wheelchair flees on foot

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP) — Police say a woman who begged from a wheelchair was caught running from a crime scene on foot in Monterrey, Mexico. Police spokeswoman Sidlayin Robles says 30-year-old Ana Victoria Perez fled on foot after she and her husband allegedly threw a stone through the front window of a furniture store. Perez was a regular fixture along a main Monterrey road, asking for change from motorists as she sat in a wheelchair pushed by her husband. Robles said Monday that the couple apparently planned to rob the furniture store but were scared off by a security guard. They have been charged with vandalism. Police arrested the couple when they returned for the wheelchair.

Michigan city considers dyeing Saginaw River green

BAY CITY, Mich. (AP) — A man's request to dye the Saginaw River emerald green for St. Patrick's Day has raised a red flag among some officials who say the brown-colored tributary may be better left alone. Brad Meyer asked the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for permission to dye the river green, following traditions in Chicago and Dublin, Ireland. His request has been endorsed by Bay County Executive Thomas L. Hickner. "Each year Bay City has a festive St. Patrick's Day celebration consisting of a parade that heads downtown towards the Saginaw River," Hickner wrote. "Dyeing the river green would add to the excitement of the day without any harm to the watershed." Others have yet to give the idea the green light. "I have no idea, but dyeing the river green when it's already brown does not appeal to me at all because I'm afraid the color is not going to be green," City Commissioner MaryJane Gorney told The Bay City Times.

Bummer: Man's bottom bared in Vail ski-lift mishap

VAIL, Colo. (AP) — A guy who dangled upside down from a ski lift with his bare bottom exposed probably doesn't want to hear any "ski bum" jokes. Officials at Vail Resorts in Colorado say the 48-year-old man was trying to get on the Blue Ski basin lift on New Year's Day. They haven't said what went wrong. Workers stopped the lift, backed it up 10 or 12 feet and rescued the man after about seven minutes. His name hasn't been released. Bystanders snapped photos and posted them on the Internet, showing a man who looks to be hanging by one ski boot, his ski pants and underwear apparently snagged in the chair and reaching no farther than his knees. Vail spokeswoman Liz Biehl confirmed the photos on one site were, in fact, the victim.

Lou the mule alerts Tenn. woman to house on fire

McMINNVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Lou the mule brayed his way into his owner's heart with a New Year's warning that her rural Tennessee home was on fire. Jolene Solomon says the mule saved her life by alerting her to the attic blaze so that she could get out of the house before it burned down. The Southern Standard in McMinnville reported Solomon had just finished supper on New Year's Day when Lou's braying and acting up got her attention. The 63-year-old — who lives alone — stepped outside and saw the fire. The farm house in south-central Tennessee built by Solomon's grandfather was gutted. Solomon is staying with family while she plans to rebuild. Solomon said her father bought Lou years ago to help her and her late sister, Blue, around the farm.

NY man demands estranged wife pay him for kidney

GARDEN CITY, N.Y. (AP) — A New York doctor is demanding that his estranged wife pay him \$1.5 million to compensate him for the kidney he gave her while they were still on good terms. Dr. Richard Batista spoke Wednesday to reporters at his lawyer's office in Garden City, Long Island. He said he gave his kidney to Dawnell Batista in June 2001. She filed for divorce in July 2005. The 49-year-old Batista works for Nassau University Medical Center. The couple have three children, ages 8, 11 and 14. A message left for his wife's attorney, Douglas Rothkopf, was not immediately returned.

DONATION STATION



PHOTO BY RUBEN CASTILLO/The Daily Treador
GEORGIA SPOLEC, A student from Dallas, donates blood Monday at the United Blood Services mobile unit located outside the Student Union Building. The next blood drive will take place Monday at the Horn/Knapp Residence Hall.

Tax compliance costly for individuals, businesses

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's tax code is so complex that taxpayers spend nearly \$200 billion a year on the work required to comply with requirements, the government's taxpayer advocate said in a report released Wednesday. The report also said the Internal Revenue Service should do more to help financially strapped taxpayers meet their obligations, an issue addressed by the IRS on Tuesday. Lawmakers have been talking about simplifying tax laws for years, yet the tax code has grown to 3.7 million words, Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson wrote in her report. In the past eight years, changes to the tax code have been made at a rate of more than one a day. "There is a real economic cost of complying with the tax code," Olson said in an interview. The tax code is likely to get even more complex in the coming weeks as Congress considers an economic stimulus package that is expected to include about \$300 billion in tax cuts, including breaks for individuals and businesses.

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STAT. CHAN. AFFIL. CITY	KTXT 5 PBS Lubbock	KCBD 11 NBC Lubbock	KLBK 13 CBS Lubbock	KMYL 14 MYN Lubbock	KLCW 22 CW Lubbock	KAMC 26 ABC Lubbock	KJTV 34 FOX Lubbock
7 AM	Curious (HD)	Today Sched: <i>used: food mistakes; Laird Hamilton</i>	The Early Show	Copeland Robison	(5:00) Daily Buzz	Good Morning America (HD)	(6:00) Good Day Lubbock
8 AM	Super Why (HD)	Govind Armstrong: <i>Marlo Lopez</i> (HD)	The 700 Club	Believer's J. Hanna	Divorce Payne	Regis & Kelly	Martha Stewart
9 AM	Sesame Street (HD)		Pride Is Right (HD)	Divorce Payne	Cosby	The View (HD)	Bonnie Hunt Show
10 AM	Dragon Word		The Morning Show	Alex Cistina	Cosby		Tyra
11 AM	Martha Jeopardy	Restless (HD)		Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.
12 PM	Quilling Watercolor	News Days of Our Lives	News Beautiful	The People's Court	Roseanne Roseanne	All My Children	Paid Prog.
1 PM	Holiday	The Doctors	As the World	Paid Prog.	Fam. Court	One Life to Live	The People's Court
2 PM	Betw. Lion Reading	Inside	Guiding Light	Mauri	Judge Jeanine	General Hospital	Judge Mathis
3 PM	Arthur WorldGirl	Oprah Winfrey	Brown	Extra	J. Foix	No Deal	Ellen DeGeneres
4 PM	FETCH Cyber	Dr. Phil	Judy	Mauri	Standing	Rachael Ray	News
5 PM	Maya	News	News	Fam. Feud	Queens	News	Lopez
6 PM	NewsHour (HD)	News	News	Fam. Feud	Queens	News	Simpsons
7 PM	Old House Hour	Earl (HD)	CSI: NY (HD)	Law Order (HD)	'70s	News	Family
8 PM	Story	Office	CSI: Crime (HD)	Millionaire	'70s	ET	Fox BCS
9 PM	Soundstage (HD)	ER (HD)	Eleventh Hour (HD)	CSI: NY (HD)	"No Way Out" (87) A mistress is slain.	Smallville "Bride"	Ugly Betty (HD)
10 PM	Bus. Rpt	News	News	King	Sex City	News	College Football Florida vs Oklahoma (Live) (HD)
11 PM	WorldFocus	The Tonight Show	(10:35) Late Show	TMZ	Maimed	Nightline	Jimmy Kimmel
12 AM	Rose	(11:35) Late Show	Late Late Show	Wife	Bernie	News	Frasier
	Cherish	Night	My Lubbock	Cops	Paid Prog.	Insider	Paid Prog.
	Geography	Last Call	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.	Paid Prog.

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Parody song more sophomoric than satirical

On Dec. 26th, it became public that the Tennessee Republican leader and former Mike Huckabee campaign manager, Chip Saltsman, had released a CD containing satirical, anti-democratic songs as a Christmas gift to other members of the Republican National Committee.

Songs titled "Love Client #9" and "Down on the Farm with Al Gore," among others, were simply light-hearted satire in nature and did elicit much attention. However, located on the CD, was the now infamous song "Barack the Magic Negro," a play-off of the title of an article that ran in the *Los Angeles Times* in March 2007.

The song is sung by Paul Shanklin imitating the Rev. Al Sharpton and contains lyrics such as: "He made guilty whites feel good, they'll vote for him and not for me 'cause he's not from the hood."

The song was first exposed to the public back in 2007 by conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh who played it on his program. However, the song did not receive much attention or criticism because, quite frankly, offensive ignorance like this is standard behavior on "The Rush Limbaugh Show."

So Saltsman mailed off copies of the CD as Christmas presents to

Derek Johnston



members of the RNC. Perhaps he expected it to be taken comically and earn him a few points as he pushes for the chairmanship of the party. Instead, he unleashed a torrent of infighting within members of the Republican Party.

RNC Chairman Robert Duncan said he was "shocked and appalled that anyone would think this was appropriate as it clearly does not move us in the right direction." Saltsman responded shortly thereafter by releasing a statement which said, "Liberal Democrats and their allies in the media didn't utter a word about David Ehrenstein's irresponsible column in the *Los Angeles Times* last March. But now, of course, they're shocked and appalled by its parody on 'The Rush Limbaugh Show.'"

Saltsman was referring to the March 2007 Op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* which refers to a historical-sociological term that emerged in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* as a black man who "has no past, (and)

simply appears one day to help the white protagonist." He exists to ease the white man's guilt over the slavery and oppression of African-Americans but does not conform to racist stereotypes of African-Americans.

This term usually reserved for cinematic characters "portrayed by actors such as Sydney Poitier, Morgan Freeman, and recently Don Cheadle," to name a few. The article makes the claim that then presidential candidate Barack Obama takes on this role, by being black but "not authentically so."

In spite of Duncan's condemnation of Saltsman's actions, some Republicans are coming to his defense. Ken Blackwell, the former Ohio secretary of state and one of four African-American members of the RNC, defended Saltsman by commenting on "the hypersensitivity in the press regarding race."

Florida Republican Party Chair-

man Jim Greer, who was also considering running for the RNC chairmanship, released a message supporting "any candidates for the chairmanship who have taken a 'firm position' on Saltsman's decision to distribute the 'racially-insulting song.'"

While the lyrics of the song are undeniably offensive, they are, in my opinion, simply tacky and the incident is not worth the attention it has been given. This election cycle has proven to be one of the great elections of American history. Obama hasn't even served a day in office and already he is hailed as a great American president by much of the country. In fact, if not yet a great president — which judging solely on the conduct of his transition team he very well may be — he is a great American symbol.

When the country was founded, there was no such thing as an African-American. There were slaves.

At the very most, an African man counted as three-fifths of a person. From the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery in America, it would be over 100 years before the ancestors of freedmen would be given any rights at all under the Constitution.

And now in the year 2009, an African-American will be sworn in as the 44th president of the United States. Forget your politics, forget all the discussion of policy on both sides of the aisle, Jan. 20th will be a great day for America.

But it is occurrences like the media attention this song is now receiving that will detract from the greatness of this moment. While the race issue will be in the spotlight no matter what, for the first time in this election cycle, it will be spotlighted in a positive sense. I will be spotlighted in the sense that while it remains an issue, it is no longer a restraint.

While racism will still be used to offend, it will no longer be used to hold people back. So in this way, race is the primary issue of the inauguration, but for the first time in 200 years, it is not an enemy of progress. It is instead, for one day, a symbol of progress. But "Barack the Magic Negro" and offensive satire like it

stand in the way of progress and return the issue of race in America to a negative light.

However, we must cut the political right-wingers a little slack. After eight years of power I'm sure their satire skills are a little rusty. After eight years in the background, liberals have learned to wield satire like a painter wields a brush to create a masterful work of art.

So this song and its distribution among the RNC come across as merely petty and sophomoric. And its publicity as racist and offensive does little but to distract us from what is really happening in the United States.

For the first time ever, Americans have proven that given enough determination focused in the right direction, a person's station in life is no longer dictated, as Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." I hope that in the weeks to come, this unfortunate incident will be forgotten and as a nation we can put politics aside and look forward to a future that is brighter than we have seen in a very long time.

Johnston is a computer science major from Lubbock. E-mail him at derek.johnston@ttu.edu

"While the lyrics of the song are undeniably offensive, they are, in my opinion, simply tacky and the incident is not worth the attention it has been given."

Warren unjust choice for inauguration

STAFF EDITORIAL
THE ORACLE (U. SOUTH FLORIDA)

President-elect Barack Obama has chosen Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback church and author of the bestselling book *The Purpose Driven Life*, to deliver his inaugural invocation Jan. 20. Warren happens to be vehemently opposed to gay rights and not believe in evolution.

In an interview with Larry King in 2005, Warren questioned the consistency of believing in both evolution and a genetic basis for homosexuality.

"If Darwin was right, which is survival of the fittest, then homosexuality would be a recessive gene because it doesn't reproduce and you would think that over thousands of years that

homosexuality would work itself out of the gene pool," he said.

Warren sent out a video message in an attempt to rally support for banning

"...It is unforgivable to put political posturing above eliminating divisiveness between groups,"

gay marriage. He had some predictably dramatic words on the subject:

"There are about 2 percent of

Americans (who) are homosexual or gay, lesbian people. We should not let 2 percent of the population determine to change the definition of marriage that has been supported by every single culture and every single religion for 5,000 years. This is not even just a Christian issue, it is a humanitarian and human issue."

Disregarding the fact that Warren grossly underestimates the actual percentage of homosexuals in America, it is patently un-American to disregard a group's rights based on size.

It is understandable that Obama would choose a prominent Christian figure to garner political favor among the evangelicals who shied away from him last November. However, it is unforgivable to put political posturing above eliminating divisiveness between groups. Inviting a polarizing figure flatly opposed to taking into account the opinions a minority of the population does nothing to further inclusiveness or tolerance.

Imagine if Obama were to invite Louis Farrakhan to deliver the invocation. This scenario seems both absurd and unlikely because it wouldn't appeal to the majority. It would also be likely to anger and alienate America's Jewish population — which happens to make up 2 percent of the U.S. population, according to U.S. Census Bureau. This begs the question: If Louis Farrakhan had penned a best-selling book, were Christian and had millions of evangelicals supporting him, would these be reason enough to overlook his anti-Semitic comments and invite him to give the inaugural invocation?

Appealing to the majority rather than applying universal principles of justice and equality is no more reasonable in the hypothetical than it is in Obama's very real invitation to Warren.

YouTube users strike gold with Google Ads

By MATT FERRARA
THE ORACLE (U. SOUTH FLORIDA)

YouTube is no longer just for water-skiing squirrels and pre-teen girls facing off about which of the three Jonas Brothers is the hottest. In light of record-low unemployment rates, the user-created video Web site is putting Americans back to work — in front of their Web cams.

In October of 2006, youtube.com, then in only its second year, was bought by search engine giant Google for \$1.65 billion. Before the buy, Google Video was YouTube's biggest competition, allowing all its users to upload lengthy videos, whereas on YouTube uploads were limited to a length of 10 minutes unless granted a director account. This brought advertisers and viewers looking for full-length pictures like the conspiracy theory film phenomenon Zeitgeist: The Movie over to Google's side of the fence.

Google Video used its fan base and advertising power to create an Internet super-hub for self-expression via YouTube. In early 2008, to promote this self-expression — and, of course, to generate revenue — Google created the YouTube Partner Program, a sector of Google Ads used to pay YouTube stars for their work.

According to the partnership's homepage, "YouTube partners are independent video creators and media companies who are looking for online distribution and who meet (the partnership's) qualifications. Becoming a partner gives you the ability to share in ad revenue from your YouTube videos."

This may come as music to the ears of relentless vloggers and undeclared college students searching for their lot in life, but becoming a YouTube partner isn't as simple as becoming a partner at your local food co-op. To become a partner, users must meet three qualifications: They must create original videos suitable for representation by YouTube, own the copyrights for all video and audio used and upload videos regularly that are viewed by thousands of YouTube users.

Such exclusivity is unusual for Google Ads, as on blogspot.com anyone who wishes to add the application can. This is because Google Ads on BlogSpot are all from Google's small business AdSense program, which doesn't bring in nearly as much money per advertiser as YouTube,



according to an AdSense support representative. Support of Google Ads on blogs typically brings in 3 to 5 cents per hit for bloggers.

The YouTube Partner Program, on the other hand, deals with the big corporate bucks. Sponsors include the likes of Sony, Verizon, LG, CBS and McDonald's, to name a few, and their advertising dollars will be spent only in a medium in which they can reach hundreds of thousands of people.

Michael Buckley of buckhollywood.com was one of the first handful of video creators to make it as a YouTube partner. His online show "What the Buck?," a commentary on all things celebrity, comes out three times a week and averages more than 200,000 views an episode. Buckley

told the *New York Times* that his show earned him over \$100,000 in 2008, the year in which his videos were most viewed.

Buckley may be a case of one-in-a-million YouTube stardom, but one doesn't have to be a household name to gain sponsorship. Newer YouTube channels with only a few videos at 25,000 views a piece have gained sponsorship, and YouTube moderators help give potential partners a jump start by featuring some of their favorite videos of the day on the homepage.

Heather Jayne, a senior majoring in social work, is grateful for the partnership program because even if not everyone can make it big on YouTube, everyone can benefit from it.

"Everything is online now, so everyone gains from this. The people who make the videos make money, the people who make the ads make money and the people watching these videos get free entertainment," she said.

Commenting on the press coverage of the YouTube Partner Program on his live BlogTV webcast last month, Buckley shared this sentiment with his viewers and all of YouTube: "It's nice to see people off of YouTube getting successful and creating positive press attention. It's (no longer) like a viral and freakish 'Oh! Do you believe these kids did that on YouTube!' kind of thing anymore. It really is a great day for YouTube."



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Meet the DT's new bloggers, check them out online.

The Press Box

By Alex Ybarra, managing editor
Consider it a delicious buffet of sports clicks for your little index finger, but don't worry, weight gain is not a side effect (for all you with New Year's resolutions).

Experience Points: Tutorial Level

By Britton Peele, opinions editor
If you thought you saw more than enough of that nerdy guy who writes about video games and geeky television shows like "Heroes" in print pages of The Daily Toreador, think again.

Livin' la Vida

By Tina L. Arons, features editor
If you've ever wondered about what happens on the windowless top floor of the psychology building, how the campus clock tower is cleaned or whether it's possible to give up coffee — fear not.

Visit each blog at blogs.dailytoreador.com

Holiday-eating stomach problems can be remedied with good diet, exercise

By HANNAH BOEN
STAFF WRITER

A holiday of feasting, toasting and traveling may mean spending the beginning of the new year feeling green around the gills.

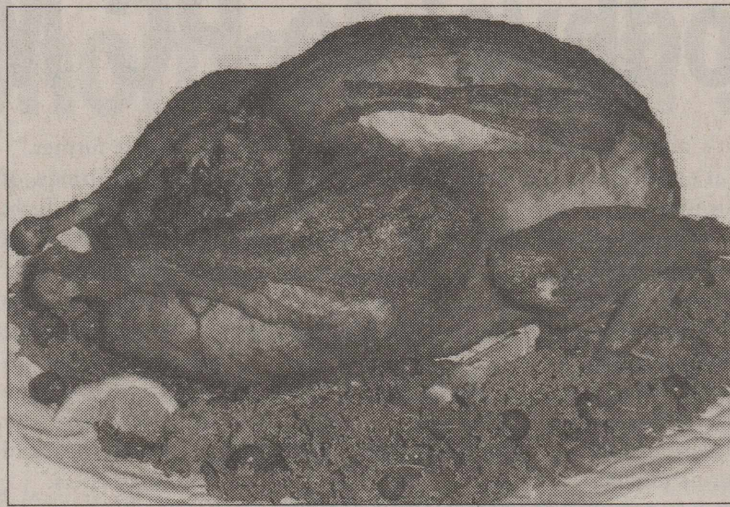
Texas Tech's Student Health Services medical director, Dr. Kelly Bennett, said both traveling and overeating can cause stomach problems and digestive disruptions.

Traveling oftentimes takes people away from normal eating habits, Bennett said, which causes indigestion, fluid retention and fatigue.

"Most people cannot find healthy foods while traveling," she said, "so people tend to get a very high carbohydrate and high fat diet."

Besides diet changes while traveling, Bennett said people tend to drink more alcohol and eat richer foods during the holiday months, which comes with consequences.

"If you eat more than normal, the stomach must expand," she said, "and that causes pain. Also, if you drink too much alcohol, your pancreas



puts out too many chemicals, causing more pain."

Common stomach problems range from overindulging to heartburn and indigestion to gastritis, a condition Bennett said can be caused by excessive consumption of alcohol.

Although few people suffer from gastritis during the holidays, the Web MD Web site considers alcohol to be one of the top ten consumed items that causes heartburn.

Caffeine, peppermint, chocolate, onion and garlic also made the list of heartburn sources, all of which are popular holiday foods.

The average American gains about seven pounds during the holiday season, Bennett said, which boils down to consuming an extra 21,000 calories in the five weeks from Thanksgiving to Christmas. However, she said there is hope for people who have gained weight as a

result of holiday eating habits. "New Year's resolutions following the six weeks of holiday eating is convenient," she said. "Make New Year's resolutions to cut back on fat and carbs and go to the gym."

Debra Reed, a nutrition professor at Tech, offered a suggestion other than heading to the gym to offset digestion disruptions from holiday eating.

Reed said after a season of neglecting nutrition, fruits and vegetables are a good place to start.

"Don't deprive yourself of nutrition," she said.

Reed said 77 percent of people do not consume enough fruits and vegetables, which are low in calories and full of fiber and will help counteract the holiday gorging.

It is important to eat a well-balanced diet and stay active simultaneously, she said.

"Have oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat bread and lots of water," Reed said, "and physical activity makes all the difference in the world."

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Grand Theft Auto IV leads top 10 video games of 2008

No matter your favorite genre or console of choice, most players can agree 2008 was a great year for video games.

The year as a whole may not compete with 1998 — a year that included the release of some of the greatest games of all time, such as "The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time," "StarCraft," and "Half-Life" — but 2008 received some amazing titles of its own.

I present my personal favorite games of the year to those behind with last year's releases who may be looking for somewhere to spend some post-holiday cash. These titles were some of the best games of 2008.

10. "Professor Layton and the Curious Village"

Nintendo DS had yet another great year, but it was "Professor Layton" that captured my heart the most. Packed with charm and puzzle-solving gameplay, this is a game I highly recommend.

Britton Peele



I hope Nintendo will bring the sequels from Japan to the United States as soon as possible.

9. "LittleBigPlanet"
Where this amazingly charming platformer really excels is in its potential for user-generated content. Unfortunately, Sony has been fairly draconian in their moderation policies, taking some of the best stuff down and preventing "LBP" from being higher on this list.

8. "Gears of War 2"

If all a player wants is outstanding action, he or she could certainly do worse than "Gears of War 2." With

outstanding visuals, great gameplay and easily one of the best multiplayer experiences of the year, "Gears 2" is an improvement over the original in every way.

7. "Burnout Paradise"
Reinventing the series by taking the gameplay to an open-world format, developer Criterion has made what is easily the best "Burnout" game yet, which makes it one of the best racing games of all time in my opinion.

6. "Braid"

This puzzle game is intriguing for a variety of reasons. It's downloadable (currently available on the Xbox Live Marketplace), 2D and was mainly created by one guy. If its highly addicting, time-manipulation puzzles aren't enough, "Braid" does something few puzzle games ever attempt. It weaves an interesting story that, when faced with the final moments and realizations, make the player say, "Holy crap!"

5. "Banjo-Kazooie Nuts and Bolts"

A title you may not find on a lot of "Top 10" lists from other gamers, "Nuts and Bolts" completely rebuilds the "Banjo-Kazooie" series with surprisingly good results. Moving away from item collecting and towards vehicle building, "Nuts and Bolts" is an extremely fun experience I think has been severely overlooked, especially considering its \$40 MSRP.

4. "Fallout 3"

Staying mostly true to the premise of being able to be anyone and do anything, "Fallout 3" lets you explore an expansive post-apocalyptic Washington, D.C., in search of the character's father. Players can choose to follow an interesting story or simply spend your time stealing bottle caps from innocent civilians while making choices that include saving a town or setting off a nuke to blow it up.

3. "Dead Space"

A game truly greater than the sum of its parts, "Dead Space" is a masterpiece that takes the best aspects from games such as "Resident Evil 4" and "Bioshock" to create what will hopefully be one of the best new series' to come along in some time.

2. "Metal Gear Solid 4"

Some may argue that "MGS4" isn't as much of a game as it is a Blu-ray movie, because players spend as much time watching cutscenes as he or she does sneaking around buildings and gunning down soldiers. But the story in "MGS4" is well worth the time spent watching, and it is a very fitting end to a character who has one of gaming's most iconic figures for the past decade, Solid Snake.

1. "Grand Theft Auto IV"

If someone had told me a year ago my favorite game of 2008 would be a "Grand Theft Auto" game, I would have called them insane. I've never

before been a fan of the series, which is known to the public more for its controversial content involving sex, crime and violence.

"GTA IV," however, took the series into an extremely serious direction, weaving a plot that rivals crime movie classics such as "Goodfellas" while creating strong emotional ties from the player to the game's characters, which makes certain story-altering choices along the way more difficult.

Combine that with stellar open-world gameplay, outstanding voice acting and fantastic writing, and I think you have the best game of 2008, if not one of the greatest games of all time.

So, those are my opinions on the top titles of last year. Disagree? Feel free to express your own thoughts on www.DailyToreador.com.

Peele is a sophomore English major from Union Valley. E-mail him at britton.peele@ttu.edu.

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	5		8		7	1		
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9	2	3						4
		5	7		2			4
	4							6
			4					2
								1

Puzzles by PageFiller

In Sudoku, all the numbers 1 to 9 must be in every row, column and 3 x 3 box. Use logic to define the answers.

5	9	1	4	8	2	3	6	7
8	7	4	3	9	6	2	5	1
3	6	2	7	1	5	9	8	4
1	3	9	8	4	7	6	2	5
7	5	8	2	6	1	4	3	9
2	4	6	5	3	9	1	7	8
6	8	3	9	7	4	5	1	2
4	2	7	1	5	3	8	9	6
9	1	5	6	2	8	7	4	3

Solution to yesterday's puzzle

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A safe place for students & staff to bring concerns.

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Cigarettes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

estimated smoking caused 82,400 fires in the United States in 2005, and older adults are at the highest risk of death or injury from smoking-material fires, even though they are less likely to smoke than younger adults.

The most common material first ignited in home, smoking-material fire deaths were mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture, according to the association's Web site.

Kyle Walker, a senior restaurant, hotel and institutional management major from Abilene, said he does not plan to smoke fire-safe cigarettes.

He was planning to quit anyway, he said, and the new legislation increases his motivation.

Walker said he heard several concerns about an increased toxicity, changes in taste and inconvenience.

"I think it's going to help a lot of people quit," he said. "And it's safer."

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Harvard study: Big behinds may benefit health

By LINGBO LI
HARVARD CRIMSON (HARVARD)

Being bootylicious has helped many a hip-hop career, but now Harvard Medical School research has found that it can also help your health.

A study led by HMS professor C. Ronald Kahn found that the kind of fat that has made Jennifer Lopez famous — fat found in the buttocks and thighs — may actually help prevent diabetes.

Those with generous derrieres, or

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"pear-shaped" bodies, store subcutaneous fat in their hips and buttocks. Those with "apple-shaped" bodies tend to store weight around their abdomens.

Researchers already knew abdominal obesity came with a higher risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

What Kahn wanted to know was what would happen if the fat from the two areas was switched. So he injected lower-body fat from mice into their abdomens.

"What we found was that moving the fat under the skin and hips...actually improved metabolism," Kahn said in an interview.

Mice with the transplanted fat lost weight, had lower insulin levels, and had better insulin sensitivity.

Kahn had found that not all fat is created equal: subcutaneous fat from the lower body, it turns out, is very different from abdominal fat.

What the difference is, exactly, has yet to be discovered. That kind of finding would have "enormous implications" for the understanding of obesity and diabetes and for the pharmaceutical industry, said Philip Gorden, the former director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

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Tech struggling with focus as Big 12 schedule looms

By ALEX YBARRA
MANAGING EDITOR

Before TCU handed Texas Tech its first home loss of the season Wednesday, forward Mike Singletary admitted the Red Raiders have lost focus too often.

"We just need to take every game and not look ahead," he said. "I think that we've been doing that lately. I think that once the Big 12 comes into play, I think we'll be ready. I think we're all kind of ready for Big 12 to start, but we do know that we do have to get the (TCU) game."

There is some good news and some bad news based on Singletary's comments.

The good news is Tech will not have to look ahead to the Big 12 Conference schedule anymore with Tech opening league play against Baylor at 12:30 p.m. Saturday in Waco.

The bad news was Tech still struggled to slow down TCU, losing 85-80. It was the fourth loss in seven games after starting the season 7-1.

So expect the learning curve to get sharper here in the next few weeks.

"Our goal is we wanna be a better (conference) team than last year," said Singletary, who scored 22 points against TCU. "We felt like there were a lot of games in there last year that we should've won. We just didn't have the leadership or anything to win those games. We feel like we have that this year."

"We really think we should be in the upper half of the Big 12 this year. We know that if we don't figure out these problems it's gonna be a tough run."

Tech coach Pat Knight, who after a 111-66 loss to Stanford owns the three-worst losses in school history, said the defense looks better in practice than in games.

"This is not North Carolina," he said. "We're gonna have ups and downs because the kids we're getting in here, but it's getting better."

Hopefully for Knight, the injuries to Trevor Cook, Michael Prince and Nick Okorie won't linger the rest of the way.

Okorie returned from an ankle sprain during the Stanford game but has not looked 100 percent since. Against TCU though, he showed glimpses of the athleticism that proved difficult to contain earlier this season with 13 points despite going 4-of-12 from the field.

After missing six games with a foot injury, Prince looked fresh during his 14 minutes against TCU, and Knight said it was refreshing to see the senior's high energy level.

Knight said he is unsure when Cook, who has not played since the Stanford game, and Damir Suljagic will return. Both are suffering from back injuries.

"They're never gonna be 100 percent until after the season," Knight said of his injured players. "To be 100 percent you gotta take off a couple months and they just can't afford to do that. We're a little banged up and so is everybody else. If you look around the country everyone has got injuries, but it's basketball."

On a positive note, Tech does get 7-foot center Esmir Rizvic back in time for Big 12 games.

The senior was granted an extra semester by the NCAA and chose to



FILE PHOTO/The Daily Treador

ALAN VOSKUIL AND the Red Raiders aim for a good start in Big 12 Conference play against Baylor at 12:30 p.m. Saturday in Waco.

return for the more important games of the year, which will come in handy considering the list of injuries.

Either way, Tech will face an uphill battle to reach the top half in the Big 12, but as a vocal leader of the team,

Singletary remains confident.

"I think we're all ready to make that step forward," he said, "and get back to playing the way that we were at the beginning of the year."

►daniel.ybarra@ttu.edu

Hold that pose: Florida, Oklahoma play for No. 1

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Bob Stoops posed next to the crystal football and played along with a wave of photographers.

They asked him to look to the left, he did. They asked him to smile, he did. Any shot they wanted Wednesday inside a hotel ballroom, he gave them.

Then a shutterbug shouted to the Oklahoma coach, telling him to hold up his finger, showing who's No. 1. Stoops tilted his head, stared at the guy and kept his hands still.

"Too soon," he said.

First, there's a game to play. The hurry-up Sooners and speedy Florida meet Thursday night for the BCS championship, a matchup that includes a pair of Heisman Trophy winners, an SEC vs. Big 12 debate and more than its share of trash talk.

Besides, enough teams already are claiming the top spot. Southern California, Utah and Texas hope their bowl wins impressed enough voters in The Associated Press poll, which will be released in the wee hours Friday.

Heck, how about New Hampshire? The Wildcats beat Army, which beat Louisiana Tech, which beat Mississippi State, which beat Vanderbilt, which beat Mississippi, which handed the No. 1 Gators their only loss.

No wonder college fans from President-elect Barack Obama on down want to see a playoff system.

"I think at some point in time it might happen," Florida coach Urban Meyer said Wednesday. "I didn't believe that a few years ago, but I feel now the discussion is out of control. I can't imagine any guy that enjoys football not discussing that wherever he's at. So I imagine at some point that might happen now."

As to whether it should be a tournament for four, eight or 16 teams, that's someone else's department.

"It's not my job to figure that out," Meyer said. "I think it would be hard. I don't know how you do it."

Echoed Stoops: "That's not for me to do. They're all good football teams; everyone realizes that. So again, that's for you guys to choose."

There's plenty of time to think about it. The BCS' latest TV deal with ESPN ensures there won't be a playoff until at least 2014.

Meanwhile, there's a pretty attractive game brewing at Dolphin Stadium between 12-1 teams.

Tim Tebow was a freshman two years ago, backing up Chris Leak when the Gators stomped Ohio State for the national championship. Tebow won the Heisman last season and now will try to add a second title.

The Rambo-style quarterback will soon explore his NFL options, deciding whether to enter the draft or return for his senior season. Tebow is not exactly elegant with his left-handed tosses, and some scouts project he'll wind up as a tight end in the pros.

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SPORTS

PAGE 8
THURSDAY, JAN. 8, 2009

Cotton Bowl, BCS title game showcase conference battle between SEC, Big 12

By ADAM COLEMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Maybe this year's Cotton Bowl Classic was more than just a Top-10 team against another that erased four-straight losing seasons.

Any indication of that came from the Ole Miss fans chanting, "S-E-C" throughout the game or Ole Miss offensive lineman Michael Oher having his conference letters written on the turf tape on his face.

Maybe the Bowl Championship Series National Championship game between No. 1 Oklahoma and No. 2 Florida is more than two high-scoring offenses colliding.

OU cornerback Dominique Franks showed that after saying the best offensive players are in the Big 12 Conference.

"The (Southeastern Conference), we're the best conference," Oher said. "We're tough, hard-nose every night. We showed that playing against Texas Tech. They weren't physical at all. We ran the ball down their throat. They were crying the whole time. We just showed them what SEC football is all about: hard-nosed."

The game between Ole Miss and Tech not only was a battle between this year's Cotton Bowl participants, but it also was between representatives from two of college football's most scrutinized conferences.

The same could be said for the BCS National Championship game between No. 1 Oklahoma and No. 2 Florida at 8 p.m. in Miami Gardens, Fla.

This season, Tech is one of seven Big 12 teams to make a bowl — four from the Big 12's South Division and three from the Big 12 North.

The SEC has eight teams in a bowl with five from the SEC East and three from the SEC West.

The two conferences seem to have the attention of the college football world at

one point of the season every year.

Ole Miss and Tech's game was no different as this year's Cotton Bowl was the most attended in the bowl's 73 years in existence with 88,175 people in the stands.

With three of the last national champions coming from either conference, some debates surface which is the better conference.

While Ole Miss fans and Oher may believe the Cotton Bowl was a chance to showcase the SEC once again, Tech players tried not to focus on a battle between conferences.

Tech linebacker Brian Duncan said focusing on a game between conferences rather than a game between Ole Miss and Tech was a distraction the Red Raiders tried not to pay attention to.

"We tried to eliminate that out of our minds," he said. "Of course we were representing the Big 12 in this game. I still believe our team is the better team, but (Friday), they came out on top and they were the better team."

The Cotton Bowl was one of two bowls to feature an SEC team against a Big 12 team. The other is this year's national championship game.

The BCS title game showcases Heisman Trophy winner and Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford against one of the finalists that finished behind him in Florida's Tim Tebow. The other finalist was Texas' Colt McCoy.

With Texas winning in 2005, Florida in 2006 and LSU last season, the game's winner will mark the fourth-straight year the national champion has come from either conference.

The conference debate recently received extra attention with Franks' comments on Monday concerning the Sooner defense.

According to Big12Sports.com, Franks said the Big 12 has "the three best quarterbacks, the three best wide receivers" and "the three best tight ends



PHOTO BY RUBEN CASTILLO/The Daily Toreador

AN OLE' MISS fan shows off his school pride at the Cotton Bowl Saturday in Dallas.

in the country." When asked if that makes Tebow the fourth-best quarterback in the nation, Franks replied yes, according to the story.

Florida linebacker Brandon Spikes also commented on the differences between the two conferences, saying the OU offense was "a step slower" and "it will be different for them when they see the speed of our defense."

Outside the drama surrounding the national championship, so far this bowl season the Big 12 has a 4-2 record while the SEC sits at 5-2.

So an Oklahoma win could go a long way in furthering the argument.

Tech receiver Eric Morris said he does not take any chant from a crowd personal and he was quick to point out Ole Miss' good execution in the 47-34 loss to the Rebels. But he also said Ole Miss' defense was nothing like the defenses he faced this season.

"They executed their gameplan, but they're not faster than Oklahoma, Oklahoma State or Texas — the top tier

defenses in the Big 12," he said. "I'm not taking anything away from them, but it wasn't personal for us"

Ole Miss quarterback Jevan Snead has seemed to make a name for himself after transferring from Texas to Ole Miss and leading the Rebels to a 10-win season.

Snead did not see much action while he was in the Big 12 as he went 26-of-49 for 371 yards and two touchdowns in 2006 as McCoy's backup.

Although the most extensive action he's seen has been as an SEC quarterback, the sophomore said both conferences deserve the attention they receive.

"We have a lot of pride in our conference, and we do think it's the best," the Stephenville native said. "Not trying to say anything bad about (the Big 12) because I played in it. I know it is a very tough conference as well. They're both great conferences and can't say anything bad about Tech or the Big 12 Conference because it's full of athletes just like the SEC is."

>>> daniel.ybarra@ttu.edu

New assistant track coach has Tech ties

By ADAM WADSWORTH
STAFF WRITER

With goals of putting the Texas Tech track team on the map, a former Olympic Trials runner has joined the Red Raiders as a new assistant coach.

Tech coach Wes Kittley added a new member to his staff this Tuesday with the hiring of former TCU All-American Roy Williams.

Williams, formerly an associate head coach at Texas-Arlington, was hired to coach sprints and relays for Tech in the upcoming 2009 season.

Williams ran the 400-meter relay at TCU in which he qualified for two Olympic Trials. He also was a four-time All-American and a part of a national championship 4x4-meter relay team in 2000.

After college, Williams worked for All Saints Episcopal High School in Fort Worth, where he coached several state champion teams and several future scholarship athletes.

After moving to UTA, Williams was named the head coach for sprints, relays, jumps, and hurdles. During his three-year tenure there, he coached Olympic qualifier Jared Connaughton in the 200-meter dash and the 400-meter relay.

Kittley said he knew Williams previously, as he originally recruited Williams to run for him when he was still coaching at Abilene Christian.

"I'd just kind of known him for a long time, I've known his family," said Kittley, who enters the 2009 season with the sixth-ranked recruiting class. "I saw him at meets carrying himself well. I felt

like he was very experienced."

Williams' involvement with recruiting in the Dallas and Fort Worth areas is something Kittley values, as he said "it's a real recruiting base" for Tech. Although Williams only has been at Tech for two days, Kittley said he already could tell he will fit in with the team.

Williams grew up in West Texas and said he's glad to be back in a familiar area.

"I'm close to my mom and she loves that," he said. "It's a little colder than I'm used to, but I'm happy to be back. Almost like being home."

Williams also said he is happy to be working for Kittley, a longtime friend who mentored his dad on how to coach him throughout his career.

While associate head coach is technically a higher position than the one he has at Tech, Williams said he left UTA because of his desire to be a head coach one day.

"I think this will put me in a better position to move up one day," he said. "It is all in the big picture."

Both coaches have high expectations for the upcoming season that features standouts such as eight-time national champion Sally Kipyego, Patience Knight, D'Andra Carter and Rodney Mims, one of the senior sprinters.

Williams said he believes he can help turn Tech into a national power. His goal is to challenge for national titles every year.

Kittley said Williams has a good concept of what he wants to get done and that the entire staff is excited about the opportunities it has this season.

The Red Raiders open their season with the Texas Tech Invitational Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. in the Athletic Training Complex.

>>> adam.wadsworth@ttu.edu

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