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The PAMPA NEWS

Thursday, December 1, 2011 Volume 107 • No. 197 75¢ Daily • Weekend \$1.50

McConahy new CEO at Pampa Regional

ARNIE AURELLANO
 editor@thepampanews.com

Pampa Regional Medical Center has a new chief executive officer.

"On an interim basis," said Dick McConahy. "I'm here to manage the closure of the proposed purchase."

McConahy, 63, takes over for Bill Buck, who left Pampa last week after Signature Hospital

Corporation, PRMC's current parent company, signed a letter of intent to sell the facility to Nuetera Healthcare and Progressive Acute Care.

A Pennsylvania native transplanted to Georgia before coming to Pampa, McConahy holds a degree in nursing from Penn State and a masters in hospital management from Central Michigan University. He has over 35 years of experience in the

medical field, a career path that started as a military clinical specialist in Vietnam. Within healthcare, he is a seasoned veteran who has served various roles, from registered nurse to hospital assistant administrator to chief executive officer.

He has helmed three individual hospitals as CEO, the largest a 200-bed hospital in Macon, Ga., and the smallest a 45-bed facility in Elberton in the same

state. He also served 10 years as CEO of Lanier Health Systems, a three-hospital system in Carrollton, Ga.

Currently an administrative consultant by trade, McConahy was brought in by Signature to help helm PRMC during its proposed ownership transition.

"I've been doing interim work for a little while now," McConahy said. "I try to do the **MCCONAHY** cont. on page 2"

TODAY IN SPORTS Seeking
 Page 1B Page 2B

NUTCRACKER SWEETS

photo courtesy of **Nikki Shelton / Shutterbug Photography**

Jana Shults (Clara) and **Ethan Rushing** (the Prince) will play the leads in Saturday's upcoming production of *The Nutcracker*, presented by the Pampa Civic Ballet. The show, which starts at 7:30 p.m. at M.K. Brown Auditorium, is directed by Deanna McGill with guest artists Stephanie Parker, Mark Lanham and Jeff M. Smith. Tickets are available at the door or from the Dance Academy at Pampa, 663-9103.

City looking into election for S.B. 100

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

While the City Commission has already decided to change its elections process to coincide with requirements from federal legislation, the city is exploring ways to hold a charter election that would allow voters to approve of the changes.

These changes came about as a result of Senate Bill 100, legislation designed to make it easier for people in the military to vote. The bill also created election changes for the city, county and PISD.

The city decided in late October to increase terms for commissioners **CITY** cont. on page 8

Prospective Election Schedule

2012: Two-year terms for commissioners in Wards 2 and 4

2013: Four-year terms for the mayor and commissioners in Wards 1 and 3

2014: One year holdover with no election

2015: Four-year terms for commissioners in Wards 2 and 4

Hank the Cowdog creator Erickson comes to Pampa

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

John R. Erickson, a Panhandle native who hails from Perryton, delivered a program yesterday to Pampa elementary school kids on his "Hank the Cowdog" series. Since 1983, Erickson has self-published 58 books, each told from the perspective of Hank, a lovable dog who works as Head of Ranch Security, all the while solving mysteries and having adventures.

Writing children's books was an unexpected career for Erickson, who graduated from the University of Texas and attended the Harvard Divinity School for two years.

"I was thinking about going into the ministry, but I decided that was not my language system, so I decided I would try to be a writer. I didn't know if I could or not," he said. "I knew it was going to be tough."

For 15 years, he sent everything from novels and short stories to plays and book reviews off to publishers, without getting

a bite from editors.

"I was trying to be a literary man, and I was just imitating the kind of stories that were being written about in *Time* magazine and *Atlantic Monthly*, places like that," said Erickson. "And I just never made it as a literary man. After 15 years, I stopped trying, and I started writing for livestock papers."

Drawing from his ranching background, Erickson began to get his work published in publications like *West Texas Livestock Weekly*, *The Cattleman* and *Western Horseman Magazine*.

"I was writing about what I was doing, and it was funny. They paid me money, and I didn't think it was literature, but it was out of that that the Hank stories came," he said.

The first adventure of Hank the Cowdog appeared as a short story in **ERICKSON** cont. on page 2

John Erickson (right) stands with **Andy Tennison**, who introduced the author during his performances. ➤




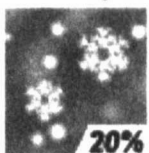
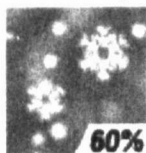
staff photo by **Mollie Bryant**

"Country Christmas" Parade
 December 3rd
 Entry forms can be picked up at the Chamber office
 Deadline for entry is Nov. 30

IN THIS ISSUE:

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PAMPA FORECAST

Today	Friday	Saturday
		
High 40 Low 22	High 31 Low 29	High 33 Low 22

Today: Partly sunny, with a high near 40. Wind chill values between 21 and 30. Breezy, with a north northwest wind 5 to 10 mph increasing to between 20 and 25 mph. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 22. Wind chill values between 11 and 16. Blustery, with a north wind between 15 and 25 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Friday: A 20 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 31. North wind between 5 and 10 mph becoming calm.

Friday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a low around 29. Calm wind becoming west northwest between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday: Snow likely. Cloudy, with a high near 33. Breezy, with a north northwest wind 5 to 10 mph increasing to between 20 and 25 mph. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60 percent.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 22. Windy, with a north wind 25 to 30 mph decreasing to between 15 and 20 mph. Winds could gust as high as 40 mph.

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CHRISTMAS TOUR of Homes, Sun. Dec. 4, 1-4pm. \$10 Ticket (covers all 3 homes) avail. at Pampa Office Supply or at the homes. 8721 Loop 171 (from Hwy 70 turn right onto Loop 171 & go approx. 1 mi. to the marked entrance), 8484 Loop 171 (southwest corner of intersection of Loop 171 & Hwy 60) & 103 E. 18th Ave. More info? 669-0148.

ALTRUSA'S SOUP with "Mrs. Claus", Dec. 3, 11:30am-1:30pm. 318 N. Cuyler (Knights of Columbus). \$5 per person.

CRAFT SHOW Dec. 3 9-6pm & Dec. 4 noon-4pm. Ag Life Family Center north of Wheeler on Hwy 83. Set up time Fri 5-9pm & Sat 7-9am. 806-334-3039.

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McConahy

cont. from page 1

once or twice a year or so, whenever someone calls and it looks like it will be interesting. I did it for a while for a company (that) managed hospitals. If they needed a CEO or someone to turn one of their hospitals around that wasn't doing that well, they would put me in for eight or nine months and we'd get it turned around."

With much to do to ensure a smooth changeover, McConahy has hit the ground running in Pampa.

"I flew in (on Monday), and (Tuesday) was my first day in the captain's chair by myself," laughed McConahy. "There's always something going on. I didn't get much of a rest period, but that's what you expect. With the hospital in the beginning of being sold, everybody's always a little nervous. Bill (Buck) did a great job, and last week I got caught up on some of the main issues."

One of those issues is the need to bring more medical providers into Pampa, McConahy said, adding that the hospital is working to bring in supplementary or replacement physicians to work at local satellite clinics under the PRMC umbrella.

"A lot of physicians nowadays want to be a member of a group, and they don't want private practice," he said. "The way the hospital can help that out is by forming a corporation that's legal in Texas. We have a gentleman (Bob Cooper) in who's an expert at that, and he's helping us set that up and recruit physicians in."

PRMC is hoping to have six or seven primary care primary care doctors in Pampa within the next six to twelve months, according to McConahy. He said that the hospital's strategic plan shows that nine primary care and internal medicine practitioners would be ideal for the area, and with five currently on PRMC's staff, McConahy added that "we would be very successful if we were able to bring two in."

Erickson

cont. from page 1

The Cattleman, and Erickson developed the concept from there, incorporating the Panhandle as the setting of the series.

"I write about the place that I chose to live in, the place that I grew up in, the place where my parents are buried - my grandparents, my great grandparents - and this is the country that I know and I love," he said. "I didn't love it when I was in high school. I wanted to get away from it, but I came back to it, and I had no choice. This is who I was. It wasn't a costume. I tried on a lot of costumes in college."

Erickson's eventual audience for his first book was not what he expected, particularly for a story that spans genres, from mystery to Texana.

"(Hank the Cowdog) was never intended to be for children. The audience was adults who worked in agriculture. So, people liked it, and they said, you need to do more with that dog, and I never would have thought to do that on my own," he said.

At that point, Erickson was frustrated but not bogged down by rejection slips from New York publishers. He decided to move full steam ahead, and publish the first Hank the Cowdog book himself in Perryton.

"I thought I could find a market, publish it myself, and I did. And I was selling to adults. My first programs were to adults, but somehow the kids got ahold of them, and took

them to school, and the librarians and teachers started calling me," said Erickson.

He began doing readings for elementary school children, incorporating the songs that appear in the audio versions of the books. Erickson has written about 120 songs, which he accompanies on banjo.

"The stories were always meant to be read aloud. Most novels are not. That's how I sold books in the beginning. I did programs in Perryton, Guymon and Pampa, went to the Rotary Club and Lyons Club, and did free programs and sold books afterwards," he said. "I knew I could do the voices and characters, and that's when I decided to do them as audio books, but instead of doing it the proper way, which is to hire someone else to do it, I decided to do it myself."

Erickson records the audio books in a studio in Amarillo, often including his family in the process when it comes to the music in the recordings.

"I wrote a lot of the songs to be sung with (my) kids or by (my) kids. At an early age, they started performing with us on stage. Kris, (my wife), bought a mandolin and a book on how to play, so we made it a family affair, and the kids sang on a number of songs on the audio books," he said. "(My son) Mark still plays with me. He's become a guitarist now. He's a really good guitar player, and he's played on about

six of the songs."

Erickson also collaborated with Mark on a screenplay that may be developed into a motion picture in the future.

"We decided we'd wasted so much time talking to movie people. They'd come out to the ranch and spend two or three days with us, and we'd try to explain that these stories come from this part of the country. We don't want them to be vehicles for a liberal ideology," said Erickson.

"These are characters for the Texas Panhandle. They're legitimate characters. The people here recognize that these are lovable, legitimate characters that could come from here, and did. So we tried to explain that, and it never took. They never understood what that meant. They tried to change up the characters and the stories immediately," he added.

So, the Ericksons have prepared a screenplay to share with movie studios that approached them about transforming Hank the Cowdog into a film. They are currently in talks with an independent studio in Dallas.

"We've discussed that we aren't trying to push an ideology of any kind. These are stories meant to be fun, delightful, heart warming and that's it," said Erickson.

But he also finds a deeper meaning in writing the series.

"People need good stories like they need water. It's part of finding the hope to survive," he said.

For the record

Police Department

The Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents for the 24 hour period ending Wednesday, November 30 at 7 a.m.

Tuesday, November 29

Harassment was reported.

A theft occurred at the 500 block of North Roberta.

Disorderly conduct occurred at the 900 block of East Browning.

Harassment was reported.

A domestic disturbance occurred at the 2200 block of North Sumner.

An accident occurred at Kentucky and Charles.

Harassment was reported.

Accidents occurred at the 500 block of West Brown and the 2800 block of North Charles.

A domestic disturbance occurred at the 2200 block of North Sumner.

A theft occurred at the 700 block of East Malone.

Disorderly conduct occurred at the 500 block of West Brown.

A TABC violation occurred at the 800 block of Jordan.

A theft occurred at the 300 block of East Brown.

Criminal mischief occurred at the 1100 block of West Sirroco.

A suspicious vehicle was

reported at the 2200 block of North Sumner.

A burglary of a motor vehicle occurred at the 500 block of South Somerville.

A suspicious vehicle was reported at the 500 block of West Brown.

Wednesday, November 30

Driving while intoxicated was reported at the 300 block of North Sumner.

A prowler was reported at the 1700 block of Chestnut.

Sheriff's Office

The Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests for the 24 hour period ending Wednesday, November 30 at 7 a.m.

Tuesday, November 29

Jeffrey Dale Strange, 31, was arrested by police on charges of displaying expired registration, expired motor vehicle insurance, failure to appear in court, no driver's license and two theft charges in Potter County.

Wednesday, November 30

Johnny Ray Wildcat, 41, was arrested by police for driving while intoxicated.


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Judge refuses to leave Ft. Hood case

Bill forces action on pipeline

WASHINGTON (AP) — Angered by President Barack Obama's delay of a proposed oil pipeline from Canada, Senate Republicans are moving to force him to act.

A bill introduced by 37 GOP senators, including Nebraska Sen. Mike Johanns, would require the administration to approve the Keystone XL pipeline within 60 days, unless the president declares the project is not in the national interest.

The bill has little chance of approval in the Democratic-controlled Senate, but the measure illustrates Republicans' frustration over the pipeline delay and their belief that Obama is vulnerable on the issue. GOP senators called the \$7 billion pipeline the ultimate "shovel-ready" project and said it could create as many as 20,000 jobs.

The 1,700-mile pipeline would carry oil from Alberta, Canada to refineries in Texas.

Perry denies staff shakeup

DERRY, N.H. (AP) — Republican presidential contender Rick Perry denied Tuesday that his campaign was in the middle of a major staff shakeup.

Perry, the Texas governor, said he had spoken recently to senior strategist Dave Carney and campaign manager Rob Johnson and that there's been no change in their roles with the campaign.

Politico reported that Joe Allbaugh would now be Perry's campaign manager, Tony Fabrizio its main strategist, and Carney focusing on New Hampshire.

"News to me," Perry told reporters when asked whether Carney or Johnson had been demoted.

Perry, who has struggled for support according to recent polls, was campaigning in New Hampshire on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Dewhurst worth over \$200M

AUSTIN (AP) — A federal financial disclosure shows Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst has a net worth of at least \$200 million.

Dewhurst, seeking the Republican nomination to replace retiring U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, filed the extensive report in Washington last month.

An analysis of the assets showed his worth at a minimum of \$198.6 million, including outstanding liabilities. Because the values were reported in ranges rather than exact figures, his net worth is likely more.

The report shows the contents of his blind trust, as required by federal campaign law. It includes investments in Boeing, Carmax, Carnival and Caterpillar. The fund, worth at least \$50 million, also includes investments in Wells Fargo, XTO Energy and Tiffany & Co.

3 dead in Roswell plane crash

ROSWELL, N.M. (AP) — Authorities on Wednesday found the wreckage of a small plane that crashed near Roswell, killing all three people aboard.

The Federal Aviation Administration says the single-engine Cessna 182 plane left Snyder, Texas, on Saturday apparently was headed to Sierra Blanca Regional Airport in Ruidoso. No flight plan was filed.

The plane was reported missing on Tuesday, according to the FAA, and search and rescue crews found the wreckage shortly after 11 a.m. Wednesday about 37 miles west of Roswell.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA are en route.

The names of the victims have not yet been released. FAA records show the plane was registered to JD & KAT Ltd. in Snyder.

Apollo 13 checklist sells

DALLAS (AP) — A checklist used by Apollo 13 commander James Lovell to make calculations that helped guide the damaged spacecraft home has been sold at auction for \$388,375.

Dallas-based Heritage Auctions sold the checklist Wednesday as part of a batch of U.S. space program artifacts being offered during its "Space Signature Auction."

The checklist was sold to an anonymous collector. The pre-auction estimate for the checklist was \$25,000.

Michael Riley, senior historian at Heritage, says that without the checklist, the crew would not have known their position in space.

On April 13, 1970, an oxygen tank exploded as the spaceship was four-fifths of the way to the moon. The crew was forced to scrap the moon mission and focus on getting back to Earth alive.

Police say soldier killed supervisor

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Police now say the woman a Fort Bliss soldier shot and killed earlier this week was his supervisor.

An El Paso police statement on Wednesday says Fort Bliss soldier James Steadman killed Lykisha Gooding on Monday. Before shooting her, Steadman also shot and wounded Gooding's husband, Kelvin Gooding, who answered the front door at their home.

As Steadman fled, Kelvin Gooding shot him in the thigh. Police said Steadman continued to his own residence, where he struggled with his wife and was shot dead under undisclosed circumstances.

No arrests have been made and the investigation continues.

Man sentenced to 22 years

DALLAS (AP) — A man driving a stolen pickup in a dramatic police chase that ended on a Dallas Love Field runway has been sentenced to 22½ years in prison.

A federal judge in Dallas on Wednesday sentenced 47-year-old Michael Browne.

Browne last fall pleaded guilty to interfering with security screening personnel.

Browne has been in custody since the Aug. 19, 2010, incident in which live TV coverage showed the truck breaking through an airport fence and driving along a runway.

Police rammed the pickup, to stop the vehicle, and pulled Browne from the cab.

State charges are pending against Browne for incidents the day before and during the chase, including criminal mischief and evading law officers. Prosecutors say Browne also faces earlier unrelated aggravated robbery counts in Dallas and Fort Worth.

FORT HOOD (AP) — A military judge refused Wednesday to step down in the case of an Army psychiatrist charged in the Fort Hood shooting rampage, saying it had no effect on him.

Maj. Nidal Hasan's attorneys argued that the judge, Col. Gregory Gross, should recuse himself. They claimed there was an appearance of bias since he was on the Texas Army post the day of the 2009 shootings that left 13 dead and more than two dozen wounded.

Gross has said he was presiding over a trial on Nov. 5, 2009, when someone handed him a note instructing him to take a recess immediately. He said he then called his wife, who was shopping on the post with some other relatives, but they were fine and left before Fort Hood was locked down.

Gross said he hasn't read news articles about Hasan's background, hasn't heard statements made at different Fort Hood ceremonies by President Barack Obama and then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, and has never seen Fort Hood's memorial to the victims.

"I'm in my own little world over here," Gross said during the pretrial hearing, adding that he rarely left the courthouse.

Hasan, 41, faces a death sentence or life in prison without parole if convicted in the worst mass shooting on a U.S. military installation. He's charged with 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder.

Hasan, who was arraigned in July, has not yet entered a plea. His trial at Fort Hood is to start in March and is expected to last at least two months. Military jurors will be brought in from Fort Sill, Okla., according to documents filed in the case.

Hasan's attorneys also urged the judge to remove the death penalty as a punishment option, citing constitutional issues. Gross did not rule on those motions.

Gross did not decide if the government will pay for two defense experts requested in motions at an October hearing. Defense attorneys have said Hasan needs a jury consultant and another expert to determine how potential jurors might be influenced by the extensive pretrial

publicity. Prosecutors have urged the judge to deny both motions, saying the experts are unnecessary.

U.S. officials have said they believe Hasan's attack was inspired by the radical U.S.-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki and that the two men exchanged as many as 20 emails. Al-Awlaki was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen in late September. Army prosecutors have never mentioned the cleric's name in any hearings in the criminal case against Hasan.

In early November before the second anniversary of the Fort Hood shootings, more than 80 people — relatives of some of those killed and injured, as well as 10 who were wounded that day — filed administrative claims seeking \$750 million in compensation from the Army. They allege willful negligence and say the government had clear warnings that Hasan, an American-born Muslim, posed a grave danger to the lives of soldiers and civilians.

Hasan was paralyzed from the waist down after being shot by police that day. He remains jailed.

Feisty Cain presses on with campaign

WEST CHESTER, Ohio (AP) —

His campaign rocked anew, a feisty Herman Cain claimed a "groundswell of positive support" from backers on Wednesday and accused critics of trying to derail his White House bid as he worked to stem the fall-out from allegations of a 13-year extramarital affair.

"They're attacking my character, my reputation and my name in order to try to bring me down," a feisty Cain told a friendly crowd without naming his critics. "But, you see, I don't believe that America is going to let that happen."

Questions about the campaign's viability hovered over Cain's one-day bus tour through Ohio.

It came a day after the candidate told staff he was reassessing his campaign after Ginger White, an Atlanta businesswoman, alleged in media interviews that she and Cain had a long-running sexual affair.

"We are reassessing as we speak. Reassessment means reevaluation," Cain told reporters Wednesday after his well-received speech to roughly 150 people in a hotel meeting room. He gave no indication to the audience that he was considering abandoning his bid despite telling staff that he would make a decision in the next few days about whether to continue it.

Cain received a standing ovation after he spoke about what a "Cain administration" would do. And he said that while some people predicted that the room would be empty, "I don't see any empty seats."

"It's been a groundswell of positive support," Cain insisted to reporters later, even as some backers in

early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire who had stuck by him after decade-old allegations of sexual harassment surfaced several weeks ago now indicated they were abandoning him.

Cain's latest turmoil comes just five weeks before the first votes are cast in the state-by-state march to the nomination. The earlier sexual harassment accusations that have taken a toll on both his standing in polls and, supporters say, his fundraising. Prominent conservatives who rushed to his defense earlier this month were all but silent when White stepped forward on Monday to accuse Cain of a consensual sexual relationship that ended this year before he became a White House candidate.

The candidate has denied the affair, and in a letter addressed to "patriots and supporters," called her allegations "completely false" and labeled her "troubled."

White steadfastly stood by her assertion in an interview Wednesday on ABC's "Good Morning America" and said she was "disappointed" by Cain's characterization of her. She called her relationship with Cain "a very casual affair" that lasted more than a dozen years.

"I'm not here to say anything negative about Mr. Cain," White said, although White added that she didn't think he should be president.

She elaborated on her claims, saying she took several trips with Cain, including a flight to Las Vegas to see a Mike Tyson-Evander Holyfield boxing match. She also said she had "consistently"

received gifts and money from Cain over the past two and a half years, but said it was "not sex for cash."

Following Monday's developments, some Cain supporters have started to defect.

New Hampshire state Rep. William Panek endorsed Cain at a news conference earlier this year. But he changed his mind Tuesday after seeing reports that White showed evidence that she had traded 61 text messages and cellphone calls with the candidate. Panek has endorsed former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in the upcoming primary.

"I felt like we were being lied to," he said. "I'm putting my name in New Hampshire as a state

rep behind him, and I just didn't like the way it was being played out."

In Iowa, Cain's campaign has lost some precinct-level supporters following the new allegations, according to Steve Grubbs, Cain's Iowa chairman. Cain was in Iowa for a day last week to film a new ad, but aides say that spending to air it was on hold pending the fundraising in the days to come.

Still, some are sticking by him.

Florida state Rep. Scott Plakon, one of four chairmen for Cain's Florida campaign, said he wanted to see more evidence.

"If it is true that he didn't do this, I think he should fight and kick and scratch and win," Plakon said.

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Cinema 4
 Movies Showing Friday, December 2 through Thursday, December 8.
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 Fri 7:15 9:30
 Sat 2:00 4:30 7:15 9:30
 Sun 2:00 4:30 7:15
 Mon/Thu 7:15
 Breaking Dawn (PG-13)
 Fri 7:00 9:45
 Sat 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:45
 Sun 2:00 4:30 7:00
 Mon/Thu 7:00
 Arthur Christmas (PG)
 Fri 7:15 9:30
 Sat 2:00 4:30 7:15 9:30
 Sun 2:00 4:30 7:15
 Mon/Thu 7:15
 The Muppets (PG)
 Fri 7:00 9:30
 Sat 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30
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Viewpoints

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 1, the 335th day of 2011. There are 30 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 1, 1941, Japan's Emperor Hirohito approved waging war against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands after his government rejected U.S. demands contained in the Hull Note, including a call for Japan to withdraw all of its forces from China and French Indochina.

On this date:

In 1824, the presidential election was turned over to the U.S. House of Representatives when a deadlock developed between John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. (Adams ended up the winner.)

In 1860, the Charles Dickens novel "Great Expectations" was first published in weekly serial form.

In 1921, the Navy flew the first nonrigid dirigible to use helium; the C-7 traveled from Hampton Roads, Va., to Washington, D.C.

In 1934, Soviet communist official Sergei M. Kirov, an associate of Josef Stalin, was assassinated in Leningrad, resulting in a massive purge.

In 1955, Rosa Parks, a black seamstress, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Ala., city bus; the incident sparked a year-long boycott of the buses by blacks.

In 1969, the U.S. government held its first draft lottery since World War II.

In 1990, British and French workers digging the Channel Tunnel between their countries finally met after knocking out a passage in a service tunnel.

In 1991, Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union.

Ten years ago: Two suicide bombers blew themselves up in back-to-back explosions at a downtown Jerusalem pedestrian mall, killing 11 bystanders.

Five years ago: Felipe Calderon took the oath of office as Mexico's president amid catcalls and brawling lawmakers, a chaotic start to a term in which he pledged to heal a country divided by his narrow victory.

One year ago: President Barack Obama's bipartisan deficit commission unveiled its recommendations including lower income taxes, fewer tax breaks and higher age for retirement benefits (however, the panel failed to advance the package to Congress two days later by a vote of 11 in favor, 7 against, falling short of the 14 votes needed).

Today's Birthdays: Singer Billy Paul is 77. Actor-director Woody Allen is 76. Singer Dianne Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 72. Television producer David Salzman is 68. Rock singer-musician Eric Bloom (Blue Oyster Cult) is 67. Rock musician John Densmore (The Doors) is 67. Actress-singer Bette Midler is 66. Singer Gilbert O'Sullivan is 65. Actor Treat Williams is 60. Country singer Kim Richey is 55. Actress Charlene Tilton is 53. Actress-model Carol Alt is 51. Actor Jeremy Northam is 50. Actor Nestor Carbonell is 44. Actress Golden Brooks is 41. Actress-comedian Sarah Silverman is 41. Actor Ron Melendez is 39. Actor-writer-producer David Hornsby is 36. Singer Sarah Masen is 36. Rock musician Brad Delson (Linkin Park) is 34. Actor Nate Torrence is 34. Rock musician Mika Finco (Filter) is 30. Actress Ashley Monique Clark is 23.

Thought for Today: "I got a simple rule about everybody. If you don't treat me right, shame on you." - Louis Armstrong, American jazz musician (1900-1971)

the other shoe



Flubs: All campaign errors are not equal

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — Newt Gingrich didn't know when he would take office if he wins the presidency. Rick Perry got the voting age and the date of Election Day wrong. Herman Cain didn't realize the president does not sign amendments to the Constitution.

In ways large and small, Republican presidential hopefuls are proving on multiple occasions to be "factually challenged," as Gingrich rather haughtily described a rival, despite getting some things wrong himself.

Campaigns are long and tough, candidates are often tired and flubs happen. But they are adding up and at some point could give Republican voters pause as they look for the candidate best able to take on the highly polished — though hardly factually infallible — President Barack Obama.

In submitting to what is, in effect, America's toughest job interview, there may be only so much leeway in getting matters of current affairs and history plain wrong.

Frequent flubber Michele Bachmann's suggestion many months ago that the Revolutionary battles of Lexington and Concord took place in New Hampshire was an opening shot, in a volley of misfires by the candidates. Those battles were fought in Massachusetts in 1775.

In the months since, Cain promoted Chile's retirement system as one that gives workers the option of having private accounts, when in fact they have no choice. Mitt Romney accused Obama of canceling a Canadian pipeline project that has only been delayed.

On Wednesday, Gingrich told voters packed into Tommy's Country Ham House in Greenville, S.C., that he would sign legislation repealing health care and Wall Street overhauls when he takes office on Jan. 21, 2013.

"My intent will be to ask the new Congress to stay in session when they are sworn in on Jan. 3 and to pass — and hold at the desk until I'm sworn in on the 21st — to pass the repeal of Obamacare and the

repeal of Dodd-Frank and the repeal of Sarbanes-Oxley so that I can sign them on the 21st," Gingrich told the packed restaurant.

One problem: The Constitution that Gingrich constantly cites during his presidential campaign says the transition of power after an election takes place on Jan. 20.

Gingrich spokesman R.C. Hammond said Gingrich would assume powers at noon on Jan. 20, 2013, following the 20th Amendment of the Constitution. Because that day is a Sunday, the Inauguration's festivities would be scheduled on Jan. 21 of that year. Ronald Reagan followed a similar schedule for his second inaugural on Monday, Jan. 21, 1985.

Even so, Gingrich was wrong to say "I'm sworn in on the 21st."

A day earlier, Texas Gov. Rick Perry suggested the voting age is 21 and got the date wrong for Election Day.

"Those of you that will be 21 by November the 12th, I ask for your support and your vote," he told students at Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire.

The voting age is 18. And New Hampshire is scheduled to be the first state in the nation to host a Republican presidential primary on Jan. 10; the general election is scheduled for Nov. 6, 2012.

And Cain said he would back an amendment to the Constitution to ban abortion.

"If we can get the necessary support and it comes to my desk, I'll sign it," he told the Christian Broadcasting Network.

Except presidents don't sign amendments. Congress passes them and the states ratify them. The president could champion them, but the Constitution doesn't give him or her any formal role.

Since the campaign's start, each candidate has had a turn explaining errors as either the side effects of an exhausting schedule or simple foot-in-mouth syndrome. Under the intense media scrutiny, each mis-step or error draws questions whether each candidate is up for the job.

Romney, too, stepped in it.

The former Massachusetts governor said Obama engaged in "one of the biggest peacetime spending binges in American history." He overlooked the United States' role in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.

Yet not all errors are created equal, said Eric Dezenhall, an aide in the Reagan administration and now an image consultant who has worked with everyone from Hollywood stars to business moguls.

"The key factor in whether a gaffe catches on is whether or not it validates a pre-existing prejudice," he said.

"When Perry says that the voting age is 21, it validates the pre-existing suspicion that he's not in command of the basics," he said. "When Newt or Obama say something that is either misguided or incorrect, it doesn't resonate because everybody knows they are smart guys, so they get a break."

"The flubs that stick are those



that fit with a storyline about the candidate," said Doug Hattaway, a Democratic consultant who helped Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2008 presidential bid. "Gingrich isn't a flubber. He's known for being full of himself, and making wacky statements, not flubbing the facts. So the misstatements are less likely to stick to him."

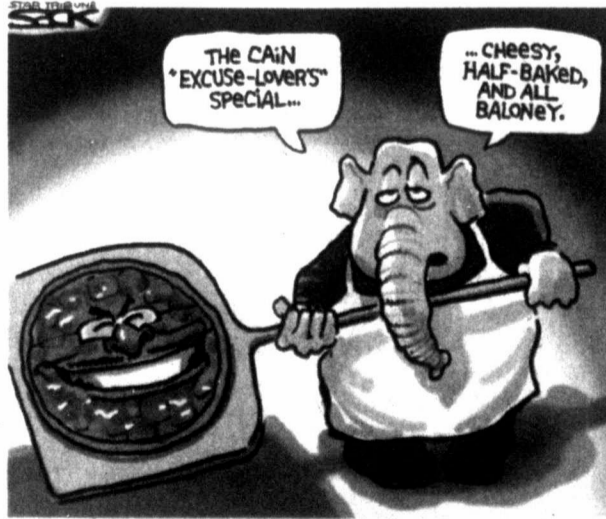
And voters might not care about factual details, Hattaway said.

"Best case of that is George W. Bush, who couldn't pass a civics quiz to save his life. Emotional intelligence is more important in politics than factual knowledge," Hattaway said.

Gingrich might be playing that to his own political advantage.

Before he seemed to reschedule the constitutional transition of power, he criticized Bachmann for stretching the facts about his record on abortion.

"Some people are just factually challenged and it's unfortunate," Gingrich told reporters. "In the eyes of a teacher, occasionally I'd have a student who couldn't figure out where things were, or what things were, or what the right date was. When that happens, you feel sorry that they're so factually challenged."



The PAMPA NEWS

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The Pampa News (UPS 781-540) is published daily, except Sundays, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Periodicals postage paid at Pampa, Texas. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Pampa News, P.O. Drawer 2198, Pampa, TX 79066-2198.

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We welcome your letters

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- Letters should be brief and to the point. All correspondence will be edited for length and clarity.
- All letters must be signed. Submit your name, address and telephone number with the letter for verification. Only your name and city will be published.
- Defamatory comments will not be published.
- E-mail submissions are welcome.
- The views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of The Pampa News or its staff.

Fuel leak triggers explosion in San Antonio oil refinery

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A San Antonio refinery caught fire for the second time in two years Wednesday after authorities said an apparent jet diesel fuel leak triggered a small explosion.

San Antonio Fire Department spokeswoman Melissa Sparks said no injuries were reported. She said firefighters contained the blaze within an hour of the explosion and that it wasn't immediately necessary to evacuate surrounding homes.

"Once they are able to get the tank cooled down and get all the lines shut off it should be good to go," Sparks said. NuStar Energy spokeswoman Mary

Rose Brown confirmed no employees were injured, but the company did not immediately provide more information.

The same refinery caught fire in May 2010 under ownership of a different company. One man in that fire was critically burned after an 18-wheeler being loaded with fuel exploded, setting off a chain reaction of smaller explosions.

Other employees received minor injuries in that blaze and residents within a half-mile of the facility were evacuated. The plant at the time was run by AGE Refining Inc., a small refinery that had filed for bankruptcy a few months earlier.

Unemployment benefits extended Eligible claimants will be mailed letters

AUSTIN — The state employment agency has announced a six-week extension of unemployment benefits for jobless Texans who have exhausted their claims.

The extension comes as a result of the state's average unemployment rate reaching an estimated 8.5 percent or higher over the previous three months.

The U.S. Department of Labor authorized the Texas Workforce Commission to begin processing claims starting December 11, 2011. This extension is not retroactive and therefore does not cover weeks of unemployment prior to December 11, 2011.

TWC will mail letters to approximately 220,000 claimants who have exhausted all benefits and may be eligible for the extension, with instructions on how to apply for the additional weeks of benefits. The letter will direct claimants who are still unemployed to call a special toll-free phone number, available 24 hours a day,

to apply for the new extension.

Claimants currently receiving unemployment benefits will automatically have the additional benefits added to their benefit period and will receive a letter showing the additional amount of benefits they could potentially receive. Claimants do not need to contact TWC unless they receive a letter instructing them to do so.

This extension brings the total number of benefit weeks an individual in Texas may qualify for to a maximum of 99 weeks. Claimants currently receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits should continue to request payment as scheduled. Claimants may update their address information online at ui.texasworkforce.org or by contacting a UI Tele-Center toll free at 800-939-6631. Reemployment services are available through local Workforce Solutions Offices statewide or job seekers may visit www.WorkInTexas.com to register and search for job postings.

Ex-Texas prosecutor says he's 'sick' about wrongful conviction

AUSTIN (AP) — A former Texas prosecutor who helped send the wrong man to prison for nearly 25 years said he didn't withhold evidence indicating the man hadn't killed his wife, and said he was sickened that an innocent person was convicted, according to copies of a deposition released Wednesday.

Attorneys for Michael Morton, who was freed in October, allege that Ken Anderson concealed key facts from defense lawyers that could have changed the outcome of Morton's 1987 trial, including that her credit card was used after her death and statements from the couple's son that his father wasn't the killer.

Anderson, who is now a state district court judge, testified under oath for eight hours over two sessions on Oct. 31 and Nov. 11. He maintained that his recollection of some case details was spotty but believed prosecutors provided all necessary information to Morton's attorneys.

"I am upset about an innocent man being convicted. I don't know how to convey that in the form of a deposition, but it is, it is very troublesome to me," Anderson said.

He later said, "I'm sick about this whole thing."

You know, it's your worst nightmare to have somebody who's innocent get convicted."

Official transcripts of the deposition aren't yet available, but the New York-based Innocence Project, which has helped represent Morton, provided a draft copy Wednesday to The Associated Press.

Morton's exoneration came after new DNA evidence indicated that another man was responsible for killing his wife Christine, who was fatally beaten in her bed in August 1986. Based on that, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the state's highest criminal court, overturned his conviction.

Among the evidence Morton's lawyers say Anderson concealed from the defense was a statement that Christine Morton's mother, Rita Kirkpatrick, gave police that her 3-year-old grandson Eric said he watched his mother get killed and that her attacker was a "monster," not his father.

Anderson has been a judge in Williamson County, where Morton was convicted, since 2002. His deposition came as part of the agreement with prosecutors that freed Morton and allowed his attorneys to investigate their allegations of wrongdoing at his original trial.



Tim Pirtle ATTORNEY AT LAW

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INJURED?

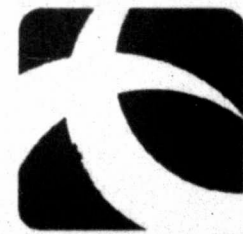
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Sunday School	9:45 a.m.
Evening Worship	6:00 p.m.

Wednesday Ministries

Children's Choirs	4:45 p.m.
Prayer Service	6:00 p.m.
Youth Activities:	
Jr. High Bible Study	6:15 p.m.
High School Bible Study	7:15 p.m.
Children's & Preschool Discipleship	6:00 p.m.

Small Group Bible Studies

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Parents...
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Grandparents...
Linda & Stan Bims
John Bims
Sue & Gary Jones
Mary Jones

Great-grandparents...
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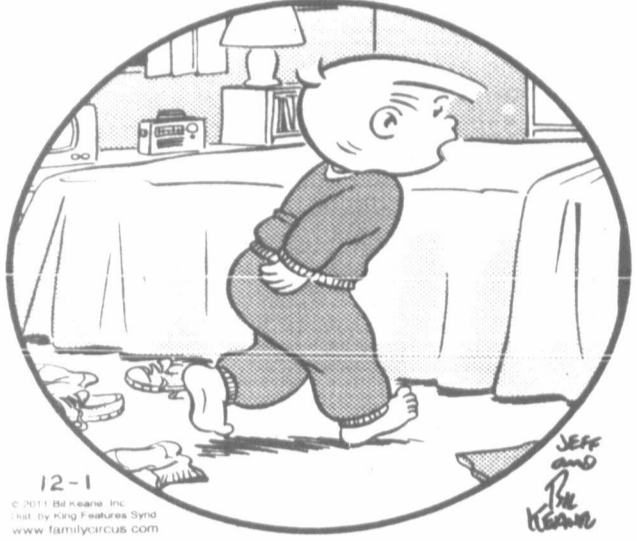
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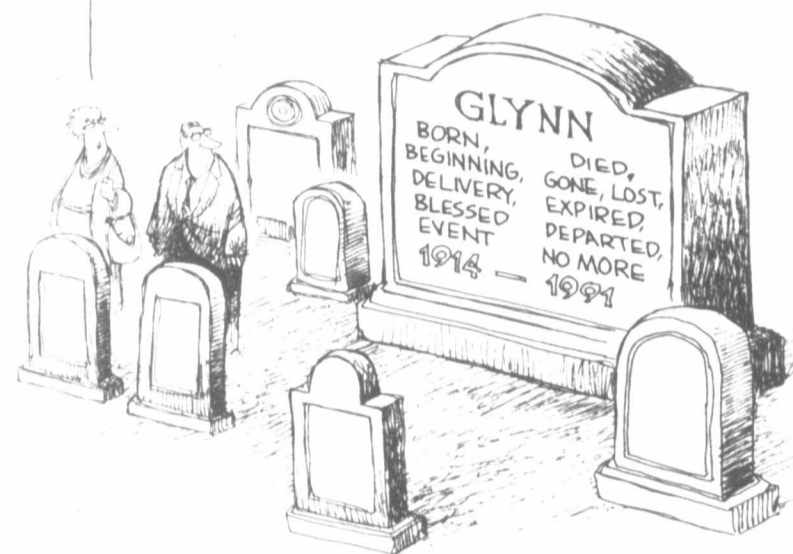


12-1

"The best thing about goin' to bed is you're one day closer to Christmas!"

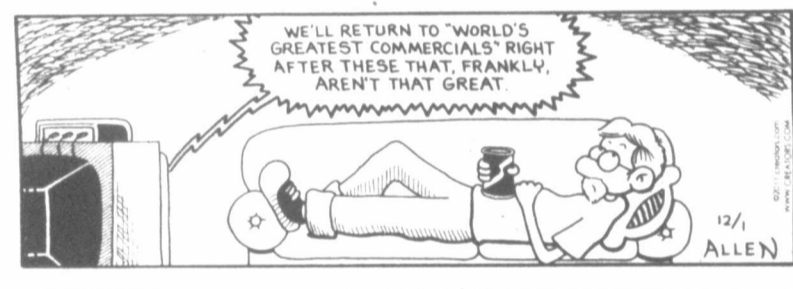
Non Sequitur

I HEARD HE WAS A
THESAURUS EDITOR



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Nest Heads



daily horoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011:

You are a cordial, sociable sign. This year is no exception. You will want to network and have even more interactions with people. Your ability to appraise situations is enhanced by an innate grasp of body language. If you are single, you could meet people so easily that you are almost constantly on a date! You will know when it's the right person. If you are attached, the two of you enjoy hanging with each other. PISCES can cause a lot of stress in your life.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ Step back and understand what is happening within your immediate circle. Be a cynic financially. You know that money doesn't grow on trees. Revamp a project with an eye to greater gains. Refuse to take comments personally. Tonight: Vanish while you can.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ You might be overlooking a special opportunity. Don't worry about it, but be more alert. Sometimes an important offer won't repeat itself. Keep your mind clear. Make it OK to think more sophisticated thoughts. Tonight: Where the fun is.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You demand a lot of attention. Your laughter and easy style make a big difference. You might see a partner change dramatically in a significant area. Remain optimistic. You are akin to a cat with nine lives! Tonight: A must show.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ You might be a bit out of kilter when dealing with daily routine matters. Let others do it, if they want to. Your mind drifts, and often you might not be present in a conversation. Use this mental state for research or considering a new project. Tonight: Break patterns.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You might not have as much of a choice as you would like when dealing with an issue. Someone else, who is also involved, decides to take the lead. That is not to say that you won't like or approve of his or her leadership. Relate directly if possible. Tonight: Dinner for two.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Defer to others, understanding

what is happening behind the scenes. Even if you want to be low-key, it appears that too many people are around to have any privacy. Your popularity might be exhausting. Pace yourself. You can do it. Tonight: Sort through the many invitations.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ How you handle yourself and the choices you make could define the success of a personal or professional relationship. You tumble into a whirlwind of activity set off by a partner or loved one. Your ability to adjust and identify with others emerges. Tonight: At home.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Your immense creativity plays out in a very dramatic way. Much about you has changed — above all, your self-expression. That transformation, combined with a surge of imagination, could create joy and wonderful ideas. Tonight: Only where you want to be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ You have ways of making a point so that others will never forget the message. Just how hard you want to clobber someone is your call. Perhaps letting this person deal with his or her conscious might be more effective. Tonight: Mosey on home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Being aware of your financial situation is critical at this time of year, or, for that matter, at any time of year. One gift might be far more important than any other. Once more, you might decide to go in another direction here. Tonight: Playing with other elves.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Your ability to perk up others might not work on you. Be careful that an error doesn't turn into a big mistake. It is in your power to end the issue at hand. What is stopping you? Squeeze in some holiday errands or a little shopping. Tonight: Make sure that you and your budget see eye to eye.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Use your high energy well. You also might note that you have an unusual influence on a friend and are able to change his or her mind. Make sure that is really what you want to do. In the long run, it might be better that this person see for him- or herself. Tonight: Only what you want.

Tundra



Shoe



Mother Goose and Grim



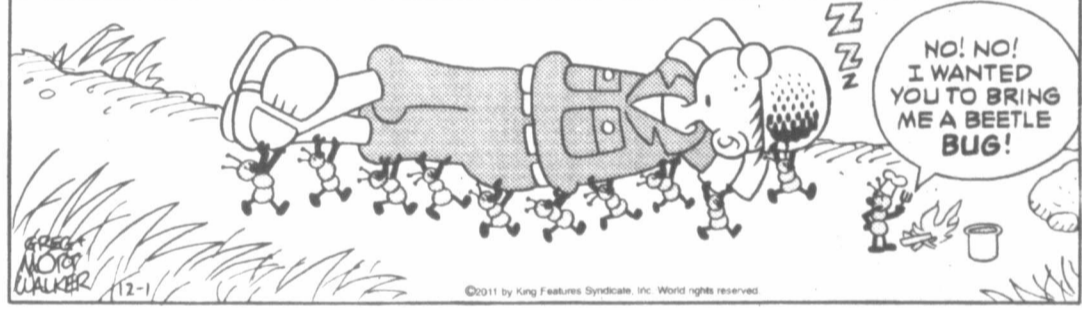
Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



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7:30 p.m. saturday, dec. 3 • m.k. brown auditorium



photo courtesy of **Nikki Shelton / Shutterbug Photography**

Cookies: Emma Doucette (back, from left), Zapryce Johnson, Maeghan Gerhardt, Jana Shults (Clara), Ethan Rushing (Prince), Bailey Knutson, Dakota Briggs, Jayci Carroll; Presley Gasparlin (front, from left), Jordan Pery, Kathleen Cooper-Cameron, Sydney Butler, Abbie Gammage, Hannah McKean

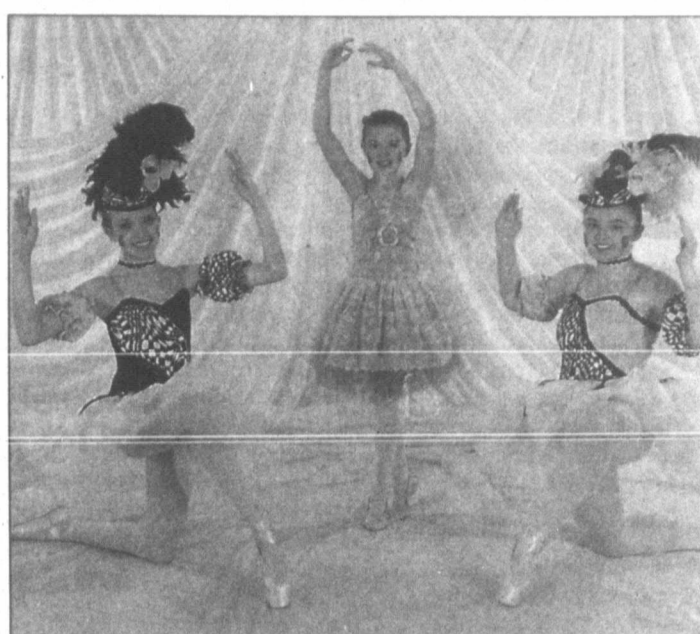


photo courtesy of **Nikki Shelton / Shutterbug Photography**

Harlequins: Kaylynn Kiker (left) and Dacie McGill (right); **Music Box Doll:** Adeline Little (center)

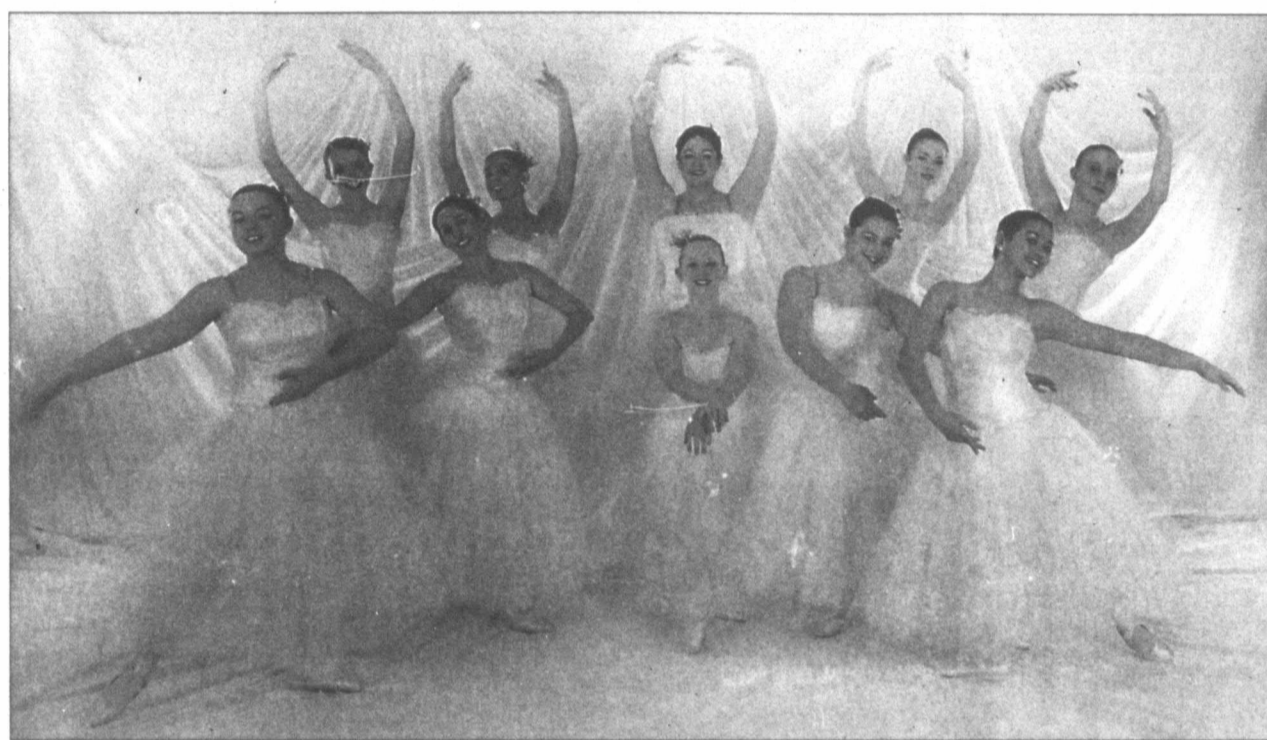


photo courtesy of **Nikki Shelton / Shutterbug Photography**

Snowflakes: Kaylynn Kiker (back, from left), Erica Brown, Bailey Read, Paris Balfour, Anna Danner; Dacie McGill (frnt, from left), Amy Kotara, Katie Rowan, Brooke Woelfle, Lois Evalle

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2009 Business
of the Year

City

cont. from page 1

and the mayor to four years, and to hold elections in May of odd numbered years. 2012 will be an exception, with an election for commissioners in wards 2 and 4 for two year terms designed to get them on track with the new system.

Lee Waters, the city attorney of Pampa, spoke at a work session meeting yesterday afternoon to address undertaking a charter election.

"There are two areas of charter amendments we're looking at. One is the election issues in response to Senate Bill 100, and the other is an overall charter review," said Waters.

The commission discussed the possibility of forming a charter commission to act as a liaison between citizens and the commission during the time leading up to the charter election. Waters said the city could hold a May charter election focusing of the election changes,

then hold a general charter election in November or the following May.

"The main directional issue we want to look at is whether we want a stand alone proposition to the voters on election issues, and then address the overall charter review, which may include a huge number of amendments, or it may just include the really important ones," said Waters. "But there are a whole lot of housekeeping things in the charter that need to be addressed (at) some point, and that's been pushed off for years."

Commissioners appeared favorable of a charter commission, but nothing has been set in stone yet.

"A charter commission is a group appointed by the commission. There's no maximum or minimum number. It can include city employees, former commissioners and mayors, and citizens," said Waters.

He also outlined key advantages and disadvantages of forming the commission. A drawback could be that the commission would consequently push back the city's deadline to resolve the election issue, set for December of 2012. Among its upsides, he included that citizens would be involved in the process, while providing support and publicity to the election.

"As you know, for any charter amendment to pass once it's approved by the commission for submission to voters, there has to be voter education. The charter commission could provide that," said Waters.

The commission will return to the charter election in future meetings.

"We're started down the road, but there are a lot of forks in the road, and we need to get some direction...about what we want

to do," said Waters.

In other business, the commission:

- discussed possible changes to their retirement plans;

- approved an ordinance amending revenues and appropriations.

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BRANDON'S FLOWERS
123 N. COOPER ST. PAMPA, TX

You will love our expanded gift lines!
Bath & Body, Home Fragrance and more

Door Prizes, Giveaways and Discounts

Brandon's Share-A-Toy Drive
Bring in a new toy to be donated to CASA or Habitat and receive 10% off your in-store purchase.

Flowers
665-5546
www.brandonsflowers.com

Sofa \$499 Loveseat \$449 Sofa \$699 Loveseat \$649

TV Stands

Sectional \$1499

ONLY \$399

Thanksgiving Sale

Texas
FURNITURE
1415 N. Hobart • 665-1623

MON-SAT 9 AM TO 5:30 PM
VISA M.C. DISCOVER
8 MONTHS NO INTEREST FINANCING WITH APPROVED CREDIT

Let us be your Santa's Helper

For that hard-to-buy-for person, we have ready-made items or we can customize a gift basket for anyone on your list!

New in Store

Blu Energy Drink - Lightly Carbonated - Original, Lemon, Lime & Sugar Free

Compare price and taste to Red Bull! 8 oz. **\$1.39**

Rich & Rare Reserve
750 ML **\$10.59**

Stella Artois - Gold Rimmed Can
4 pk **\$6.99**

Sale Prices Effective 12/01-12/03/11

EASY'S Westside Package
1300 N. Price Rd. • 663-5502
Monday - Saturday 10 am to 9 pm

King Bed, Dresser, Mirror and Nightstand **\$1699**

Queen Sleigh Bed **\$399**

La-Z-Boy Recliners **\$279** **\$329**

Sealy "Night Tide"
TWIN \$299 FULL \$379 QUEEN \$399

Sealy "Prairie Creek"
TWIN \$399 FULL \$479 QUEEN \$499

Lighter \$397

Come In Or Call For A Quote
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JOHNSTON INSURANCE AGENCY
1712 N. HOBART PAMPA, TEXAS
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Not The Largest...Not The Smallest...
But The Best Rates & Service!