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BIG SPRING HERALD

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 17, 2008

VOLUME 104, NUMBER 14
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Anticipation builds for 'Nutcracker'

By BILL McCLELLAN
News Editor

Just days before Christmas, the Big Spring Symphony Orchestra and Midland Festival Ballet are presenting Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's highly popular and festive "Nutcracker Ballet."

The two-act performance will begin at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in the Big Spring Municipal Auditorium and symphony conductor Dr. Keith Graumann is more than a little enthused.

> ***"We are tremendously excited to once again present what may be the world's most well-known ballet. Tchaikovsky's music for the ballet is magnificent and much of it will be familiar to the audience."***
>
> — Dr. Keith Graumann, symphony conductor



"We are tremendously excited to once again present what may be the world's most well-known ballet," said Graumann. "Tchaikovsky's music for the ballet is magnificent and much of it will be familiar to the audience. Excerpts are heard daily on television and radio.

"Much of the music is also very difficult, but our orchestra is very capable and anxious to perform it for you. And, exposing the wonderful plot onstage through dance will definitely make for a memorable evening."

See **NUTCRACKER**, Page 3A

Howard College again named among Top 50

Among fastest growing community colleges

By CINDY SMITH
Special to the Herald

For the second consecutive year, Howard College was named among the 50 fastest growing community colleges in the country for the 2,500 — 4,999 category, as reported in the latest issue of Community College Week, coming in at the No. 27 spot.


Sparks

Community College Week is an independent source of in-depth information for and about two-year colleges. The publication regularly provides analyses of critical academic trends and issues as well as vital statistics such as "The Special Report on The Fastest-Growing Community Colleges."

"We have known all along that we

See **FASTEST**, Page 3A



HERALD Photo/Thomas Jenkins

Police officials say tips received through Crimestoppers concerning the recent arson attack on Kids Zone in Comanche Trail Park have yet to yield any real leads in the investigation. Initial estimates have put the cost of the damage to the children's play area between $30,000 and $50,000.

Authorities still seeking tips about Kids Zone vandalism

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

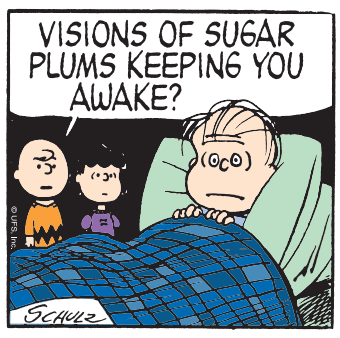
Local law enforcement officials say the search for those responsible for the arson attack on Kids Zone in Comanche Trail Park is moving forward, but slowly.

Sgt. Tony Everett, public information officer with the Big Spring Police Department, said Crimestopper tips from the community have kept investigators busy, but no arrests have been made at this time.

If you have information, call Crimestoppers at 264-TIPS

"The calls have certainly been there for us, it just takes time to sort through all of them," said Everett. "You can't ignore any of them, and in most cases we have to track people down and interview them. At this point, nothing has panned out, but we're still hopeful. Someone out there will give us what we need."

See **VANDALS**, Page 3A

8 Shopping Days Til Christmas


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Please call 263-7331. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call (432) 263-7335 before 7 p.m. weekdays and noon Sunday.

Salvation Army collects 'angels,' officials to distribute gifts Friday

By THOMAS JENKINS
Staff Writer

Area low income children and seniors won't have to go without a Christmas gift this holiday season, as the Big Spring Salvation Army wrapped up its donation gathering for the annual Angel Tree program Tuesday.

Corps Assistant Amy Tompkins, coordinator for this year's effort, said several of the angel cards taken from the trees weren't returned before Tuesday's deadline, but arrangements have been made to make sure no one goes without.

"We extended the deadline to Tuesday in hopes of getting some last minute angels back, and that's exactly what happened," said Tompkins. "We also had a lot of people who had already picked up angels from the trees and were just running late getting the presents back to us.

"We still had some angels left on the trees, but we're working to make sure they are taken care of now. None of our angels will have to go without a Christmas gift this holiday season."

See **ANGELS**, Page 3A

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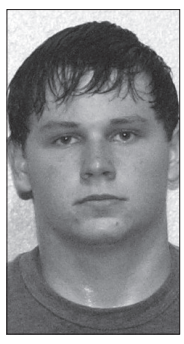
Hall honored with Edwards Award

By JONATHAN HULL
Sports Editor

While his presence on the Big Spring Steers football team was obscure on most Friday nights, the Steers coaches and players recognized how much Lanny Hall contributed to the squad.

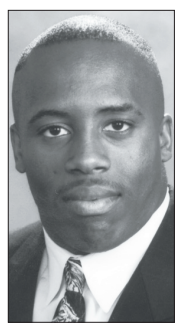
Hall, a senior backup center and middle linebacker, didn't find much playing time with the Steers this season, but his efforts on the practice field and attitude in the locker room earned him the Antwoyne Edwards Memorial Award handed out annually at the Big Spring Fall Sports Banquet.

The award is named for one of the better running backs to ever play at Big Spring High School. Edwards was a 1998 graduate and went on to play tailback at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark.


Hall

Tragically, Edwards' life came to an early end at the age of 20 as he drowned in a boating accident at Lake DeGray near Arkadelphia.

While his efforts on the football field will always be remembered, it's the impact Edwards had on the lives of those he encountered off the field that is his true legacy.


Edwards

This award was created by Edwards' former coaches and teammates to remember the type of player and individual he was.

"He was an outstanding Christian man who was a tremendous leader mainly by the way he lived his life," said former Big Spring Athletic Director Dwight Butler

See **HALL**, Page 2B

Forsan tops GC

By BRANDON HALLFORD
Special to the Herald

FORSAN — The Garden City Bearkats and Forsan Buffalos got together for a pair of games Tuesday night inside Forsan Gymnasium with the Buffs gaining the upper hand in both contests.

In the girls game, the Lady 'Kats fought back from a 28-20 deficit late in the third quarter, taking a 29-28 advantage with just over two minutes remaining in the game. However, Forsan's Tori Gauer turned in a perfect five for five performance from the charity stripe down the stretch, scoring all of her teams points in the stanza for the 35-30 win.

Forsan opened up a 5-point lead after the first quarter of play thanks to the dominating inside play of Amanda Longorio. Longorio scored eight points in the stanza to help the Lady Buffs head into the second with the 13-8 lead.

With Forsan holding the 28-20 lead late in the third quarter the Lady Kats where finally able to break through as Morgan Schwartz started things, sinking the second of two from the free-throw line. After a Lady Buffs turnover, Schwartz added another pair to her total fighting her way inside for the lay up, making it a two-possession game at 28-23.

Paige Niehues got into the act next for Garden City, coming up with another Lady Buffs turnover for the basket to end the third 28-25 in the favor of the Lady Buffs.

Garden City continued its run to start the fourth quarter and again it was Schwartz doing the damage, scoring four consecutive points to give the Lady Kats their first and only lead of the night 29-28 halfway through the

See **FORSAN**, Page 2B



Courtesy photo/James Schwartz

Garden City's Morgan Schwartz (33) attempts to drive past Forsan's Amanda Longorio in the Lady Buffs 35-30 win over the Lady 'Kats Tuesday in Forsan. Schwartz led all scorers with 15 points, while Longorio scored 12 to lead the Lady Buffs.

Coahoma's Bailey is named All-State

Herald Staff Report

Coahoma Bulldogs offensive lineman Damian Bailey was named to the All-State Second Team by the Associated Press' sports editors.

Bailey was a senior leader on the offensive line for a 5-5 Bulldogs' squad.

He was a key cog in a powerful run game Coahoma touted most of the season, led by senior tailback P.J. Daylong.

Bailey was a three-year letterman on the Coahoma football team.

Lady Steers drop game to Snyder

Herald Staff Report

SNYDER — Big Spring's Lady Steers continued to struggle to stay above the .500 mark in the 2008-2009 basketball season as they fell to the Snyder Lady Tigers, 54-38, Monday in Snyder.

The Lady Steers went cold from the field in a pivotal second period, allowing the Lady Tigers to turn a 4-point first quarter advantage into a 13-point lead by intermission.

The loss means the Lady Steers split with Snyder in two non-district games this season. Big Spring opened the year by topping the Lady Tigers, 41-37.

"The second period really killed us. You take away that quarter and we really played pretty evenly with them," said Big Spring Head Coach Mike Warren. "They played much better this time around. We also lost Cerbi (Ritchey) in the second period due to foul trouble. That really hurt us."

The Lady Steers were led by their freshman post Ritchey, who scored nine points, which is her season high. The improvement of post play was the most encouraging thing that happened for the Lady Steers in this game, according to Warren.

"Cerbi's play is really improving, as are the rest of our post players," said Warren. "We got good play from Lauren (Porras) and Crystal (Woodson) as well. It's good to see our post game starting to take shape."

The Lady Steers missed several opportunities to easily cut into the deficit as they went 13-27 at the free throw line.

"We had a lot of opportunities at the line and couldn't capitalize on them," said Warren. "We missed 14 free throws and could have made this a closer game if we converted on them."

As for the lack of a sustained win streak this season, Warren says it is due to the youth of the squad.

"That's the identity of a young team," he said. "We have a lack of experience right now. There are going to be a lot of ups and downs this season. We just hope there are more ups. Hopefully, we can close out the first part of the season with a win before going into the break."

The Lady Steers host Monahans at 6 p.m. Friday in Steer Gym. The Steers face the Lobos immediately following the girls game.

Criticized top pick Williams going to Pro Bowl

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP Sports Writer

Mario Williams was only joking, but apparently he's needed to get off his chest for a while.

"I told you so," the Houston Texans defensive end said before doubling over with laughter soon after being selected to his first Pro Bowl on Tuesday.

The selection completes a nearly three-year journey from draft-day laughingstock to starter in the NFL's all-star game. Williams leads the Texans with 11 sacks and has four forced fumbles this season.

He has been a key in leading the defensive improvement of a team that has won a franchise-record four straight games, capped by Sunday's 13-12 win over AFC South champion Tennessee.

Andre Johnson, who leads the NFL with 1,408 yards receiving, was also selected. It is the third time he's been picked and his second as a starter.

When the Texans passed on hometown hero Vince Young and fan favorite Reggie Bush to grab Williams with the No. 1 overall pick in 2006, many declared it the biggest mistake in draft history. Williams was booed by fans on draft day and criticized throughout his rookie season as he finished with 4½ sacks while dealing with a painful foot ailment.

He said he doesn't hold a grudge against any of the people who criticized him.

"You can't satisfy everybody and if you're going to go through the world saying, 'Oh well I hope they don't boo me' or whatever, and worrying about what people are saying, you're not going to make it too far," he said. "So my whole thing is that whatever is going to be said is going to be said. Everybody has their own opinion and there's always two sides to everything."

Williams is the only one of the top three picks from 2006 to make the Pro Bowl this season, with Young relegated to backup duty and Bush missing four games with a knee injury.

Johnson said he understood why Bush was the fan favorite with all his dazzling highlight reel plays in college, but that Williams has proven his value to the Texans.

"Of course (Bush) had all the hype so everybody was going to want him," Johnson said. "But Mario, if you ask anybody that was at that game on Sunday who would they want on their team, I bet you they would say Mario Williams."

Peyton and Eli Manning became the first quarterback-playing brothers chosen for the same all-star game. Peyton will make his ninth appearance in 11 seasons with the Colts and will start for the AFC. It will be the first appearance for the younger Eli, the Super Bowl MVP for the New York Giants who will play for the NFC team.

The Giants also landed the oldest Pro Bowler ever, 44-year-old kicker John Carney, who was signed at the start of the season as a short-term fill-in for the injured Lawrence Tynes. He has made 27 of 29 field goals — the two he missed were blocked — and has kept the now-recovered Tynes inactive for all but two games.

The New York Jets led all teams with seven Pro Bowlers, including quarterback Brett Favre, who will be in his 10th Pro Bowl and his first representing the AFC. There will be six each from the Giants, Minnesota Vikings and Tennessee Titans in the game, to be played on Feb. 8 in Honolulu.

See **PRO BOWL**, Page 2B

Obituaries

Edman 'Ed' McMurray



Edman "Ed" McMurray, 71, of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 15, 2008, in a Midland hospital. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, 2008, at the Nalley-Pickle and Welch Rosewood Chapel with Chaplain Larry Hood of Home Hospice in Midland officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home.

He was born Oct. 2, 1937, in Big Spring and married Wanda Shelley Feb. 5, 1959, in Big Spring.

Ed was a lifelong resident of Big Spring and attended Big Spring High School. He served in the United States Army. He worked for Taylor Implement and later went to work for Cosden Refinery, working as an operator. He retired in 2000. He was a third generation farmer, farming in the Luther Community for many years. Ed loved hunting, fishing and gardening, but his greatest joy was his grandchildren.

He was a member of Berea Baptist Church.

Survivors include his wife, Wanda McMurray of Big Spring; three daughters and sons-in-law, Nikita and Eddy West of Victoria, Deidre and Keith Knox of Grantsville, Utah, and Shelley and Ron Graham of Midland; one son and daughter-in-law, Wade and Cheryl McMurray of Waxahachie; three brothers and sisters-in-law, J.R. and Jackie McMurray of Midland, Ray and Joyce McMurray of Orange Grove, and Earl and Wanda McMurray of Big Spring; two sisters, Dorothy Newby of Big Spring and Mary Klahr of Eunice, N.M.; seven grandchildren, Krista Wilkerson and husband Abe, and Kaci West, all of Victoria, Kody Whaley and Klate Graham, both of Midland, and Braxton McMurray, Josh McMurray and Reagan McMurray, all of Waxahachie; a great grandson, Kooper Wilkerson of Victoria; and special friends, Dub and Faye Day of Forsan.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one sister; and numerous aunts and uncles.

The family suggests memorials be made to the Allison Cancer Center, 301 North N., Midland 79701; or to the McMurray Family Scholarship Fund at Forsan High School, c/o First Bank of West Texas, P.O. Box 3430, Big Spring 79721-3430.

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

Paid obituary

Take Note

• Donnavan J. Silvas, 1, of Big Spring, died Friday, Dec. 5, 2008, in a local hospital. The parents are in need of help with burial expenses. All donations can be made at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home and Crematory of Big Spring.

• The purpose of life is a life of purpose. Join Nurses' Hospice of Big Spring Volunteer program today. We request potential volunteers not to volunteer for one year after a significant loss. Come by 1008 E. Third St. or call (432)517-4073.

• The mission of CASA of West Texas is to promote and support quality volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglect children in court in an effort to find each child a safe, nurturing and permanent home. CASA currently has 10 active volunteers to serve the 55 plus children of Howard County in foster care. A class is forming in Howard County and 20 volunteers are needed. For more information on becoming a CASA volunteer, please contact Robyn LaForge at (432) 683-1114.

• The Big Spring Salvation Army will be conducting free blood pressure and glucose screenings Dec. 31 from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the Army's Corps Building, located at 811 W. Fifth St. The screenings are being sponsored by In-Home Care. For more information, contact the Salvation Army at 267-8239.

• West Texas Opportunities Inc., through a Job Access Reverse Commute project with the Texas Department of Transportation offers transportation to employment in Midland, on a limited schedule, Monday through Friday each week. This fixed route currently leaves Big Spring at 7 a.m. and makes a stop at the EZ Rider bus connection in downtown Midland. The route leaves Midland for the return to Big spring at 4:15 p.m. As a promotional introduction, no fare is charged. Beginning April 1, the daily fare will be from $3 to $8, round-trip, depending on the number of passengers using the service. For more information, call Victor Enriquez, JARC coordinator, at West Texas Opportunities, (800) 245-9028.

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 7 a.m. Tuesday and 7 a.m. today:

• MARGARET DAGESTEAD, 33, of 401.5 Westover Road, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of theft.

• ROY BIDDLE, 43, of 5203 Sterling Rd., was arrested Wednesday on a charge of public intoxication.

• JESSICA MORENO, 26, of 1322 Madison, was arrested Wednesday on two local warrants.

• THEFT was reported:
in the 4000 block of Vicky.
in the 1000 block of Gregg Street.
in the 2000 block of Gregg Street.
in the 300 block of Owens.

• POSSESSION OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA was reported in the 1400 block of Sycamore.

Sheriff's report

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

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 66 inmates at the time of this report.

• LANCE NORMAN MARTEL, 35, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

• RANDALL WAYNE CONNER, 44, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a motion to revoke probation for possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

• CRYSTAL ANN SCHNEIDER, 20, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of minor in consumption of an alcoholic beverage and violation of a promise to appear.

• JOSH THOMPSON, 21, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

• VERONICA LUERA, 22, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on charges of driving while license invalid, violation of a promise to appear, possession of marijuana – two ounces or less and possession of a controlled substance.

• MICHAEL ANTHONY HORN, 20, was transferred to the county jail Tuesday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

• EPIFANIO JOE GUZMAN JR., 21, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.

• DAVID CHRISTOPHER PETREE, 24, was arrested Tuesday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

• RICHARD HODNETT, 70, was arrested Tuesday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated – second offense.

• ZACK MONROE TURMAN, 31, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of public intoxication.

Support Groups

WEDNESDAY

• RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain disease), a new support and informative group meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

THURSDAY

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

FRIDAY

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

SATURDAY

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

SUNDAY

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

MONDAY

• Encourager's Support Group for all widows and widowers meets the first and third Monday of the month. For more information, call Nancy Hale at 398-5239.

Your Local Weather

Thu 12/18	Fri 12/19	Sat 12/20	Sun 12/21	Mon 12/22
70/39	67/45	76/31	47/25	55/31
Mostly cloudy skies. High around 70F. Winds S at 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid 40s.	Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the low 30s.	Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the mid 20s.	More clouds than sun. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.

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Bulletin Board

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

TODAY

• Eagles Lodge Ladies Auxiliary meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 703 W. Third.

THURSDAY

• Gideon International Big Spring Camp U42060 meets at 7 a.m. in Herman's Restaurant.

• Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Friends of the Library meets at noon in the Howard County Library, 500 S. Main.

• Big Spring Main Street meets at noon in the Railroad Museum located at Second and Main streets.

• League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Chapter 4791 meets at 5:30 p.m. at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce. The public is invited.

• American Legion Auxiliary meets at 6 p.m. at 3203 W. Highway 80.

• The Prospector's Club meets at 7:30 p.m. at 606 E. Third St. The public is invited to these meetings. For more information contact Lola Lamb at 263-3340.

• Neighbors and Newcomers Club meets. New members are welcome. Call 263-2005 for more information.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:

• MEDICAL was reported in the 3100 block of FM 461. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 800 block of W. Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 700 block of E. Club. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 400 block of E. Fourth Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of Ramsey. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 3900 block of Hamilton. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAUMA was reported in the area of FM 700 and Goliad. One person was transported to SMMC.

• STRUCTURE FIRE was reported in the 1200 block of Sycamore.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1300 block of Lexington. One person was transported to SMMC.

• TRAUMA was reported in the area of FM 700 and Goliad. Five people were transported to SMMC.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Tuesday night:
Winning numbers drawn: 1-8-24-31-33.
Number matching five of five: 2. Prize: $12,267.

The winning Daily 4 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
3-5-2-8. Sum It Up: 18

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Tuesday night by the Texas Lottery, in order:
0-8-8. Sum It Up: 16

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HALL

Continued from Page 1B

upon the creation of this award. "He was extremely self motivated and an outstanding role model. He always had a smile on his face and was extremely respectful to any adult or peer. Antwoyne Edwards was an awesome young man. His teammates and the coaches' lives were forever touched by Antwoyne Edwards. He will never be forgotten."

According to Mitch Woodard, Hall's position coach at linebacker, the senior was selected for the Edwards Memorial Award because of his consistent effort.

"I've coached Lanny for three years and he plays the game with a lot of heart," said Woodard. "He's never going to miss a practice and he's going to always know what he's supposed to do. He's going to give everything he has got to get it done. He's not the best athlete, but you know you're going to get 100 percent out of him. That's what makes Lanny special and deserving of this award."

Hall is the 11th Steer to receive the award since 2000.

PRO BOWL

Continued from Page 1B

The Titans have the NFL's best record at 12-2 and won their first 10 games before losing to the Jets.

"If we were the Dallas Cowboys, it would easily be 12 of us going to the Pro Bowl," said Titans safety Chris Hope. "A lot of people say it's a small market or we haven't been around long enough to gain the recognition like the other teams."

Pittsburgh (11-3) had only three Pro Bowlers: linebackers James Farrior and James Harrison and safety Troy Polamalu.

The starting quarterback for the NFC will be Kurt Warner, who led the Arizona Cardinals to the NFC West title. It will be the 37-year-old Warner's fourth Pro Bowl but his first since 2001, when he was with St. Louis and made it for the third straight season.

Joining Warner are the Cardinals' two starting wide receivers, Anquan Boldin and Larry Fitzgerald, both voted in as starters.

Warner and the 39-year-old Favre, who leads the NFL in interceptions with 17, are far from the oldest Pro Bowlers this year. Those honors go to Carney and 42-year-old Giants punter Jeff Feagles.

Carney is 2 years older than another former Pro Bowl kicker, Jan Stenerud, who was 42 when he made it in 1984. Stenerud is the only kicker in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Carney and Feagles also set records for the longest gap ever between Pro Bowl selections: Carney made it in 1994 with San Diego and Feagles in 1995 with Arizona.

The AFC roster contains 17 first-timers while the NFC has 14.

Dallas, which had a record 13 Pro Bowlers when it went 13-3 last season, has five this year — but receiver Terrell Owens and quarterback Tony Romo both missed out.

Kansas City tight end Tony Gonzalez made his 10th straight Pro Bowl and Tampa Bay linebacker Derrick Brooks made it for the 11th time.

Brooks had gone to 10 straight Pro Bowls before missing out last season.

Seattle's only representative is offensive tackle Walter Jones, but he will miss the game after undergoing season-ending knee surgery last week.

Among those who missed out were Miami quarterback Chad Pennington and Atlanta's John Abraham.

Pennington was released by the Jets after Favre was obtained in a trade and has led the Dolphins, 1-15 last season, to a 9-5 record and a three-way tie for the lead in the AFC East. Abraham, primarily a defensive end, is third in the NFL in sacks with 15.

Pennington lost out to Peyton Manning, Favre and Denver's Jay Cutler. Abraham was beaten out by the Giants' Justin Tuck, Carolina's Julius Peppers and Minnesota's Jared Allen.

Titans running back Chris Johnson was the only rookie to make the Pro Bowl.

Four teams had no representatives: Cincinnati and Jacksonville in the AFC and St. Louis and winless Detroit in the NFC.

Patsy's sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

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

FORSAN

Continued from Page 1B

final stanza.

Gauer started her heroics a couple minutes later as the Lady Buffs guard battled her way inside for the score, drawing contact in the process to put Forsan ahead for good.

Schwartz led all scorers with 15 for the Lady Kats, while Longorio scored 12 for the Lady Buffs.

Lady Buffs 13 7 8 7--35
Lady Kats 8 8 7 9--32

Leading Scorers: Garden City - Schwartz 15, Forsan - Longorio 12.

Buffs 52,
Bearkats 24

In boy's action, the Garden City Bearkats hung close to the Forsan Buffaloes, trailing 18-16 with five minutes elapsed in the second quarter of play.

Unfortunately, the Buffs found their groove, outscoring their visitors 34-8 the rest of the way to win easily, 52-24.

Nathan Atkerson was the decisive force in the second and third quarters for the Buffs as the senior post bullied the smaller Bearkats over the span to score all of his 13 points during the Forsan outburst.

"Nathan really played a good game for us," Forsan Head Coach Terry McDonald said. "We were able to run our offense and that opened up some things for us."

"You saw the difference tonight between an experienced team (Forsan) and a young team (Garden City)," Bearkats Head Coach Koby Abney said. "We have a real young. We knew coming in that we were going to take a beating early in the year, but we are used to going into district play with a .500 record. In the long run though, it is going to help us in the end. Forsan has a real good team and it showed tonight, but playing teams like that is only going to make us better."

Forsan 11 18 10 13--52
BearKats 5 11 0 8--24

Forsan - Jeremy Robbins 17, Nathan Atkerson 13, Evan Burton 9, Alex Huckabee 5, Tristan Clay 4.

GC - Bret Chudej 7, Hayden Halfman 6, Brian Hirt 6, Travis Gully 3, Aaron Long 2.



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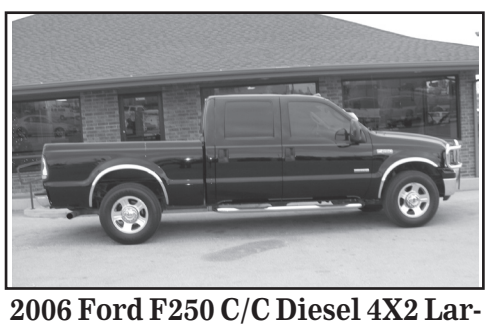
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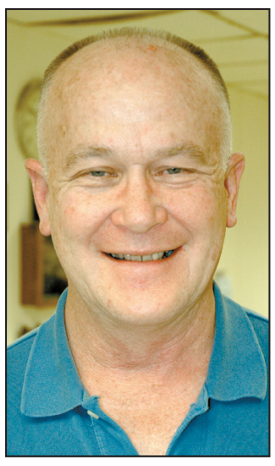
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Meiser named Hangar 25 Veteran of the Month



Meiser

Ed Meiser has been named Hangar 25 Air Museum's Veteran of the Month for December.

Meiser served in the U.S. Air Force from 1968 to 1974. He was an air traffic controller during the Vietnam War.

A reception in his honor will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday in the museum briefing room. The public is invited.

Hangar 25 Air Museum is located at 1911 Apron Drive.

For more information, call 264-1999.

NUTCRACKER

Continued from Page 1A

The music is only part of the colorful performance.

"We are fortunate to have the Midland Festival Ballet company as our guest artists for the evening," said Graumann. "The co-artistic directors of the ballet are Judy Coleman, the founder, and Susan Clark. They maintain and operate the ballet studio in Midland in which most of the 80 dancers have been trained."

Local talent will be utilized as well.

"I am especially pleased to have a number of Big Spring dancers performing this year. Students of Stevi McKinnon, owner of the Dance Gallery, auditioned and were accepted into the Midland Festival Ballet Nutcracker company," Graumann explained. "These students, with help from Stevi, family and friends, have traveled to Midland each week since August to rehearse the 'Nutcracker.'"

Those special dance students include Alyssa Deanda, Bari Green, Destiny Mata, Carly Morris, Maddi Miller, Megan Magallanes and Bailee Grant.

Corporate sponsors for the event, and, indeed, the symphony season, are the Citizens Federal Credit Union and Alon USA.

"We are indebted to the sponsors who agreed to assist with the considerable financial burden," said Graumann, who also praised the Big Spring Symphony board of directors, association members and the Dora Roberts Foundation.

This is the second subscription performance of the 2008-2009 concert season, "Times to Remember."

Tickets are $15 for adults, $10 for senior citizens and $5 for students and are available at the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce, Blum's Jewelers, the *Big Spring Herald*, Faye's Flowers, First Bank of West Texas and the Midland Festival Ballet.

For more information on Saturday's performance, call the symphony office at (432) 264-7223.

FASTEST

Continued from Page 1A

were on a great pathway for success with our current growth," said Dr. Cheryl T. Sparks, president of Howard College. "We have seen this growth throughout our district and we are very pleased to see the fruits of our labor materialize before us and be recognized for our growth along with our peer colleges in this category."

The fall 2007 semester realized a 12 percent increase across the district, which was led by the continued increase on the Big Spring and San Angelo campuses. Much of the increase is credited to the concurrent or dual credit programs; however, growth was also seen in the remainder of the student population.

The San Angelo campus alone grew by 307 students in fall 2007, due in large part to its dual credit enrollment.

"With a great partner like San Angelo ISD, our dual credit numbers here in San Angelo have definitely increased," said LeAnne Byrd, provost at Howard College San Angelo. "But we have also seen growth in our medical programs which were evidenced by our recent expansion to the St. John's campus earlier this year."

There couldn't be better timing for a growth in the district as this is a funding year for Howard College, officials noted.

"I am extremely proud of the growth we are seeing across our district and know this will have a positive effect on each one of our communities as some of them have experienced some economic struggles of their own," added Sparks.

The fall 2008 Howard College preliminary district numbers reported an increase of 16,656 contact hours, which shows that not only are more students enrolled in college classes, but those students are also taking more courses, a concept which couldn't please administrators more.

"We want more students on all of our campuses taking more courses," said Sparks. "It is a win-win situation for our entire district as well as the communities that we serve."

For more information on Howard College, visit www.howardcollege.edu. To view the complete report, visit www.ccweek.com.

VANDALS

Continued from Page 1A

A fire ripped through the southwest corner of the children's structure during the evening hours of Dec. 9, according to Big Spring Fire Marshal Carl Condray, who said it took more than 1,000 gallons of water to douse the blaze.

Condray declined to go into details concerning how the fire was set or if an accelerant was used.

"Information like that is one of the tools we have to validate the tips we receive," said Condray. "So I'm doubtful we'll release that type of information until the investigation is completed. However, we are still working very hard to catch whoever is responsible for this outrageous attack on Kids Zone."

Condray said damages to the play equipment reach well into the thousands of dollars.

"The damages caused by the fire are estimated between $30,000 and $50,000, and all of it was done with volunteer labor and money," said Condray. "People got out there and worked their tails off to build it because they wanted our kids to have something they could be proud of. And now you have some hooligans come along and try to take that away from our kids. We're very, very serious about catching these people."

City officials announced last week they would raise the reward being offered by Crimestoppers — which is up to $1,000 — to $5,000 in hopes the extra cash will help "jog memories."

"The council and I have decided to up the reward being offered in the case to $5,000," said Mayor Russ McEwen. "That's $5,000 to anyone who can provide information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the people responsible for this atrocity."

McEwen hasn't been shy about expressing his feelings for the person or persons responsible for the fire and calling for local residents with information on the incident to step forward.

"There's plenty of ways I would describe what's happened. Thoughtless. Inconsiderate. Ridiculous. It's just so hard to put into words. Sure, there's been vandalism in Big Spring before. Graffiti, broken windows, you name it. But when I heard about this... it's so hard to put into words. You just feel like, OK, enough is enough. Where's this going to end?"

Tuesday's fire wasn't the first reports of vandalism to come out of the park in the past few weeks, as vandals — possibly the same vandals who set fire to Kids Zone — destroyed the totem pole that has been a part of the park since the 1950s.

McEwen described the Big Spring landmark — which has been a part of the Comanche Trail Park landscape for nearly six decades — as "irreplaceable."

City officials confirmed this week the portion of Kids Zone destroyed by the fire will be rebuilt, but a start date for the construction hasn't yet been established.

Anyone with information regarding the fire or totem pole — or any other acts of vandalism — are asked to call Big Spring Area Crimestoppers at 264-TIPS (8477). No caller ID is ever used, and informants can remain anonymous.

Information can also be left with the Fire Marshal's Office at 264-2305, or the Big Spring Police Department at 264-2550.

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

ANGELS

Continued from Page 1A

The annual program — which provides Christmas gifts for area low income children and seniors who might otherwise go without during the holiday season — got under way last month when Salvation Army officials began taking applications.

Tompkins said the next big challenge for her and the rest of the Salvation Army staff will be to get the presents to the children and seniors they were bought for.

"It's pretty crazy at the warehouse right now," said Tompkins with a laugh. "We'll be distributing the gifts Friday morning. We've contacted each of the parents or guardians who have been approved for the program and given them a time to show up and pick up their gifts. We're hoping to get this done in an organized manner."

Tompkins said area residents who were approved for the program more than a month ago and haven't received a letter with their pickup time should contact the Salvation Army office.

"This is one of our biggest challenges of the year," said Tompkins. "We have a lot to get done between now and Friday, but it's all worth it when you see the faces of the parents picking up the gifts. That's something you don't forget."

For more information on the Angel Tree program, call 267-8239 or stop by the Salvation Army office, located at 811 W Fifth Street.

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

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WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24TH
Deadline Monday, Dec. 22nd, 3:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 25TH
No Paper Christmas Day

FRIDAY, DEC. 26TH
Deadline Tuesday, Dec. 23rd, 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, DEC. 28TH
Deadline Wednesday, Dec. 23rd, 10:00 a.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 29TH
Deadline Wednesday, Dec. 23rd, Noon

Merry Christmas!

18971

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Laurinaitis leads AP All-American team

NEW YORK (AP) — James Laurinaitis idolized A.J. Hawk, Chris Spielman and the other great linebackers who played for Ohio State before him.

Now, in at least one area, he has surpassed them.

Laurinaitis became a three-time AP All-American, and Heisman Trophy winner Sam Bradford and star receiver Michael Crabtree joined him on the first team released Tuesday.

Ohio State has a history of great linebackers from Hawk to Spielman and Tom Cousineau to Randy Gradishar. Hawk and Spielman were both two-time AP All-Americans.

Among the other players to make the AP first-team three times were San Diego State running back Marshall Faulk (1991-93), Pittsburgh offensive lineman Bill Fralic (1982-84), Georgia running back Hershel Walker (1980-82) and Pittsburgh defensive end Hugh Green (1978-80).

Alabama put more players on the 2008 AP first team than any school, about 1,000 pounds of linemen. Offensive tackle Andre Smith, listed at 330 pounds, was an unanimous first-team choice, and was joined by center Antoine Caldwell. Crimson Tide nose guard Terrence Cody, listed at 365 pounds, anchored the top-ranked defense in the Southeastern Conference.

Bradford beat out Texas' Colt McCoy and Florida's Tim Tebow in All-America voting that broke the same way as the Heisman balloting. McCoy, the Heisman runner-up, was the second-team quarterback. Tebow made the third team, a year after winning the Heisman and being a first-team AP All-American.

Laurinaitis and Crabtree, the Texas Tech receiver, were among five players to repeat as first-teamers.

Oklahoma guard Duke Robinson, Cincinnati punter Kevin Huber and Missouri receiver/kick returner Jeremy Maclin, who made it as an all-purpose player, were the others.

Two Big Ten running backs completed the All-America backfield. Iowa's Shonn Greene is second in the country in rushing (144 yards per game) and has scored 17 touchdowns. Michigan State's Javon Ringer is third in rushing (132 ypg) and has scored 21 touchdowns.

Oklahoma State's Dez Bryant was the other receiver. A sophomore like Crabtree, Bryant scored 20 touchdowns.

Rounding out the offensive line were Mississippi tackle Michael Oher and LSU guard Herman Johnson.

Chase Coffman, who led all tight ends with 83 catches, gave Missouri's high-scoring offense two All-Americans.

Utah's Louie Sakoda was the kicker. He booted 21 field goals in 23 attempts and scored 115 points for the undefeated Utes.

The defense featured Laurinaitis' teammate, cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, and two players from Southern California's top-ranked unit: linebacker Rey Maualuga and safety Taylor Mays.

Florida's Brandon Spikes was the other linebacker.

Up front, Aaron Maybin of Penn State and Brian Orakpo of Texas were the defensive ends, and Cody and Mississippi's Peria Jerry were the tackles.

Wake Forest cornerback Alphonso Smith and Tennessee safety Eric Berry completed the secondary.

Laurinaitis was recruited by the Buckeyes out of Minnesota, and came to Columbus with relatively modest goals considering where he ended up.

He wanted to make the travel squad as a freshman, start as a sophomore, receive some type of all-Big Ten recognition as a junior and be an All-American and Butkus Award candidate as a senior.

By the time his sophomore season was complete, he had accomplished all his goals.

Oklahoma sans Murray for title game

NORMAN, Okla. (AP) — Oklahoma running back DeMarco Murray will have surgery to repair a hamstring injury and miss the BCS national championship game against Florida.

Murray will undergo surgery on Dec. 22 to repair the tendon in his left leg, Sooners' coach Bob Stoops said Tuesday. The championship game is Jan. 8.

"Obviously, we're very disappointed for DeMarco," Stoops said in a statement. "He has been an important part of our success this year and we will miss his contributions."

Murray was Oklahoma's leading rusher before he was injured in the Big 12 championship game against Missouri on Dec. 6. The injury was first diagnosed as a bruise but an MRI exam revealed the damage.

Murray, now the team's second-leading rusher with 1,002 yards, will be replaced by Mossis Madu. Chris Brown leads the Sooners with 1,010 yards.

"With Chris Brown and Mossis Madu, we still have two very fine backs," Stoops said. "Our team has a lot of confidence in their abilities."

Murray also had 395 receiving yards and was second on the team with 18 touchdowns. He will be able to resume training in about five months, said Oklahoma athletic trainer Scott Anderson.

Madu has rushed for 463 yards and six touchdowns as the third-team back. He filled in for Murray during the Big 12 title game and carried 15 times for 114 yards and three touchdowns.

In Sunday's
Big Spring Herald



Songs that changed America

The period from right after WWII through the mid-1960's was a time of transformation for America socially and culturally. There was no better way to witness these changes than through the popular songs of the day. Plus, nutty about nutcrackers and buttermilk coleslaw.

American Profile

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EDITORIAL

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

-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Ron Midkiff
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John A. Moseley
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News Editor

OTHER VIEWS

Mexico needs more free-speech protection

As much as we hate to admit this, the leaders of Mexico's drug cartels know what they're doing. By targeting the people who tell the rest of Mexico — and the world, including those of us in North Texas — about their deadly ways, the cartel's honchos know they are silencing the storytellers.

And by silencing them, they decrease the chance that people will know the depth of the cartels' corruption.

Sadly, this is precisely what's happening. The Committee to Protect Journalists in New York reports that 21 journalists have been slain in Mexico since 2000. That includes Armando Rodriguez, killed last month in Ciudad Juarez.

Equally troubling, seven journalists have disappeared since 2005. During its 27 years of documenting abuses against journalists, the committee reports, only Russia during the Chechnyan conflict saw a similar number of journalists simply vanish.

Writing in Dangerous Assignments, the committee's magazine, Monica Campbell and Maria Salazar tell the story of the disappearing storytellers.

One was Rafael Ortiz Martinez, a reporter in the border state of Coahuila, which abuts parts of southwestern Texas. He disappeared in the early hours of July 8, 2006, as he traveled from his newspaper's offices to his apartment. Before this respected journalist disappeared, he had received death threats because of his coverage of a local politician.

Local officials, unfortunately, are a big worry in Mexico. The cartels can intimidate them or tempt them into corruption. Either way, the locals are less likely to protect those trying to tell the rest of us the truth.

That's why it's so critical that Mexican legislators pass a law before them now to make it a federal crime to curtail an individual's right to self-expression. The proposal also would strengthen the federal office of special prosecutor and give it more clout in investigating cases like Ortiz's.

Giving the feds more power to protect journalists wouldn't end the violence, but at least the cartels would know that Mexico City values the storytellers. And that must frighten them.

The more the truth gets out, the more likely the free world will be to stand up to the merchants of death.

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

LETTER POLICIES

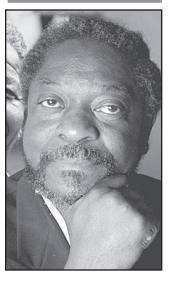
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Shame on the addicts of Wall Street

While gnashing our teeth over the failure of the auto industry bailout, let's talk about "derivatives."

These financial instruments are cited as key examples of the greed that sparked the Wall Street meltdown wrecking the economies of the entire capitalist world. (Don't get me started on swaps.)



LES PAYNE

Since the life savings of working people are affected, I've struggled mightily to understand derivatives. This gamble, as my less business-challenged friends explain it, is beneath the dignity of a three-card monte game. (This street hustle more resembles the subprime mortgage scheme.) Derivatives are more like side bets on three-card monte, with $250,000 minimums.

The profits from "derivatives" that these capitalists report is taxed at a rate half that paid by American workers earning their money by the sweat of their brow.

This stark class disparity carries over to the way the federal government treats those who work, as opposed to the idle who scheme. The $700 billion panhandled from taxpayers for the Wall Street bailout, for example, was entrusted to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, who is a creature of the shoddy practices that collapsed the financial system. The former Goldman Sachs chief executive seems bent on distributing the loot to the banks with no demands for structural changes to curb Wall Street greed and fraud.

We need look no further for the latter than the Thursday arrest of a legendary Wall Street titan who reportedly said he ran a "giant Ponzi scheme" out of his highly respected investment securities office. Former Nasdaq chairman Bernard L. Madoff, who is a pioneer of modern Wall Street, confessed that his operation reportedly is "all just one big lie" that has lost as much as $50 billion. His firm handles mainly wealthy clients and gained a reputation for generating high yields, whether the economy was up or down.

What officials say Madoff called "basically a giant Ponzi scheme," which tops Enron's tens of billions in loss to shareholders, may prove to be the biggest fraud yet perpetrated on unsuspecting clients. This 70-year-old financial trader may not be typical on Wall Street but his "too good to be true" lure is a standard bait of the con artists at the heart of the financial collapse, whether it's subprime, swaps or derivatives.

Corrections for the Wall Street crisis, I submit, would require not unrestricted bailouts, but chain arrests of securities Ponzi schemers like Madoff, and the institution of structure adjustment programs not unlike those the IMF imposes on poor nations it supposedly bails out.

While Secretary Paulson did not demand such structural changes by bank managers bailed out with taxpayers' money, Congress insisted upon tough strictures for unions in the auto bailout negotiations. The House-approved $14 billion plan failed by a 52-35 Senate vote Thursday, as Republicans insisted that the United Auto Workers accept deep wage cutbacks for its union members.

Again, the GOP did not insist upon such structural adjustments when the pirates and Ponzi-scheme managers of Wall Street panhandled their bailout.

A well-tuned nose can pick up the scent of union-busting wafting from the defeated bailout bid.

This GOP blood lust extends back to '81, when President Ronald Reagan took such glee in busting up the federal Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Some 11,400 union members lost their jobs and eased the way for the squeezing of labor by management. Government regulations withered away under the misguided Republican notion that business and banking can regulate itself.

A quarter-century later, the collapse demonstrates that Wall Street can no more be trusted to regulate its gluttony than addicts can be left to control their heroin intake.

The economic challenge for the Obama administration is not simply to bail out the Wall Street addicts with more of their drugs but rather to rush them off to rehab — or into the calaboose.

Les Payne is a columnist for Newsday.

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Texas 31st District
401 Austin, Suite 101
Big Spring, 79720
Phone: (432) 268-9909

Off to Iraq, seeking answers

I'm on my way to a country that no one wants to hear about anymore.

When I was last in Baghdad, a year ago, Iraq stories dominated the headlines. Pundits were still arguing over the merits of the surge and Gen. David Petraeus' 2007 testimony to Congress.



TRUDY RUBIN

That was then. In the last year, we've had a diminution of Iraqi violence, the election of Barack Obama, and the signing of a status-of-forces agreement with Iraq that calls for all troops to leave the country by the end of 2011. Iraq news has virtually vanished, to be replaced by headlines from Afghanistan and Mumbai.

But we still have nearly 150,000 troops in Iraq, and bombs still go off there. How our troops leave, how fast they go, and what they leave behind are immensely important. Otherwise, Iraq could return to haunt us and our next president.

So I'm going back to Baghdad to ask Americans and Iraqis how we can leave responsibly, and what's likely to happen after we exit. Will violence and jihadis return? Will Iran fill the political vacuum when we leave? Or will Iraqis be able to muddle through with some semblance of unity and sovereign control?

"There will be a lot of violence as the Americans leave," predicts Ali Allawi, a former Iraqi government minister and one of the smartest analysts of his country's political currents. "They will leave a country with a high fever rather than a terminal illness," he told me by phone.

What does he mean?

As I've written before, Petraeus' counterinsurgency strategy dramatically improved Iraq's security. He took advantage of developments already under way by backing Sunni tribes who had once helped al-Qaeda in Iraq, but had turned against its vicious ways.

The surge troops alone would not have turned the tide. But they kept ethnic cleansing under check in Baghdad and surrounding areas, while a Sunni tribal surge crushed al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The demise of al-Qaeda in Iraq broke a vicious cycle of violence, in which the group had deliberately targeted Shiite civilians, sparking revenge killings of Sunnis. Once al-Qaeda in Iraq was down, ordinary Shiites dropped their support for their own thuggish militias, and the tit-for-tat murders diminished.

But there are still plenty of old scores to settle. And it's unclear whether the current Shiite-led government is willing to share power and wealth with Sunni Arabs or other sectors of society. In a society where power struggles usually meant death to the loser, compromise is an art that few have mastered.

U.S. power is waning with the signing of the status-of-forces agreement, Allawi said. The accord constrains what U.S. troops can do and sets a timeline for their departure. As U.S. power diminishes, Iraqi factions are already struggling over who will replace the foreign overlords. No one is certain whether that struggle can be contained by voting or will involve guns.

"The fault lines are no longer between Sunnis and Shiites," Allawi said. That brutal civil war has basically ended, since the Sunni Arab minority now knows it can't restore the power it once wielded under the regime of Saddam Hussein.

But the Shiite majority is splintering. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who once seemed incapable of governing, is increasing his power by setting up tribal support groups paid with government money. The largest Shiite party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, which now controls much of southern Iraq, is crying foul. Many wonder whether coming provincial elections will be marked by more assassinations. Iran will surely meddle, via Iraqi proxies, in the voting.

Nor is it clear what will happen to the Sunni Arab militias that the United States paid to fight al-Qaeda. They were supposed to be absorbed into government jobs; if Maliki doesn't do this, they could turn back to violence.

Meantime, Sunni Arabs and Kurds are at loggerheads over who will control oil-rich areas of northern Iraq.

Indeed, the operative word for Iraq at present is fragmentation. The country isn't set to divide neatly into three regions, as some predicted, but has dissolved into a plethora of armed elements who want to protect or expand their turf.

Allawi said he believed provincial elections set for the end of January were more likely to increase the fragmentation than to solidify political institutions. He predicts at least five more years of instability and killings, but not all-out battles. Some expect a coup, but he said he thought the army wasn't strong enough for that.

So the question is how U.S. troops can draw down without accelerating Iraq's disintegration. Right now, U.S. troops provide an element of stability, but they cannot knit the country together. In private, many Iraqis worry about their leaving, but in public nationalist sentiment is rising.

Obama has proposed using regional diplomacy to stabilize Iraq. He has pledged that one of his first acts as president will be to convene the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his national security team and "design a plan for a responsible drawdown."

I'm going to Iraq to try to figure out what that means.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to her at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at trubin@phillynews.com.

CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST

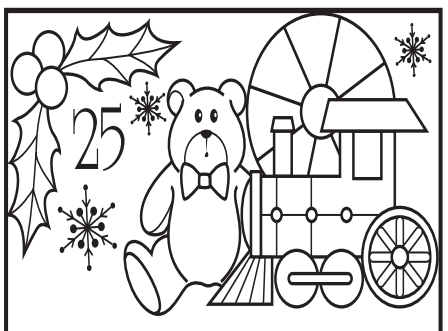
Kids Submit Your Entry Color 1 Block & Bring To The Big Spring Herald By

Monday, Dec. 22, 2008
5:00 p.m.

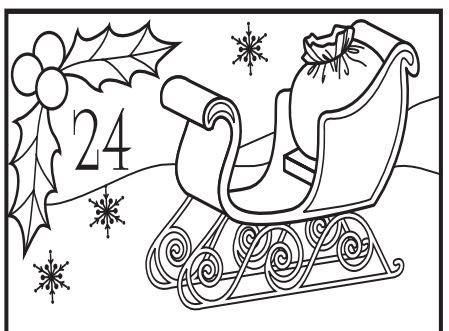
1ST PRIZE: $50.00 GIFT CARD
2ND PRIZE: $35.00 GIFT CARD
3RD PRIZE: $25.00 GIFT CARD

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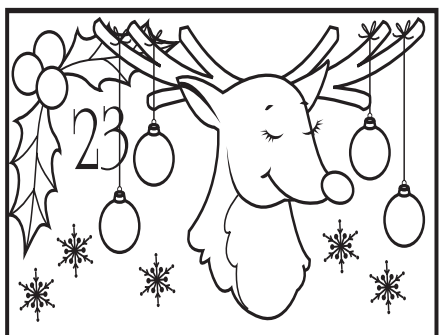
1. Contest open to children ages 10 and under. Relatives of newspaper employees or contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
2. Contestants may use crayons, colored pencils or markers. Adults may assist in completing the contest entry form, but not in the coloring.
3. Limit one entry per child. Entries will not be returned.
4. All entries must be turned in by Dec.22, 2008, 5 p.m.
5. Submissions are considered property of this newspaper and may be printed by this newspaper.
6. Decision of the judges is final.



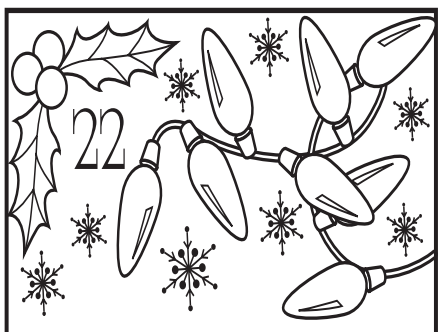
Spanky's Coffee House
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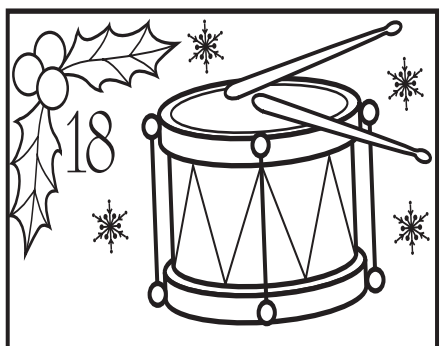
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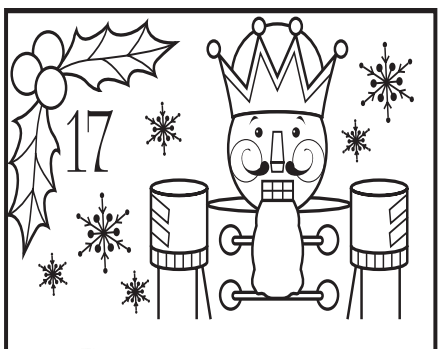
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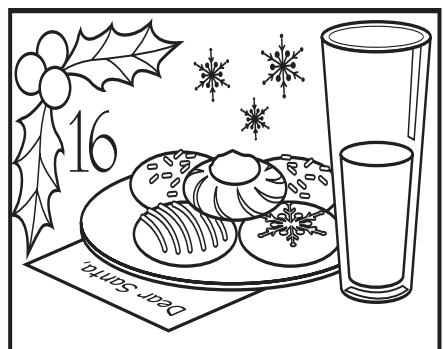


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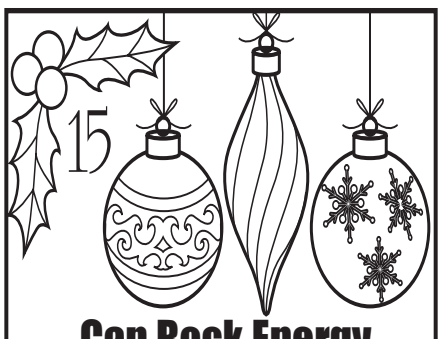


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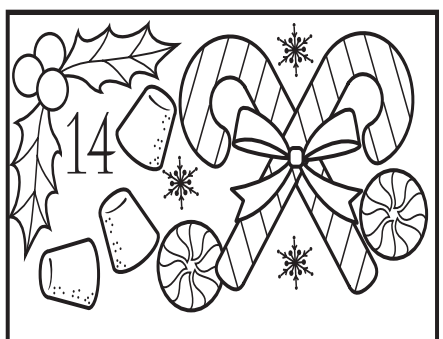
Domino's
2111 Gregg
267-4111



Comet Cleaners
1500 E. FM 700
267-2584



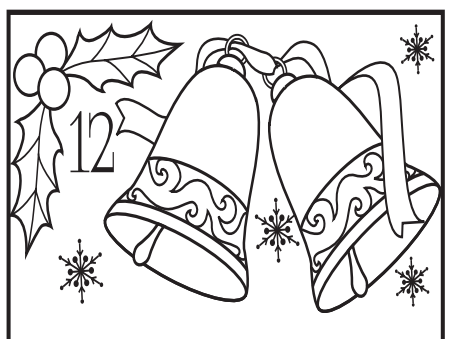
Cap Rock Energy
Stanton Division
1-800-442-8688 (after hours)
432-756-4126



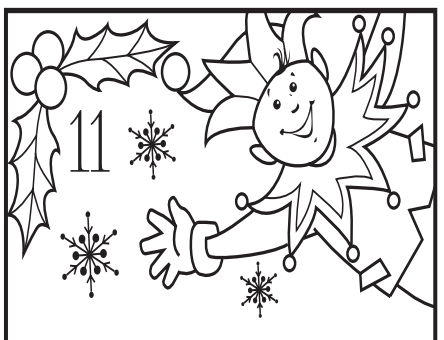
Blum's Jewelers
Inside The Big Spring Mall
267-6335



Big Spring Community Federal Credit Union
503 E. FM 700 263-1361



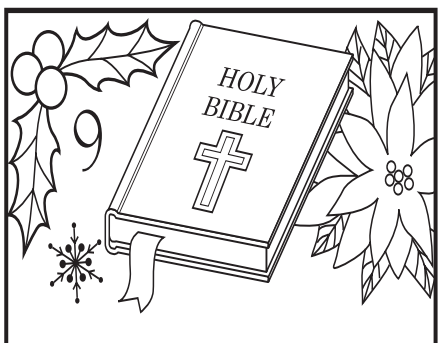
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CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN COLORING CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Name: _____ Age_____

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City_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone:_____

Mail to: THE BIG SPRING HERALD
710 SCURRY ST.
BIG SPRING, TEXAS 79720

Merry Christmas and Good Luck!

DEADLINE: MONDAY, DEC. 22ND

Job search in the big city not so easy

By MARTHA IRVINE
AP National Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — The girl from Texas didn't bring a warm coat with her. But to hear Kimberly Bratton tell it, winter in Chicago isn't as bad as people say.

Never mind that it's only December. She is an optimist, an adventurer — one who picked up and moved to a city where she knew no one, with no job, in the middle of a recession.

"I always wanted to be that girl who moved away and saw what was out there ... the girl working in the big city," says Bratton, who graduated from the University of Texas this summer.

So far, it's meant taking office temp jobs and lining up babysitting gigs while she networks, sends applications and schedules the occasional interview. She's looking for a job in advertising and public relations, a field that is usually bustling in Chicago.

But many agencies, she's finding, aren't even taking interns right now.

"They always say, 'Check back, check back. We don't have anything right now. Check back,'" says Bratton, who's 22.

It's been like that since September, when she and her parents packed a U-Haul with her belongings — among them, a bed, a dresser, a desk. They headed north from the family's home outside Dallas to the third-floor flat Bratton rented with roommates she found in an online ad.

It was all part of her plan to move to the city she fell in love with her sophomore year of college, shortly after she chose her major and her career. She'd planned to finish school in December, but was so ready to get here, she crammed in her remaining classes over the summer and graduated in August.

For starter cash, her parents let her keep the remainder of the college fund she would have spent this semester.

But after that, they said, she was on her own.

"So be prepared to do whatever it takes," said her father, Stan Bratton, an insurance broker.

He recalls how, when he graduated from college, he "never saw another dime" from his parents. And while he and his wife are willing to be a safety net for their daughter, they also want her to learn to make it on her own.

"I think that's the reality of trying to budget around your own money instead of budgeting around your parents' money," he says.

It's meant that Bratton had to spend her first Thanksgiving away from her family. It's also meant living in a sunny but sparsely furnished apartment, with most of her belongings tucked into a tiny bedroom with no closet (she keeps her clothes in a wardrobe in the dining room, near the foosball table).

But still, there's the positive spin. "Our landlord tells us this is his prettiest apartment," Bratton says, noting that she and her roommates will soon hang artwork on their currently barren walls.

This is home, she says, firmly. This is where she wants to be.



AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast

Kimberly Bratton's shadow is cast against the wall in this portrait at her Wrigleyville apartment in Chicago.

MINUTES OF COUNTY FINANCES TREASURER'S REPORT

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY FINANCES IN THE HANDS OF TERESA THOMAS TREASURER OF HOWARD COUNTY, TEXAS.

COMMISSIONER'S COURT HOWARD COUNTY, TEXAS IN REGULAR SESSION OCTOBER TERM 2008

IN ACCORDANCE with Section 114.026, Local Government Code, we, the undersigned constituting the entire Commissioners Court of said County, certify that on the 8th day of December, 2008 at the Regular term of Court, we compared and examined the monthly report of TERESA THOMAS, Treasurer of Howard County, Texas, for September, 2008, and finding the same correct, entered an order in the Minutes approving said Report, which states total cash and other assets on hand as $13,355,829.82.

Mark Barr, County Judge
Emma Brown, Commissioner Pct.1
Jerry Kilgore,Commissioner Pct. 2
W.B. "Bill" Crooker, Commissioner Pct. 3
Gary Simer, Commissioner Pct. 4

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, by Mark Barr, County Judge, and County Commissioners of said Howard County, each respectively, on this the 8th day of December, 2008.

Attest: Donna Wright, County Clerk

FILED FOR RECORD THIS 8TH DAY OF December, 2008, and recorded on the 8th day of December, A.D. 2008.

Donna Wright,
County Clerk and
Ex-Officio Clerk of the Commissioners
Court in and for Howard County, Texas.

15377

Happy Holidays
GEE MOTOR COMPANY
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Dating Violence

"The person I'm going out with scares me sometimes."

What Is It?

Dating violence is controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship. It can happen in straight or gay relationships. It can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a combination.

Controlling behavior may include:

- Not letting you hang out with your friends
- Calling or paging you frequently to find out where you are, whom you're with, and what you're doing
- Telling you what to wear
- Having to be with you all the time

Verbal and emotional abuse may include:

- Calling you names
- Jealousy
- Belittling you (cutting you down)
- Threatening to hurt you, someone in your family, or himself or herself if you don't do what he or she wants

Physical abuse may include:

- Shoving
- Punching
- Slapping
- Pinching
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Hair pulling
- Strangling

Sexual abuse may include:

- Unwanted touching and kissing
- Forcing you to have sex
- Not letting you use birth control
- Forcing you to do other sexual things

Anyone can be a victim of dating violence. Both boys and girls are victims, but boys and girls abuse their partners in different ways. Girls are more likely to yell, threaten to hurt themselves, pinch, slap, scratch, or kick. Boys injure girls more and are more likely to punch their partner and force them to participate in unwanted sexual activity. Some teen victims experience violence occasionally. Others are abused more often, sometimes daily.

If You Are a Victim of Dating Violence, You Might...

- Think it's your fault.
- Feel angry, sad, lonely, depressed, or confused.
- Feel helpless to stop the abuse.
- Feel threatened or humiliated.
- Feel anxious.
- Not know what might happen next.
- Feel like you can't talk to family and friends.
- Be afraid of getting hurt more seriously.
- Feel protective of your boyfriend or girlfriend.

You're Not Alone

- One in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped, or pushed by a partner.[1]
- 50–80% of teens have reported knowing others who were involved in violent relationships.[2]
- Teens identifying as gay, lesbian, and bisexual are as likely to experience violence in same-sex dating relationships as youths involved in opposite sex dating.[3]
- Many studies indicate that, as a dating relationship becomes more serious, the potential for and nature of violent behavior escalates.[4]
- Young women, ages 16 to 24 years, experience the highest rates of relationship violence.[5]

Get Help

Being a victim of dating violence is not your fault. Nothing you say, wear, or do gives anyone the right to hurt you.

- If you think you are in an abusive relationship, get help immediately. Don't keep your concerns to yourself.
- Talk to someone you trust like a parent, teacher, school principal, counselor, or nurse.
- If you choose to tell, you should know that some adults are mandated reporters. This means they are legally required to report neglect or abuse to someone else,

Or Contact
Victim Services
263-3312

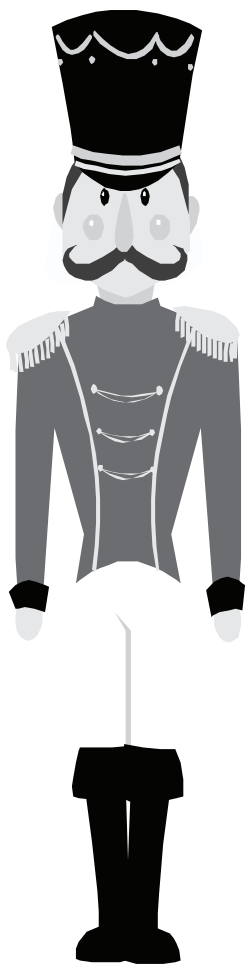
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Music Director and Conductor
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THE NUTCRACKER BALLET



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7:30 pm
Big Spring Municipal Auditorium

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Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce
Blum's Jewelers
Big Spring Herald Office
Faye's Flowers
First Bank of West Texas (all branches)
or at the door of the Municipal Auditorium the night of the performance

ADMISSION
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Student $5

For more information,
Call (432)264-7223

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SAVE $$$$$$ on monuments/ markers. We deliver to all cemeteries. Little Red Barn across from Mt. Olive Cemetery. Mt Olive Monuments. 432-264-7722.

SPECIAL SALE. Two grave spaces for the price of one. Pay-out plan available. $50.00 Down. The Little Red Barn across from Mt. Olive Cemetery. 432-264-7722.

Help Wanted

AMERICAN STATE bank is seeking a self-motivated employee with excellent sales, communications, and customer service skills to work a flexible part-time teller schedule. Credit and criminal checks are part of our application process. Apply at 1411 Gregg Street.

ARFF PROFESSIONAL Inc. is offering one managerial position for a parts/ dispatch manager. Skills required: heavy truck/ automotive background, good communication/ people skills, management skills, computer skills. Apply in person at 306 State St. Office hours M-F 8-5.

BIG SPRING Independent School District hiring cashiers, cooks, and line servers. Please apply online at www.bsisd.esc.18.net.
No phone calls please.

BIG SPRING Oil Company, needs experienced Tool Pusher. Must be able to pass drug test. Competitive salary and limited benefits. Most work within 60 miles of Big Spring or Snyder. Please send resume to: PO Box 1870, Big Spring, TX 79721.

BLUE BELL Creameries is seeking a responsible, dependable Part Time Shipping Clerk. Position involves site maintenance, loading and unloading trucks, etc. Must be 18 years old and have reliable transportation. No experience necessary, we will train. We offer competitive pay and flexible hours. M-F, 20 hours per week. Apply in person at 401 East I-20.

CARING HEARTS Home Health is seeking a LVN PRN Only. Great hours, friendly atmosphere. Call for appointment (432)714-4512, 1900 Scurry.

Help Wanted

BLUE BELL Creameries is seeking a responsible, dependable Full Time Shipping Clerk. Position involves physically working with ice cream products in a cold environment. Must be 18 years old and have reliable transportation. No experience necessary, we will train. We offer competitive pay and great benefits, including medical, paid vacation, retirement and more. Apply in person at 401 East I-20.

BUFFALO COUNTRY FINA taking applications for Sales Clerk all shifts. Experience preferred but will train. Apply at 4911 South Hwy 87. No Phone Calls.

CARING HEARTS Home Health is seeking a full-time RN Position. Great hours, friendly atmosphere and Benefits. Sign-On Bonus $2500.00. Call for appointment (432)714-4512, 1900 Scurry.

CDL Driver needed for Ameri-Tech Building Systmes. Must have clean driving record. Local hauls/ home most evenings! Excellent pay and full range of benefits.
Apply in person at
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Building Systems
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$15.47-$16.25/hr
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COMFORT INN is now hiring housekeeping with competitve pay. Please apply at 2900 East I-20, Big Spring, Texas, 79720.

COOKS & **CARHOP.** Must be Neat in Appearance. Honest & Dependable. No experience necessary will train. Inquire at Wagon Wheel, 2010 Scurry St. No phone call Please!

WANTED OIL and Gas Drilling Engineer with at least 7 years experience and Reservoir Engineer experience would be helpful in their job application. For Sharp Image Energy Inc. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 1888, Big Spring, Tx. 79721.

Help Wanted

DRIVERS WANTED. We need drivers now and get hired on the spot, subject to qualifications. We have best delivery compensation in the business. Make cash every day. Great part time and full time shifts. Health Insurance plan. Great starting wage- $7.00 an hour, plus delivery compensation, plus tips. We more than compensate for high gas prices. Got experience? Work for Papa or the Hut? Come on over and get an additional hiring bonus. Senior citizens and stay at home Moms always welcome. Apply at Domino's Pizza.

EZ PAWN, Now Hiring 2 Full time & 1 Part Time Sales and Loan Representatives. Must have High School/GED, pass background & drug test. Apply online at www.ezpawnjobs.com

FARM HAND Wanted! Experience only apply. Call after 7:00 p.m. (432)684-5418.

NOW ACCEPTING resumes for plant operator and telemetry/measurement specialist @ natural gas processing plant NE of Big Spring, TX.
Salary DOE Send resume to:
Plant Supervisor
11703 E. FM 846
Coahoma, TX 79511
or fax 432-399-4290.

NEED 2 Backhoe operators with at lease 5 years experience. Must pass drug test. Call 432-394-4161.

Help Wanted

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Wanted You will work on a variety of print related projects from logos, branding, packaging, POS, advertisements, sales presentations, large banner graphics, magazine design and much more? The ideal candidate will have at least 2-3 years of experience in graphic design and have a strong command of Adobe Programs.
To apply please visit us online at www.themediaco.net or email your resume to brian@themediaco.net or call 432-599-8018.

MATURE CHRISTIAN person interested in substituting for Christian childcare enter. Experience preferred, but will train. Must be able to pass Criminal History Check and FBI fingerprint check. Apply in person at NHCS 118 Cedar Rd.

NEED WATER Well pump person. Call (432)517-0510.

NEIGHBORS CONVENIENCE Store now hiring cooks, cashiers, stockers. All Shifts. Apply at 3315 E. FM 700.

PARKVIEW NURSING and Rehabilitation is now seeking a full time Charge Nurse. We offer competitive pay, Retirement, Vacation, and a fun, friendly atmosphere. Apply in person or online at www.parkviewnursing.net
3200 Parkway, Big Spring, Tx. (432)263-4041.

PLANT SUPERVISOR needed for Ameri-Tech Building Systems. Experience required in Portable Metal Building Manufacturing. Competitive Salary and Benefits available. Email to kwr_atbs@yahoo.com or fax to 254-938-2762. EOE

Help Wanted

PIZZA INN
EARN $12-$14 PER HOUR DELIVERING PIZZA'S. $100 HIRING BONUS. MUST BE 18YRS. OLD WITH CLEAN DRIVING RECORD. ALSO TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS. APPLY IN PERSON AT 1702 GREGG. NO PHONE CALLS.

POST OFFICE NOW HIRING! Avg. Pay $20/hr, $57K/yr including Federal Benefits, OT. Placed by adSource, not affiliated w/ USPS who hires. 1-866-795-4058.

SHELL STAR STOP looking for new team members. Full & Part time Cashiers. Apply in person at any Shell Star Stop in Big Spring. Drug Free Environment.

WANTED DRILLING Supervisor with at least 7 years experience. For Sharp Image Energy Inc. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 1888, Big Spring, Tx. 79721.

WESTSIDE DAY Care needs Part-time Teacher/ Mon.-Fri. 11:30-5:30. For more information, call 432-263-7841.

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2 NEW Twin Mattress Sets, will separate, and take $95 per set. Factory Sealed. 432-664-8980.

Cherry sleigh-bed solid wood still in box with mattress set, both new $395. 432-664-8980.

FIREWOOD. SEASONED OAK FIREWOOD. Satisfaction Guaranteed. $325.00 Full Cord & $180.00 Half Cord. Delivered and Stacked. Call 325-648-2818 or 512-913-8297.

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3 pcs King Pillow Top Mattress Set still in plastic w/Factory Warranty. $235. 432-664-8980.

FIREWOOD FOR Sale. $250.00 per cord, $150.00 per half cord. Call 432-213-3399.

METAL BUILDING for Sale, 800 sq. ft., Moveable, all amenities for a house, office, salon, ect.. Newly Remodeled! Very Nice! Call (432)466-2011 or (432)816-1321.

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Laura on Life: Bartering for some soup



LAURA SNYDER

It was a cold, dark, and bleak-looking day, so we decided to take a road trip to find out if the grass was greener on the other side of the state. It was only supposed to be a one-day road trip, but we drove too far looking for something green and didn't want to drive all the way back at night.

So, we found a hotel that looked like it had the minimum amount of bedbugs and checked in.

First, in case you were wondering, the grass was not greener. In fact, if hell rained sleet 24/7, we had arrived at Satan's playground. I think we may have taken a wrong turn at the corner of Sunnyside & Doomsday.

Well, no matter. We were here now and pretty much stuck. We decided to get something to eat at a local diner called Our Daily Bread. It sounded like a Christian gift shop, but we saw tables and chairs, so we entered and sat down. As it turns out, the name was very appropriate. The menu was varied and offered all the popular choices for sandwiches, but bread seemed to be all they had.

I asked what the soup of the day was because I felt like a holiday Jello mold — completely chilled and mixed with soggy fruit. The waitress, sounding very sincere, said, "I'm sorry. We just ran out of soup."

"Okay, how about hot chocolate?"

"I'm sorry, we don't have hot chocolate, but we have coffee."

Well, coffee has never been my cup of tea… Tea!

"How about tea?"

"We have iced tea."

What was wrong with this place? It was colder than a witch's toe out there! Was there nothing hot?

"Well, maybe you could throw the iced tea in the microwave for two minutes and serve it in a coffee cup?"

She agreed to the bizarre request from the deranged lady and eventually brought our drinks. Then we proceeded to negotiate for our dinner. It was like bartering with a Damascus fish merchant.

"I'll have the turkey sub."

"We're out of turkey."

"Okay, then how about ham and cheese?"

"We have only American cheese today."

"Okay, deal."

"And for the children?"

"Three Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, please."

"We ran out of peanut butter yesterday. How about grilled cheese?"

"Lactose intolerant. Do you have any jelly?"

"Only grape."

"Please bring three grape jelly sandwiches, then."

"Well, that's not really on the menu…"

"Then bring me your manager."

"Grape jelly sandwiches, it is! White or wheat bread?"

"Wheat."

"We're out of wheat. How about white?"

"Sold!"

Now that we'd gotten something in our stomachs, we went back to the hotel and practiced a lesson in futility. We've found that renting a room for the night merely allows us to pretend we're sleeping. Nobody actually sleeps.

My daughter is a "kicker" so anyone who sleeps with her is jolted awake by a random heel every 30 minutes or so. My son snores and he had a cold. So it was like listening to a pair of rubber boots slogging through a swamp all night.

My husband wanders at night like a tortured ghost. He says he can't sleep, but I always tell him that it's hard to sleep when you are standing upright, fully clothed, watching documentaries on a big screen TV in the hotel lobby. At least, that never worked for me.

I figure the grass must be greener somewhere, but it's going to be difficult to see it if I can't keep my sleep-deprived eyes open.

You can reach Laura Snyder at lsnyder@lauraonlife.com Or visit her Web site at www.lauraonlife.com for more columns and info about her books.

Savvy Senior: Consider some computer adjustments

Dear Savvy Senior
What computer resources are available that can help seniors with diminished eye sight and dexterity problems? My grandparents love the Internet and e-mail, but both have up-close vision problems and grandpa struggles with hand tremors?

Web Surfers

Dear Surfers,
There are lots of simple computer adjustments you can make as well as devices and software you can buy to help keep your grandparents online. Here's what you should know.

Getting Started

The first place to start is with the computer's operating system. Both Microsoft and Apple offer a variety of built-in accessibility features that make it easy to resolve most age-related computing problems without downloading or purchasing anything.

Microsoft

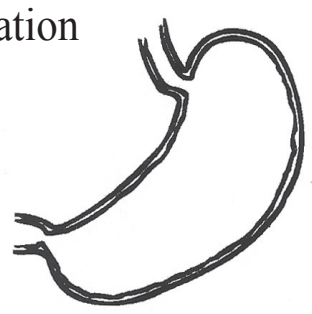
If your grandparents use Windows there are a number of things you can do to customize their computer to make it easier to see, hear and use. Depending on their operating system (Windows 98, Me, 2000, XP or Vista), here are a few examples of what you can do:

• Easier to see: If seeing the computer screen is difficult, you can adjust their settings to increase the text and icons size, change colors and add contrast. Or, you can enable the Microsoft Magnifier, which opens a floating window that enlarges different parts of the screen – just like a magnifying glass. If their vision is beyond the point where magnification isn't enough, there's the Narrator feature (available in XP and Vista) that will convert text and captions into

See **SAVVY**, Page 7A

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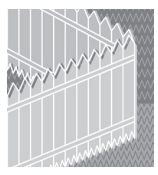
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SAVVY

Continued from Page 6A

speech. In addition, you can also make the Web easier to read with a variety of options offered through Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5, 6 and 7.

• Easier to hear: If they're having trouble hearing e-mail alerts and other audible notifications you can adjust the sounds to tones that are easier to hear, or enable the Sound Sentry feature, which makes parts of your screen flash whenever a system sound occurs.

• Easier to operate: If mild hand tremors or stiff fingers are creating typos and other keyboard errors, the Filter Keys feature can give them the equivalent of a steady hand by enabling their computer to ignore brief or repeated keystrokes that they make accidentally.

Or if stiff joints or other dexterity issues are slowing them down, the Speech Recognition in Windows Vista gives them the ability to talk to their computer using voice commands to dictate text, send e-mail, and more.

They'll need a PC microphone to execute this feature.

For details, instructions and tutorials on these and many other Windows accessibility features see www.microsoft.com/enable.

Mac Users

Apple also offers a wide variety of features that can help older computer users and those with disabilities. If they use the Mac OS X operating system, visit www.apple.com/accessibility for a list of what they provide, along with instructions of how to make the adjustments.

Web Boosting

Another option that can enhance your grandparent's Internet viewing is a free new software program that can be downloaded at www.lowbrowse.org. Created by Lighthouse International, this software will let you customize and increase the size of the Web to make it easier for them to see. It can even read text aloud.

This software is compatible with Windows, MacOS and Linux, but requires the Firefox browser which you can also download for free. If this doesn't do the trick, there's software you can purchase like WebEyes (www.ionwebeyes.com) or ZoomText (www.aisquared.com).

Other Gear

If seeing the keyboard itself is a problem they can buy keyboards with extra large letters, numbers and symbols starting at around $40 (see www.visikey.net).

If they don't want to purchase a new keyboard they can also buy large-print peel-and-stick labels at www.goldviolin.com for $10 that they can attach to their existing board. Another option is "big key" keyboards (www.bigkeys.com; $159) where the keys are four times larger than normal.

If carpal tunnel syndrome or arthritis pain in the hands, wrists, elbows or shoulders is causing problems there are many different types of ergonomic mice, keyboards and computer accessories that can help make operating a computer easier and more comfortable. Most of these items cost under $200 and can be found online at Web sites like www.enablemart.com, www.kinesis-ergo.com and www.ergokey.com.

Another handy device for your grandpa who has hand tremors is the Assistive Mouse Adapter (www.montrosesecam.com; $184) that plugs in between the computer and mouse to filter out shaky movements and eliminate multiple clicks.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit www.savvysenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS


HOLIDAY MATHIS

The Virgo moon manages the goings on of this highly productive day. Things will run on time, each event precisely setting off the next. It's an artfully orchestrated ballet of logistics and an endless string of gleaming details that leap and land in the perfect place. Tonight you can kick back and admire the intricate masterpiece this day spun itself into.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The one you are interested in makes yet another intriguing move to keep you hooked. The romantic song in your heart surges. Do you dare sing out? If you keep your feelings to yourself they grow more intense.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You know that people need each other and that groups can accomplish things quickly. Still, it takes so much to organize and manage others right now that there is something to be said for doing it all yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You find the good in practically every situation, though you are in no way naive. Let people know that you recognize the problems and challenges. To see them as opportunities is your conscious choice.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Strengthen your commitment to finishing what you started. Motivation might be low at first, but once you mentally wrap your head around the goal a few times the energy comes back. Visualization helps.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You will rather enjoy being swept along in the rush. There is happiness in your human connections and you can relate easily to the group mind for a while, too. As long as you also get in some time to yourself, it's a pleasing day.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Others seek your counsel, but you don't just deliver news about what you know they should do. You wisely lead them to a clear-headed view of their problem and invite them to make their own decisions. Everyone wins.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll roll with other people's flawed logic because it's more polite not to make waves. Anyway, nothing too important is being discussed. It's strangely liberating to let things go, knowing that you don't always have to be the judge.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your ability to deliberate will prove that you are more than just a pretty face at work today. Continue to facilitate insightful debates with friends tonight, for no other reason than to flaunt your unmitigated brilliance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There is raw talent inside you -- more than you can ever develop in your lifetime. Broaden your idea about what that talent might be. Stop doing what's difficult and look for what you're good at.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). People want to feel better, and that's why they come to you. Empathy is the easiest way, and entertainment is even better. Arm yourself with a few uplifting anecdotes, jokes and funny stories.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Relationships experience a passage. Maybe you're falling in love again, having an anniversary or making up after a fight. Make a big deal out of this one. Pull out all of the stops, fireworks and everything.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You get to play that social game you love. You'll be inconspicuous, play it cool and lowdown so that people don't expect much, and then at an opportune moment, spring up with your amazing talent and blowing them all away.

WHO IS SATURN? With Mars and Saturn squaring off these days the personality of this astrological heavy hitter is more pronounced. The Saturn mythology centers around what the Greeks called the Golden Age. It was the beginnings of humanity when humans were innocent and pure, the weather was always sweet and the world was a perfect utopia. There was no good and evil, only good and glorious. This was the era of Saturn's rule. Of course, something always comes along to disrupt utopian states, but the Romans made sure to remember that the Golden Age did once exist, and they celebrated it once a year with a feast called Saturnalia, which was held on the winter solstice. During the celebration all wars and battles would be forgotten, masters would sit at the same table as servants and everyone put merrymaking at the highest priority. And though one imagines that Saturn would be honored by the sentiment, in astrology Saturn isn't known for his jolliness. In later myth, Saturn swallows up his children in order to avoid his destiny. He spends his years banned to a black pit of sadness. This complex ruler represents the fall from utopia and the karmic consequences of action.

Annie's Mailbox


KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

Dear Annie: My wife and I have been married for 20 years and have two great kids. When we first married, life was fun. We did things together, held hands, cuddled in bed, talked and laughed a lot. Now, other than going out to eat, we don't do much together. There is no romance, and I couldn't even tell you the last time either of us said "I love you."

I don't think my wife is happy, either. But she is not one to discuss emotional things. Her approach is to ignore it. I have thought about asking her to go with me for counseling, but she has been very stressed at work and I worry it would make things worse for her.

I don't want a divorce, but I don't want to be miserable forever. I suspect if we saw a counselor, my wife would put on an act and pretend to be what I wanted so I wouldn't walk out the door. I know I'm not the same guy she married 20 years ago, but I still want to have fun and I want it to be with her. She seems content to go to work, come home, watch TV and go to bed. Please help. -- Not Having Fun in N.C.

Dear N.C.: Your wife may have lost interest in romance partly due to menopause or because the children have consumed much of her energy. It's also possible she needs more help from you in other areas to free up time for romance.

In any event, the situation won't improve if you don't address it. Tell your wife you are concerned about your relationship. Ask her to see her doctor for a complete physical and then to come with you for marriage counseling. If she refuses to go, go without her.

Dear Annie: Please tell me how to handle it when guests arrive chronically early.

Certain family members are always at least a half-hour ahead of schedule. They arrive while my husband and I are still cooking and cleaning, or while we are trying to get our three children and ourselves ready. Worse, they pull into the driveway and honk the horn, expecting us to help them unload their car, which is filled with stuff they bring "wondering if we can use it."

Am I expected to put out food for them before the others arrive? Is it OK to excuse myself to shower and dress? I don't want to insult them, but how can I get them to arrive on time? -- Not Yet

Dear Not Yet: You have two options: You can tell them to arrive a half-hour later than everyone else, or you can act stunned and bewildered that they have shown up so early. Let them honk their horn, and if they ring the bell, tell them you're so sorry you don't have time to help them unload their car and you hope they won't mind sitting in the living room while you continue your preparations.

Be polite, but under no circumstances should they be given your attention or your food until you are ready.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Ashes," whose sister-in-law is constantly attacking and degrading her. I experienced the same thing for over 20 years.

One holiday, my sister-in-law came to my home for a family meal. I asked my husband to pay close attention to the things she said. She proceeded to complain about the food, ridicule a project I was working on, question the way I washed dishes, etc. My husband heard every word and finally understood. What an eye-opener!

My pastor told me that turning the other cheek does not mean God expects me to be someone's victim, that sometimes we must build a wall to find peace. My husband and I have been able to keep visits with my sister-in-law to a minimum, and I have never been happier. -- The In-Law in Illinois

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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State briefs

$15,000 UT Regents' retreat criticized in light of UTMB layoffs, Hurricane Ike and economy

AUSTIN (AP) — A $15,000 retreat planned for the University of Texas System Board of Regents is drawing fire from an association that represents some of the 3,800 people losing their jobs at the UT Medical Branch in Galveston, officials said.

The Texas Faculty Association has sued UT, accusing regents of violating the Texas Open Meetings Act when they authorized the terminations of the UTMB employees on Nov. 12. The association is questioning whether regents have "lost their minds" by having the retreat, according to reports in the Houston Chronicle and the San Antonio Express-News.

"They wallow in ... luxury while Hurricane Ike victims — thousands of whom are their employees, tens of thousands of whom are their patients and students — struggle mightily at incredible odds, trying to re-establish their lives," said Tom Johnson, the association's executive director.

Ike blasted ashore near Galveston on Sept. 13, flattening buildings and killing at least 37 people in Texas.

The "Presidents' Retreat" at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort near Bastrop scheduled on Thursday and Friday will be paid from interest on donated, non-tax funds, said UT spokesman Matt Flores. The meeting will include work sessions, a reception, a dinner and an overnight stay for a few dozen regents and other UT officials. He said the cost includes food, meeting space, audio-visual services and rooms for 32 people.

Feds versus Texas on cell phone test

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas officials are accusing the Federal Communications Commission of "bureaucratic doubletalk" after agency officials just "encouraged" a cell phone jamming test that was cancelled because federal officials would not authorize it, according to a newspaper report.

"Only in Washington can a federal agency encourage conduct it previously said was unauthorized," Jerry Strickland, communications director for Attorney General Greg Abbott, said after the FCC issued a statement encouraging the test.

The test is in response to a deluge of illegal cell phones discovered in Texas prisons. The cell phones first came to light in October when a condemned inmate made threatening calls to Sen. John Whitmire, prompting a statewide prison lockdown and shakedown for contraband that turned up hundreds of smuggled phones. Whitmire is a Houston Democrat who chairs the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.

A successful demonstration of the device was recently held in South Carolina.

Because of a federal law that makes jamming of radio signals illegal, Texas officials on Monday cancelled Thursday's demonstration of an electronic device that would do just that. In effect, the device would render a phone inside a prison useless.

Texas sues drug company to recover millions

AUSTIN (AP) — A drug company supplied phoney advocacy groups and used Texas mental health officials as "pitchmen"— all so the firm's top-dollar schizophrenia drug would get on the state's Medicaid list, according to a newspaper report.

According to documents filed Friday in a district court in Travis County, the state wants to recover millions of dollars. The lawsuit alleges that New Jersey-based Janssen Pharmaceuticals, part of Johnson & Johnson, defrauded the state of Texas repeatedly over the last decade.

It alleges the improper influence-seeking took place to secure a spot for the drug, Risperdal, on the state's Medicaid preferred drug list and on controversial medical protocols that determine which drugs are given to adults and children in state custody.

Janssen officials said they have not done anything improper in Texas and are fighting the suit. Kara Russell, a spokeswoman for the company, said that Janssen is cooperating with the investigation, but that the allegations are untrue.

"We are committed to high ethical standards and responsible behavior," she said. "We take this obligation very seriously," The Dallas Morning News reported Tuesday for an online story.

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5 :PM	News	News	Locura	Lopez	News	Noticias	News	Raymond	Cortes	BBC	Cash Cab	2: Judgment Day, Edward Furlong	CSI: NY	Law & Order	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live	Wizards
:30	ABC	ABC	Noticiero	Lopez	CBS	Noticiero	NBC	Friends	Israel	Business	Cash Cab					Wizards
6 :PM	News	Jeopardy!	Tontas Cielo	Two Men	News	12 Corazones	News	Seinfeld	Prophecy	News-Lehrer	Made		CSI: NY	Law & Order		Suite Life
:30	Entertain	Fortune		Two Men	Entertain		Millionaire	Seinfeld	Hagee		Made					Montana
7 :PM	Pushing Daisies	Pushing Daisies	Cuidado-Ángel	Secret Millionaire	Christine	Doña Barbara	Muppets-Santa	Payne	Israel	Great Performances	Time Warp	Movie: Out for Justice, Jerry Orbach	CSI: Crime Scn	Cmas Wash.	Movie: South Central	Movie: Go Figure, Cristine Rose
:30					Gary			Payne	Scott							
8 :PM	Private Practice	Private Practice	Fuego en la Sangre	Bones	Criminal Minds	El Rostro de Analia	Life	Payne	Light of the Southwest		MythBusters		The Ultimate Fighter	Movie: A Christmas Carol, Joel Grey		Phineas
:30								Payne								
9 :PM	Dirty Sexy Money	Dirty Sexy Money	Don Francisco	TMZ	CSI: NY	Sin Senos	Law & Order	Payne		L.A. Holiday	Prototype This!	Movie: Thunderheart, Sam Shepard			Brother	Wizards
:30				Raymond		El Cartel		Payne							Brother	Life De
10 :PM	News	News	Impacto	Raymond	News	Noticiero	News	Seinfeld	Israel	Charlie Rose	Made			Cmas Wash.	Blk Car	Suite Life
:30	Nightline	Nightline	Noticiero	King-Hill	Late Show	Decisiones	Tonight Show	Seinfeld	Dr. Young		Made				Comic	Montana
11 :PM	Insider	Jimmy Kimmel Live	La Hora de la Risa	Law Order: CI	Late Late Show	Decisiones	Late Night	Sex &	CCM	Smiley	Time Warp		CSI: NY	Movie: A Christmas Carol, Joel Grey	Movie: South Central	So Raven
:30	Jimmy Kimmel Live							Sex &	Scott	Smiley		(:45) Movie: Gremlins, Hoyt Axton				Cory
12 :AM		Extra	Amarte-Pecado	RENO 911				Movie: The Legend of Zorro, Rufus Sewell	Israel	(Off Air)	MythBusters		Star Trek: Voyager			Replace
:30	News	Paid		RENO 911	Insider	Programa Pagado	News		Sanchez							Kim
1 :AM	Paid	Light	Clasicos	Friends	Entertain		Poker After Dark		Light of the Southwest		Prototype This!		Deep Space 9	Cmas Wash.	The Deal	Emperor
:30	Paid	Light	Humor	Paid	Paid	Pagado										Dragon

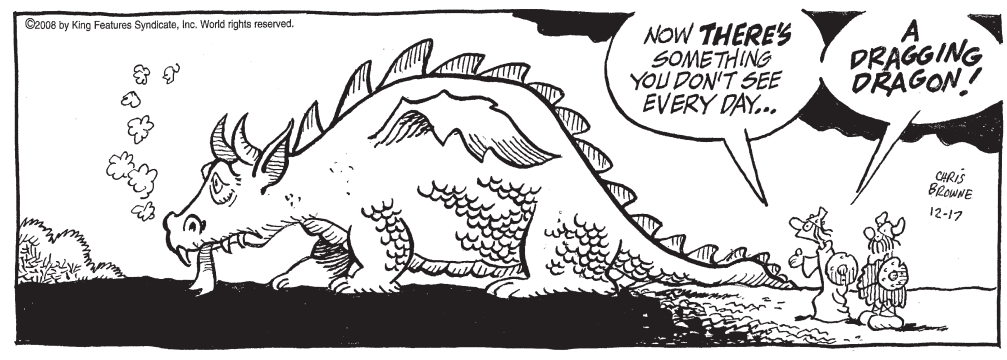
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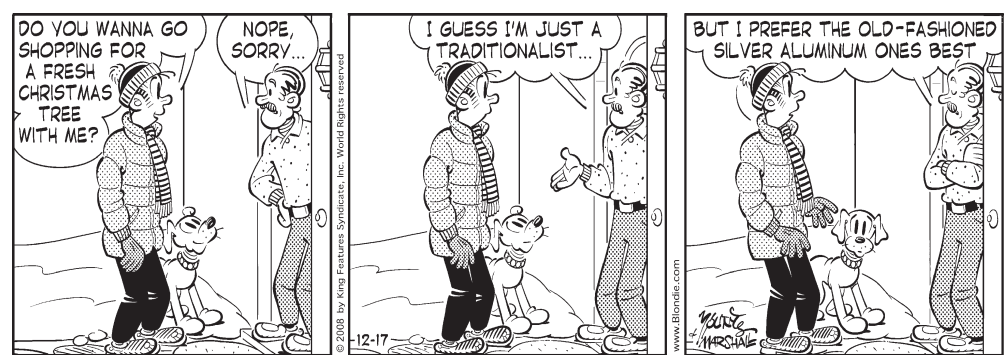
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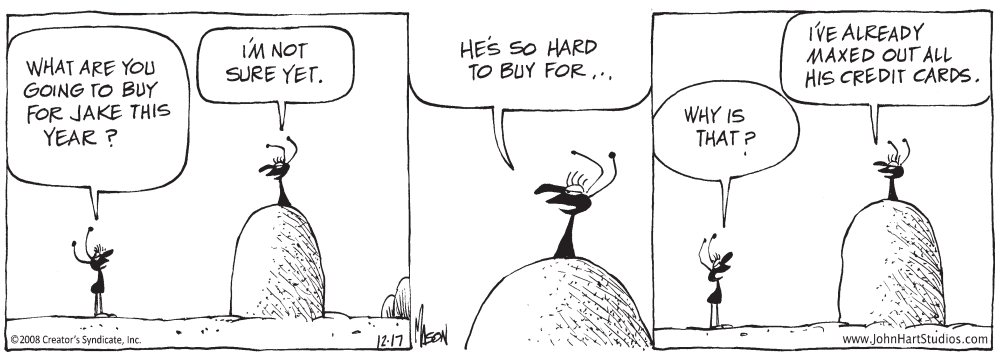
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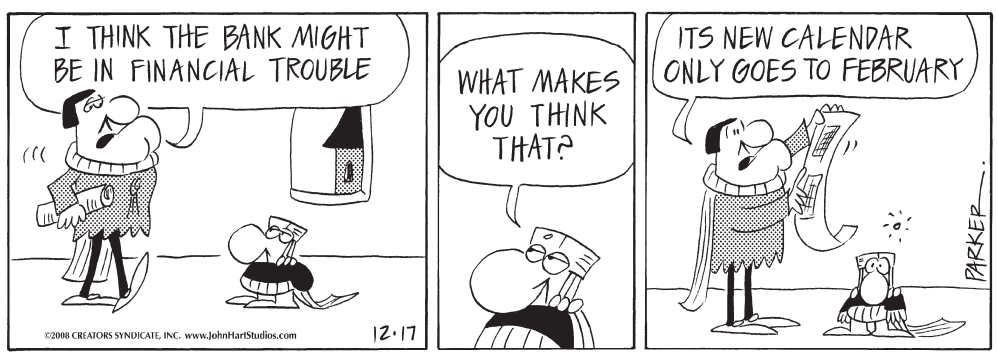
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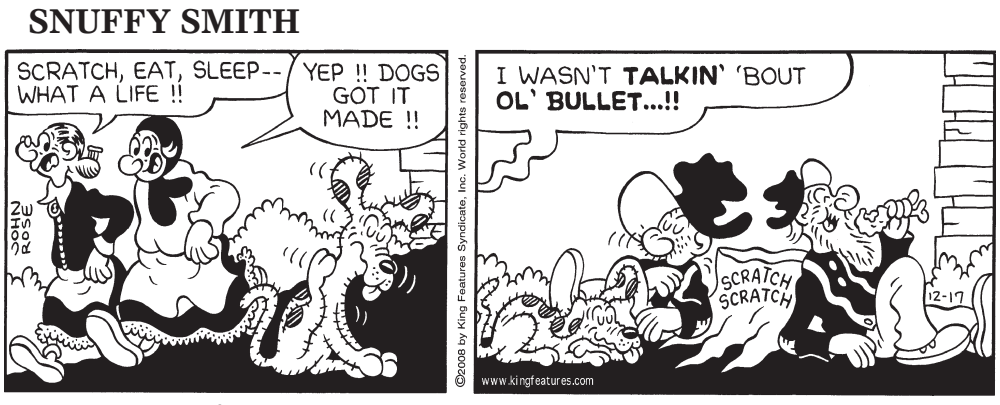
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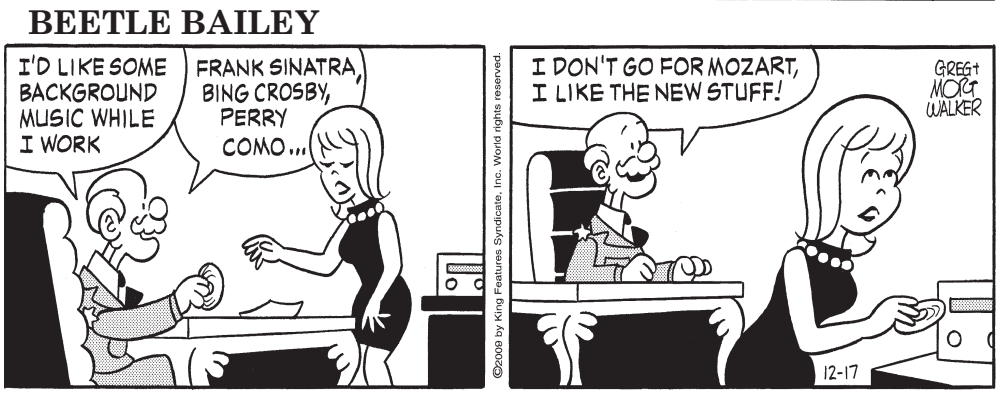
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This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 17, the 352nd day of 2008. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, conducted the first successful manned powered-airplane flights, near Kitty Hawk, N.C., using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

On this date:

In 1777, France recognized American independence.

In 1830, South American patriot Simon Bolivar died in Colombia.

In 1925, Col. William "Billy" Mitchell was convicted at his court-martial of insubordination for accusing senior military officials of incompetence and criminal negligence; he was suspended from active duty.

In 1933, in the inaugural NFL championship football game, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants, 23-21, at Wrigley Field.

In 1939, the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee was scuttled by its crew, ending the World War II Battle of the River Plate off Uruguay.

In 1944, the U.S. Army announced it was ending its policy of excluding Japanese-Americans from the West Coast.

In 1957, the United States successfully test-fired the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.

In 1975, Lynette Fromme was sentenced in Sacramento, Calif., to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford.

In 1981, members of the Red Brigades kidnapped Brig. Gen. James L. Dozier, the highest-ranking U.S. Army official in southern Europe, from his home in Verona, Italy. (Dozier was rescued 42 days later.)

In 1986, Eugene Hasenfus, the American convicted by Nicaragua for his part in running guns to the Contras, was pardoned, then released.

One year ago: President

Today's Birthdays: Newspaper columnist William Safire is 79. Actor Armin Mueller-Stahl is 78. Magazine publisher Robert Guccione is 78. Actor George Lindsey is 73. Singer-actor Tommy Steele is 72. Rock singer-musician Art Neville is 71. Actor Bernard Hill is 64. Actor Christopher Cazenove is 63. Actor Ernie Hudson is 63. Comedian-actor Eugene Levy is 62. Actor Wes Studi is 61. Pop musician Jim Bonfanti (The Raspberries) is 60. Rock singer Paul Rodgers is 59. Rhythm-and-blues singer Wanda Hutchinson (The Emotions) is 57. Actor Bill Pullman is 55. Actor Barry Livingston is 55. Country singer Sharon White is 55. Producer-director-writer Peter Farrelly is 52. Rock musician Mike Mills (R.E.M.) is 50.

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Answer to previous puzzle

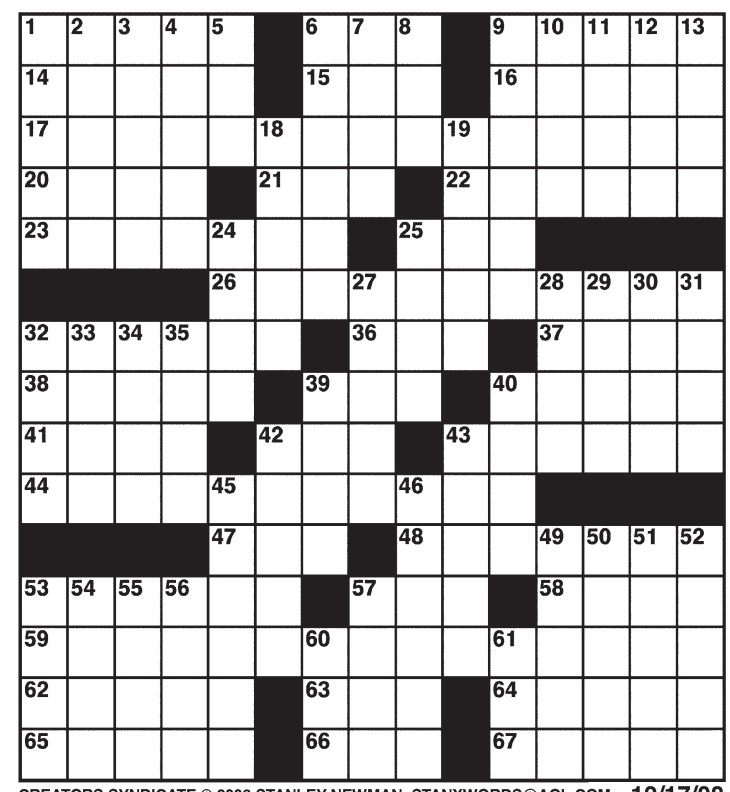
B	A	N	D	S		S	U	M	O		L	O	S	E
A	T	E	U	P		W	H	I	P		A	H	O	Y
G	O	A	P	E		A	O	N	E		N	I	N	E
S	P	R	E	A	D	T	H	I	N		D	O	G	S
			S	K	I		S	E	W	S				
U	S	C		S	T	O	P		R	A	C	K	E	T
S	T	I	R		T	W	O		R	A	N	G	E	
H	A	V	E	N	O	N	E	T	O	S	P	A	R	E
E	L	I	T	E			T	I	C		E	V	E	N
S	E	C	R	E	T		S	E	E	P		E	T	S
			E	R	R	S			A	L	A			
P	A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

Newsday Crossword

GETTING THERE by Fred Piscop
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Feelings of hunger
6 Peas' place
9 Buggy-driving sect
14 Golden-__ (seniors)
15 Leave speechless
16 Devilfish
17 Show the ropes to someone
20 Stampeding group
21 Pot accessory
22 Key in anew
23 Meeting of Congress
25 Science-class feature
26 Send via book rate, say
32 Sports settings
36 Hosp. personnel
37 Chorus member
38 "I pass"
39 Odin or Thor
40 Billy Joel's instrument
41 Jessica of *Dark Angel*
42 Family chauffeur, at times
43 Villain
44 Do some woodworking
47 Like some martinis
48 In the wrong role
53 From Croatia, perhaps
57 IRS-form expert
58 AD part
59 Prepare for takeoff
62 __ acid (protein component)
63 Kid's card game
64 Get goggle-eyed
65 Cop's device
66 Stuff to smelt
67 Fathered, on the farm

DOWN
1 Places to jog
2 See eye to eye
3 Converges on
4 Power networks
5 W-2 ID
6 Small grilled sandwich
7 Was in the hole
8 Morning moisture
9 Unicellular creature
10 Retail center
11 Deep black
12 Big first for Baby
13 Big-eared hopper
18 Maui greeting
19 Finishes a film
24 ". . . or __ just me?"
25 Come to shore
27 TV ad, e.g.
28 Speakeasy's bane
29 Taciturn one
30 Sicilian peak
31 Bird on the Canadian dollar
32 Quick break
33 Turnpike payment
34 "Mamma Mia" foursome
35 Campus honcho
39 Elapse
40 Places for notes
42 __ Polo
43 Prickly shrub
45 Journal honcho
46 Unit of current
49 "Over the Rainbow" end
50 Sadat of Egypt
51 Type of drum
52 Trifled (with)
53 TDs, for instance
54 Nash's "one-l" priest
55 Graph line
56 Handful for Tarzan
57 Blacken on the grill
60 Jefferson's bill
61 Battleship letters



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