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12/05

BIG SPRING

HERALD

VOLUME 102, NUMBER 16

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2005

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50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND



INSIDE

Vick scores
three times
to lead
Falcons
past Saints

Page 1B

Sales tax rebates up

Big Spring tops \$4 million mark for the year

By **BILL MCCLELLAN**
News Editor

Sales tax rebates were up more than 15 percent for Texas this month, and Crossroads area cities and communities reflected that trend, including Big Spring, according to the Texas Comptroller's Office.

In eclipsing the \$4 million mark for the year, Big Spring received \$352,262.51 this month, up 22.79 per-

cent when compared to the \$286,876.13 taken in during December of 2004. Through the 12 months of 2005, Big Spring collected \$4,323,614.99, an amount topping last year's collections by 7.26 percent.

Coahoma received \$4,528.99 for the month, up 29.49 percent when compared to the \$3,497.55 received a year ago. For 2005, Coahoma received \$62,058.91, a pace 15.2 percent higher than 2004.

Forsan received \$6,385.08 this month compared to \$3,602.00 in December 2004. That's a whopping 77.26 percent increase. For the year, Forsan has received \$76,091.43, up 26.64 percent. Only Lubbock and Stanton — both of which passed sales tax rate hikes last year — indicated stronger improvement.

Rebates went up 11.38 percent for

See **REBATES**, Page 3A

CLEANING UP COAHOMA



A private contractor tears down an abandoned building during Saturday's Coahoma Trash Off, which targeted nearly a half-dozen dilapidated structures in the city for demolition. The Trash Off was part of the Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI) effort to revitalize the community.

HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins

Commissioners OK county burn ban

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

Dry, dead vegetation plus windy conditions equals burn ban.

Howard County commissioners, facing a dry winter with the increased chance grass fires, issued a 30-day general burn

ban, along with a ban on aerial fireworks Monday morning.

The ban is necessary because conditions in rural portions of the county are over-ripe for grass fires, County Judge Ben Lockhart said.

A wet spring led to an abundance of vegetation

in the county. However, that also means that there is now plenty of fuel for fires.

That combination of conditions led Tommy Sullivan, chief of the county volunteer fire department, to request the burn ban from commissioners.

"Too much of the vegetation (in outlying areas of the county) have dried out since the last rains," Lockhart said. "That why Chief Sullivan requested the ban."

The aerial firework ban covers such items as bot-

See **BAN**, Page 3A



KRT photo/Tom Grallish, Philadelphia Inquirer

President George W. Bush issued new warnings to Iran and Syria while defending his Iraq policy at a forum in Philadelphia Monday that included some hostile questions.

Bush defends policy in Iraq

Downplays expectations of dramatic results from voting there

By **RON HUTCHESON**
and **NANCY YOUSSEF**

Knight Ridder News

PHILADELPHIA

President Bush acknowledged Monday that perhaps 30,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the U.S.-led invasion of their country in 2003, an admission he gave in answer to a rare unscripted question from the audience after he spoke in defense of his Iraq policy.

Speaking to the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, Bush downplayed expectations for this week's election of a new Iraqi government. He said he doesn't expect the selection of a 275-member parliament to end the violence that's claimed more than 2,100 American lives.

When pressed by a questioner for the Iraqi death toll — a topic that U.S. officials try to avoid — Bush put the figure at "30,000, more or less." Presidential aides said

"It said that oceans no longer protect us, that we can't take threats for granted; that if we see a threat, we've got to deal with it. I made a tough decision. And knowing what I know today, I'd make the decision again."

—President Bush on 9-11

the number was based on independent estimates and wasn't an official count.

The Iraq Body Count, a U.S.-British group, relies on press accounts for its estimate of 27,383 to 30,892 civilian deaths.

Bush came to the birthplace of American democracy to deliver a

See **BUSH**, Page 3A

Texas awaits Supreme Court decision in redistricting case

By **KELLEY SHANNON**
Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN (AP) — The Supreme Court's decision Monday to consider constitutional challenges to Texas congressional boundaries could send the redistricting map back to the Texas Legislature, if the court finds it unconstitutional.

But next year's elections are moving forward under existing Republican-drawn districts, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott said.

"The 2006 elections will proceed forward under the current map," Abbott said.

State lawmakers, at the urging of then-U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, drew new

congressional boundary lines in 2003 during a special session called by Gov. Rick Perry. That map, opposed by Democrats and minority groups, withstood legal challenges before a three-judge federal court panel.

On Monday, the Supreme Court said it will hear arguments on a fast track, likely in March, in a consolidated case

that contains four separate appeals by critics of the Texas map. A ruling from the court is expected before its term ends in June.

Already, candidates are filing with state party officials to run for Congress in the existing GOP-created districts. Texas' primary election is March 7. So campaigns will be in full swing

by the time the court hears arguments and rules on the appeals.

Abbott, whose office represents the state in court, said Texas' congressional districts already have been OK'd by the three-judge panel that "reviewed all the evidence, con-

See **DISTRICTS**, Page 3A

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www.bigspringherald.com

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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.

FREE SYMPHONY TICKETS

Win two free tickets to the Big Spring Symphony Orchestra's presentation of "A Symphonic Christmas" set to begin at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Municipal Auditorium. Be the first to call the *Big Spring Herald* at 263-7331 and correctly answer the question:

"Who wrote 'The Nutcracker Suite'?"
The *Herald* will have a different question each day this week and the first person to call with the correct answer wins two free tickets to the symphony. The answer to Monday's question, "What famous composer is celebrating his 250th birthday?" is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Billie Dominguez correctly answered the question.

DID HE BITE BACK?

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A police officer had part of a finger bitten off by a woman after he responded to a call about a dispute over a cat, authorities said.

Lt. Robert Menzel said the 40-year-old woman who called police Sunday afternoon had argued with a man about the animal and wanted him removed from her home.

The officer, a 10-year veteran, tried to restrain the woman, and she became belligerent and she bit off part of his right ring finger, Menzel said.

Surgeons at Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital were not able to reattach the finger, the lieutenant said.

12 SHOPPING DAYS LEFT



Obituaries

Daniel L. Bedwell



Daniel L. Bedwell, 44, of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 12, 2005, in a local hospital. Memorial services are 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2005, at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park.

He was born Sept. 11, 1961, in Amarillo. He was very active in the Boy Scouts. He was a good automobile mechanic. He was a Catholic.

Survivors include his father, Johnnie Bedwell of Big Spring; his mother, Phyllis Banes of Amarillo; one sister, Donna Potter of Big Spring; several cousins; and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Jesse and Opal Bedwell and one uncle, Jesse Bedwell.

The family suggests memorials be made to Home Hospice, 111 E. Seventh Street, Suite A, Big Spring 79720.

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

Sandra Nix



Sandra Nix, 56, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 10, 2005, at her residence. Graveside services are 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2005, in the Coahoma Cemetery with Chaplain Dean Thomas, VAMC, officiating.

The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

She was born Feb. 11, 1949, in Big Spring to Katherine and James Edwards and she graduated from Big Spring High School. She had been away from Big Spring several years, returning four years ago. She was a registered nurse, having previously worked for Malone and Hogan Hospital.

She is survived by her husband, Weldon Nix of Big Spring; three sons, Kevin Nix of Buffalo Gap, Joe Nix of Rock Springs, Wyo., and Tommy Nix of Christine; two daughters, Darla Huschke of Jourdan and Cassie Andrews of Christine; three sisters, Jimmie Alexander and Karen Edwards, both of Big Spring and Judy Estes of Virginia; four brothers, Ricky Edwards, James Edwards, Roger Edwards and Mark Edwards, all of Big Spring; and five grandchildren.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by one son, Clinton Allen Nix and one sister, Julia Ann Edwards.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

Support Groups

TUESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

Take Note

• **JOHN MOSELEY, BIG SPRING HERALD MANAGING EDITOR AND LONGTIME COMMUNITY SUPPORTER**, is in critical need of life-saving treatment insurance will not provide. A fund has been established at Citizen's Federal Credit Union, account no. 926151. For more information, call Marsha at 263-7331.

• **COAHOMA ELEMENTARY'S SECOND ANNUAL POLAR EXPRESS DRIVE THRU** is set for 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Thursday. The line to view the 10 animated stops starts forming at 6 p.m. in the Coahoma High School parking lot. Hot chocolate and cookies will be for sale.

• **NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR MAN AND WOMAN OF THE YEAR** for the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce until Thursday. Contact the chamber at 263-7641 for an application.

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

• **LASAGNA DINNER AT KENTWOOD ELEMENTARY SPONSORED BY THE PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION** is set for 6 p.m. today. Cost is \$3 per plate, followed at 7 p.m. by the Kentwood third graders performing "A Sombbrero for Santa." At 7:30 p.m. the PTO will be sponsoring "The Gingerbread Shop." Christmas gifts in the economical price range of 15 cents to \$7 will be available for students and parents to purchase.

• **SPRING TABERNACLE CHURCH 10TH ANNUAL TOY GIVE-AWAY** begins at 10 a.m. Friday in the church sanctuary, 1209 Wright St. Gifts distributed on a first-come, first served basis. Open to parents and grandparents raising young children, and parents are urged to find childcare during the selection of the gifts. For more information, call the church at 267-5321.

• **THE BIG SPRING SYMPHONY PRESENTS 'A SYMPHONIC CHRISTMAS'** at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Municipal Auditorium. Tickets available at the Big Spring Herald or call 264-7223.

• **STAR TEK CANNED FOOD DRIVE** to benefit the Salvation Army from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday. Bring two cans of food and get a free photo with Santa Claus. For more information, contact Anna Osborne at

Police blotter

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

- **GEORGE BERNHARDT**, 57, of 1202 E. Third Street, was arrested Monday on two local warrants.
- **ANTONIO ARGUELLO**, 20, of 2608 E. Highway 350, was arrested Monday on two local citations.
- **JAMES USSERY JR.**, 45, of 1203 Harding, was arrested Monday on charges of parole revocation, theft of a firearm and possession of a firearm by a felon.
- **BRANDY OLIVAS**, 19, of 1112 Sycamore, was arrested Monday on a charge of hindering the apprehension of a known felon.
- **JESSE TORRES**, 48, of 803 E. 14th Street, was arrested Tuesday on two local warrants and a charge of aggravated robbery.
- **UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM BY A FELON** was reported in the 3500 block of 11th Place.
- **THEFT OF A FIREARM** was reported in the 1600 block of Third Street.
- **POSSESSION/DELIVERY OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA** was reported in the 1300 block of Sycamore.
- **FRAUDULENT USE/POSSESSION OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION** was reported in the 400 block of Fourth Street.

Sheriff's report

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

- **ELIZABETH ROSE MILLS**, 24, was arrested Monday by the HCSO on a charge of issuance of a bad check.
- **JIMMY RAY JOHNSON**, 31, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the HCSO on charges of evading arrest or detention with a vehicle and resisting arrest, search or transportation.
- **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 5900 block of East Midway Road.
- **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 100 block of Miller B Road.

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department reported the following activity:

- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 1600 block of West Second Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **TRAFFIC ACCIDENT** was reported in the 1700 block of Gregg Street. Service was refused.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the 3200 block of West Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.
- **MEDICAL** was reported in the area of South Highway 87. Service was refused.

Around Town

• **RAILROAD MUSEUM** at the corner of Second Street and Main Street is open from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. every Saturday. Free admission. Call 432-559-3409 for more information.

• **HANGAR 25 AIR MUSEUM** is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday.

• **RED DRESS TEA** at 11 a.m. at Heritage Museum Saturday. Seating is limited. Call 267-8255 for more information.

• **SIGNAL MOUNTAIN QUILTERS GUILD** presents comfort quilts to CASA at 2 p.m. Saturday at Heritage Museum.

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

• **THE HOWARD COUNTY CHILD WELFARE BOARD** seeks Christmas help for the 69 children in foster care. To 'adopt' a child or family for the holidays, contact Patti Richard at 432-559-6953 or 268-4550.

• **ODYSSEY HOSPICE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS** to work in the office and perform patient services. For more information or to volunteer, call 263-5999.

• **THE MOBILE MEALS PROGRAM** that delivers meals to the elderly and homebound needs volunteers to deliver meals. If you can spare one hour per week to deliver eight or 10 meals, you are needed. About 85 to 90 meals are prepared, packaged and delivered to recipients within the city limits of Big Spring. If you can volunteer, please call 263-4016 before 3 p.m.

• **ROAD TO RECOVERY**, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call LaWanda Hamm at 263-7827.

• **SPRING TABERNACLE CHURCH**, 1209 Wright, has free food for the area needy. Distribution is scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon every Thursday.

Coronado Hills Apartments

1 Bedroom • \$375 • 2 Bedroom • \$475 • 3 Bedroom • \$575

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Pool, Private Patios, Covered Parking
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"Remember...you deserve the best!"

Bulletin Board

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

TODAY

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

WEDNESDAY

• Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Senior Circle meets at 10:30 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for Sit and Be Fit Chair Aerobics. Those 50 years and older are invited to attend. Call 268-4721.

• Senior Circle meets at 11 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center classroom for Stretch and Tone. Call 268-4721.

• Downtown Lions Club meets at noon at the Howard College Cactus Room.

• Line dancing begins at 1 p.m. at the Spring City Senior Citizen's Center in the Industrial Park. Call 267-6966 or 267-1628.

• Duplicate Bridge Club meets at 1 p.m. in the Big Spring Country Club.

• 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.

• Coffee Club meets at 10 a.m. in Gale's Sweet Shoppe.

• Kiwanis Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane. Call 267-6479.

• Citizen's Police Academy Alumni Association meets at 5:30 p.m. in the RSVP office at 501 Rannels.

• American Legion Post 506 meets at 6 p.m. Call 263-2084 for more information.

• Festival of Lights opens at Comanche Trail Park.

• Rackley-Swords 379, Vietnam Veterans of America meets at 7 p.m. in the Sparenburg Building, 309 S. Main St.

• Big Spring Masonic Lodge No. 1340 meets at 7:30 p.m. at 2101 Lancaster.

FRIDAY

• Signal Mountain Quilting Guild meets from 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. at 1019 Nolan St. Call 267-1037 or 267-7281 for more information.

• Spring Tabernacle Church 10th annual toy giveaway begins at 10 a.m. in the church sanctuary, 1209 Wright St.

• AMBUCS meet at noon in La Posada Restaurant.

• Greater Big Spring Rotary Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room, 1001 Birdwell Lane.

• Spring City Senior Citizen's Center country and western dance from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. featuring Monroe Casey and the Prowlers. All area seniors are invited.

Weather

Tonight—Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s. Southwest winds around 15 mph.

Wednesday—Mostly sunny. Cooler. Highs in the mid 50s. North winds 10 to 15 mph.

Wednesday night—Mostly clear. Colder. Lows in the upper 20s. Northeast winds around 10 mph in the evening becoming light and variable.

Thursday—Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. Light and variable winds.

Thursday night—Partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s.

Friday—Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Highs in the upper 40s. The chance of rain is 20 percent.

Friday night—Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and snow showers. Lows in the lower 30s. The chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

Lottery

Results of the Cash 5 drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 7-9-21-25-37.

Number matching five of five: none.

Next Cash 5 drawing: Tuesday night.

...

Results of the Texas Two Step drawing Monday night:

Winning numbers drawn: 3-8-14-19. Bonus Ball: 18.

Number matching four of four, plus Bonus Ball: none.

Estimated jackpot for Thursday night drawing: \$225,000.

...

The winning Pick 3 numbers drawn Monday night by the Texas Lottery, in order: 8-4-3

BIG SPRING HERALD

www.BigSpringHerald.com

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REBATES

Continued from Page 1A

Abilene, comparing December 2005 rates of \$2,166,189.97 to December 2004 rates of \$1,944,803.16. For the year, Abilene received \$29,169,018.14, up 8.57 percent.

Andrews approved a significant sales tax increase in November — from 1 cent to 1.75 cents. As a result, the city's rebates for this month went through the roof. The community received \$137,358.72 this month compared to \$66,083 for December 2004, an increase of 107.85 percent. For the year, Andrews collected \$1,086,434.97, up 23.66 percent.

The Texas state sales and use tax rate is 6.25 percent, but local taxing jurisdictions (cities, counties, special pur-

pose districts and, transit authorities) may also impose sales and use tax up to 2 percent for a total maximum combined rate of 8.25 percent.

Colorado City collected \$32,604.08 for December 2005. That's a 39.17 percent increase when compared to the \$23,425.93 the Mitchell County seat collected in December 2004. For the year, Colorado City collected \$444,906.83, up 4.2 percent.

Fort Stockton collected \$140,952.03 this month, a 20.43 percent increase over the \$117,032.78 taken in during December 2004. For the year, Fort Stockton received \$1,532,916.05, up 7.18 percent.

Kermit brought in \$35,699.83. That's a 29.69 percent increase compared to \$27,526.54 a year ago. For the year, Kermit received \$359,311.64, up 8.62 per-

cent.

Lamesa took in \$64,481.53 this month, an increase of 15.65 percent when compared to the \$55,754.75 received in December of 2004. For the year, the Dawson County seat received \$909,325.79, up 7.79 percent.

Lubbock, which raised its sales tax a year ago in November, finally began to see a leveling of rates this month. The city received \$3,089,887.25, compared to \$2,787,210.43 in December 2004, a 10.85 percent increase. For the year, Lubbock took in \$41,014,970.66, an increase of 34.98 percent.

Midland collected \$1,904,775.53 this month, up 13.05 percent compared to the \$1,684,879.95 banked a year ago. For the year, Midland received \$24,389,436.46, up 11.81 percent.

Monahans witnessed rebates go up 41.8 percent, comparing

this month's collections of \$101,877.44 to December 2004's \$71,841.22. For the 12 months of 2005, Monahans received \$1,034,177.22, an increase of 11.91 percent.

Odessa received \$1,366,886.58 this month, a 24.49 percent increase when compared to the \$1,097,980.10 received in December 2004. For the year, Odessa took in \$16,936,118.37, up 11.09 percent.

Pecos collected \$68,341.81 this month, 30.43 percent more than the \$52,396.33 received in December 2004. For the year, Pecos collected \$877,988.96, up 10.4 percent.

San Angelo brought in \$1,229,653.61 in the year's 12th month, up 15.17 percent when compared to the \$1,067,671.12 received in December 2004. For the year, the Tom Green county seat collected \$15,397,136.49, up

6.29 percent.

Snyder deposited \$139,952.25 this month, up 22.02 percent when compared to the \$114,687.62 the Scurry County seat received in December 2004. For the year, Snyder took in \$1,772,620.53, up 4.21 percent.

Stanton, which raised its tax from 1 cent to 1.75 cents in December 2004, closed out the year with \$152,275.67 — 82.55 percent ahead of the previous year. For the month, the Martin County seat took in \$21,112.70 compared to \$16,342.07 for December last year — an increase of 29.19 percent.

Sweetwater received \$177,097.45, a 39.67 percent hike when compared to the \$126,788.28 received in December 2004. The Nolan County seat received \$2,254,561.08 for the year, up 15.07 percent.

BUSH

Continued from Page 1A

progress report on the administration's efforts to transform Iraq from a dictatorship to a democracy.

Monday's speech included a new twist: For the first time in months, Bush took questions from an audience that wasn't stacked with supporters. Although the crowd in Philadelphia's Park Hyatt Hotel seemed generally supportive, there were some dissenters among the several hundred luncheon guests.

Faeze Woodville, an Iranian-American from the Philadelphia suburbs, won scattered applause when she asked Bush why he and other administration officials "keep linking 9-11 to the invasion of Iraq."

Bush has acknowledged that there's no direct link between Iraq and the ter-

rorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, but he and other top officials often spoke about 9-11 in presenting the case for war with Iraq.

Bush told Woodville that the 2001 attacks changed his approach to foreign policy.

"It said that oceans no longer protect us, that we can't take threats for granted; that if we see a threat, we've got to deal with it," he said. "I made a tough decision. And knowing what I know today, I'd make the decision again."

The applause for Bush's response was far louder than the applause for Woodville's question, but she felt the answer fell short.

"He didn't answer it. I didn't expect that he would," she said later.

In his speech, the president accused Iran and Syria of trying to thwart the transition.

Bush said Iran "is actively working to

undermine a free Iraq" by meddling in Iraqi affairs. Many of Iraq's leading Shiite Muslims, the dominant sect in both countries, have close ties to Iran.

"Iran doesn't want democracy in Iraq to succeed because a free Iraq threatens the legitimacy of Iran's oppressive theocracy," he said. "Iraq's neighbor to the west, Syria, is permitting terrorists to use that territory to cross into Iraq."

Bush's generally upbeat assessment of Iraqi politics was the third in a series of speeches intended to shore up support for the war. His previous remarks dealt with security issues and Iraq's economic reconstruction. He will deliver a fourth and final pre-Iraq election address Wednesday.

Bush listed four big challenges for Iraq after the election: quelling the insurgency, forming a government acceptable to

all of Iraq's ethnic groups, establishing the rule of law and resisting meddling by its neighbors.

He cited the recent discovery of what appear to be government-sponsored torture chambers as an example of the rifts in Iraqi society. The interrogation centers, run by the Iraqi Interior Ministry with help from Shiite militias, seemed to target Sunni Arabs.

"Iraqis still have to overcome longstanding ethnic and religious tensions, and the legacy of three decades of dictatorship," Bush said. "I know some fear the possibility that Iraq could break apart and fall into a civil war. I don't believe these fears are justified."

Bush also took issue with critics who say that Iraq's history and ethnic makeup make it an unlikely candidate for a swift transition to democracy.

"It is hard work. There's

a lot of resentment and anger and bitterness. But I believe it's going to happen. And the only way it won't happen is if we leave, if we lose our nerve, if we allow the terrorists to achieve their objective," he said.

He accused his critics of assuming that a withdrawal from Iraq would pacify the Iraqi insurgents and foreign terrorists who have infiltrated the country.

"That's not reality," Bush said. "And my job as the president is to see the world the way it is, not the way we hope it is."

In related developments, a consortium of Western news organizations, including ABC and Time magazine, found in a new poll of 1,711 Iraqis that three-quarters of Iraqis voice confidence in the elections and that 70 percent — including most people in Shiite and Sunni areas — want Iraq

to remain a unified country.

In addition, 69 percent expect things to improve over the next year — though Iraqis in Sunni-dominated provinces are far less optimistic.

But two-thirds of Iraqis said they oppose the presence of U.S. and coalition troops — 14 percentage points higher than in February 2004 — and nearly 60 percent disapprove of how the United States has acted in Iraq. Nearly half want U.S. forces to leave soon. The poll was taken between Oct. 8 and Nov. 22 and had an error margin of 2.5 percentage points.

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8288

Sandra Nix died Saturday. Graveside services will be at 10:00 AM Wednesday at Coahoma Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 7:00 until 9:00 PM Tuesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Richard Parnell died Saturday. Memorial Services will be at 2:00 PM, December 29, 2005, at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

Dr. Kimberly Saenz

Pediatrician
Se habla español
2301 S. Gregg St.
(432) 264-6575

DISTRICTS

Continued from Page 1A

sidered all the law and upheld the redistricting plan."

"We feel very confident the United States Supreme Court will do (so) also," he said.

Plaintiffs are hoping otherwise.

"Today's decision to hear our appeal demonstrates that the court is concerned with the effect of the Texas congressional map on Latino voters," said attorney Nina Perales of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

MALDEF, representing the American GI Forum of Texas and other Hispanics interests, argued the Texas plan discriminates against Latino voters by failing to create seven Latino-majority districts in South Texas and by "dismantling" a West Texas district in which Hispanics previously had a major influence.

Democrats against the plan criticized what they said was political gerry-

mandering by Republicans and objected because the plan was drawn mid-decade, not immediately after a census year.

Once the district boundaries approved in 2003 were in place, Republicans won 21 of the state's 32 congressional seats in 2004, up from 15 seats.

Like Abbott, other Texas Republicans defended the plan Monday as fair and legal. "I welcome the Supreme Court's review, and I think they will agree that everything was done according to the law," said Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick, a Midland Republican who successfully pressed for a Midland-based district in the new plan.

"We welcome this review by the U.S. Supreme Court because we believe the Texas remap is constitutional, as lower courts and the U.S. Department of Justice affirmed," said Gov. Perry. "We remain confident that the Supreme Court will find

that every Texas voter has a voice at the ballot box."

If the high court rules against the Texas map next year, there are several scenarios for what could then happen, those familiar with the case said.

"Typically, what would happen is, if the court were to rule against the state of Texas plan, overturn the lower court's decision, it probably would refer it back to the Texas Legislature," Abbott said.

The Legislature doesn't meet again in a regular session until January 2007 and could take the matter up then if the court throws out the current plan. If lawmakers were to draw a new map sooner than that, it would have to be in a special session.

The next congressional elections after the 2007 regular session are in 2008.

Whatever the outcome, the high court's decision to hear the case raises questions for Texas politicians and voters that

won't be answered for a few months.

"While this is a very important decision to the future of democracy in Texas and across America, its immediate effect is to create uncertainty — uncertainty as to what happens next," said U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, an Austin Democrat.

Doggett said in the meantime, he will move ahead with his re-election plans in his existing 350-mile-long district that

snakes from Austin to the Rio Grande Valley.

The district was one that opponents seized on as an example of unfairness. They argued that voters in South Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border had little in common with constituents in the capital city.

"Clearly, this Legislature, this governor, went way off course and did things that had never been done before," Doggett said.

BAN

Continued from Page 1A

tle rockets and Roman candles. Ground fireworks such as firecrackers are not part of the ban, Lockhart said.

The ban, effective immediately, will run for 30 days, Lockhart added.

In other business Monday, commissioners:

- Authorized the adver-

tisement of bids for automobiles for the sheriff's office and office supplies for various county departments.

- Approved \$10,000 in renovations to be done at the county fairbarns. The work will be performed

by the Johnston Construction Group of Big Spring.

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

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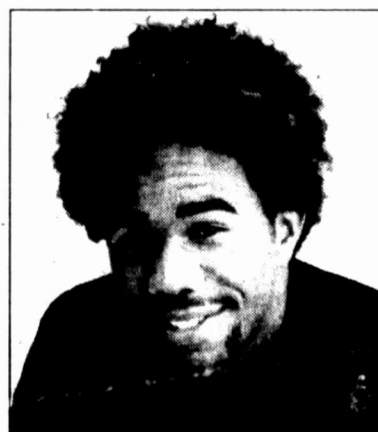
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-FIRST AMENDMENT

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

Susanne Reed
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OTHER VIEWS

Chief Justice shows his stuff

Chief Justice John Roberts showed during oral arguments last week that he is as nimble with an argument sitting on the U.S. Supreme Court as he was standing before it as an advocate.

At issue was the Solomon Amendment, a federal law that cuts off federal funds to universities that bar military recruiting on their campuses.

A group of law schools (not including the University of Texas) argue that the Solomon Amendment violates their constitutional right to bar the recruiters, which they want to do because the military rejects openly gay members. A lower federal court agreed with the law schools and the government appealed to the Supreme Court.

The lawyer for the law schools, Joshua Rosenkranz, argued before the justices that the Solomon Amendment compelled the law schools to support discrimination against gays, which they believe is immoral. But Justice Sandra Day O'Connor retorted that the law schools remained free to give students their own message that they oppose the military's policy toward gays. "And when they do it, your honor, the answer of the students is, 'We don't believe you,'" Rosenkranz said. Roberts pounced: "The reason they don't believe you is because you're willing to take the money. What you're saying is this is a message we believe in strongly, but we don't believe in it to the detriment of \$100 million."

Elsewhere, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick baffled the Chinese diplomatic and linguistic establishment by his choice of words in a speech to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations back in September.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Zoellick declared, "We need to urge China to become a responsible stakeholder" in the international scheme of things. Well, sir, if that don't beat all, because the buzzword "stakeholder" doesn't translate into Chinese. Well, if "stakeholder" threw that kind of monkey wrench into the works, we can just imagine the multiple impositions a transcript of Texas political speaks would cause.

Can you imagine how long it would take Chinese translators to decipher the transcript of an Austin City Council meeting? How would you translate "Mayor, members of the council, I'm here wearing two hats"?

Does it mean the speaker has two heads? Or how would you translate a Texas legislator explanation that his bill wears "suspenders and a belt"? Does that go well with two hats?

Austin American-Statesman

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions. In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

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

LETTER POLICIES

- The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.
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- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
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Dems have boxed themselves in

At the core of the Democrats' incessant carping about the war in Iraq is their oft-stated belief that our attack on Iraq and our continued presence there are fueling the terrorist movement.

But when you hear them arguing the point, you can't help coming away with the sense that it is not the terrorists' moral outrage over Iraq they are concerned with, but their own. They just don't dare go so far as to admit it.

You've heard them say our presence in Iraq is inciting otherwise peaceful Muslims to don their suicide bomber belts, and, "The Iraqi people view us as occupiers, not liberators." And how about their enthusiasm for the highly dubious (and patently absurd) poll that 80 percent of Iraqis want us out?

Surely they know that Islamofascist terrorists, who declared war on us years before they attacked us without provocation on 9/11, don't need any prompting to hate us infidels, capitalists and cultural decadents.

But if we were to turn tail and run out of Iraq, they would hate us even more, because their hatred would be compounded by a profound disrespect for our weakness and cowardice.

If you truly want to incite further terrorist action against America, adopt the Democrats' Neville Chamberlainesque approach to aggressive and brutal enemies, or emulate Bill Clinton's precedent in Mogadishu.

Yet the Democrats can't possibly afford to say what they really think. It would be politically suicidal for them to express sympathy for the terrorists' ostensible moral indignation at our intervention in Iraq, so they couch their objec-

tions in pragmatic terms: Our actions are leading to the recruitment of more terrorists. But their own moral objections to the war are too overpowering for them to successfully mask.

Why else would they deliberately overlook America's accomplishments in Iraq and the historic progress of Iraqis toward constitutional self-rule? Why would they rush to embrace innuendo, propaganda, rumors and lies about American misconduct, from allegations about American torture of terrorist detainees to those of our troops terrorizing Iraqi citizens? Why would they eagerly spread the lie that we've killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis? Why do they downplay the atrocities and oppression of Saddam's reign of terror?

Indeed, if it's America's perceived misdeeds that spawn terrorism, why are Democrat leaders devoted to destroying our image abroad? Why do they, against the advice of Sen. Joe Lieberman, undermine our wartime commander in chief?

Whether or not Democrats like it, Saddam has now been deposed, and we have limited options going forward. We either withdraw before we're confident the Iraqi forces can protect the newly formed government, which would greatly increase the likelihood that Iraq would turn into another terrorist staging center and that our fallen soldiers would have died in vain. Or we remain until Iraqi forces can go it alone.

As any reasonable person can see, we have no real choice -- unless you disagree with our mission. We have to stay until the job is completed.

As for Democrats disagreeing with our mission, you have to wonder when no less than the recently sainted Congressman John Murtha said, "When you fight an insurgency, you have to win the hearts and minds of the people, and we've lost the hearts

and minds of the people."

It's pathetic that we've allowed the terrorists, malcontents and nihilists in Iraq to be euphemized as "insurgents," as if any of them want what is best for the Iraqi people as a whole. It is offensive that we even flirt with the preposterous suggestion that there is moral equivalence between these barbarians and the vast majority of the Iraqi people who appear committed to a republican government. And it is outrageous that leaders, such as Murtha, are lending credence to the idea that the hearts and minds of global terrorists or Saddamist rejects are "winnable."

It is also pathetic that Democrats had to convene a closed-door meeting to come up with a plan for Iraq. You mean they have been crucifying George Bush for the last two years over the deficiencies of his plan when they never had an earthly idea themselves as to what alternative they'd recommend?

Yes, that's precisely what I mean, and Democrat spokesman Howard Dean admitted as much, saying it is not the Democrats' responsibility to come up with a plan.

Democrats simply have no plan beyond Sen. Biden's gratuitous refrain, "We've got to train Iraqi soldiers faster." Until they have the guts to openly admit their moral opposition to the mission, they'll be reduced to bogus arguments about terrorist recruitment, destructive obsessing over their mythical creations that Bush lied and tortures, or the unintelligible psychobabble of John Kerry calling for nonspecific, specific timetables and the setting of benchmarks.

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

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Are corporation rights trumping ours?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Molly Ivins is on vacation. The following column was first published in June 2000.

AUSTIN — Heads up! Your First Amendment right to free speech is being trumped by the rights of corporations.

Some of you may not be aware that corporations have First Amendment rights. It does seem sort of silly, since the Constitution clearly states that it is written for "We the people of the United States." It does not say "the people and the corporations of the United States."

Nevertheless, corporations have been held to be "persons" under the Constitution ever since a particularly screwy decision in 1886 called Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad, a decision that ought to be more famous and more discussed than Roe v. Wade.

Well, it's time to take heed, because those corporations — Inc., Corp. and Swoosh — have not only been granted rights, they are now busily taking away your rights just as fast as they can.

In a little-noted decision in 2000, the Supremes declined to limit the way that telephone companies can use information about their customers to market new services on the grounds that it would infringe on U.S. West's free-speech rights. What this means is another erosion of your privacy, allowing

phone companies to study your calling habits without your permission.

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, "Local phone companies have vast databanks about each customer's calling habits, including who they call, how long they talk and what types of telecommunications services they purchase."

For example, when you call your local phone company's customer service, you hear a recording telling you the company needs your permission to use your billing information to sell you new services.

The customer must then press 1 to grant said permission. This is the "opt-in" system required by the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which was infamously biased in favor of the industry to begin with, and now the Supremes have just made it even more worthless.

U.S. West sued, saying that the rule violated the company's freedom of speech by limiting the kinds of contact that the company could have with its customers. And you know how your phone company likes to keep in touch. Especially during dinner.

Another corporate menace to free speech is the proliferating number of "John Doe" lawsuits being filed against Internet users who say anything critical about a corporation. On message boards run by Yahoo, Raging Bull, Silicon Investor and America Online, intrepid citizens make observations ranging from "This company stinks" to "Sell now! They just lost their biggest contract." Naturally, the companies are furious and file

these John Doe suits to find out who posted the messages.

Heaven forbid that you should have a right to say anything negative about dear old Inter-Global Mega-Universal Widget. Some Net users are suing back to halt the corporate lawsuits aimed at uncovering their identities.

The Supremes' worst decision in this vein, in my opinion, is still the 1976 Buckley v. Valeo stinker that held that money is free speech in politics — hence, any attempt to control money in politics is a violation of free speech. Happily, the court did rule recently that a Missouri law limiting the contributions that individuals can give to a political candidate during a single election campaign is constitutional.

As author Scott Turow writes, every citizen has opinions of political matters. Few have money to promote their beliefs. As long as politicians must approach the well-to-do on bended knee to secure their chances for election, it is inevitable that the concerns of that narrow segment of society will have a disproportionate influence on national policy.

Duh. Just remember — as Milton Friedman, The Man himself, said: The only social responsibility of corporations is to increase profits.

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

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MOLLY
IVINS

Texas briefs

Two plead guilty in FEMA fraud trial

WACO (AP) — Two McLennan County women have pleaded guilty to falsely claiming to be Hurricane Katrina victims and trying to collect benefits from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Michelle Lynn Goodwin, 27, of Moody, and Kelly Suzanne Oliver, 32, of Waco, each pleaded guilty Monday to filing a false, fictitious or fraudulent claim in separate incidents.

U.S. District Judge Walter S. Smith Jr. will sentence them Feb. 8. Both women face up to five years in federal prison and fines up to \$250,000.

The same charge is pending against George Marrero, who prosecutors say worked with Oliver at the Waco Humane Society.

Officials investigating death of student in frat house

AUSTIN (AP) — University of Texas officials are investigating after a student was found dead at a fraternity house over the weekend.

University officials on Monday also said that they have temporarily suspended the house.

The body of Phanta Jack Phoummarath, an 18-year-old freshman pre-computer science major from Houston, was discovered Saturday at the Lambda Phi Epsilon house, just west of campus.

"We want a thorough investigation," said his brother, John Phoummarath of Houston. "We just want answers."

Officials with the Travis County medical examiner's office said they are awaiting results of toxicology tests before determining how Phoummarath died.

UT Dean of Students Teresa Graham Brett said the university has told the fraternity about its investigation and the suspension, which will affect the fraternity's use of university facilities but does not require the group to move out of the house.

Town's school board president struck by train, killed

ARP (AP) — The president of the school board was struck by a train and killed while walking across the tracks on Monday afternoon.

Wayne Roberts, 71, frequently walked around town because he could not drive, said Texas Department of Safety Trooper Tracey Tullis. Roberts had served on the school board since 1968.

The town's businesses closed as news of the death spread.

Tullis said Roberts left his home, where his wife was wrapping Christmas presents, to go to the post office. He was struck by a Southern Pacific locomotive when he crossed the tracks while walking on the town's Main Street.

Tullis said in Tuesday's Tyler Morning Telegraph that Roberts had cataract surgery Monday morning and also didn't hear well.

"The train track arms were down and lights flashing, but the engineer said he (Roberts) stepped out onto the tracks from behind a clump of small trees," she said.

Hangar burns at Arlington airport, destroying planes

ARLINGTON (AP) — At least nine planes and several cars were destroyed when a hangar at the Arlington Municipal Airport caught fire Monday night, officials said.

The fire may have been burning for some time before firefighters at the airport station noticed the blaze, said Battalion Chief David Stapp.

"By the time anyone would have seen it from the outside, it would have been pretty severe," Stapp said in Monday's online editions of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

There were no injuries reported in the fire which burned through nine hangar stalls.

The building's 11 other hangar stalls were damaged by smoke, Stapp said.

Fire investigators were working to determine the cause of the fire.

The hangars are owned by the city and rented to fliers by the month, airport manager Bob Porter said.

Gang founder executed after appeals fail

SAN QUENTIN, Calif. (AP) — Convicted killer Stanley Tookie Williams, the Crips gang co-founder whose case stirred a national debate about capital punishment versus the possibility of redemption, was executed early Tuesday.

Williams, 51, died at 12:35 a.m. Officials at San Quentin State Prison seemed to have trouble injecting the lethal mixture into his muscular arm. As they struggled to find a vein, Williams looked up repeatedly and appeared frustrated, shaking his head at supporters and other witnesses.

"You doing that right?" it sounded as if he asked one of the men with a needle.

After he was declared dead, his supporters shouted in unison: "The state of California just killed an innocent man," as they walked out of the chamber.

The case became the state's highest-profile execution in decades.

Hollywood stars and capital punishment foes argued that Williams' sentence should be commuted to life in prison because he had made amends by writing children's books about the dangers of gangs and violence.

In the days leading up to the execution, state and federal courts refused to reopen his case. Monday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger denied Williams' request for clemency, suggesting that his supposed change of heart was not genuine because he had not shown any real remorse for the killings committed by the Crips.

"Is Williams' redemption complete and sincere, or is it just a hollow promise?" Schwarzenegger wrote. "Without an apology and atonement for these senseless and brutal killings, there can be no redemption."

Williams was condemned in 1981 for gunning down convenience

store clerk Albert Owens, 26, at a 7-Eleven in Whittier and killing Yen-I Yang, 76, Tsai-Shai Chen Yang, 63, and the couple's daughter Yu-Chin Yang Lin, 43, at the Los Angeles motel they owned. Williams claimed he was innocent.

Witnesses at the trial said he boasted about the killings, stating "You should have heard the way he sounded when I shot him." Williams then made a growling noise and laughed for five to six minutes, according to the transcript that the governor referenced in his denial of clemency.

Lora Owens, Owens' stepmother, watched Williams die. In the days before the execution, she was one of the outspoken advocates who believed the execution should go forward. She said her stepson was shot in the back, though he begged Williams for his life.

"I believe it was a just punishment long overdue," she told ABC's

"Good Morning America."

About 1,000 death penalty opponents and a few death penalty supporters gathered outside the prison to await the execution. Singer Joan Baez, MASH actor Mike Farrell and the Rev. Jesse Jackson were among the celebrities who protested the execution.

"Tonight is planned, efficient, calculated, anti-septic, cold-blooded murder and I think everyone who is here is here to try to enlist the morality and soul of this country," said Baez, who sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

A contingent of 40 people who had walked the approximately 25 miles from San Francisco held signs calling for an end to "state-sponsored murder." But others, including Debbie Lynch, 52, of Milpitas, said they wanted to honor the victims.

"If he admitted to it, the governor might have had a reason to spare his life," Lynch said.

'Brokeback Mountain' leads nominees

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — The cowboy romance "Brokeback Mountain" positioned itself as a key Oscar competitor Tuesday, roving in seven Golden Globe nominations, including best dramatic picture and honors for actor Heath Ledger and director Ang Lee.

Other best drama picture contenders were the murder thriller "The Constant Gardener," the Edward R. Murrow tale "Good Night, and Good Luck," the mobster story "A History of Violence," and the infidelity drama "Match Point."

The Globes have a separate category for musical or comedy films. Nominated there were the theater tale "Mrs. Henderson Presents," the Jane Austen costume pageant "Pride & Prejudice," the Broadway musical "The Producers," the divorce story "The Squid and the Whale," and the Johnny Cash film biography "Walk the Line."

Along with Ledger, who plays a family man concealing a homosexual affair from his family, best dramatic actor nominees included three actors playing real-life figures: Russell Crowe as Depression-era boxer Jim Braddock in "Cinderella Man," Philip Seymour Hoffman as author Truman Capote in

"Capote," and David Strathairn as newsman Murrow in "Good Night, and Good Luck." The fifth

nominee was Terrence Howard as a small-time pimp-turned-rap singer in "Hustle & Flow."

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Sunni candidate killed on last day of campaigning

By PATRICK QUINN

Associated Press Writer
BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Gunmen killed a Sunni Arab candidate for parliament and militants tried to blow up a leading Shiite politician in separate attacks Tuesday, the last day of campaigning for Iraq's election.

More than 1,000 Sunni clerics issued a religious edict, or a fatwa, urging Sunni Arabs to vote in Thursday's balloting.

Ali al-Lami, executive director of the Iraqi Electoral Commission, appealed for peace when about 15 million people will be called on to vote in more than 6,200 polling stations.

Insurgent groups also have in recent days backed way from the threats they used to keep Sunni Arabs away from previous elections.

The militant Islamic Army in Iraq told its fighters not to attack polling stations during the elections to avoid killing civilians, according to a statement published Tuesday in the group's name on the Internet.

Early voting proceeded without problems Monday for Iraqi security forces, hospital patients and prisoners, al-Lami said. Balloting for Iraqis who live abroad opened

Tuesday, and began in Australia, where up to 20,000 registered Iraqi voters live. They are part of a group of 1.5 million voters living outside Iraq who will cast ballots at polling centers in 15 countries, including the United States, Canada and the Netherlands.

Gunmen in the insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, killed Sunni Arab candidate Mezher al-Dulaimi while he was filling up his car at a gas station.

A roadside bomb targeted the convoy of Sheikh Jalal Eddin al-Sagheer, a Shiite member of the National Assembly who was elected with the governing United Iraqi Alliance. The Iraqi army said the explosion in Latifiyah, about 20 miles south of Baghdad, damaged one of the vehicles.

Police said a roadside bomb intended for one of their patrols in the central city of Samarra missed, instead killing a child.

Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Chalabi held a pre-election rally in the southern city of Basra for about 1,000 supporters, while former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi hosted a gathering in Baghdad. No campaigning is allowed Wednesday to give Iraqis time to

reflect ahead of the vote.

Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, told about 1,000 tribal leaders who gathered in Baghdad's Jadriyah neighborhood that the military wing of his group — the Badr Brigade — was ready to help with election security.

"I declare that the Badr Organization is ready to mobilize 200,000 of its men in all parts of Iraq so that they can play a role in defending Iraqi and Iraqis," said the black-turbaned cleric, who is heading the strong Shiite United Iraqi Alliance slate.

President Bush offered encouraging words from Washington to Iraqi voters but cautioned that the parliamentary elections "won't be perfect."

"Iraqis still have more difficult work ahead, and our coalition and a new Iraqi government will face many challenges," Bush said Monday in a speech in Philadelphia.

Sheik Ahmed Abdul Ghafour al-Samarai, who heads the Sunni Endowment, the government agency in charge of the maintaining Sunni mosques and shrines, said Iraqis have the right to choose the candidates they want.



KRT photo/Tech Sgt. Andy Dunaway

An Iraqi army soldier shows his inked finger after voting in Hayji, Iraq, December 12, 2005. On Dec. 15, Iraqi citizens will elect their first permanent parliamentary government, which will lead the new democracy for the next four years. Iraqi security forces vote early so that they can provide security during the general election.

Mistrial declared in Merck's federal Vioxx trial

By KRISTEN HAYS

AP Business Writer
HOUSTON (AP) — A jury's inability to reach a unanimous verdict in the nation's first federal Vioxx trial after more than 18 hours of deliberations prompted a judge to declare a mistrial and aim for second try.

The nine-member panel was about 20 minutes into its fourth day of deliberations Monday when U.S. District Judge Eldon Fallon called jurors to the courtroom and reminded them they had agreed Saturday to reach a verdict in a "reasonable time."

"It has now been a reasonable time. We cannot get a verdict," Fallon said, declaring a mistrial. Federal litigation requires a unanimous verdict.

Fallon said the case involving the 2001 death of a Florida man who took

the once-popular painkiller for a month will be retried, and he would confer with attorneys next week to set a date.

The mistrial leaves Vioxx's maker Merck & Co. with the prospect of facing a new jury that could hear allegations that the company withheld information from the New England Journal of Medicine about a 2000 Vioxx study so the drug would appear safer than it was.

Merck shares fell almost 3 percent as the trial's outcome shook investors worried about the company's liability in the thousands of pending Vioxx cases.

Two jurors who voted in favor of the drugmaker told The Associated Press that only one of the nine refused to absolve Merck of liability.

One of the jurors,

Amanda Toungate, said she didn't believe the drug caused Richard "Dicky" Irvin's death. She also said Merck should have done a better job telling patients about Vioxx's risks.

"He had too many other risk factors," said Toungate.

Merck lead attorney Phil Beck said that he could not confirm the 8-1 jury split because the judge instructed lawyers not to contact the jurors.

"If it is accurate, it's very gratifying; 8-to-1 is good enough to win in almost every state court in the country, including Texas. But in the federal system you need to win 9-0 and hopefully next time we'll get all nine votes," he told the Associated Press.

About 20 million people took Vioxx before Merck withdrew what had become a \$2.5 billion sell-

er from the market last year when a separate, longer-term study showed it could double risk of heart attack or stroke if taken for 18 months or longer.

"You can't lie to people like the New England Journal of Medicine and get away with it," said plaintiff's lawyer Jere Beasley. "We look forward to the next trial."

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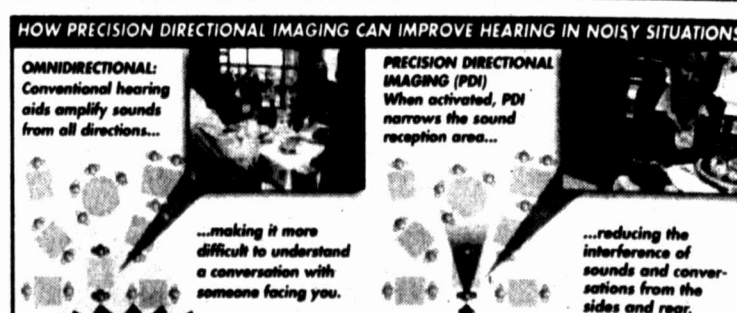
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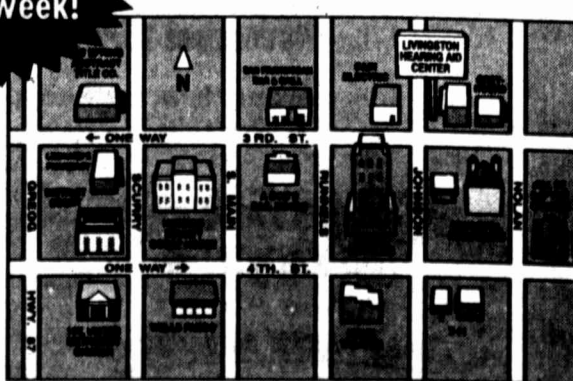
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Do you have an interesting sports item or story idea? Call Troy Hyde at 263-7331, Ext. 237. Email results to: sports@bigspringherald.com

Page 1B
Tuesday, December 13, 2005

IN BRIEF

Coahoma sets final day to sign up for "Little Dribblers"

The last day to sign up for the Coahoma Youth Basketball League "Little Dribblers" will be held this Saturday at the Coahoma JH gym from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Those already signed up will tryout at this time, as well.

Those eligible for the league are boys and girls in fourth through sixth grade or third graders who were 9-years-old before Aug. 31 of this year.

The cost is \$25 per child through Dec. 17, but late registration will occur until Dec. 21 for \$35. Late registration players will be placed on teams according to the established team placement guidelines.

For more information, contact Cindy Smith at 394-4203.

Van Gundy resigns, Riley takes over as Heat head coach

MIAMI (AP) — Pat Riley is again the coach of the Miami Heat, replacing Stan Van Gundy following his resignation for family reasons.

Riley, whom Van Gundy succeeded on the bench shortly before the 2003-04 season, will make his debut Tuesday night when Miami opens a four-game road trip in Chicago.

Riley, the team president, coached the team from 1995-03 after winning four titles with the Los Angeles Lakers and a stint with the New York Knicks.

Artest seeks trade out of Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Ron Artest's days with the Indiana Pacers appear to be over.

Artest, suspended most of last season for his role in one of the worst brawls in American sports, said over the weekend that he wants out, his past haunts him in Indianapolis and the team would be better off without him.

Team president and chief executive Donnie Walsh said he didn't like Artest taking the issue to the media first, but he would try to work out a trade.

After the NBA suspended him for triggering a brawl with fans in Detroit, Artest missed 73 games and the playoffs.

Morris agrees to three-year deal

with San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Right-hander Matt Morris agreed to a three-year contract with the San Francisco Giants, leaving the St. Louis Cardinals after nine seasons.

Morris went 14-10 with a 4.11 ERA last season, winning his first eight decisions for the Cardinals. But St. Louis didn't pursue him with the same fervor as the Giants.

Rangers settle for Padilla from Philadelphia

By STEPHEN HAWKINS

AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON

Spurned in their pursuit of Matt Morris and Josh Beckett, the Texas Rangers got former All-Star right-hander Vicente Padilla from the Phillies Monday for a player to be named.

Padilla was 9-12 with a 4.71 ERA in 27 starts last season in Philadelphia. He was traded July 26, 2000, from Arizona to the Phillies along with three

other players for pitcher Curt Schilling. Padilla made \$3.2 million last year, and is eligible for salary arbitration.

Padilla was an All-Star in 2002, when he was 14-11 with a 3.28 ERA, and he followed that by going 14-12 with a 3.62 ERA in 2003. He is just 16-19 over the past two seasons, missing more than two months in 2004 because of right elbow tendinitis.

"He is a youthful starting pitcher with an excel-

lent track record that includes an All-Star selection, and will bolster our starting rotation," Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said.

Morris turned down a \$25 million, three-year offer from the Rangers, and the free agent instead agreed to a three-year deal Monday with the San Francisco Giants. The Rangers were willing to trade All-Star third baseman Hank Blalock to get Beckett, but the Marlins

last month traded Beckett to Boston.

After the Rangers cut ties with 41-year-old All-Star left-hander Kenny Rogers, the only returning starting pitchers for Texas were rookies last season. Chris Young was 12-7 with a 4.26 ERA in 31 starts, while Kameron Loe (9-6, 3.42 ERA in 48 games/eight starts) and Juan Dominguez (4-6, 4.22 in 22 games/10 starts) finished the season in the rotation.

Padilla, 28, is 51-51 with a 3.95 ERA in 194 career games (111 starts) over seven seasons with the Diamondbacks (1999-2000) and Philadelphia. Rangers manager Buck Showalter was in Arizona when Padilla had a 3.35 ERA in 35 games as a reliever there.

Omar Daal, Nelson Figueroa and Travis Lee — the rest of the Arizona players involved in the Schilling trade — previously left the Phillies.

Rockets fined for road trip to Vegas

HOUSTON (AP) — The Houston Rockets have been fined by the NBA for a trip to Las Vegas last week.

League spokesman Tim Frank declined to disclose the amount of the fine, saying it is an internal matter.

"They took them to Las Vegas in the middle of a road trip, and that's against salary cap rules," Frank said Monday night.

Rockets general manager Carroll Dawson told Houston television station KRIV that he understands that the Rockets violated the rules and expects to find out the details Tuesday.

Dawson did not immediately return a message from The Associated Press on Monday night.

Frank said that, under the rules, teams are prohibited to provide any benefits or compensation to players that are not included in their contracts.

Houston opened a six-game, 11-day trip on Thursday against Sacramento, winning 106-95. They beat the Portland Trail Blazers 100-86 Sunday night.

Bryant's 43 points, late 3-pointer sinks Mavs

• Webber's monster game sends Sixers past red-hot Wolves

By JAIME ARON

AP Sports Writer

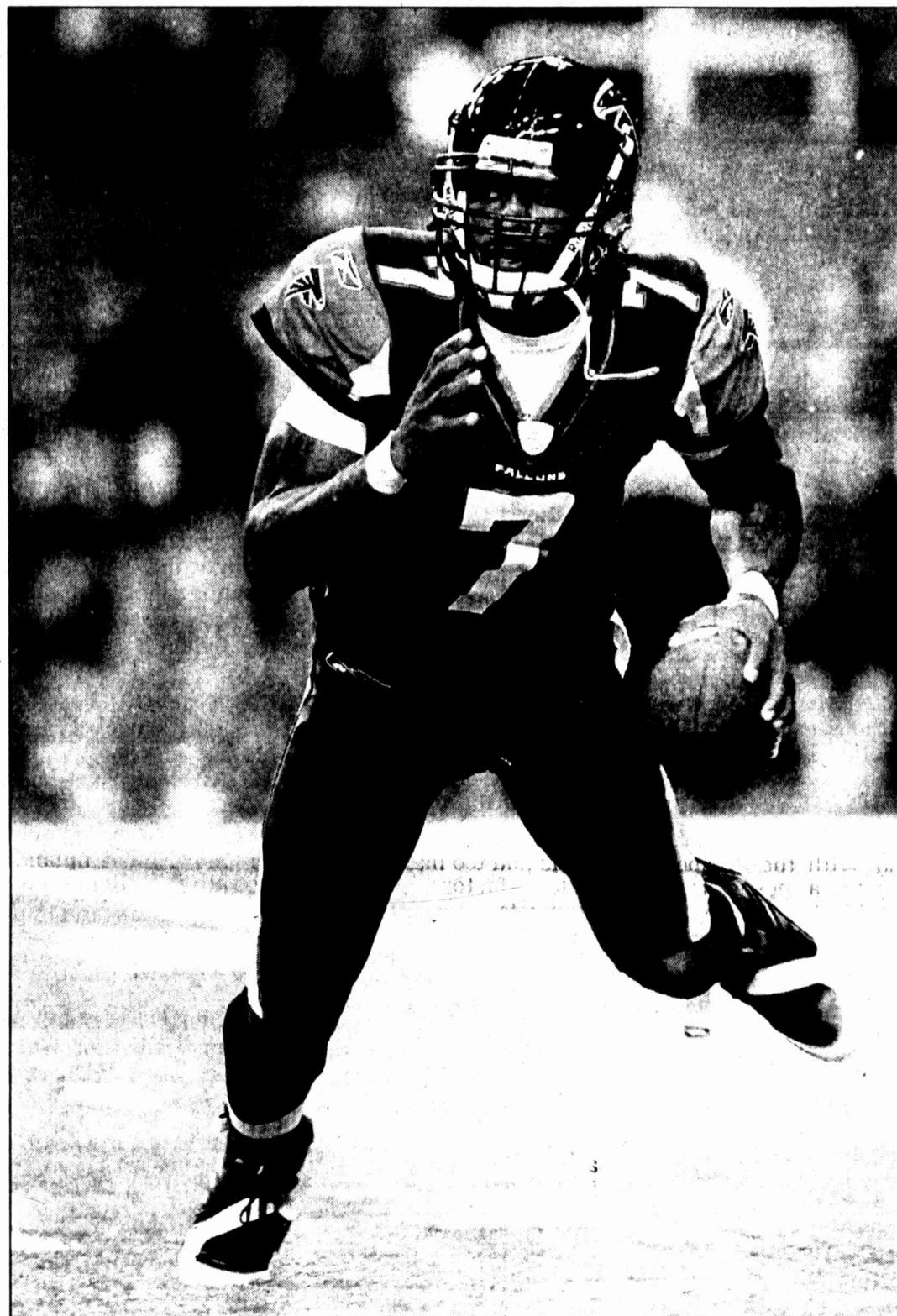
DALLAS — Lamar Odom has a pretty good theory on why Kobe Bryant shoots so much.

"It's hard not to shoot the ball when you can make shots from everywhere," Odom said.

Bryant gave several more eye-popping examples Monday night, making a spectacular layup in the third quarter, then swishing a jumper from about 30 feet while falling away with a hand in his face, the shot clock expiring and 34.9 seconds left to send the Los Angeles Lakers past the Dallas Mavericks 109-106.

The Lakers went from leading by 11 before half-time to trailing most of the second half until Bryant, who scored 43 points, tied it at 97 with a 3-pointer. Los Angeles was down by two when Bryant lost the ball at the top of the key, chased it down and heaved up the go-ahead 3 with defender Adrian Griffin coming at him.

"That's backyard stuff,"



KRT photo Rich Addicks, Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Atlanta's Michael Vick scrambles against New Orleans in the first half Monday. The Falcons defeated the Saints and Vick scored three touchdowns in the game.

Bryant said.

Bryant, Luke Walton and Smush Parker all made key plays the rest of the way, capping a 4-1 road trip for the Lakers and giving them five wins in six games. It also ended Dallas' five-game winning streak.

"It's a confidence builder for this team," Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson said. "It shows we can overcome odds."

The Mavericks had their chances to pull out the win, but couldn't get it done. Jason Terry missed a 3-pointer in the closing seconds and Lamar Odom batted away the rebound, conking Dirk Nowitzki in the face as he followed through. Nowitzki, who had 27 points and 15 rebounds, was sprawled on the court for several minutes after time expired.

"My neck popped a little bit," he said. "I'll be stiff tomorrow, but I'll be all right."

He was bothered more by Dallas' lousy defense, especially in the first half, when Bryant made eight of his first 11 shots and scored 27 points. He was about to have more when seldom-used Mavs center D.J. Mbenga made a phe-

nomenal block on a dunk attempt in the final minute of the second quarter.

Bryant struggled in the third quarter, missing three straight shots and having a turnover during a 10-0 run that put Dallas in control. Although he went 2-of-10 in the period, that included a twisting, scooping, bank shot along the baseline that even Michael Jordan and Julius Erving would be proud of.

The fourth quarter opened with Bryant on the bench for the first time all game. The rest certainly helped when he put up the big shot over Griffin.

"He said he wasn't ready to come out," Jackson said. "But then he sat down for a while, came back, and made a shot like that. We wanted him to rest his legs. Your legs can suffer when you take as many shots as he does."

DeSagana Diop had a chance to tie it for Dallas after that, but missed his second foul shot. Los Angeles stretched the lead to four on a free throw by Bryant and a pair by Walton, who had rebounded Bryant's

missed second free throw.

After a 3-pointer by Devin Harris got the Mavericks back within one with 8.5 seconds left, Parker made two free throws.

Kwame Brown was 6-of-6 for 12 points, half coming in the final quarter, and Odom had 15 points and 11 rebounds. Chris Mihm scored 10.

Marquis Daniels scored 23, Terry had 20 and Harris 19 for Dallas.

Mavs forward Josh Howard returned to the lineup after missing eight games with an ankle injury. He started and had four points and three rebounds in 11 minutes, all in the first half. His return might be good timing as forward Keith Van Horn bruised his right hip in the second quarter and didn't return. He's scheduled to have an MRI exam and an X-ray on Tuesday.

Diop had seven points and eight rebounds. Starting center Erick Dampier had only two points and four rebounds. He went to the bench after picking up his fifth foul midway through the third quarter and didn't

Atlanta cruises past NO on MNF

By CHARLES ODUM

AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA — Michael Vick gave the Falcons the shot in the arm they needed. Then Atlanta's immediate future took a shot to the ribs.

Vick ran for two touchdowns and passed for another score Monday night to lead the Falcons over the New Orleans Saints 36-17. But a late hit knocked Vick to the turf and out of the game in the fourth quarter.

The NFL's most electric runner writhed in pain and seemed to be favoring his back. The injury was announced as bruised ribs, and Coach Jim Mora appeared confident that his quarterback would be ready for Sunday's game at Chicago.

"Mike doesn't miss games," Mora said. "He'll do whatever it takes to get ready to go."

Vick was the difference as the Falcons bounced back after losing three of four games to fall behind in the NFC playoff picture.

Atlanta improved to 3-0 in Monday night games this season and Vick remained a perfect 5-0 against the Saints (3-10), who have lost eight of their last nine games. Vick had scoring runs of 2 and 17 yards, and he threw a 54-yard touchdown pass to rookie Roddy White on a flea-flicker play.

A vicious late hit from linebacker Ronald McKinnon, who drew a roughing-the-passer penalty, knocked Vick to the turf and he was slow to get up. Vick stayed in for two more plays, but the pain was too much — he called a timeout with 9:21 left, slowly walked off the field and was escorted to the locker room.

"I landed with a guy's foot right on my ribs," Vick said. "Then I aggravated it when I took one more hit."

Added Vick: "Hopefully I'll be able to play this Sunday. ... I'm confident. I'm always confident. I've just got to get my treatment."

The Falcons (8-5) still are behind in the playoff race. They would lose NFC tiebreakers with two other 8-5 teams, Dallas and Minnesota. Atlanta has games remaining against Chicago, Tampa Bay and Carolina — all playoff-caliber teams.

See NBA, Page 2B

See FALCONS, Page 2B

NBA

Continued from Page 1B

return.

"We were just battling uphill all night," Dallas coach Avery Johnson said. "We couldn't get it in gear (Monday night)."

Sixers 90,

Timberwolves 89 (OT)

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Chris Webber had 27 points and 21 rebounds, and Allen Iverson added 19 points and 10 assists to help the Philadelphia 76ers win their third straight game, 90-89, in overtime over the Minnesota Timberwolves Monday night.

Wally Szczerbiak scored 23 points, Kevin Garnett had 19 and Marko Jaric added 14 points and 10 assists for the Wolves, who ended a five-game winning streak that had sent them to the top of the Northwest Division.

After the Sixers wasted a 10-point lead in the final 4 1/2 minutes of the fourth quarter, Webber scored the go-ahead basket in overtime and made a key block on Garnett that denied the tying field

goal.

Webber nearly came up with a steal in the final seconds, but disrupted the ball enough that Szczerbiak got one look on an inbound pass with 0.4 seconds left. Szczerbiak tossed a pass to Garnett, his shot was off the mark, and the Sixers escaped with a win they tried to give away.

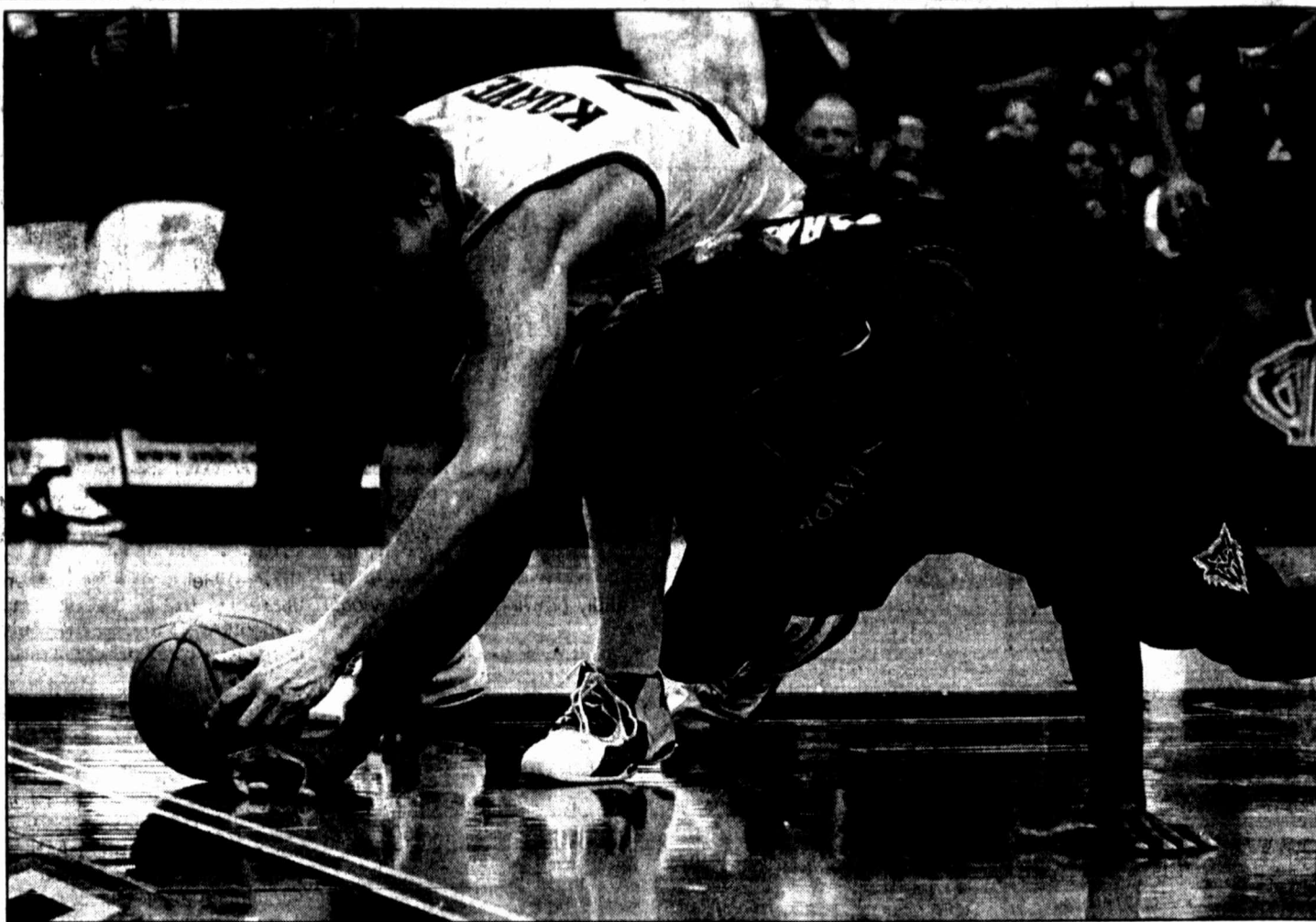
Bucks 112, Knicks 92

NEW YORK (AP) — Reserve Dan Gadzuric scored a season-high 18 points, and the Milwaukee Bucks won their third straight.

Michael Redd finished with 31 points to lead Milwaukee, which has won six of seven and improved to 10-1 against Eastern Conference teams. Maurice Williams added 15.

Rookie Channing Frye scored a career-high 30 points for the Knicks, who dropped their third straight. Nate Robinson and Eddy Curry each had 15.

Frye dominated his matchup with fellow lottery pick Andrew Bogut — but that may have backfired for the Knicks because it meant more



76ers' Kyle Korver, left, and Minnesota Timberwolves' Kevin Garnett scramble for a loose ball under Minnesota's basket with only seconds left in overtime at the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, Penn., Monday. The Sixers beat the Timberwolves 90-89 in overtime.

playing time for Gadzuric. He scored 12 points during the decisive second quarter, then

came back off the bench late in the third period to make three field goals after New York had

pulled within single digits.

Gadzuric entered averaging five points in just

over 12 minutes per game. He fell shy of his career high of 22 points, set last April against Boston.

FALCONS

Continued from Page 1B

"Well, we're in a fight, we're in a dogfight," Mora said. "We'll take it. It's better to be in a fight than not be."

Vick was 12-of-23 for 231 yards with a touchdown and an interception and rushed for 38 yards in his fourth career game with two scores on the ground. Alge Crumpler caught three passes for 94 yards.

New Orleans' Aaron Brooks passed for 219 yards and a touchdown and Antowain Smith rushed for 60 yards and a touchdown on 11 carries.

Falcons cornerback DeAngelo Hall, who seems to thrive in Monday night games, provided the first big play of the game when he

stripped the ball from receiver Joe Horn following a third-down catch for first-down yardage in the first quarter.

Hall pulled the ball loose before Horn hit the ground and returned it 20 yards to the Saints 12, setting up a 1-yard touchdown run by T.J. Duckett.

Hall had interceptions in each of Atlanta's first two Monday night games this season.

He had another apparent interception return for a touchdown wiped out by a roughing-the-passer penalty against linebacker Demorrio Williams late in the first half.

With Atlanta leading 7-3 following John Carney's 47-yard field goal, the Saints evened the turnover count at 1-1 when Will Smith deflected Vick's pass and Jason

Craft returned the interception 19 yards to the 6. On first down, Smith bulled through the line for a touchdown and a 10-7 Saints lead.

Vick gave the lead back to Atlanta with his 2-yard dive for the pylon, capping a drive that included a 36-yard pass to Brian Finneran.

On third-and-goal from the 2, Vick scrambled to his left and appeared to be pushed out of bounds near the 1. The officials spotted the ball at the 1, but Mora called for the review.

"Because Mike Vick told me to," Mora said. "He said 'Challenge it, we'll win it.' You listen to what No. 7 says."

The run was ruled a touchdown after replays showed Vick's leg in bounds as his body flew over the pylon, the

ball in his hands.

"It is hard to defend the quarterback," said Saints coach Jim Haslett. "He does a great job. He made a nice play. I guess his hand touched the pylon. I thought the ball was outside the pylon, but if any part of your body touches the pylon it is a touchdown."

Vick went to the air — with a little trickery from Mora's playbook — for the Falcons' next touchdown.

Late in the second quarter, Vick lined up as a wideout as Warrick Dunn took the snap and then pitched the ball to the quarterback.

Vick, under pressure from defensive end Tony Bryant, waited for White to get open and then heaved the ball downfield.

UTEP player allowed back on team after suspension

EL PASO (AP) — UTEP's Jason Williams is back on the team following his suspension last week after punching a teammate and breaking his jaw.

Coach Doc Sadler made the announcement during a news conference Monday.

"I've got to make a decision based on what is best for our basketball program," Sadler said. "I took into consideration what happened, the people involved, their teammates, the coaching staff and the fans. Jason is reinstated today and will play Saturday, and we will move forward."

Williams, a senior forward who averages 15.4

points a game for UTEP, practiced with the team during Monday afternoon's two-and-a-half-hour session and will play in the team's next game, Saturday against New Mexico State.

Sadler has said that Williams hit Jackson during a "very competitive practice." Williams has apologized for his actions.

"One of the biggest things has been my conversations with Stefan," Sadler said. "But it was not based on just that. It was also based on Jason's whole background. In his two-and-a-half years here he has never had a problem."



LET'S DREAM

I know that you are not asleep yet and you think you can't dream. Oh, but you can! You can dream while you are awake, and with your eyes wide open. I dream at night and in the daytime and I think you probably do, too!

Do you dream a night while you are asleep? Do you have pretty dreams? Do you dream of little kittens, and their soft, fluffy fur? Do you dream of your little puppy, with his wagging tail, and his funny ears?

We all dream at night, while we are asleep. We all dream in the daytime, too. We just don't know it sometimes. Let me show you!

Have you ever been riding along a sidewalk on a bike, and pretending the sidewalk was a big highway, and it was taking you to a faraway place. It

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visit. Would you take all your friends along with you? What would this faraway place? Would you see pretty flowers? Would you see lots of good candy? Would you see a river, flowing softly, gently to the ocean? Would you see all the toys you had ever wanted? This is a dream!

Have you ever wished you had a little brother? A little brother would be nice to play with, wouldn't he? Do you wish this

little brother would play games with you? Do you wish

this little brother would play tag with you? Would he ever win? You would let him win sometimes, wouldn't you? Does he play in the water with you? Do you squirt him with water? Does he squirt you back? You are laughing and having fun, aren't you? This is a dream!

Have you ever wished you had a little sister?



Does she play with you? Does she like to play the same games you like to play? Does she have a doll, and a dollhouse? She is a very pretty sister, isn't she? And, she is so nice! She will keep all your secrets and never

tell anyone. She will help you when you fall down. And she will make you feel better,

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won't she? This is a dream!

Have you ever watched a little bird flying overhead? Have you ever imagined yourself

being that little bird? Everything he sees when he is flying must be really beautiful. Do you think you can see everything the way the little bird sees it? Do you ever think you can fly? Do you ever wish you could just stay in the sky forever? This is a dream!

Have you ever seen a great big bulldozer push-

ing big mounds of dirt? Have you ever thought that you could move the dirt like the bulldozer does? Did you ever think



you were as strong or even stronger than the bulldozer? You could move many times more dirt than the bulldozer, couldn't you? This is a dream!

Have you ever thought of what you will be when you grow up? Have you ever thought of learning something you could learn, and being a very smart person? Have you ever thought of having a good

job and making lots of money? Have you ever thought of all the people you could help if you had lots of money? This is a dream, and the best one of them all!

So now that we are almost finished with this story, you can turn over



and go to sleep, and dream! I hope your nighttime dreams are very nice tonight. I also hope your daytime dreams include the best dream of them all!

Now you know that we can dream while we are awake, and our eyes are wide open, don't you? GOOD NIGHT and SWEET DREAMS

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS Mercury and Uranus are in a tiff, causing disturbing vibrations across the solar system. Human emotions reverberate with startling intensity and continue to shake us like tiny earthquakes over the next week. If you remain objective about your feelings, the outcome can be positive. Several small releases can prevent one big upset.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The planets encourage you to round out your support group with some impressive and knowledgeable individuals. Reach to the outer corners of your network. Ask for referrals.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Moving forward comes with a price. You must lose the familiarity and comforts of the past. Before you take a step, be sure the progress you desire will be worth the sacrifice.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A mysterious person from the past figures into your picture — someone who has struck it rich, lived in a foreign place or been led far off the beaten path. There's a lesson for you in their story.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your intuition is hot, especially regarding someone else's life. Unless you make the other person believe it, too, it does neither of you any good. Work on your powers of persuasion.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You love to portray the

one who's got it all figured out, a big player and a real cool cat. By stepping into the role, you become this. Allow room for vulnerability, too.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're trying to go by the book, but a free-spirited Gemini is happy to lead you off the path. You're likely to have more fun when you follow this person.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's the same old people and places you see, but it's a new you who is seeing them. You'll notice what you never picked up on before and might also be inspired to call someone out on a lie.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your talent is ready. Now all you need is the right audience — one that has enough experience to appreciate the nuances of masterwork. A Virgo and a Pisces will applaud you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You might think that your life lacks excitement, but you're mistaken. What is ordinary to you is intriguing and grand to someone else. Share your story about a mundane experience, and you'll be surprised at the response.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You are kinder than have to be, a gift to the world that also happens to define you as a classy person. So if you lose money or face in the process, don't give it a second thought.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll revel in self-expression, and you don't find it the least bit difficult to be unique. In order to share your ideas, explain them thoroughly. Much of what makes perfect sense to you must be broken down for your audience.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). A partner adds sweet dimension to your activities today, as long as it's the right partner. If it's not, there are plenty of opportunities for conflict that point this fact out.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Liberal Massachusetts senator and 2004 presidential Democratic nominee John Kerry is out to prove that defeat does not equal retirement. Sen. Kerry hints that we have not seen the end of his grand political ambitions. Sagittarian leaders are particularly suited for foreign policy, as they are passionately driven to understand other cultures.

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6 PM	News (CC)	News (CC)	Piel de Oloro	My Wife-Kids	News (CC)	La Tormenta	News (CC)	Raymond	Booker	News (CC)	MythBusters (CC)	Classics	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	Live BET	That's Raven	With Smith	NFL's Greatest	Sci-Fi
7 PM	Ent. Tonight	News (CC)	Contrita Viento	Bones (CC)	Ent. Tonight	El Cuerpo del	News (CC)	Friends (CC)	Update/Israel	Secrets of Lost	CSI: Crime Scene	Moby King	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	The Ultimate	Movie: 102	Honor Roll	NFL's Greatest	Movie: Dinocroc
8 PM	Commander in Chief (CC)	Commander in Chief (CC)	Alborada	House (CC)	The Amazing Race: Family Edition (CC)	Corazon Partido	News (CC)	Sex and the City	Light of the Southwest	Frontline (CC)	Dirty Jobs (CC)	Movie: Jaws 2	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	The Ultimate	Movie: 102	NBA Coast-to-Coast (CC)	College Basketball	Movie: Planet of the Apes
9 PM	Boston Legal (CC)	Boston Legal (CC)	Casos de la Vida Real	My Wife-Kids	News (CC)	Noticias Laura	News (CC)	Sex and the City	The Hour of Healing	Independent Lens (CC)	MythBusters (CC)	Movie: Jaws 2	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	Comicview	American Idol	DePaul at Wake Forest	Inside Kong	Movie: Planet of the Apes
10 PM	News (CC)	News (CC)	Primer Impacto	70s Show	News (CC)	Noticias Laura	News (CC)	Sex and the City	The Hour of Healing	Independent Lens (CC)	MythBusters (CC)	Movie: Jaws 2	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	Comicview	American Idol	DePaul at Wake Forest	Inside Kong	Movie: Planet of the Apes
11 PM	Ent. Tonight	Ent. Tonight	La Hora	Becker (CC)	Ent. Tonight	La Hora	Ent. Tonight	Sex and the City	The Hour of Healing	Independent Lens (CC)	MythBusters (CC)	Movie: Jaws 2	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	Comicview	American Idol	DePaul at Wake Forest	Inside Kong	Movie: Planet of the Apes
12 AM	Live (CC)	Live (CC)	Amigas y Rivales (SS)	Becker (CC)	Live (CC)	Amigas y Rivales (SS)	Live (CC)	Sex and the City	The Hour of Healing	Independent Lens (CC)	MythBusters (CC)	Movie: Jaws 2	CSI: Crime Scene	Law & Order (CC)	Comicview	American Idol	DePaul at Wake Forest	Inside Kong	Movie: Planet of the Apes

DENNIS THE MENACE



"REMEMBER, JOEY, CHILDREN SHOULD BE SEEN BUT NOT OVERHEARD."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Why were you going through Mommy's clothes and writing down the sizes?"

HAGAR



BLONDIE



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 13, the 347th day of 2005. There are 18 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 13, 1862, Union forces suffered a major defeat to the Confederates at the Battle of Fredericksburg.

In 1577, Sir Francis Drake of England set out with five ships on a nearly three-year journey that would take him around the world.

In 1918, President Wilson arrived in France, becoming the first chief executive to visit Europe while in office.

In 1928, George Gershwin's musical work "An American in Paris" had its premiere, at Carnegie Hall in New York.

In 1944, during World War II, the U.S. cruiser Nashville was badly damaged in a Japanese kamikaze attack that claimed more than 130 lives.

In 1964, in El Paso, Texas, President Johnson and

Mexican President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz set off an explosion that diverted the Rio Grande, reshaping the U.S.-Mexican border and ending a century-old dispute.

In 1978, the Philadelphia Mint began stamping the Susan B. Anthony dollar, which went into circulation the following July.

In 1981, authorities in Poland imposed martial law in a crackdown on the Solidarity labor movement. (Martial law formally ended in 1983.)

In 1994, an American Eagle commuter plane carrying 20 people crashed short of Raleigh-Durham International Airport in North Carolina, killing 15.

In 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured by U.S. forces while hiding in a hole under a farmhouse in Adwar, Iraq, near his hometown of Tikrit.

Today's Birthdays: Former Secretary of State George P. Shultz is 85. Actor-comedian Dick Van Dyke is 80. Actor Christopher Plummer is 78. Actor Robert Prosky is 75. Country singer Buck White is 75. Movie producer Richard Zanuck is 71. Singer Ted Nugent is 57. Rock

musician Jeff "Skunk" Baxter is 57. Country musician Ron Getman is 57. Country singer John Anderson is 51. Singer-songwriter Steve Forbert is 51. Singer-actor Morris Day is 49. Actor Steve Buscemi is 48. Actor-comedian Jamie Foxx is 38. Rock singer-musician Thomas Delonge (Blink 182) is 30. Actress Chelsea Hertford is 24.

Thought for Today: "A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few."

Judge Learned Hand, American jurist (1872-1961).

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Answer to previous puzzle:

BING ENDS SLOPE
USER LOOP COVER
IATE SELL OPERA
LITTLE LEAGUER
DALAI SET TOY
SHE APACHE CITE
BBALL SEMIS
SMALL POTATOES
ALONE WAGES
PANG MONROE POD
EMU EAR LARGE
MINIATURE GOLF
AGENT TONE ABEE
DANCE ENID SERA
ALTAR SITS PSSIT

WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



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THE OTHER COAST



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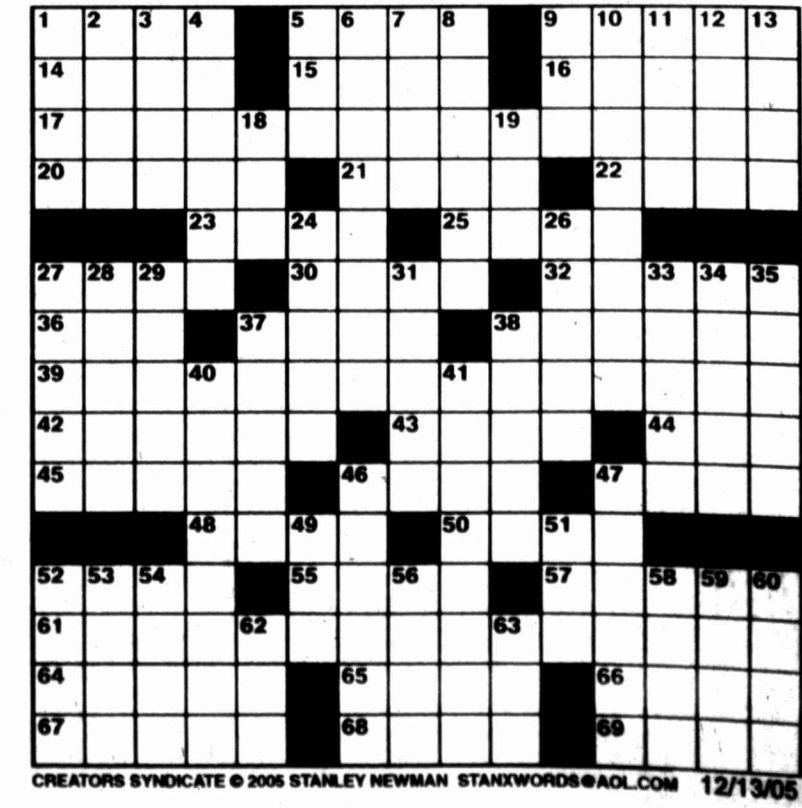
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ACROSS

- 1 Squeezing snakes
- 5 Star of Bethlehem followers
- 9 More competent
- 14 British noble
- 15 Get a good thing
- 16 Location
- 17 Avoiding
- 20 Color variation
- 21 Cincinnati's state
- 22 Soda containers
- 23 Aussie greeting
- 25 Elephant tooth
- 27 Suit to
- 30 Rat relatives
- 32 Behaved
- 36 Election Day mo.
- 37 Sharpen
- 38 Good for farming
- 39 Go-getter's motivation
- 42 Restaurant activity
- 43 Mediterranean and Caribbean
- 44 Phonograph records: Abbr.
- 45 Pottery fragment
- 46 Stinging insects
- 47 Happiness
- 48 37 Down teacher
- 50 Rip
- 52 Italian wine region
- 55 Prefix meaning "opposed to"
- 57 Deer in a Disney film
- 61 Distracting

DOWN

- 1 Porgy and
- 2 Solemn vow
- 3 Vicinity
- 4 Heavy hammer
- 5 1002, in old Rome
- 6 Pesky
- 7 Vincent van
- 8 Egg on
- 9 Imitate
- 10 Bad-luck animal, supposedly
- 11 Zhivago's love
- 12 Business-school subj.
- 13 Football officials
- 18 Checker color
- 19 Dobbs of CNN
- 24 In the midst of
- 26 Dresses of India
- 27 Chilean mountains
- 28 Synagogue scroll
- 29 Lloyd Webber musical
- 31 and desist
- 33 Short-term government security
- 34 Run off for love
- 35 Thickly packed
- 37 Yoga practitioner
- 38 Degrade
- 40 Where Norfolk is
- 41 Office conferences
- 46 Make a mess of
- 47 Alexander Bell
- 49 Sprinted
- 51 Belly muscles
- 52 Business-envelope abbr.
- 53 "Be happy to!"
- 54 Ensnare
- 56 Pliers or wrench
- 58 Waiter's handout
- 59 Explosion sound
- 60 "Beware the of March"
- 62 Under the weather
- 63 Compass pt.



Wacky Facts

* The first insulated bottles were made for home use 100 years ago. The word "thermos" (a trademarked name for a brand of the bottles) comes from a Greek word meaning "hot."
* Dec. 31: Make Up Your Mind Day
— World Almanac for Kids

KID NEWS

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Chatter Box

'Maybe Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more.'
— Dr. Seuss from, "How The Grinch Stole Christmas."



1. Wake up early to watch the sun rise.
2. Sleep in.
3. Go sledding.



Try our tips for an amazing winter vacation

Give yourself a break ... to remember!

Here are 50 boredom busters
for your winter vacation.

— Chicago Tribune



28. Bake cookies.

29. Surprise a neighbor with fresh-baked cookies.

30. Throw away any leftover Halloween candy.

31. Start a journal.

32. Rename your sibs and call them by their new names.

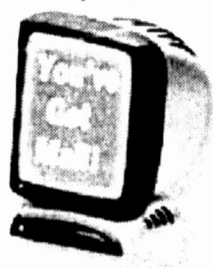
33. Color with a younger sib.

34. Catch a matinee with friends.

35.

Sign up for an e-mail pen pal.

36. Write a long, chatty letter.



37. Drop by a record store, slip on headphones and jam to a new artist.

38. Make your own music video with a camcorder.

39. Go ice-skating.

40. Organize a broom hockey game.

41. Recycle holiday greeting cards. (Cut off the fronts and glue them on plain paper, folded in half.)

42. Visit a cool museum.

43. Memorize a poem.

44. Spend a day at work with Mom or Dad.

45. Clean out your backpack.

46. Build a snowman.

47. Memorize three jokes and test them out for laughs.

48. Go half a day without talking — just to see if you can.

49. Teach your dog a trick.

50. Teach yourself a trick like juggling or magic. (Go to www.kidzone.ws/index.htm)

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY JOHN
CORBITT/KRT



Take a disposable camera on a long walk and snap photos until the film's gone.

Put loose photos into an album.

Play with your gifts.

Make your family breakfast.

Come up with your own secret code.

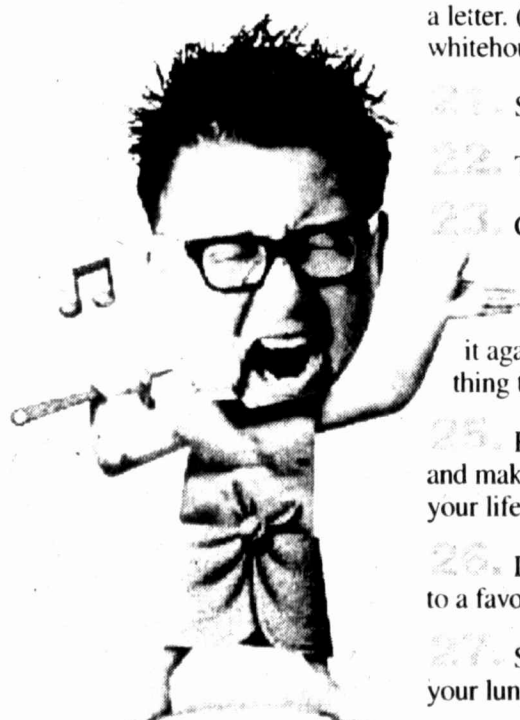
Earn cash for the New Year by babysitting or walking a neighbor's dog.

Figure out how to say "Happy New Year" in another language. (Go to www.yourdictionary.com.)

Write down your New Year's resolutions.

Read a front-page newspaper story, start to finish.

Read the comics.



14. Draw your own superhero.

15. Invent the name of the planet that your superhero came from.



Stretch for 15 minutes (keep breathing and no bouncing!).

Figure out how to find an actual planet in the night sky. (Start at www.astronomy.com.)

Make a pizza and load it with your favorite toppings.

Think of something you'd change about the world if you could.

Write President Bush a letter. (Go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.)

Swap CDs with friends.

Try a new hairstyle.

Clear out a shelf or drawer in your room.

Start filling it again by collecting something that tickles you.

Record fave tunes and make a soundtrack for your life.

Learn ALL the words to a favorite song.

Sing it at the top of your lungs in the shower.



PHOTOS BY GUILLAUME BONNI/UNICEF

Ambassador Clay Aiken visits the Madi Opei IDP Camp in Uganda in May. More than a million people in northern Uganda have been forced from their homes by civil war and are living in displaced persons (IDP) camps.

In The News

Aiken on a mission

Time For Kids reporter Avery Hardy interviewed Clay Aiken about his job as a UNICEF ambassador. The "American Idol" runner-up visited Indonesia and Uganda to help those in need. As a former teacher, Aiken is also interested in helping those with learning disabilities become more accepted in society. He is now touring the country on his holiday tour, "Joyful Noise 2005."

TFK: How does

one get named a UNICEF ambassador?

AIKEN: I think UNICEF goes about and tries to find people who it feels matches ... their philosophy and what it is they do. I was a teacher before I started singing, and they were looking for someone to be an education ambassador. There was an obvious connection that I'd be an ambassador for education, so they gave me a call and asked me if I'd be interested.

TFK: What are your responsibilities?

AIKEN: My goal was to learn as much about UNICEF as I could, so that I could tell other people what UNICEF does. There are such important stories that happen all throughout the world. The UNICEF ambassador program takes advantage of people's celebrity ... because the news will talk to us and then ... we have an opportunity to talk about something that's important and we can tell people what UNICEF does.

TFK: On the UNICEF Web site, I watched your virtual field trip through Uganda where the children are suffering from over a decade of civil war. If you could do one thing for these children, what would it be?

AIKEN: If I could do one thing ... it would be to end the civil war. The Lord's Resistance Army has been terrorizing kids in these villages and all of these districts in northern Uganda for the past 18 years. ... When people are made aware of the situation, hopefully they'll put pressure on their government to get this problem solved. Children who are 10 years old have never known what it's like to sleep at home at night.

TFK: Describe the "Joyful Noise" tour.

AIKEN: It's a Christmas tour. It's a little more theatrical (than last year). ... Our goal is to try to get people all warm and fuzzy for the holiday season as early as we can.

TFK: Who are your favorite musical artists?

AIKEN: Growing up I never knew that I wanted to be a singer. I always thought that I wanted to be a teacher or a reporter ... something different. So I didn't really have any musical artists that I followed or idolized.

— Avery Hardy, 10



Aiken joined a class of boys at Pabbo IDP camp in the Gulu District.

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