Iowa vote nears
GOP race remains unpredictable
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MISD: Recruitment focus shifts to region

By Meredith Moriak
Staff Writer

After reviewing which colleges provide Midland ISD with the most teachers, the district has decided to focus the majority of its recruiting efforts at regional universities.

District data show the majority of teachers hired within the past three years obtained their degrees from the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Texas Tech University, Angelo State University or Sul Ross State University.

MISD Chief of Staff Ed Zachary said he asked Paul Hooper, director of certified personnel, to examine where teachers were getting their degrees.

Zachary said he wanted to evaluate the return MISD gets by sending recruiters to job fairs at large universities and metropolitan areas.

Overwhelmingly, Hooper said he found there is little return on visiting with and recruiting students from large universities. Most students don't leave the Metroplex, Austin or Houston, to work in Midland.

Typically, graduates from large schools return to Midland because they were reared here, Zachary said.

UTPB leads the number of new hires since 2009 with 134. Texas Tech has 92; Angelo State at 42 and Sul Ross at 23, which rounded out the top four. Next on the list was Texas A&M University and the University of Arizona with 13 each.

"Geographically, students would have to pass through a lot of school districts before they get here, and chances are slim to none they'd come all the way out here," Zachary said.

Zachary said he has gone on recruiting trips in the past and talked with a lot of great candidates who would be a good fit for Midland. However, Zachary said a lot of the discussions are courtesy visits because candidates want to work on their networking skills and don't have an interest in moving to Midland.

"We're focusing our recruitment efforts around where we get our graduates," Hooper said.

Please see **RECRUIT**/2A

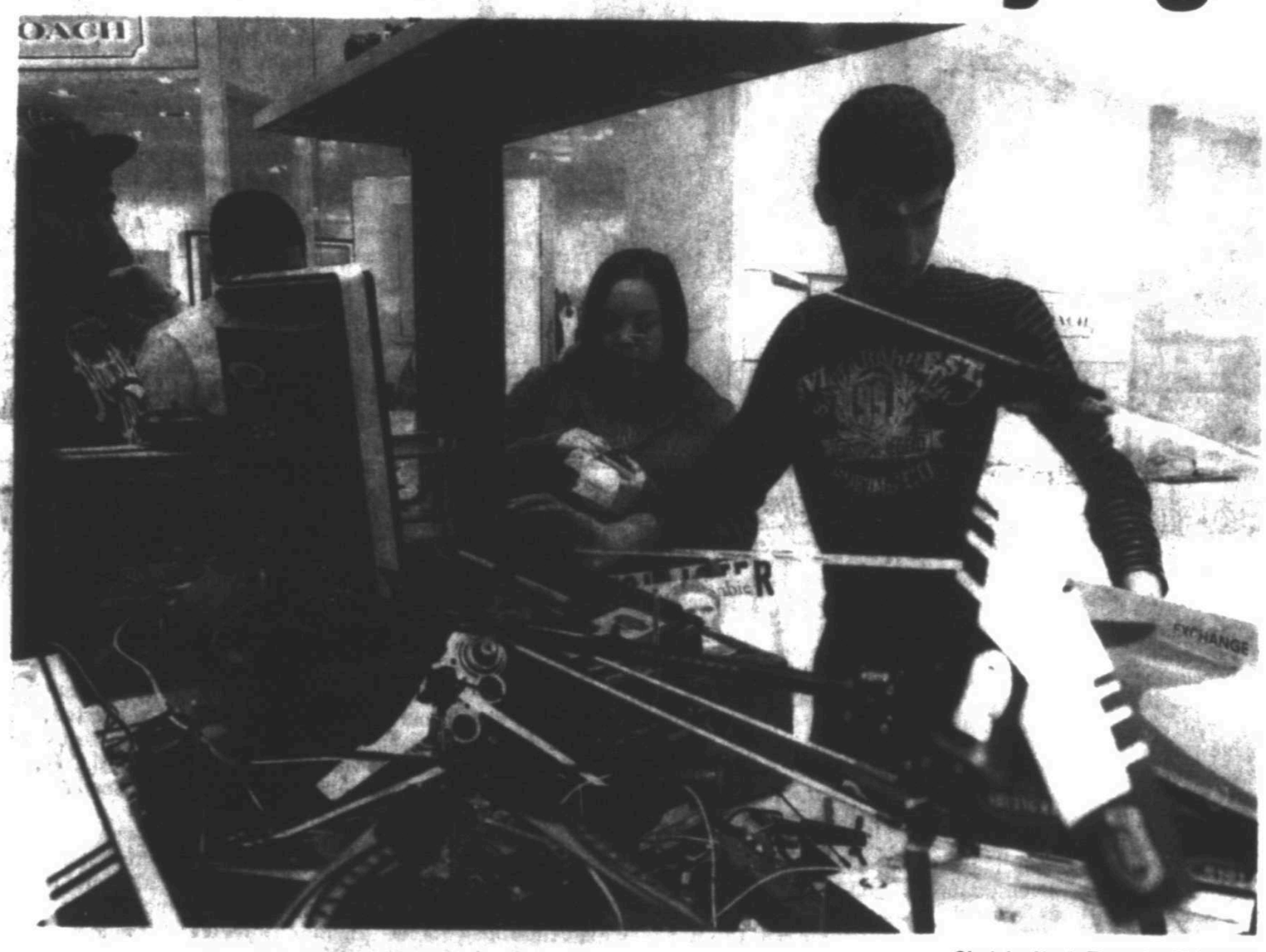
Teacher recruitment

Total number of new-hire teachers by college since 2009

UTPB - 134
Texas Tech - 92
Angelo State - 42
Sul Ross State - 23
Texas A&M - 13
Arizona - 13
Lubbock Christian College - 12
North Texas - 10
Tarleton State - 10
West Texas State University - 10

Source: MISD

Post-Christmas buying



Cindeka Nealy/Reporter-Telegram

Jessie Vasquez, 16, from left, his cousin Carlos Estrada, 13, and mother Barbara wait for Mehmet Karauilan to ring up their remote-controlled helicopter purchases Monday afternoon at the Midland Park Mall. The mall was packed with shoppers and others exchanging Christmas presents. Manager Kevin Church said the mall was busy as expected with shoppers as the holiday season comes to an end.

Does shale boom mean U.S. energy independence is near?

By Kevin G. Hall
McClatchy Newspapers

TOWANDA, Pa. — Ever since Richard Nixon's 1973 promise to attain energy independence, successive U.S. presidents all have pledged the same goal, even as foreign supplies composed a larger and larger share of the U.S. energy mix.

Now, almost 40 years later, a measure of independence is within reach. But as this booming mountain town in northeastern Pennsylvania shows, the quest for independence involves both opportunities and trade-offs.

It may surprise Americans who've lived through many years of dependence on foreign fuels, but in less than a decade the United States could pass its 1970s peak as an oil and natural gas producer. If that happens — and many analysts think it's possible — the United States would edge past Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the world's top energy producer.

That alone wouldn't make us completely energy independent. Mexico and Canada likely are to remain stable providers of oil to supplement growing U.S. production. And other factors

Please see **SHALE**/2A

Survey: Economy to pick up, still vulnerable

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy will grow faster in 2012 — if it isn't knocked off track by upheavals in Europe, according to an Associated Press survey of leading economists.

Unemployment will barely fall from the current 8.6 percent rate, though, by the time President Barack Obama runs for re-election in November, the economists say.

The three dozen private, corporate and academic economists expect the economy to grow 2.4 percent next year. In 2011, it likely grew less than 2 percent.

The year is ending on an upswing. The economy has generated at least 100,000 new jobs for five months in a row — the longest such streak since 2006.

The number of people applying for unemployment benefits has dropped to the lowest level since April 2008. The trend suggests that layoffs have all but stopped and hiring could pick up.

And the economy avoided a setback when President Barack Obama signed legislation Friday extending a Social Security tax cut that was to expire at year's end. But Congress could agree only on a two-month extension.

The economists surveyed Dec. 14-20 expect the country to create 177,000 jobs a month through Election Day 2012. That would be up from an average 132,000 jobs a month so far in 2011.

Dean Maki, chief U.S. economist at Barclays Capital, says the U.S. economy remains vulnerable to an outside shock. A big threat is the risk that Europe's debt crisis will trigger a worldwide credit freeze like the one that hit Wall Street in late 2008.

A shock to the U.S. economy, he says, might not be as dangerous if it were growing at a healthier 4 percent to 5 percent annual pace. But when growth is stuck at 2 percent or 3 percent, a major global crisis could stall job creation and raise unemployment.

Beyond Europe, troubles in other areas could also upset the U.S. economy next year, the economists say. Congressional gridlock ahead of the 2012 elections and unforeseen global events, like this year's Arab Spring protests, could slow the U.S. economy. Three economists said rising nuclear tensions with Iran are a concern.

Even without an outside jolt, the economists expect barely enough job creation in 2012 to stay ahead of population growth and the return of discouraged workers into the labor force.

"I just don't know if it's going to be enough to bring the unemployment rate down," says Chad Moutray, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers.

The AP economists expect the unemployment rate to be stuck at a recession-level 8.4 percent when voters go to the polls in November. Unemployment was 8.6 percent in

Please see **ECONOMY**/2A

Cindeka Nealy/Reporter-Telegram

Crash causes outage

Midland police and firefighters investigate an accident that caused power outages in northwest Midland about 6:04 p.m. Monday. A silver Pontiac that failed to yield while exiting Midland Park Mall hit a black Nissan driving southbound on Midkiff Road, said Tasa Watts, Midland public information officer. The Nissan flipped and the Pontiac clipped a power line before skidding through an alley. There were no major injuries, police said. The power line broke in three places, causing major power outages throughout the area, including Midland Park Mall, Hollywood Theaters and H-E-B. Crews diverted power from other lines to get power back to about 70 percent of the 857 homes and businesses affected within two hours, but the remaining 30 percent wasn't expected to have full power until midnight, said Sue Mercer, Oncor electric delivery area manager.

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Fear of more violence in Nigeria
WORLD/5A

TODAY IN MIDLAND

Thing to do

■ Classic Movie Club presents "The Importance of Being Earnest," 7 p.m., Cigar Frog's.

Meetings schedule

■ County commissioners
9 a.m. today
Midland County Courthouse auxiliary courtroom,
500 N. Loraine St.

■ Midland Association of Retired School Personnel will meet Jan. 5 in the fellowship hall at First Baptist Church. There will be no newsletters reminders. Send reservations for meals to Anita at apatton123@sbcglobal.net. Greet and meet at 11:30 a.m., lunch at noon and business meeting at 12:30 p.m. Burr Williams, from the Sibley Learning Center, will discuss West Texas water issues. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

City's watering schedule

According to the city's Drought Contingency plan, the watering schedule is:

■ Odd addresses: beginning 6 p.m. Sundays through 10 a.m. Mondays and beginning 6 p.m. Wednesdays through 10 a.m. Thursdays.

■ Even addresses: beginning 6 p.m. Saturdays through 10 a.m. Sundays and beginning 6 p.m. Tuesdays through 10 a.m. Wednesdays.

Community calendar

■ Palmer Drug Abuse Program's sixth annual Celebration Midland is 7 p.m.-midnight Saturday at Midland Center. The alcohol-free New Year's Eve event features entertainment, food and door prizes. Admission is free.

■ The Byron Johnston Holiday Basketball Tournament will take place Wednesday through Friday at Chap Center.

EZ Express

Leaves Downtown Midland: 6:15 a.m., 7:15 a.m, 8:15 a.m., 3:15 p.m., 4:15 p.m., 5:15 p.m.

Stops: Midland College, Citibank Ballpark (6:40 a.m.), UTPB/EZ Rider, UTPB Founders Building, Downtown Odessa)

Leaves Downtown Odessa: 6:15 a.m., 7:15 a.m, 8:15 a.m., 3:15 p.m., 4:15 p.m., 5:15 p.m.

Stops: UTPB Founders Building, UTPB/EZ Rider, Citibank Ballpark (5:55 p.m.) Midland College, Downtown Midland)

Fare: $2

For a full schedule for the service, visit:
http://www.youareheremedia.com/ezexpress/schedule.html

MRT photo gallery

The Midland Reporter-Telegram is offering a photo gallery online. Visit http://mywesttexas.mycapture.com/mycapture/index.asp

Now readers can purchase local photos not published on the pages of the Reporter-Telegram. Look for extra photos from area sports, features, news subjects, parades and other community events. Readers will have options to pick different size photos to purchase, prints on T-shirts and sweatshirts, refrigerator magnets, buttons and many other items not previously offered. Keep checking back to mywesttexas.com and look in the Photo Gallery for more pictures as we continue to add events and more pictures.

Have questions? Contact Photo Editor Tim Fischer at tfischer@mrt.com.

Know a soldier coming home?

Military families can call 689-8696 or email Vickie Gomez (zamagy@cablerone.net) when they know their soldier is flying into our airport so the Permian Basin Welcome Home Committee can be there to greet them.

Lottery

Pick 3 day: 3-6-4
Pick 3 night: 4-3-4
Daily 4 day: 7-1-5-4
Daily 4 night: 1-5-4-6
Cash Five: 7-11-28-30-31
Texas Two Step: 4-8-9-25
BB: 22

Today in history

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 27, the 361st day of 2011. There are four days left in the year.

Today's highlight:

On Dec. 27, 1968, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.

On this date:

In 1932, Radio City Music Hall opened in New York City.

In 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin, who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.

In 2007, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Pakistan by an attacker who shot her after a campaign rally and then blew himself up.

Ten years ago: Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners would be held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Five years ago: Saddam Hussein urged Iraqis to embrace "brotherly coexistence" and not to hate U.S.-led foreign troops in a goodbye letter posted on a website a day after Iraq's highest court upheld his death sentence.

One year ago: A Russian court found imprisoned oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky guilty of stealing nearly $30 billion in oil from his company, Yukos. (His supporters have charged that Khodorkovsky's prosecution was politically motivated.)

How about that White Christmas?

SHANNA SISSOM
City editor

Who couldn't notice how spirits soared on Christmas Eve as the snow kept coming down? Gleefully, strangers were exchanging remarks in public places, and children squealed as it became apparent Midland would enjoy a white Christmas.

On the morning of Dec. 23, I was on the other side of Texas visiting family when it became clear a major snow event was likely upon my return flight home that evening.

That's when I told my mother we needed to make one final shopping trip en route to the airport, and with child-like excitement I bought a new pair of boots for the snow. Then with high hopes, I put them on for the trip.

The flight was delayed, but that meant time for one final seafood meal while sitting at Houston Hobby, and everyone at the oyster bar happened to be talking about the West Texas and New Mexico snow forecast.

A young married couple, booked on the same delayed flight as me, explained they were headed to see his parents in Midland and also were hoping for a white Christmas. Pointing to the new boots, I expressed my readiness, and we all enjoyed a laugh.

A few hours later, we would land at Midland International Airport as flurries descended. We had first seen the white ground on descent, and everyone on the plane was chatting about it.

Visibility was low in the parking lot, and my red car was almost completely covered in white. Then it was time to carefully drive home, unpack and build a cozy fireplace while watching it continue to snow.

On Christmas Eve morning, everyone woke up to a winter wonderland as snow kept accumulating.

An official, National Weather Service measurement of 5.8 inches fell on Christmas Eve alone, with total snowfall for the historic event reaching 6.4 inches for the record books.

Money spent on those snow boots certainly was justified.

But reflecting back on it all, what a special blessing for our city, and especially the children, as we celebrated the birth of Christ this year.

City Editor Shanna Sissom can be reached at shanna@mrt.com

Trying out a gift

Cindela Nealy/Reporter-Telegram

Caige Wall, 14, adjusts the wheels on his skateboard, which was a Christmas gift, Monday at Beal Park.

SHALE

From 1A

will help too, ranging from advances in battery technologies and alternative fuels such as ethanol to greater fuel economy in automobiles.

However, the biggest potential game changer for U.S. energy production is natural gas, which previously had been supplied largely from the Gulf of Mexico region. Just a few years ago, terminals were being built at U.S. ports in anticipation of importing natural gas; today, there's talk of exporting it.

Technological advances have allowed drillers to go down almost 7,000 feet, smashing through rock formations and drilling horizontally, freeing trapped oil and gas that long had been considered inaccessible.

"Shale gas, the biggest energy innovation since the start of the new century, has turned what was an imminent shortage in the United States into what may be a hundred-year supply and may do the same elsewhere in the world," Daniel Yergin, the world's most prominent oil historian, wrote in his new book about energy security, "The Quest."

The promise of shale gas is present in many places that are being developed across the country, but it's nowhere more visible than in northeastern Pennsylvania's Bradford County, which is in the aptly named Endless Mountains region. Communities here sit atop the Marcellus Shale formation, which runs along southern New York state through western Pennsylvania into eastern Ohio and parts of Maryland and West Virginia.

Geologists think the Marcellus Shale formation contains the second-largest natural gas deposits in the world, behind only Iran's South Pars-North Dome gas field in the Persian Gulf, off the coasts of Iran and Qatar. If America becomes energy independent, it'll be in large part thanks to this region. Energy consultancy PFC Energy projects that the United States will recapture the flag of top energy producer within the next eight years.

"We need to continue to have increased drilling and production. It looks like the resource base is there to support that. The evidence is there for that; I think it's a pretty high probability," said Bob MacKnight, a PFC senior manager, who added that large U.S.-based energy companies are "rediscovering" the United States. "A lot of these companies had left the U.S. for dead 10 years ago, and are now realizing the type of growth they can get here onshore is a scale they didn't think existed."

Onshore is the operative word. Offshore drilling has brought new oil resources, and before the April 2010 BP oil spill, new ultra-deepwater production was replacing lost conventional domestic supplies and beginning to reduce the amount of imported oil. On Dec. 14, the federal government unsealed the winning bids on the first deepwater leases since the devastating BP spill, fetching more than $337 million and showing there's still strong interest in deepwater drilling.

But oil and gas from shale is the biggest new phenomenon.

"To have energy independence, you need to have energy," said Brian Grove, the director of corporate relations in Towanda for Chesapeake Energy, the most active player right now in Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains region. "We've grown our production here from zero to hundreds of millions of cubic feet per day. ... It's going to take decades for development."

Grove was the fourth local employee for Chesapeake Energy back in early 2009. Today, the company employs more than 1,400 in wholly owned subsidiaries that operate in the Bradford County area, not to mention the hundreds of contractors it works with locally.

The natural gas coming out of the shale formations can be fed into a pipeline that already passes through the region, operated by El Paso Corp. The region's stepped-up natural gas production has led to a number of high-profile announcements of new power plants in the Northeast that won't need oil or coal to operate.

Utilities are expected to be the largest beneficiaries of the new production, and that's likely to translate into cheaper electricity for companies and consumers alike. Forecaster IHS Global Insight projects that the abundant supply will lower natural gas prices, reduce electricity costs by an average of 10 percent nationwide and boost industrial production by 2.9 percent by 2017, as manufacturers enjoy cost savings. Natural gas is also likely to displace a lot of heating oil in the Northeast.

Demand remains a limitation. Manufacturers are big users of natural gas, and some cities have switched public buses to natural gas. But the scale of demand has yet to approach the available supplies, and producers want a more active federal policy that encourages the wider use of natural gas.

"We've got a supply of natural gas. We need an energy policy that reflects that," said Kristi Gittins, the vice president of industry and public affairs for Chief Oil & Gas, a Dallas-based driller that's drilled more than 150 wells along the Marcellus Shale formation and has three that now are operational.

Chief has invested more than $1.5 billion in a relatively short time, she said.

"That's a pretty significant investment to a company like ours," Gittins said.

Shale gas production now accounts for anywhere from 23 to 34 percent of U.S. marketed production, according to differing estimates by energy consultants. That'll grow to at least 42 percent by 2020, PFC Energy said. IHS Global Insight projects that it will grow to 60 percent by 2035.

In fact, in a thick study released recently, IHS Global Insight forecast $1.9 trillion in capital investment from 2010 to 2035. The industry will have spent $48 billion by 2015 to reach oil and gas trapped beneath shale deposits, the group said.

"You're talking about something that's the next level," said Anthony Ventello, the executive director of the Central Bradford Progress Authority, an economic development agency. By the agency's count, more than 700 wells have been drilled in Bradford County, more than 300 are operational and more than 2,000 drilling permits have been issued.

Environmental concerns are one potential brake on the shale boom. There are worries about risks to water tables from hydraulic fracturing, the fancy name for shooting pressurized water, sand and chemicals deep into the ground to ease shale gas to the surface. Industry says the process is safe, but the Environmental Protection Agency early this month linked chemicals in the groundwater of a small Wyoming town to hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.

State and local governments are struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of development here. The Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper spotlighted in a four-part series this month how there's little regulation of the pipelines that feed from the new wells into a pre-existing transmission pipeline that serves the densely populated Northeast. Pipelines in interstate transmission are federally regulated, but in rural Bradford County and elsewhere, it's essentially self-regulation.

Dietz, who's the town's volunteer fire chief, too, stresses that he and others here are grateful for a boom when most of the nation struggles with high unemployment.

"It's change. And people hate change. But if it wasn't for this industry ... we'd be in tragic times right now. There's no other way to look at it," Dietz said.

Nearby tiny Towanda looks and feels like the bustling U.S.-Mexico trade corridor in South Texas. The rumble of diesel engines is everywhere as trucks haul the pipes, equipment, water and sand needed for hydraulic fracturing.

A new Best Western has gone up in a town that previously was known for quaint bed and breakfasts. At $169 a night, the hotel's almost always sold out. Room and board often must be found far away.

"I've had people visit here and they have to stay 40 or 50 or 60 miles away. The local hotels are booked up," said Amit Daga, the vice president of Towanda Metadyne Inc., a local manufacturer of mining products that use tungsten carbide, the second hardest material in the world, after diamonds.

Metadyne's tungsten carbide tips on hammer-drill bits are used to break rock formations deep below the Earth's surface. The drill bits are as wide as a garbage-can lid.

The boom keeps Lehigh Railway busy. The 56-mile rail line moved about 2,000 railcars into the area last year. This year the number is about 12,000, and 80-car trains are now common.

"Since I've been here, I have never seen an 80-car train. Since the 1970s we haven't had an 80-car train," said Ventello, the progress authority chief.

Lehigh Railway expects to move 15,000 railcars next year. It added more than six miles of new track this year and expects to add more next year, said Jim Raffa, the company's vice president of marketing.

"This is going to continue to grow. It's just at what percentage of growth rate," Raffa said.

ECONOMY

From 1A

November.

A majority (56 percent) of the economists say the economy will get a lift from Federal Reserve policies. The Fed has said it plans to keep short-term interest rates near zero through at least mid-2013 if the economy remains weak. The central bank also has begun a campaign to try to push down mortgage rates and other long-term interest rates through next June.

Those surveyed also think the economy is strong enough to withstand higher oil prices. At near $100 a barrel, oil prices are up 10 percent from a year ago. But only two of the economists AP surveyed expect the higher prices to slow the economy "a lot."

The economists expect the European economy to shrink 0.5 percent in 2011 — and fall into a recession. Europe is slowing as heavily indebted countries slash spending and banks exposed to government debt curtain lending.

Among the gravest fears is that a major country like Italy will default on its debt, wiping out some banks with large holdings of European government bonds. A worldwide credit crunch like the one that followed the 2008 failure of Lehman Bros could follow.

Twenty-one of the economists listed Europe as a threat to the U.S. economy next year.

RECRUIT

From 1A

Ideally, MISD officials would like to have diverse teachers who come from different backgrounds and geographic regions, Hooper said.

Aside from recruiting in a few isolated states that have lots of qualified teachers and not many positions, Hooper said officials don't spend their time going on out-of-state trips because a lot of times those students won't stay and retention is something for which the district strives.

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Crash kills doc getting heart for transplant

Associated Press

PALATKA, Fla. — A heart surgeon from a Mayo Clinic in Florida flying across the northern corner of the state to retrieve a heart for transplant was killed Monday when his helicopter crashed, officials said.

The helicopter departed the clinic in Jacksonville about 5:45 a.m. but never arrived at the Gainesville hospital, Shands at University of Florida, about 60 miles southwest, said Kathy Barbour, a spokeswoman for Mayo, which is based in Rochester, Minn.

Heart surgeon Dr. Luis Bonilla, procurement technician David Hines and the pilot were killed.

They were on their way to pick up a heart for a patient at the Jacksonville hospital, Clinic spokesman Carl Oestreich told the Associated Press. He said he didn't know whether the heart could still be used in a transplant or what would happen to the patient who had been scheduled to receive it.

The helicopter went down about 12 miles northeast of Palatka, said Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Kathleen Bergen. The town is about 40 miles east of Gainesville and about 45 miles south of Jacksonville.

Clay County Sheriff's Office dispatcher Myron White confirmed the three dead but had no more information to release about the crash in the remote, forested area away from roads. The National Transportation Safety Board also was investigating.

The National Weather Service in Jacksonville reported that there was light fog with overcast conditions in the area but no rain.

"As we mourn this tragic event, we will remember the selfless and intense dedication they brought to making a difference in the lives of our patients," John Noseworthy, Mayo Clinic president and chief executive officer, said in a statement. "We recognize the commitment transplant teams make every day in helping patients at Mayo Clinic and beyond. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families."

FAA records show the Bell 206 helicopter is operated by SK Jets. An employee who declined to give her name said the St. Augustine company had no immediate information.

Gary Robb, a Kansas City aviation attorney specializing in helicopter safety, said SK Jets is known as a careful and safe operator in the industry. The small, lightweight craft has low weight and speed capabilities and is primarily used by traffic reporters or police departments, Robb said.

"It's not usually used in donor flights," he said.

"If you're on a mission where time is sensitive, why use an engine that is low performance?" Robb said, adding that the helicopter has a cramped cabin.

An NTSB investigator will scour the crash site for clues and look into the pilot's experience and any factors that might have impaired the pilot, any environmental factors such as birds or low visibility that may have contributed to the crash, and any mechanical problems with the helicopter, he said.

The Bell 206 helicopter usually has an older engine no longer installed in new helicopters, Robb said.

"We've seen a number of instances where that engine simply failed," Robb said.

The crash and others like it illustrate the delicate nature of transporting organs.

In 1990, a surgeon and an assistant flying to pick up a donor heart for a patient were killed in a plane crash in New Mexico. And in 2007, a twin-engine plane carrying a team of surgeons and technicians — along with a set of lungs on ice being brought to a patient already prepped for surgery — crashed into the choppy waters of Lake Michigan. Six were killed.

FBI joins search for missing Indiana girl

Associated Press

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — The FBI joined the search for a missing 9-year-old Indiana girl with physical and emotional problems Monday as agents descended on the mobile home park where she lived and that's a known haven for registered sex offenders.

About a half-dozen people in black windbreakers, several of whom identified themselves as FBI agents, were at the mobile home park Monday where Aliahna Lemmon went missing from a family friend's home on Friday. Some with search dogs were seen at a nearby storage facility.

Monday's renewed search came a day after local police declined to search Sunday. Allen County sheriff's department officials also originally had not planned to search Monday either, unless new leads arose through tips from the public or interviews, Cpl. Jeremy Tinkel, a department spokesman, said earlier in the day.

Local police haven't said what they think happened to Aliahna.

Meanwhile, agents at the scene Monday wouldn't say why the FBI was involved. An agency spokesman didn't immediately return phone calls and emails seeking comment.

More than 100 emergency workers conducted an extensive search Saturday for Aliahna around the rundown mobile home park on Fort Wayne's north side where she was last seen. No active search was done Sunday for the girl.

According to a state website, 15 registered sex offenders live at the mobile home park that numbers about two dozen homes.

Elizabeth Watkins, 52, who has lived at the park for six months with her 4-year-old granddaughter, said it's well-known that several sex offenders live in the neighborhood.

"It's scary," she said. "I don't know how a parent could leave their child alone."

Aliahna's mother, Tarah Souders, 28, told the Journal Gazette her daughter has vision and hearing problems and suffers from attention deficit disorder and emotional problems. She also has a history of sleepwalking, family members said.

Aliahna and her sisters were staying at a family friend's nearby home because their mother had been sick with the flu and Aliahna's stepfather works at night and sleeps during the day, the Journal Gazette reported Monday.

Mike Plumadore, 39, told the newspaper Sunday that he left the three girls in his mobile home about 6 a.m. Friday and went to a gas station about a mile away to buy a cigar. Authorities have said the store's surveillance video shows him there about that time.

"I had deadbolted the door," he said. "When I got back, all the girls was here."

He said he smoked his cigar and went back to sleep, then woke up about 10 a.m. when Aliahna's mother called. After that call, he realized the door to the home was unlocked and that Aliahna was gone. He said Aliahna's sisters, both 6 years old, told him that Aliahna had left with her mom.

Plumadore said it wasn't until he talked with Aliahna's mom about 8:30 p.m. that they realized she was missing and police were notified.

Plumadore is not listed on the state's website that lists registered sex offenders.

Tarah Souders said miscommunication between the two of them caused the delay in determining that Aliahna had vanished.

"She's never wandered off," Souders said. "She's never done anything like this before."

But Aliahna does have a history of sleepwalking, even unlocking doors and going outside while sleeping, said her grandmother, Amber Story.

"I just hope that she's not suffering or in pain," Story said.

Souders said her daughter also has vision and hearing problems and suffers from attention deficit disorder and emotional problems.

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Iowa caucus campaign enters final week

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — An Iowa caucus campaign that has cycled through several Republican presidential front-runners entered its final week Monday, as unpredictable as the day conservatives began competing to emerge as Mitt Romney's chief rival.

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, released a new television commercial for the state in which he cited a "moral imperative for America to stop spending more money than we take in. It's killing jobs," he said.

Gov. Rick Perry countered with an advertisement that said four of his rivals combined — none of them Romney — have served 63 years in Congress, "leaving us with debt, earmarks and bailouts."

Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, who has invested more time in Iowa than any other contender, was the only one in the state during the day.

That changes Tuesday, with bus tours planned by Perry, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, all eager to energize their existing supporters and attract new ones.

Texas Rep. Ron Paul arrives Wednesday. Recent polls suggest he is peaking as caucus day approaches, and in some surveys is tied with Romney or even ahead.

The result figures to be a short but intense stretch of campaigning through small towns and even smaller towns, the sort of one-on-one politicking that has largely vanished in the electronic age.

Failing that, it will pay tribute to the types cuisine that prosper in early 21st century America.

The Perry bus will belly up to Doughy Joey's in Waterloo and to the Fainting Goat in Waverly, an establishment whose website says "After 10 p.m., we are the type of place your mothers warned you about." Perry also will visit a vineyard and winery in Carroll.

Bachmann will make an early-winter stop at a Dairy Queen, as well as Pizza Ranch establishments in Harlan, Red Oak and Atlantic, three localities with a combined population of 17,282.

It's not all about the food, though.

Perry has a stop arranged at the Glenn Miller Museum in Clarinda, population 5,301, where the great bandleader was born.

The Texas governor also has a distinction that none of his rivals can boast, a town that shares his name. Thus, Perry will visit Perry.

There were signs of strategic shifts as candidates struggled to stand out in advance of the straw poll next week that inaugurates the round of primaries and caucuses that will pick a nominee to oppose President Barack Obama next fall.

Perry's new ad shows images of Gingrich, Paul, Santorum and Bachmann as it criticizes Congress and renews the governor's call for halving lawmakers' pay and time spent in Washington.

Despite the commercial's implication, Gingrich and Santorum were out of Congress when the multibillion-dollar financial bailouts of 2008 occurred. Paul and Bachmann voted against the legislation.

Still, the approach taken suggests the Texas governor is more concerned with outpacing Paul, Bachmann, Santorum and Gingrich on caucus night that he is in defeating Romney.

The former Massachusetts governor, making his second try for the White House, has a well-funded and well-organized campaign nationally and in Iowa, as well as allies who are spending heavily on television advertisements through an independent organization known as a super PAC.

While others have periodically risen to challenge him, Romney has kept his support from seriously eroding in the polls, consistently remaining near the top.

A victory in Iowa does not necessarily translate into the Republican presidential nomination. Yet history suggests that contenders who finish farthest behind next week will quickly drop out, underscoring the significance of the struggle to emerge as Romney's chief rival.

The most recent presidential hopeful to surge and then falter is Gingrich. The former House speaker's campaign imploded last summer and still shows the after-effects: a shortage of funds to counter attack ads in Iowa, and failure to qualify for the primary in Virginia in March.

After insisting he would run a purely positive campaign, Gingrich let it be known he was about to attack Romney on one of his presumed areas of strength, his economic proposals.

R.C. Hammond, a spokesman for Gingrich, said the candidate would make the case that Romney has advanced "very timid ideas that will do little to get people back to work."

Gingrich favors an end to taxes on investment income and dividends, while Romney wants to end them only for individuals with incomes of $200,000 or less.

Gingrich also has proposed an optional 15 percent flat tax on income. Under the plan, taxpayers could stay in the current system, which has a top tax rate of 35 percent on taxable income above $379,150, or switch to the new flat rate, which would apply to income at all levels.

Romney favors retaining the current graduated income tax system, with lower rates than currently exist.

In swing Ohio, Gingrich gaining the 'not-Romneys'

Associated Press

WEST CHESTER, Ohio — For "Anybody but Romney" Republicans in a key conservative region of Ohio, Newt Gingrich has been picking up support as an alternative to the former Massachusetts governor.

The former House speaker has moved to the top in recent polling in Ohio, just as Republican presidential candidates prepare for the Jan. 3 caucuses in Iowa, followed closely by the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries. Ohio's presidential primary is scheduled for March 6, one of the biggest prizes for Republicans among about a dozen states voting on "Super Tuesday."

Mitt Romney hasn't excited some of the party's staunchest conservatives for reasons that include his past support of abortion rights and enactment of a Massachusetts health care plan that's often compared to President Barack Obama's overhaul.

Some conservatives had flirted with supporting Herman Cain, drawn to his business background and unconventional campaign style. But Cain suspended his campaign this month following allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior and a longtime extramarital affair. Cain's decision and Gingrich's performance in nationally televised debates helped some make up their minds.

"He's sold me," said Dan Keith, 61, of Hamilton. Keith and his wife, Pat, said they are convinced that Gingrich has the experience and savvy to be strong against Obama. "I can't see anybody else coming onto the scene that we would go to."

The Keiths said they were undecided when first interviewed three months ago.

"I think before, people liked the other candidates because they were an alternative to Romney. But I'm hearing more people who like Gingrich as Gingrich," said Bill Langdon, co-owner of the Grand Ole Pub, a popular gathering spot for Republican partisans in West Chester. Langdon had been interested in Cain, but he doubted whether Cain could win the presidential nomination.

Gingrich is now his choice. "He's the guy they think can go toe-to-toe with the president," Langdon said.

Sandra Arno, of nearby Springdale, turned out for Cain's visit to West Chester in November and liked what she heard. She was deciding between him and Gingrich before Cain stopped campaigning, and most recently was leaning toward the former speaker.

"I think they're both very intelligent, and I think Newt will be good as the candidate," Arno said.

Republican-dominated suburbs like this one — home of House Speaker John Boehner — just north of Cincinnati provide a stronghold of votes in a state that no GOP nominee has ever reached the White House without winning. Their enthusiastic turnout to vote for George W. Bush by 2-to-1 margins in 2004 is credited with delivering Ohio to clinch his re-election. It's important for the Republican nominee to be able to attract big numbers in GOP-oriented suburban and rural regions to offset Democratic urban bastions led by Cleveland.

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You may think, since cold weather is here, that you've missed your best opportunity to replace your home's siding or to save energy with replacement windows, but Rodney Martin at American Home Improvement says now is a great time.

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And remember, vinyl siding means you will not have to worry about painting your home's exterior ever again. In that way, siding saves you lots of money over the years. It also keeps your home looking its best year in and year out. You have plenty of other maintenance items to handle at your home every year—why not let American Home Improvement relieve you of one of the biggest worries you have?

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Rodney Martin

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Opinion

How life gets worse in 'Garbage City'

■ Life for some Christians in Egypt is expected to get much worse.

RICH LOWRY
King Features Syndicate

Imagine a town built atop an active landfill. That is "Garbage City" in Cairo, Egypt, longtime home to an impoverished, marginalized community of Coptic Christians for whom life is only going to get harder.

The so-called Zabbaleen have been the trash collectors of Cairo for generations. The fathers and their sons go out into the city and collect the garbage in beat-up pickup trucks or donkey-drawn carts. They bring it back to their community, where the women meticulously sort through all of it. They recycle an incredible amount, as much as 80 percent, selling whatever is salvageable. Particularly poor families rifle through the trash for food to eat. They have created a complex, labor-intensive process for getting the most out of what other people throw away.

Garbage City looks like an American city if the municipal workers had gone on strike — forever. It's as if, as someone has mused, Cairo had been picked up by one end and shook so that all the rubbish fell on the homes of the Zabbaleen. They live among their livelihood, the waste that no one else wants and that few would dare touch.

Yet there is a timelessness and pluck to the Zabbaleen. "We are one community, and we all know and love each other," a garbage collector says in one video explicating their way of life.

The area's juxtaposition of the dignity of simple people against a trash-strewn, post-apocalyptic backdrop is so compelling that it has twice recently been the occasion for feature-length documentaries.

The Christians of Egypt have been repressed historically, and the Zabbaleen are a potent symbol of their station. They were pushed to the outskirts of the city hard up against the Moqattam Mountain. When the authorities — typically — tried to obstruct the building of a church, the Zabbaleen dug out worship space in the adjoining caves. With its huge amphitheater that can seat thousands, the "Cave Church" is now a tourist attraction. It is magnificent and spiritually vital, built on the faith of the humble.

The Zabbaleen community never got any favors when times were good in Egypt. Pigs were an integral part of its operations. They ate the organic matter in the trash and could, in turn, be sold. A few years ago, in its wisdom, the Egyptian government decided to use the swine-flu outbreak as the occasion to kill untold numbers of pigs — an ostensible public-health measure that just happened to disproportionately harm Coptic Christians.

That looks enlightened and fair-minded compared with what may yet come, as the Egyptian revolution plays into the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood and even more radical Salafists. Earlier this year, residents of Garbage City were set upon by deadly Muslim gangs in what religious expert Paul Marshall of the Hudson Institute calls "more a pogrom than a 'sectarian clash.'"

If there were equity in international outrage, the plight of Garbage City specifically and Coptic Christians in Egypt more broadly would be a front-burner issue for all the global great and good who exalt diversity and tolerance. Christians there could face the same slow-motion, largely ignored extirpation as their Christian brethren in Iraq.

On Nov. 11, the Cave Church was the site of a vast, fervent Christian prayer service, the largest anyone can remember. It was during his stint in Harlem in 1930, among a shunned but vibrant Christian community, that the great German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer began to see things "from below." There is no other vantage point from Garbage City. Everyone there must instinctively understand the lines of our vintage Christmas carol, "Why lies He in such mean estate/Where ox and ass are feeding?"

Asked by the Voice of America about the future of Garbage City a few weeks ago, resident Adel Gad el-Rab said, "We are the garbage collectors, but we live on a mountain of faith." They will need all of it in what may well become a time of terrible testing.

OUR VIEW

House Republicans got played on payroll tax bill

House Republicans were made to walk the plank in Washington at the end of last week when they swallowed hard and agreed on a short-term renewal for payroll tax cuts for all workers.

The Republicans had wanted a more long-range solution on the tax cuts, opting for a full year. They balked at the two-month Band-Aid that the Democrats supported and the compromise Republicans and Democrats had passed on to the House from the Senate.

The real mistake by the House Republicans was trying to draw a political line in the sand. The Democrats simply walked out and went home, having nothing to do with the change of heart. House Republicans and the speaker of the House got played.

This left Republicans in quicksand up to their necks. If they stood their ground, millions of Americans would have seen hefty payroll tax increases, losing on an average of about $40 on a two-week paycheck.

We know it's hard to believe, but that would make President Barack Obama the champion for tax cuts and the Republicans as the party of tax increases. No matter how far from the truth that is, Democrats could go into the spring primaries as the party championing tax cuts.

It was a position Republicans couldn't risk, so they had no other choice but to cave in on the issue. Republicans took the wrong road on this stance and got caught with the jar of stolen cookies.

Would we rather the tax cuts be for a full year rather than two months? Yes. Would we rather Congress know how to pay for the tax cuts before signing the bill? Yes. But, we also have to be realistic. We also have to better deliver the message. Think about it. Democrats made America believe eight weeks of tax cuts was better than 52. They made America believe $1,000 per paycheck was on the line. The number, thanks to the agreement, is closer to $160.

So, Democrats deliver an inferior message, and as a bonus, they get to hold this issue over the Republicans' head. The likely impact? More payroll tax cuts likely will be passed, the president's approval ratings likely will continue to rise, and the Republicans' economic message is sure to get lost.

Another loser in the deal is Keystone XL pipeline. The bill, according to a Washington Post report, requires the president to approve construction of the pipeline from Canada to Texas within 60 days unless he declares the project would not serve the national interest. We anticipate he's likely to stall the project, citing environment concerns. Thousands of jobs will be kicked to the curb.

Still, Republicans undoubtedly have and will continue to be seen as troublemakers on this issue, and it is not an issue where you want to be on the wrong side of the American voter.

It's unfortunate Democrats gain so much on this issue without getting tied down to pay for their actions. They still think they can spend without paying for it. Republicans failed to sell this fact to the American public, and they now have a lot of work ahead of them convincing voters that they still have their best interests in mind.

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Recognizing Tebow, the role model

■ Tolerance only goes so far with some people, but the Broncos' quarterback offers an inspiring message.

JONATHAN GURWITZ
San Antonio Express-News

NBA Hall of Famer Charles Barkley may have said it best: "I am not a role model." Anyone who looks to famous athletes for moral or ethical guidance is almost certain to end up lost and disappointed.

There are, throughout the years, some notable exceptions — athletes whose success in sports was matched in their personal and professional lives with integrity and decency. Among the most recent, NBA star David Robinson comes to mind.

But behind every amazing dunk, every game-winning touchdown, every incredible tee shot and every spectacular home run is a fallible human being, just like the rest of us, prone to make mistakes, break laws and sin.

Few athletic stories are more inspiring than that of Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger, who fulfilled an improbable dream of playing football at Notre Dame with dedication, faith and perseverance. This month, the Securities and Exchange Commission indicted Ruettiger for participating in a scheme to deceive investors into buying stock in his sports drink company that generated more than $11 million in illicit profits.

Maybe all the well-founded reasons for cynicism partly explain the phenomenon of Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow. Throughout his youth, he worked with his missionary parents helping the poor in the Philippines. In college, he created a student society for charitable giving. As an NFL player, he's used his notoriety to raise money for his foundation that funds a number of worthy philanthropic causes in the United States and abroad.

He looks and acts like a role model. And, oh yes, Tebow is not shy about professing his faith, for which he has become a Rorschach Test in our nation's culture wars.

For the record, Tebow has never said that he is "God's quarterback," that the Broncos are God's team or that the string of six straight victories — including four seemingly miraculous fourth-quarter comebacks — he helped manufacture this season were the result of divine intervention.

In his book, "Through My Eyes," Tebow echoes Abraham Lincoln in expressing his hope that he is on God's side, not that God is on his side. "When it comes to making our decisions, the key that God is concerned with is that we are trusting and seeking Him," Tebow writes. "God's desire is for us to align our lives with His Word and His will."

About his public professions of faith, Tebow said in an interview with ESPN: "Is it good enough to only say to your wife 'I love her' the day you get married? Or should you tell her every single day when you wake up and every opportunity? That's how I feel about my relationship with Jesus Christ."

That kind of relationship — marital or spiritual — isn't for everyone. It's also not hellfire-and-damnation proselytizing.

So, it's interesting that in a society in which tolerance is supposedly a high virtue and in a profession that isn't awash in role models that a man who has seemed to get the important things in life right is so widely ridiculed and his faith lampooned. You can be sure some of the same people mocking Tebow rallied to defend former Denver Nuggets guard Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf when he refused to stand for the national anthem because, he said, it was a symbol of oppression and conflicted with his religious beliefs.

"I like this whole emphasis on spirituality with Tim Tebow," New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, who is Jewish, told Yahoo Sports last week. "It's a great thing that people are talking about faith and values that are important — we need that in society."

Of course, that was right after his team had just ended the Tebow winning streak by handing the Broncos a 41-23 loss. But, it was also a thoughtful, gracious response — the kind you'd expect to hear from Tebow.

From the Left | Doonesbury

From the Right | Mallard Fillmore

WORLD BRIEFS

FROM WIRE REPORTS

BAGHDAD

Sadrists call for new elections in Iraq

The political party loyal to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr called Monday for the dissolution of Iraq's parliament and new elections in another move that could escalate the country's growing sectarian crisis.

The anti-American Sadrist bloc is a partner in the Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Bahaa al-Aaraji, the head of the Sadrists' bloc in parliament, said the elections are needed because of instability in the country and problems that threaten Iraq's sovereignty.

Iraq plunged into a new sectarian crisis last week, just days after the last American troops withdrew at the end of a nearly nine-year war.

The new political crisis has been accompanied by a new wave of attacks on the Iraqi capital by suspected Sunni insurgents linked to al-Qaida. A suicide bomber set off a car bomb Monday at a checkpoint leading to the Interior Ministry, killing seven people and injuring 32, officials said. Police and hospital officials said the bomber struck during morning rush hour, hitting one of many security barriers set up around the ministry's building.

BEIRUT

Arab monitors head to Syria; opposition remains skeptical

The Arab League sent monitors to Syria on Monday even though President Bashar Assad's regime has only intensified its crackdown on dissent in the week since agreeing to the Arab plan to stop the bloodshed.

Activists said government forces have killed several hundred civilians in the past week. At least 23 more deaths were reported Monday from intense shelling in the center of the country, just hours before the first 60 monitors were to arrive. The opposition says thousands of government troops have been besieging the Baba Amr district of in the central city of Homs for days and the government is preparing a massive assault on the area.

France expressed strong concerns about the continued deterioration of the situation in Homs. Foreign Ministry spokesman Bernard Valero demanded Syrian authorities allow the Arab League observers immediate access to the city.

Mexico's cartels build own radio system

By Michael Weissenstein
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — When convoys of soldiers or federal police move through the scrubland of northern Mexico, the Zetas drug cartel knows they are coming.

The alert goes out from a taxi driver or a street vendor, equipped with a high-end handheld radio and paid to work as a lookout known as a "halcon," or hawk.

The radio signal travels deep into the arid countryside, hours by foot from the nearest road. There, the 8-foot-tall dark-green branches of the rockrose bush conceal a radio tower painted to match. A cable buried in the dirt draws power from a solar panel. A signal-boosting repeater relays the message along a network of powerful antennas and other repeaters that stretch hundreds of miles across Mexico, a shadow communications system allowing the cartel to coordinate drug deliveries, kidnapping, extortion and other crimes with the immediacy and precision of a modern military or law-enforcement agency.

The Mexican army and marines have begun attacking the system, seizing hundreds of pieces of communications equipment in at least three operations since September that offer a firsthand look at a surprisingly far-ranging and sophisticated infrastructure.

Current and former U.S. law-enforcement officials say the equipment, ranging from professional-grade towers to handheld radios, was part of a single network that until recently extended from the U.S. border down eastern Mexico's Gulf coast and into Guatemala.

The network allowed Zetas operatives to conduct encrypted conversations without depending on the official cellphone network, which is relatively easy for authorities to tap into, and in many cases does not reach deep into the Mexican countryside.

"They're doing what any sensible military unit would do," said Robert Killebrew, a retired U.S. Army colonel who has studied the Mexican drug cartels for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. "They're branching out into as many forms of communications as possible."

The Mexican army said on Dec. 4 that it had seized a total of at least 167 antennas, 155 repeaters, 166 power sources, 71 pieces of computer equipment and 1,446 radios. The equipment has been taken down in several cities in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz and the northern states of Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas.

The network was built around 2006 by the Gulf cartel, a narcotics-trafficking gang that employed a group of enforcers known as the Zetas, who had defected from Mexican army special forces. The Zetas split from the Gulf cartel in 2010 and have since become one of the nation's most dominant drug cartels, with profitable sidelines in kidnapping, extortion and human trafficking.

The network's mastermind was Jose Luis Del Toro Estrada, a communications expert known as Tecnico who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine in federal court in Houston two years ago.

Using millions of dollars worth of legally available equipment, Del Toro established the system in most of Mexico's 31 states and parts of northern Guatemala under the orders of the top leaders in the Gulf cartel and the Zetas. The Gulf cartel boss in each drug-smuggling territory, or plaza, was responsible for buying towers and repeaters as well as equipping his underlings with radios, according to Del Toro's plea agreement.

Del Toro employed communications specialists to maintain and run the system and research new technology, according to the agreement.

Mexican authorities, however, presented a different picture of the cartel radio infrastructure, saying it was less monolithic than the one described by U.S. authorities. A Mexican military official denied that the army and navy have been targeting one network that covered the entire Gulf coast. The operations had been focused on a series of smaller, local systems that were not connected to each other due to technical limitations, he said.

"It's not a single network," the official told the Associated Press on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic. "They use it to act locally."

In recent years, reporters traveling with the Mexican military have heard cartels using radio equipment to broadcast threats on soldiers' frequencies. The military official told the AP that the signals are now encrypted, but cartels are still trying to break in.

At least until recently, the cartel's system was controlled by computers that enabled complex control of the radio signals, allowing the cartel to direct its communications to specific radios while bypassing others, according to Grupo Savant, an intelligence and security consulting firm in Washington that has firsthand knowledge of Mexico's cartel operations.

The radio system appears to be a "low-cost, highly extendable and maintainable network" that shows the Zetas' sophistication, said Gordon Housworth, managing director of Intellectual Capital Group, LLC, a risk- and technology-consulting firm that has studied the structure and operations of Mexican cartels and criminal groups.

Other Mexican criminal organizations maintain similar radio networks, including the Sinaloa cartel, based in the Pacific coast state of the same name, and the Barrios Azteca street gang, which operates in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, a U.S. law-enforcement official said. The Zetas' system is the largest, however, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic.

The Mexican raids are "a deliberate attempt to disrupt the business cycle of the cartels," said one former law-enforcement official with direct knowledge of the network. "By going after command and communications you disrupt control."

Law-enforcement officials and independent analysts described the operations against the Zetas' communications system as significant short-term victories in the fight against the cartel.

"The seizures show that the organization is scrambling," said Steven Dudley, co-director of InSight, a group that analyzes and investigates organized crime in Latin America.

The longer-term impact is unclear. The cartel has had little difficulty in replacing radio gear and other equipment seized in smaller operations in recent years. And contacts among the highest-ranking Zetas operatives tend to take place in highly encrypted communications over the Internet, according to Grupo Savant.

Certainly, cartel radio equipment is a near-ubiquitous presence for Mexicans living along the front lines of the drug war.

In the state of Tamaulipas, across the border from eastern Texas, many antennas are concealed in the foliage of the rockrose, an invasive shrub that has spread across much of the state's open land.

US weighing travel request for Yemen's president

Associated Press

HONOLULU — The Obama administration is considering whether to allow Yemen's outgoing president into the United States for medical treatment, as fresh violence and political tensions flare in the strategically important Middle Eastern nation.

A senior administration official said President Ali Abdullah Saleh's office requested that he be allowed to receive specialized treatment in the U.S. for injuries sustained in a June attack on his compound. The request was being considered, and would only be approved for medical reasons, the official said.

Until now, the White House had not commented on Saleh's assertion Saturday that he would be leaving Yemen and traveling to the U.S. Saleh insisted he was going in order to help calm tensions in his country, not for medical treatment.

The official, who requested anonymity because of a lack of authorization to speak publicly, did not say when the Obama administration would decide on Saleh's request. But the official said Saleh's office indicated that he would leave Yemen soon and spend time elsewhere abroad before he hoped to come to the U.S.

Demonstrators began protesting against Saleh and calling for his ouster in February. The Yemeni government responded with a bloody crackdown, leaving hundreds of protesters dead, and stoking fears of instability in a nation already grappling with burgeoning extremism.

DAILY PROMISE BROUGHT TO YOU BY

HENRY

Luke 2:13-14

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Nigerians fear more church attacks

Associated Press

MADALLA, Nigeria — Women returned to clean the blood from St. Theresa Catholic Church on Monday and one man wept uncontrollably amid its debris as a Nigerian Christian association demanded protection for its churches.

At least 35 people died at St. Theresa and dozens more were wounded as radical Muslim militants launched coordinated attacks across Africa's most populous nation within hours of one another. Four more people were killed in other violence blamed on the group known as Boko Haram.

Crowds gathered among the burned-out cars in the church's dirt parking lot Monday, angry over the attack and fearful that the group will target more of their places of worship.

It was the second year in a row that the extremists seeking to install Islamic Shariah law across the country of 160 million staged such attacks. Last year, a series of bombings on Christmas Eve killed 32 people in Nigeria.

Associated Press

Onlookers gather around a destroyed car at the site of a bomb blast at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, Nigeria, on Sunday, killing 39 people.

The Rev. Father Christopher Jatauadare told the Associated Press that Sunday's blast happened as church officials gave parishioners white powder as part of a tradition celebrating the birth of Christ. Some already had left the church at the time of the bombing, causing the massive casualties.

In the ensuing chaos, a mortally wounded man had cradled his wounded stomach and begged a priest for religious atonement. "Father, pray for me. I will not survive," he said.

At least 52 people were wounded in the blast, said Slaku Luguard, a coordinator with Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency. Victims filled the cement floors of a nearby government hospital, some crying in pools of their own blood.

Pope Benedict XVI denounced the bombing at his post-Christmas blessing Monday, urging people to pray for the victims and Nigeria's Christian community.

"In this moment, I want to repeat once again with force: Violence is a path that leads only to pain, destruction and death. Respect, reconciliation and love are the only path to peace," he said.

The U.N. Security Council condemned the attacks "in the strongest terms" and called for the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors "of these reprehensible acts" to be brought to justice.

The African Union also condemned the attacks and pledged to support Nigeria in its fight against terrorism.

"Boko Haram's continued acts of terror and cruelty and absolute disregard for human life cannot be justified by any religion or faith," said a statement attributed to AU commission chairman Jean Ping.

Man killed amid UK's sales after Christmas

Associated Press

LONDON — A teenager was fatally stabbed Monday and a second man wounded in attacks on London's most famous retail street as thousands of shoppers flocked to Britain's capital seeking post-Christmas bargains.

The killing of the 18-year-old man on Oxford Street — and a second wounding in the same road — did little to deter shoppers crowding into neighboring stores in the landmark shopping district. Bargain hunters also were largely untroubled by a subway strike which badly disrupted the city's public transport services.

Selfridges — close to the scene of Monday's stabbing and one of Britain's most popular department stores — reported its biggest ever first hour of trading Monday morning, while the New West End Company, which represents traders on central London's shopping streets, reported US$23.5 million in sales in the first three hours of trading.

Jace Tyrrell, of the New West End Company, said hundreds of thousands of people had visited central London retailers, despite action by police to cordon off parts of Oxford Street and temporarily close some stores.

"These incidents are extremely rare on Oxford Street and we understand arrests have been made," she said. "The emergency services were quick to respond and have cordoned off the street as they continue with their investigations. We are working to ensure the street is open to businesses and shoppers tomorrow."

Tyrrell said shopkeepers had requested a meeting with police to discuss the incidents. "We understand both incidents involved gangs of youth who were known to each other (and) the police, and did not involve individual shoppers," she said.

Kim Jong Il's heir meets with South Korean delegation

Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — North Korea's next leader burnished his diplomatic skills Monday, welcoming a private South Korean mourning delegation as state media revealed a new title that gives Kim Jong Un authority over political matters.

Kim Jong Un has rapidly gained prominence since the death of his father Kim Jong Il on Dec. 17, and his brief meeting with a group led by a former South Korean first lady and a prominent business leader shows Seoul that he is assured in his new role.

State media have showered Kim with new titles. On Saturday, the North referred to him as "supreme leader" of the 1.2 million-strong armed forces and said the military's top leaders had pledged their loyalty to him. On Monday, the Rodong Sinmun newspaper described him as head of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party — a post that appears to make him the top official in the ruling party.

On Monday, a South Korean delegation stood in a line on a red carpet and bowed silently during their visit to the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where Kim Jong Il's body is lying in state in a bier surrounded by flowers and flanked by an honor guard.

Kim Jong Un gave the South Koreans his thanks after they expressed condolences and sympathy, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said. Seoul's Unification Ministry confirmed the meeting in a statement but didn't elaborate.

The lead delegates were the widow of former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who engineered a "sunshine" engagement policy with the North and held a landmark summit with Kim Jong Il in 2000, and Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jeong-eun, whose late husband had ties to the North.

Their meeting with Kim Jong Un could be intended to push South Korea to pursue previously agreed upon cooperative projects that would give North Korea much-needed aid, said Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, which is in South Korea.

Footage from AP Television News in North Korea earlier showed the South Koreans being greeted by North Korean officials during a stop at a factory park in the North Korean border town of Kaesong. North Korea sent delegations to Seoul when the women's husbands died.

Monday's meeting appeared to be Kim Jong Un's first reported meeting with South Koreans since his father's death.

The Kim family has extended its control over the country of 24 million people to a third generation with Kim Jong Un, who is in his late 20s and was revealed last year as his father's choice among three sons for successor.

Kim Jong Il, who ruled North Korea for 17 years, wielded power as head of three main state organs: the Workers' Party, the Korean People's Army and the National Defense Commission. His father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, remains the nation's "eternal president" long after his 1994 death.

Kim Jong Un was named a vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party last year, but was expected to ascend to new military and political posts while being groomed to become the next leader.

Monday's reference to his new title was in commentary in the Rodong Sinmun newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Workers' Party, urging soldiers to dedicate their lives "to protect the party's Central Committee headed by respected Comrade Kim Jong Un." Rodong Sinmun has also called on the people to become "eternal revolutionary comrades" with Kim Jong Un, "the sun of the 21st century."

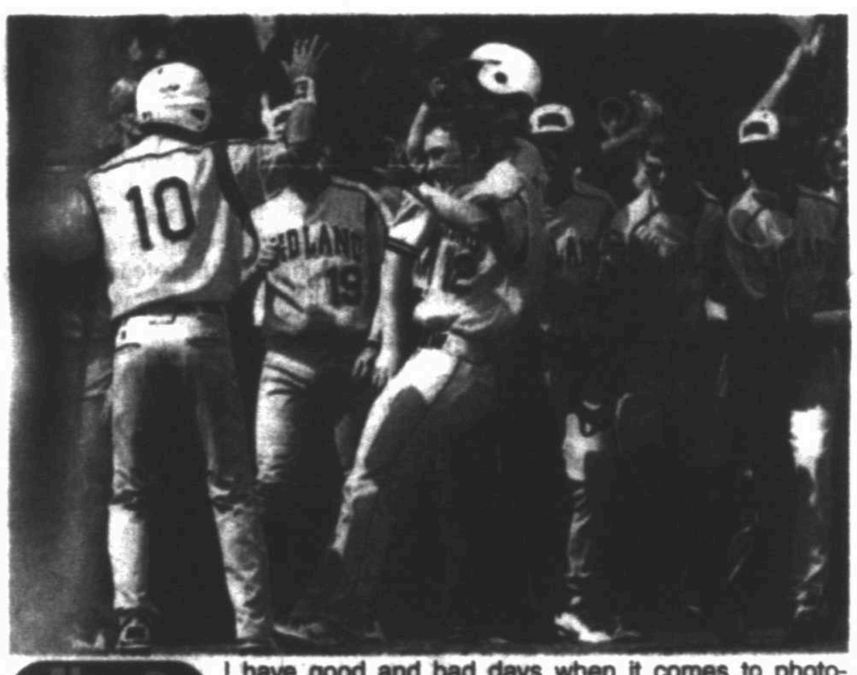
No. 1

This photograph of Lonnie Wells, a World War II veteran who polishes shoes at Lone Star Barbershop, is one of my favorites not only because of the image itself but also the time and effort put into getting it. I showed up with a camera and a small strobe with the intent of taking a portrait. I photographed him from every angle and in different poses. I gave up on the portrait idea. While waiting for a customer to enter, Wells and Reporter-Telegram columnist Ed Todd were talking about old times and then the moment happened as I took this on Nov. 17 at the Lone Star Barbershop.

Year in pictures

Reporter-Telegram photographer Cindeka Nealy's picks

No. 2 The drought has been tough in the Permian Basin. But, on Aug. 11 before the start of the Midland RockHounds vs. Tulsa Drillers baseball game at Citibank Ballpark, we got what we wanted. I went into action photographing the groundskeepers covering the field, people taking shelter, and then I noticed a handful, including Kevin Leoffler, who stayed in their seats. I believe it was luck that I saw him and was able to capture this image of him tasting the rain. But, bad luck did follow when I returned to my car to view the images and noticed that two of my camera bodies and lenses were inoperable because they got wet.



No. 3 I have good and bad days when it comes to photographing sports. On March 19, I was probably just as excited as Midland High pitcher Shane Sawyer after capturing this image of him crossing home plate during the Bulldogs game against Lee at Ernie Johnson Field. I knew the grand slam during the third inning, as well as the expressions on the players' faces would make a great dominant photograph. Because Midland High lost the game 10-8, the photograph lost its dominant spot on the sports front page, but it remains one of my best celebration shots.

No. 5 Smoke covers the western part of Midland on May 24, as a wildfire that started near State Highway 191 and Farm to Market Road 1788 moves east toward town. I like this image not only for the vantage point that it was taken, but also it reminds me of all the wildfires in the area. The smoke cover resembled the dust storms that preceded the rain toward the end of summer.

No. 4 Midland Fire Department personnel move in to extinguish a house fire June 2 at 1911 N. County Road 115. This fire had to have been the most intense that I have photographed in my 11 years of working as a photojournalist.

No. 6 I like this image of Susie Hitchcock Hall, owner of Susie's South Forty, because I was worried she would be against the idea of me photographing her sitting inside of her custom made brass cookers. The idea sparked when she said she was most proud of her custom made cookers, which have helped to increase her toffee production by 40 percent. When I pitched my idea to her, she was more than happy to work with me.

No. 7 Volunteers reach for some of the 2,978 flags on Sept. 5, that were being placed in the ground outside of Midland Classical Academy in remembrance of the people who died because of the 9/11 attacks. I like this because of the highlight and shadows on the American flags.

No. 8 After celebrating with her teammates Midland High goalie Jamie Hall tends to a dislocated finger that she injured on her game-winning save April 8 at Grande Communications Stadium. The Lady Bears defeated Grapevine High School 1-0 in a Region I-5A tournament shootout. There were other images that told the story of that game, and they were chosen for the paper. But this became one of my most unique reaction shots I photographed.

Obituaries

L. B. Ryan

L.B. (Lawrence Burton) Ryan, 78, of Midland passed away on Saturday, December 24, 2011 at Midland Memorial Hospital. L.B. was born December 20, 1933 in Fort Stockton, Texas, to Lawrence B. Ryan Sr. and Merry Francis (Clark) Ryan. He was the older of two children. L.B. graduated from Fort Stockton High School in 1952 and two years later joined the United States Army where he served for four years. After fulfilling his military service, he married the love of his life, Ruthie McAteer in 1957 and enjoyed 54 years of matrimony alongside each other. Together, they would go on to have three children: Dayna Kelly Ryan (Weldon) of Bakersfield, TX, David Lawrence Ryan (Tammy) of Midland, TX, and Robert Clark Ryan (Melinda) of Odessa, TX. L.B. began working as a rancher and went on to become a successful business owner. After moving to Midland in 2002, L.B. and Ruthie joined Mid-Cities Community Church where L.B. served as an usher and in the church's shuttle ministry. L.B. was a strong, devout Christian who believed in life, love, and spending eternity with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He lived his life with the highest degree of integrity. He was the rock and prayer warrior for his family for which he loved more than anything. He believed in strong family values and adamantly supported his kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids at every one of their programs, ceremonies, competitions, and sporting events. We will miss him dearly and look forward to joining him in Heaven one day.

He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife Ruthie; sister Connie Coker of Odessa, TX; three children Dayna, Dave, and Bob; eight grandchildren: (Dayna) Jayme, Scott, and Ryan; (Dave) Reagan, Collin; and Cody; (Bob) Sara and Robert; five great-grandchildren: (Jayme) Kaleb and McKinsey; (Scott) Brianna and Ethan; (Collin) Ryder; along with many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday, December 27, 2011 from 5:00-7:00PM at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Midland. A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, December 28, 2011 at 11:00AM at Mid-Cities Community Church in Midland with Pastor Daniel Stephens officiating. Interment will follow at Resthaven Memorial Park.

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

Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory (432) 550-5800

Loyace B. Hazlewood

Loyace B. Hazlewood, 95, passed away in Midland Memorial Hospital on December 26, 2011.

He was born in Martin County on November 6, 1916, to Wiley E. Hazlewood and Leita B. Hazlewood. Mr. Hazlewood farmed in Martin County and retired from CRMWD after 25 years employment.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Johnnie B. Hazlewood in 1957; his second wife, Lily M. Hazlewood in 2008; a son, James R. (Dickie) Hazlewood in 1976; three brothers; four sisters; his parents; and a son-in-law.

Survivors include sons, Wallace (J.W.) Hazlewood and wife Mary of Midland, and Kenneth B. Hazlewood and wife Barbara of Houston; a daughter, Loyace Ann Fincher of Midland; grandchildren, Michele Jungman and husband David, Sherrie Schuster and husband Stan, Lee Ann Fincher, Chad Fincher and wife Lynn, all of Midland, Lynnette and Stephanie Hazlewood of Houston and Ronnie Hazlewood of Slidel, LA; and several great grandchildren; and 2 great great grandsons.

The family suggests memorials to be made to Hospice of Midland, PO Box 2621, Midland, Texas 79707; St. Jude's; or to ones favorite charity.

Graveside services will be held at 2:00 PM Thursday, December 28, 2011, at Resthaven Memorial Park, with Rev. Bob Porterfield, pastor at West Kentucky Street Baptist Church, officiating.

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

Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory (432) 550-5800

Maurine Johnson Phillips

Maurine Johnson Phillips was born May 7, 1921 in Sedalia, Missouri the daughter of Clifford and Maurine Johnson. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jim Phillips, and their son, Tim Phillips. Maurine spent her childhood in Sedalia and later moved to Dallas, Texas where she graduated from Highland Park High School. She attended Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas and was a Cheerleader and a member of A Di Pi sorority. Then moved back to Dallas where she met and married Jim. His work for Gulf Oil Company moved the family to many cities; Crane, Houston, Odessa, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Beaumont and finally Midland where she lived until 2009. Maurine moved to Austin to live with her devoted daughter, Liz, and husband John and their children Jordan and Will.

Maurine was a devoted Christian, wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, aunt and friend. Her next love was golf, and she spent many years playing with her friends at Ranchland Hills. She also bowled in a league, played bridge regularly and volunteered for several organizations including her church, Summer Mummers and Meals on Wheels.

Maurine passed away peacefully Friday December 23, 2011 with her daughters by her side.

She leaves behind daughter Diane Whittenburg and her husband Jo Ben, daughter Liz Weinert and her husband John, and daughter-in-law Becky Phillips; grandchildren Jenny Karlstrom, Alison Williams, Chris McGauley, Matt Phillips, Betsy Pollock and Jordan and Will Weinert. As well as great grandchildren Signe, Helena and Lars Karlstrom, Lauren and Matthew McGauley, Amelia Williams, and Maddison and Griffin Duewall.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the physicians, nurses and staff of Austin Hospice at The Christopher House.

Graveside services will be held Thursday December 29, 2011, at 11:00 A.M. at Resthaven Memorial Park, Midland, Texas. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to: Alzheimer's Association, P.O. box 96011, Washington, D.C. 20090-6011 or Hospice Austin, 4107 Spicewood Springs Road Suite 100, Austin, TX 78759. Condolences may be made at www.ellisfunerals.com

Ellis Funeral Home
Funerals & Cremations
Dignity 801 Andrews Hwy. (432) 683-3335

T.J. Chriesman

T.J. Chriesman, beloved Father and Grandfather was born in Caldwell, Texas on November 28, 1924 to Lorenzo and Annie Chriesman.

T.J. served in the United States Army, and afterward met and married the love of his life, Ollie Mae Nelson, on September 6, 1947. He and his family moved to Midland in 1951 where he became employed with Sunset Motor Lines, that company eventually evolved into ABF Freight Systems. T.J. worked with this Company for 39 years.

He joined Greater Ideal Baptist Church under the pastorship of Dr. I.M. Woodard. T.J. was blessed with a beautiful voice, he loved to sing and was a member of the True Lite Gospel Singers and the Spiritual Wonders. He traveled with these quartet groups through out the years, spreading the message of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A family visitation was held on Monday December 26, 2011 from 6-8 PM, at Thomas Funeral Home and Chapel.

Services will be held at Greater Ideal Baptist Church today December 27, 2011 at 1:00 PM with Dr. George A. Bell officiating.

Interment will follow at Serenity Memorial Gardens under the direction of Thomas Funeral Home.

T.J. departed this life on December 19, 2011. He was preceded in death by his son, J.L.Chriesmon and his grandson Michael Torrence Chriesmon.

He leaves to cherish his memory, his wife of 64 years, Ollie Mae, two sons: Maurice (Georgette) Chriesmon of Pearland, Tx. and L.J. (Virginia) Chriesmon of Midland, Tx., two daughters: Anita Chriesmon of Midland, and Patricia Ann (Dennis) Goodley also of Midland. Nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends. Our beloved T.J. will be forever remembered by all his family and friends.

Thomas Funeral Home
Funerals & Cremations
1502 N. Lamesa Rd.
(432) 683-5597

Alexander John Manulik

Alexander John Manulik, 87, passed away on Saturday, December 3, 2011, with loving family by his side. The son of Russian immigrants, Alex was born February 19, 1924 and was raised in West Haven, Connecticut. After serving in the Navy's Pacific Theater during World War II, Alex attended Cornell University and the University of Michigan, obtaining a Master's Degree in Geology from UM. Alex and his young bride, Laura, were longtime residents of Midland, arriving here in 1950. They grew to love Midland and West Texas and made it their home. Alex's first job in the oil industry was with Continental Oil, followed by a position with Monterey Oil. When Monterey was acquired by Humble Oil & Refining, Alex continued his career with Humble for several years, ultimately becoming District Geologist with Humble. When Alex was offered a position in Humble's New Orleans Division in 1966, he chose Midland and launched his own firm as an independent exploration geologist. Alex lived large and loved the simple things in life, a good meal, a golf or gin rummy game with his pals at Ranchland Hills, a good history book on WWII, the Wolverines and vacations to the California beaches with his bride and family.

Alex was preceded in death by his beloved Laura in February of 2009 and is survived by his children, Martha (Charles) Lockridge of Arlington, Texas, Mark (Bette) Manulik of Portland, Oregon, Matt (Martha) Manulik of Midland, and Mike (Janet) Manulik of Austin, Texas, nine grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 4:00 pm at St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, 4000 W. Loop 250, Midland, Texas, on Wednesday, December 28, 2011 with a reception following the service.

In lieu of flowers, you are welcome to make a donation to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in honor of our father: SPCA, 2701 S County Road 1206, Midland, Texas 79706. Arrangements are under the direction of Ellis Funeral Home of Midland. Condolences may be made at: www.ellisfunerals.com.

Ellis Funeral Home
Funerals & Cremations
Dignity 801 Andrews Hwy. (432) 683-3335

Patricia Jean "Patsy" Watlington

Patricia Jean "Patsy" Watlington was born August 18th, 1946 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Wilema Jean Garlow and John Price Baker. She passed from this life on December 22nd, 2011 in Midland, Texas. A long-time Midland Resident, Patsy managed the Garden Village Apartment complex before her death. Her life took her many interesting places. She lived in Oklahoma, New Mexico, Alaska and Texas. She leaves many friends in all those places, as she never met a stranger. She was an interesting lady, with her own opinions and a heart the size of Texas. If her innumerable friends, adopted children and relatives doubted her advice, they usually determined in time that she was right, but she never rubbed it in too deeply. She was a kind, caring, and loving person who was always the first to lend a hand and the last to leave in a time of need. She was one of the most giving people that you could ever know. She was a registered organ donor, wishing to help others even in death.

She is survived by those she helped, and by her loving friends and family, her mother Wilema Jean Garlow of Midland, her stepmother Betty Baker of Florida, her brother & sister-in-law Dale & Kathy Garlow of California; her sister and brother-in-law Ellen & Clay White of McKinney, her son and daughter-in-law Ronald & Tonya Dickman of Eldorado, Oklahoma, her daughter and son-in-law Tammra & Zane Bergman of Hobbs, New Mexico, eight grandsons, Ronnie, Ryan, Dustin, Austin & Jeremiah Dickman and Zachry, Skyler & Camren Bergman, a great granddaughter Makayla Dickman and a great grandson Jacobe Dickman, her niece and spouse Kim & Erik Hewett, nephews Lance & Brent Garlow and great nephew Grayson Alvarado, and her adopted brother and sister Mike and Vi Lea Borland their daughters Misty, Crystal and Vilesyha, along with best friends forever Pam Saunders, Patty Chambers, Willie Wheat and Gwen Dale, all of Midland.

She was preceded in death by her biological father John Price Baker and adoptive father Robert Garlow.

Pallbearers will be her eight grandsons. Honorary pallbearers will be Zane Bergman, Clay White, Mike Borland, Ken Corder, Erik Hewett, Steve Wheat, Devin Phiffer, Fore Brown and Derek Saunders.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be directed to Hospice of Midland or the United Way.

The family will receive visitors on Tuesday, December 27th, 2011 from 6 to 8 pm at the funeral home. Services will be on Wednesday, December 28th at 3:00 p.m. in the chapel at Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home 3800 N. Big Spring St. in Midland.

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

Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory (432) 550-5800

Texas Lucille Cooke Barnes

Texas Lucille Cooke Barnes, 86, of Midland, passed away on Friday, December 23, 2011. She was the last child of John Cooke and Lillie Patrick Cooke. Lucille was born on July 1, 1925 in Fort Stockton, Texas. She married the love of her life, David E. Barnes Jr. in April 1945 and moved to Midland. A very hardworking woman, Lucille retired from Walgreens after more than 30 years of service. She was a faithful, longtime member of Crestview Baptist Church. Lucille had a green thumb and loved to work in her yard and also loved sewing.

Lucille is preceded in death by her beloved husband; both parents; one son, Freddy Barnes; and one daughter, Rebecca Barnes.

She is survived by her sons, David Barnes and Pat Barnes; her daughter, Barbara Beadle; six grandchildren, several great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Also left to cherish her memory are numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, December 27, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Ellis Funeral Home. A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, December 28, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at Ellis Funeral Home with interment to follow at Resthaven Memorial Park. Arrangements are under the direction of Ellis Funeral Home of Midland. Condolences may be made at: www.ellisfunerals.com.

Ellis Funeral Home
Funerals & Cremations
Dignity 801 Andrews Hwy. (432) 683-3335

Death Notices

Beverly Hermanson

Beverly Hermanson, 76, of Midland, died on December 24, 2011, at her home surrounded by family, friends and loved ones. Services are pending with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Midland.

Lawrence L. Smith

Lawrence L. Smith, 79, of Andrews, passed away Sunday, December 25, 2011 at his home in Andrews.

Mr. Smith was born April 22, 1932 in Channing, Texas in the Texas Panhandle, to Lawrence and Minnie Smith.

He served in the US Navy from 1951 until 1955.

He married Mittie Blackwell May 11, 1957 in Dalhart, Texas. They lived the cowboy life and worked together on ranches from Texas to California and everywhere in between.

They moved to Andrews in 1971 and remained there ever since.

He is survived by his wife Mittie Smith of Andrews.

Oliver Cofer Jr.,

Oliver Cofer Jr., 87, died Friday, December 23, 2011 in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Graveside services will be held at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring on Wednesday, December 28, 2011 at 1:00 P.M.

Survivors: wife, Bonnie Marie Burleson; children, Vicki and husband, Wade Trostle of North Richland Hills, Texas and Steve Cofer and wife, Dana of Hurst; and two grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Salvation Army or the American Heart Association.

Arrangements by Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. www.npwelch.com.

Teresa de Jesus Martinez

Teresa de Jesus Martinez, 53 of Midland, died Saturday, December 24, 2011.

Prayer Service Tuesday, December 27th at 7:00 pm at Lewallen-Garcia-Pipkin Funeral Home and Chapel. Funeral service Wednesday, December 28th at 2:00 pm at Emmanuel Baptist Church. Interment at Serenity Memorial Gardens.

Survivors: sons Ricardo Martinez, Sammy Martinez III both of Midland, daughter Veronica M. Benavides of Midland, three brothers; five sisters; four grandchildren; numerous uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and cousins.

Arrangements by Lewallen-Garcia-Pipkin Funeral Home, pipkin@nts-online.net.

Willie Saddler

Saddler, 93, of Midland, died on December 23, 2011, in a local hospital.

Funeral services 2:00 PM, Friday, December 30, 2011, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Chapel. Interment at Resthaven North.

Survivors: wife Rosie Saddler, children Linda Saddler, Annie Saddler, Willie Londell Saddler (Vickie), James Saddler, Raymond Saddler, Willie Jr Saddler (Joyce), Patricia Luke (Mickey) and Helen Swearnger (Mike); sisters: Roetta Eaton, Beverly Jones, and Mary Alice Dyers; brothers: Arthur Lee Sams, John Sams, and Harry Sams; 30 grandchildren, 50 great-grandchildren, 13 great-great grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and extended family.

Arrangements directed by Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Midland, www.npwelch.com

To Submit Obituaries:
Contact
Direct: 432-682-6222
Fax: 432-682-6999
Email: obits@mrt.com
Midland Reporter-Telegram

Supreme Court gay privacy case victor dead at 68

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Texan whose gay privacy case led to a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling that granted privacy rights to gay men and lesbians has died at the age of 68.

John G. Lawrence died in Houston Nov. 20, according to Sarah Wilson of R.S. Farmer Funeral Home in Silsbee, Texas. His partner, Jose Garcia, said Lawrence died of a heart condition.

Mitchell Katine, a Houston attorney who represented Lawrence in the case Lawrence vs. Texas, said he learned of his client's death Saturday while inviting him to an April celebration of the ruling.

Lawrence and Tyrone Garner were arrested in 1998 at Lawrence's home near Houston by sheriff's deputies who found them having sex. The 2003 Supreme Court ruling struck down the Texas state law that made sodomy a crime.

AP Photo

In this July 2, 1964, photo, President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Standing from left, are Sen. Everett Dirksen, R-Ill.; Rep. Clarence Brown, R-Ohio; Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn.; Rep. Charles Halleck, R-Ind.; Rep. William McCulloch, R-Ohio; and Rep. Emanuel Celler, D-N.Y. A $10-million redesign of the LBJ Library and Museum announced is intended to give visitors a better understanding of the landmark reforms Johnson propelled through Congress and is being done even as many of his initiatives are under attack by conservatives.

LBJ Library redesign to focus on policy legacy

By April Castro
Associated Press

AUSTIN — The keepers of President Lyndon B. Johnson's legacy have embarked on an ambitious project to elevate awareness of the Texas Democrat's accomplishments in his quest for civil and social justice.

A $10-million redesign of the LBJ Library and Museum announced earlier this month is intended to give visitors a better understanding of the landmark reforms Johnson propelled through Congress and is being done even as many of his initiatives are under attack by conservatives.

A new exhibit will feature interactive segments on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which gave blacks and other minorities unprecedented access to the electoral process and some say paved the way for the election of the nation's first black president.

A computer simulation will give visitors a chance to fill in for Johnson and make decisions about the escalation of the Vietnam War. They'll get to listen to his phone conversations with Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy and others. The renovation also will give more room to exhibits on the 1965 Medicare law that provides health care to senior citizens and Johnson's contributions to manned space exploration.

"That sweeping spate of legislation that was passed during his administration continues to resound in a way today that the legislation of no other president in my lifetime and yours does," said library Director Mark Updegrove, 50. "We want people to see the difference this man made to their lives, why it's important to know about this president who reigned in the White House almost half a century ago."

But as the library devotes more space to the programs, some are looking to cut them back in real life. The renovation is due to be finished next December, weeks after a presidential election that will likely hinge in part on voters' feelings about big government.

The Voting Rights Act, Medicare and federal funding for education and public broadcasting — some of the hallmarks of Johnson's administration — are being increasingly challenged by conservatives.

"Johnson is often a punching bag," said Guian McKee, a historian at the Miller Center, a think tank focused on presidential and policy history at the University of Virginia. "He becomes a symbol of big government. But if you look at the reforms he created and implemented, they're actually quite popular and remain quite popular and a major component of what the United States government today does. Yes, they attract attacks but many ... I think are firmly established."

Lawmakers have so far this year avoided a threatened slash of payments to doctors who treat Medicare patients. But Republican presidential candidates are making promises to limit benefits and encourage retirees to seek private insurance coverage instead of depending on the government service.

Medicare was part of Johnson's "War on Poverty," a series of programs that critics say is the "creation of the modern welfare state."

"I have to say that the legacy of that is a $15 trillion national debt that's at the root of the fiscal problems the United States faces today," said David Boaz, executive vice president of the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute. "We have promised far more than we can afford to pay to tens of millions of Americans, and Lyndon Johnson played an important role in putting us into that situation."

As the budget debate wages in the nation's capital, another attack on Johnson's efforts is taking shape in courtrooms. A keystone of his Voting Rights Act — a requirement that states with histories of racial discrimination get federal clearance before changing election practices — is being challenged as unconstitutional in at least five different lawsuits, each claiming the 46-year-old law is no longer necessary.

"I wish this were the case," U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said recently while at the LBJ Library. "The reality is that — in jurisdictions across the country — both overt and subtle forms of discrimination remain all too common."

Citing a pending case involving redistricting in Texas, Holder called the Voting Rights Act a critical tool to safeguard the right to vote for all Americans.

Meanwhile, federal funding for public broadcasting — legislation Johnson signed in 1967 to "enrich man's spirit" — has been a prime target for cuts.

"I don't want to take the position that none of these programs are untouchable. ... There's the possibility of improvement in all of them," said Harry Middleton, Johnson's White House speechwriter from 1966-69 and director of the library for 31 years. "I wouldn't say that everything that passed in the Great Society is so pristine that it shouldn't be touched, but I don't like the tenor of what I have been hearing."

Still, Middleton believes the legacy will live on.

"He changed the way we live in this country, his policies did," Middleton said. "Of course, that cannot ever be ignored."

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TUESDAY PRIME TIME — DECEMBER 27, 2011

For Complete Information Please Check Movie Listings

						6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
KMID ABC	3	3	4	3	2	Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	The Middle	Subway-atory	Body of Proof "Lazarus Man"		KMID News	(:35) News Nightline	Jimmy Kimmel Live
KOSA CBS	7	7	7	7	7	CBS 7	Ent. Tonight	NCIS "Defiance"		Kennedy Center Recipients are recognized for their lifetime work. (N)				CBS 7 News	(:35) David Letterman	(:35) Late
KWWT CW	5	14		5	14	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	★★★ Keith (2009, Romance) Elisabeth Harnois, Tabitha Brunstrom, Jesse McCartney.			Cops	'Til Death	King of Queens	South Pk "Death"	South Park	Roseanne
KPEJ FOX	8	5	5	8	3	Two and Half Men	Two and a Half Men	Glee "Grilled Cheesus"		New Girl	Raising Hope	The Simpsons	Met Your Mother	Met Your Mother	Ray "Not So Fast"	Law & Order: C.I. "Homo Homini Lupis"
KMLM IND	11	11	12	11	11	Mark Biltz	Cardoza Moore	Update News	Rico Cortes	Light of the Southwest				Jean-Claude	NewBe-ginning	Ministerios Nueva Vida
KWES NBC	9	9	9	9	9	News-West 9	Be Millionaire	The Biggest Loser Overweight participants undergo physical changes.			Parenthood "Nora"			News-West 9	(:35) The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	(:35) LateNight
KPBT PBS	13	13		13	8	PBS NewsHour		The Botany of Desire A new analysis of humanity's relationship with plants.			Lee Stetson			Charlie Rose	BBC News	Tavis Smiley
KUPB UNI	4	4		4	16	Cuando me enamoro		Una familia con suerte		La fuerza del destino		Aquí y ahora		Noticias Tejas	Noticiero noctu.	Hasta que el dinero nos separe
KOSA MNT	16	16		16		Office	30 Rock	Case "Mindhunter"		Cold Case		My News	Earl	30 Rock	Sunny	Scrubs	Access H.
FLIX	340	65		165		(5:30) ★ Joshua		★★★ The Molly Maguires				(:35) ★★★★ Bloody Sunday				★ Street Smart
HBO	300	68	14	14		(5:00) ★ Dinner for ...		Real Sports		★ Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rod...		(:45) 1stLk		Boxing's Best		Boxing's Best
HBO2	302	69	15	101	23	(5:00) ★ The Dilemma Vince Vaugn.				Flyers/ Rangers: NHL		Thrones "Lord Snow"		Game of Thrones		★★★ The Ring
HBO5	304	70	16	102		(5:00) ★ Send It Like...		Boardwalk Empire		Boardwalk Empire		★★ The Kids Are All Right			(:50) ★ Greenberg	
MAX	380	71	17	120	24	(5:30) ★ Aambo: First Blood			★ Cedar Rapids Ed Helms.			★ Big Mommas: Like Father, ...			(:50) Confidential "Sophomores"	
MAX2	382	72	18	122		(:15) ★★ Heart and Soals				★★ Hereafter ('10, Dra) Matt Damon.			(:15) Life T		(:45) ★ Coming to America	
PLEX			96			(:20) ★★ My Brother the Pig				★★ King of the Hill					(:45) ★ Out on a Limb	(:15) ★ FIX II
SHOW	320	66	19	140	25	(5:00) ★ The Italian J...		Shame. "Daddyz Girl"		Shameless		★★ Online Colin Farrell.			(:45) ★ The Boys of 2nd Stree...	
TMC	336	67	22	155	26	(5:30) ★ Nowhere Boy		★★ Scream ('96, Hor) Neve Campbell.				★★ Scream 2 ('97, Hor) Neve Campbell.				★★ Push
A&E	27	32	28	35	47	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Storage Wars
AMC	40	21	23	42	51	(5:00) ★ Patch Adams		★★★ The Polar Express Tom Hanks.				★★★ The Polar Express Tom Hanks.				★ The Sandlot
BET	58	26		40		(5:10) BAP	★★ Baby Boy ('01, Dra) Omar Gooding, Tyrese Gibson.					★ Motives ('04, Thri) Vivica A Fox.				Wendy Williams
BRAVO	65	63		41		Salon Takeover		Salon Takeover		Salon Takeover		Salon Takeover		Salon Takeover		Salon Takeover
CNBC	46	45		39	72	The Kudlow Report		Bio. "Dave Thomas"		60 Minutes		American Greed		Mad Money		60 Minutes
CNN	43	24	51	30	56	OutFront		A. Cooper 360		Piers Morgan		A. Cooper 360		OutFront		Piers Morgan
DISC	50	20	31	24	42	Dirty Jobs		Business	Business	Dirty Jobs		Swamp Loggers		Dirty Jobs		Swamp Loggers
DISNEY	56	27	36	25	36	Jessie	Austin	Wizards	★ The Adventures of Shasha...			(:15) Wizard	(:35) Jessie	Austin	Wizards	Wizards	Wizards
ESPN	32	29	48	31	30	(5:30) NCAA Football		NCAA Football Belk Bowl Louisville vs. North Carolina State (L)							SportsCenter	
ESPN2	34	28	49	32	31	NCAA Basketball Pittsburgh vs. Notre Dame (L)				NCAA Basketball Wisconsin vs. Nebraska (L)				SportsNation		NFL Live (N)
FAMILY	53	54	34	42	33	(5:00) ★ Willy Wonka & the C...		★ Charlie and the Chocolate Factory						The 700 Club		Fresh P.	Fresh P.
FNC	45	58	53	23	55	FOX Report		The O'Reilly Factor		Hannity		On the Record		The O'Reilly Factor		Hannity
FOOD	64	59	27	68	54	Chopped		Chopped		Chopped		Chopped		Chopped		Chopped
FSSW	37	43	50	45	29	Sports Stories	Stars Insider	NCAA Basketball Cal St. - Bakersfield vs. Texas Tech (L)				WPT Poker Bay 101 Shooting Star		UFC Countdown "Lesnar vs. Overeem"		The Game 3...	Football Preview
FX	31	31	59	64	69	2¼Men	Two 1/2...	★★★★ Zombieland Woody Harrelson.				★★★★ Zombieland Woody Harrelson.				★ Alien vs. Predator
HALLMARK	54	49	58		34	(5:00) ★ The Three G...		★★★ All I Want for Christmas				★★ Debbie Macomber's Mrs. Miracle				★ The Three Gifts
HGTV	63	50	26	48	44	House	HouseH	My Place	My House	Property	Property	HouseH	House	HouseH	House	Property	Property
HISTORY	71	62	29	50	43	Modern History		Time Machine		The Epic History of Everyday Things				Hardcore History		Time Machine	
LIFETIME	28	25	25	28	48	America's Supernanny		America's Supernanny		Supernanny "The Fitzgerald Family"		One Born Every Minute		One Born Every Minute		America's Supernanny	
MSNBC	47	51		49	73	Hardball		The Ed Show		Rachel Maddow		The Last Word		The Ed Show		Rachel Maddow	
NICK	55	34	39	34	37	Sponge	Sponge	Sponge	Sponge	'70s	'70s	G. Lopez	G. Lopez	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends
SPIKE	30	22	55	53	58	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction	Auction
SYFY	66	64	41	57	67	★★ Friday the 13th Jared Padalecki.				★★★★ Halloween ('07, Hor) Malcolm McDowell.					★★ My Bloody Valentine	
TBS	25	11	44	66	41	Sein. "The Strike"	Seinf. "The Cartoon"	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan Justin "Timberlake		Office "The Fire"	The Office
TCM	41	61	24	63	66	(5:00) ★ Touch of Evil		★★★★ Close Encounters of the Third Kind				★ Earth vs. the Flying Saucers				★ The Man From ...
TELE	20	8	10	20		Caso cerrado		Maid en Manhattan		Flor salvaje		La casa de al lado		Noticiero	Sin senos	no paraiso	Decision
TLC	51	33	32	38	52	What Not to Wear "Ariel"		What Not to Wear "Wanda"		What Not to Wear "Christine"		Extreme Coupon	Extreme Coupon	What Not to Wear "Wanda"		What Not to Wear "Christine"	
TNT	24	23	40	26	50	Bones "The Boy in the Shroud"		NBA Basketball Boston Celtics vs. Miami Heat Site: American Airlines Arena -- Miami, Fla. (L)				NBA Basketball Utah Jazz vs. Los Angeles Lakers Site: Staples Center -- Los Angeles, Calif. (L)					
TVLAND	49	48	35	54	35	(:25) M*A*S*H		(:55) Home	Home I.	Loves Ray	Loves Ray	Hot In	The Exes	Queens	Queens	Queens	(:35)Queens
USA	26	30	42	27	49	(5:00) ★ Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead M...		★★★ Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End ('07, Adv) Orlando Bloom, Johnny Depp. The pirates battle Davy Jones and the East India Company.								★★ Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest
VERSUS	38	39				NHL Live!	NHL Hockey St. Louis Blues vs. Detroit Red Wings (L)					NHL Live!	NHL Overtime (L)		NBC Sports Talk	AdvSprt
WGN	19	18				America's Funniest Home Videos		Met Your Mother	Met Your Mother	Met Your Mother	Met Your Mother	WGN News at Nine		30 Rock	Scrubs	Scrubs	Always Sunny

Algebra in 7th grade may be right equation

By Ericka Mellon
Houston Chronicle

Many of us groan when we think back to high school algebra class.

Imagine taking the course as a seventh-grader — and, no, it's not a new form of punishment.

A handful of campuses in the Houston Independent School District are experimenting with placing their best math students in algebra in seventh grade — two years before most take the class.

The earlier they pass algebra, the thinking goes, the more time they have to take advanced math courses in high school that could lead to college credit.

Over the last decade, policymakers across the nation have pushed for algebra to become the standard for eighth grade, while some educators argue against the rush.

HISD's move to teach algebra to an even younger set gives the students — many from poor, minority families — a head start in the course, considered a steppingstone to college and 21st century careers.

Time will tell whether the effort produces a crop of math brainiacs who take college-level calculus and statistics in high school or burnouts who ditch the subject after earning the four credits needed to graduate.

"Certainly we don't want to push kids into something they're not ready for," said Monica Kendall, HISD's manager of secondary math. "But I would like to challenge what people think kids are ready for. A lot of people think economically disadvantaged students can't do upper-level math. My whole perspective has been, 'Let's find out what they can do.'"

Little research exists on seventh-graders taking algebra, although HISD isn't breaking entirely new ground.

The Spring Branch and Alvin school districts are among those that have been enrolling their top seventh-graders in algebra for years.

HISD starts small

In Spring Branch ISD, about 10 percent of seventh-graders and 30 percent of eighth-graders take algebra. As a general rule, all eighth-graders at the district's two schools that require applications take algebra.

Pamela Butler, a former Spring Branch principal, said some students struggled and had to repeat algebra in high school.

"There are students that are not quite ready," said Butler, now the district's executive director of secondary teaching and learning. "I would have been one of those. I'm very sensitive to that."

A 2008 study from Brookings Institution researcher Tom Loveless found that tens of thousands of eighth-graders nationwide were misplaced in algebra — setting them up for failure and frustration.

HISD has started small with five middle schools — Jackson, Pin Oak, Revere, Stevenson and Westbriar — offering seventh-grade algebra this year. About 200 students, or 2 percent of the district's seventh-graders, are enrolled.

Roughly a quarter of the district's eighth-graders are taking algebra, a big jump from 8 percent five years ago, said Kendall. Nationwide, a third of students take algebra in eighth grade, federal data show.

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LEVEL

Each set of letters below is arranged alphabetically, and the ? is in the correct alphabetical position. Figure out what letter the ? represents and rearrange the letters to spell a six-letter word. For example, in A?ENTV the ? could bean A, B, C, D or E. Here it represents a D, which can be combined with the other letters to spell ADVENT. The first letter is placed to get you started.

A M O O T ?
T _ _ _ _ _

A C E F T ?
F _ _ _ _ _

A L ? S U W
W _ _ _ _ _

B D E H I ?
B _ _ _ _ _

? E L O T Z
Z _ _ _ _ _

A H M R ? W
W _ _ _ _ _

Yesterday's Answer: PLAGUE, ENERGY, VOYAGE, TWELVE

12.27

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Gas industry looks to generate alternative to coal

By Simone Sebastian
Houston Chronicle

The natural gas drilling rush that promises to supply a century of the nation's energy needs with domestic fuel is lacking one critical element: Demand.

Technology that allows drillers to access densely buried fossil fuels has launched a drilling frenzy in shale rock regions, pushing the supply of natural gas to a record high and its prices to cavernous lows. But heat-efficient buildings and a mild autumn up North have curbed consumers' desire for the fuel.

"There's a lot of gas in the marketplace now, but not a lot of places for it to go," said Bruce McDowell, director of policy analysis for the American Gas Association.

Increasingly, industry watchers say, the most promising cure for the glut isn't natural gas-powered vehicles or manufacturing. It's in the declining popularity of coal, the country's dominant power plant fuel.

The federal push to limit emissions has utilities searching for cost-effective alternatives to traditional coal plants.

"We've got to find a way to increase uses for natural gas," McDowell said. "Power generation is the obvious choice."

Low prices

Since 2008, the price of natural gas has fallen from a high of $13 per million British thermal units to $3.11 at the close of trading Friday. Natural gas companies count on December chills to drive up demand and prices, as Northeasterners pump their thermostats.

But this year, the cold-weather season launched with a record-high supply of natural gas in the market, while heating needs so far have remained low, said Alan Lammey, senior energy markets analyst for WeatherBell Analytics. It was a warmer-than-normal November for Northeastern states.

"You don't usually see prices as low as they are now because this is peak time," Lammey said. "The oil and gas industry, they know they have overproduced (natural gas) and put themselves into a corner price-wise."

The circumstances aren't isolated. The U.S. has been cooling on natural gas heating for years, as offices and homes become more energy efficient.

Home consumption of natural gas has remained flat since 1970, though the national population has grown 50 percent.

With no signs of relief from low demand and prices, the natural gas rush is starting to look like an exodus.

The number of drilling rigs operating in North American gas fields has fallen 14 percent in the past year, dropping to 802, according to Baker Hughes, which tracks rig counts.

Signs of a turnaround

But there are signs that gas is on the cusp of a heyday.

Political pressure is pushing electricity generators to divorce themselves from the environmental burdens of coal and consider cleaner-burning natural gas as an alternative.

From 2005 to 2010, coal fell from 50 percent to 45 percent of the fuel used to generate power in the United States, according to the federal Energy Information Administration. Natural gas grew from 20 percent to 24 percent during that time.

Shale production has made gas plentiful. "And plentiful means cheap," said Poe Reed, chief commercial officer of CenterPoint Energy Pipelines, which transports natural gas. "It is pricing out coal in a lot of electric markets."

Several recent energy forecasts have projected that natural gas will surpass coal as the nation's primary source of power generation within three decades.

Projections by consulting firm Black & Veatch show that in 2036, coal will fuel just 16 percent of the nation's power generation while gas will rise to 44 percent.

New regulations

"The biggest interest now is in the great amount of environmental regulation that is being finalized this year and the effect it will have on the retirement of coal plants," said Robert Patrylak, managing director of Black & Veatch Energy Market Perspectives.

The Environmental Protection Agency last week announced rules that more tightly limit the amount of mercury and other toxic emissions from power plants. The rules could lead to the more rapid retirement of coal plants, where the environmental standards could be too difficult or costly to meet.

"How is that void going to be filled?" Patrylak said. "From everything that I've seen, the power industry is what people see as the largest driver of natural gas demand growth."

Power generator NRG Energy chose natural gas for its three newest fossil fuel-based plants, including one in Baytown, said John Ragan, president of the company's Gulf Coast region. In fact, natural gas already is the corporation's largest power generation source, making up 46 percent of its capacity. Coal makes up 30 percent.

Ragan said it's harder to get permits for coal plants because of their more complex mix of emissions.

He said the company has made heavy investment in its coal plants recently to ensure they meet new EPA regulations on emissions. And NRG is trying new technologies to reduce the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

"If we can do that, then coal can potentially continue to be very useful," he said. But, "Natural gas is probably a very good alternative right now."

For natural gas producers, hopes are growing that it will be a good alternative well into the future. A demand boom from the power industry could be the shot needed to revive depressed prices and return drillers to gas fields.

"Production will come off at about the same time as new demand is coming online. That's real potential for natural gas prices to move pretty rapidly," said Lammey, the energy analyst. "We're going to see the perfect storm."

Keith Srakocic/AP

In this July 27 photo, Range Resources site manager Don Robinson stands near the well head by the drill that goes into the shale at a well site in Washington, Pa. The company is one of many drilling in the area to release natural gas.

Police task force focuses on Mexican Mafia gang

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Four men are awaiting trial on murder charges and more than a dozen others have been sent to prison with federal drug convictions in what court documents show is a result of a crackdown by federal, state and local authorities on a gang born in Texas prisons.

FBI Special Agent Stephen Hause told the Austin American-Statesman in a story published Monday that two FBI agents and 17 state and local officers comprise a task force that for two years has been investigating the Mexican Mafia. It's one of the law enforcement group's biggest cases in recent years.

"If you let a group like (the Texas Mexican Mafia) grow and prosper, it's just a matter of time before the violence increases," Hause told the newspaper. "In San Antonio, the Mexican Mafia is strong, and they control neighborhoods. ... There have been a lot of gang-related murders. ... We just hope not to let that happen here."

A federal affidavit shows investigators using taps on gang members' phones caught a break in September 2010 when a conversation revealed plans to move a murder victim's body. The information was passed to authorities in the Austin area who pulled over a pickup truck driven by two suspected gang members.

In the bed of the truck was the body of 35-year-old Walter Capello, of Lockhart. He'd been stabbed 63 times. Authorities believe Capello was killed because gang members believed someone close to him had been working with police.

Four men have been charged with his slaying.

"You are talking about people with skills in the drug trade, who are willing to do violence, acting as one unit," Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Cottingham said. "You want to keep them from getting out of control."

A 63-page affidavit with some details of the investigation was unsealed earlier this month after a federal judge sentenced 16 suspected gang members to prison. Nine of them have received sentences of at least 20 years.

Hause said it's not clear whether the gang's influence will continue to grow. Its ranks on the outside world are dependent on the release of members from Texas prisons, where the gang was formed in the 1980s to provide protection to those who join. Once outside, they deal in drugs, contract killings, prostitution, robbery, gambling and weapons. Its president, Heriberto Huerta, is serving life at a federal prison in Colorado but investigators believe he's still able to give orders.

Authorities say the gang is bankrolled by a tax, known on the street as "the Dime," which it imposes on drug dealers not affiliated with the gang.

Read Terry Williamson Sundays in the Reporter-Telegram

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New Year's

The Midland Reporter-Telegram will be closed Monday, January 2, 2012

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Publishing On:	Deadline is:
Classified Word Ads	
Fri., Dec. 30th	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Fri., Dec. 30th, 12 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Fri., Dec. 30th, 3 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Fri., Dec. 30th, 5 PM
Classified Display Ads	
Fri., Dec. 30th	Wed., Dec. 28th, 3 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Wed., Dec. 28th, 5 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 12 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM
Retail Display Ads	
Fri., Dec. 30th	Wed., Dec. 28th, 5 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 12 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st (OU Report/Lifestyles/Arts & Entertainment)	Tues., Dec. 27th, 5 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM

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We will re-open Tuesday, January 3rd for regular business hours.

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TODAY Sunny high 53 low 28

WEDNESDAY Sunny high 55 low 27

THURSDAY Sunny high 61 low 32

LOCAL FORECAST

Expect sunny skies today with a high around 53 and north winds between 5 and 10 mph. Tonight's forecast calls for mostly clear conditions with a low around 28 and south winds between 5 and 10 mph.

Wednesday, look for sunny skies with a high around 55, a low around 27 and northwest winds between 5 and 10 mph.

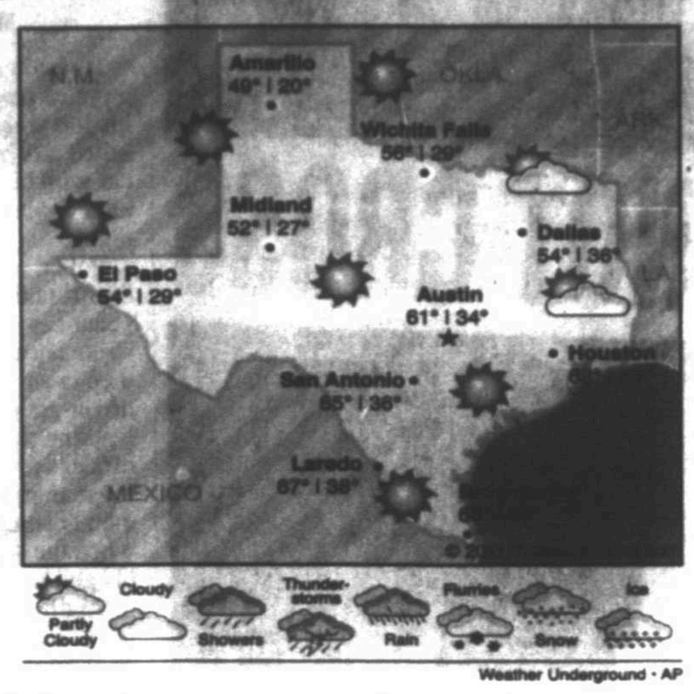
Thursday, look for sunny skies with a high around 61 and a low around 32.

The high on Monday reached 49 while the low dropped to 29. The record high for Dec. 26 is 78 set in 2008. The record low is 11 set in 1939.

***

A soaking rain will fall across the mid-Atlantic and Southeast as low pressure moves up the Appalachians today. Thunderstorms also will sweep eastern Virginia to South Carolina and across the Florida peninsula. Some storms will be strong to severe, especially across coastal sections of the Southeast.

Farther west, as cold front pushes into the Ohio Valley and interior Northeast, rain will mix with then change to snow. It will turn much colder behind the front late Tuesday and Tuesday night. Snow showers and squalls will fly across the Great Lakes.



Precipitation

Sunday	trace
Monday	0.00 in.
Total for month	1.63 in.
Total for year	5.49 in.
Normal total (year to date)	14.51 in.

Monday's temperatures

High	49
Low	29
Normal high	57
Normal low	30
Sunrise	7:48 a.m.
Sunset	5:52 p.m.

Family of sex offender urged to act cautiously on holidays

DEAR ABBY

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Her column is distributed by Universal Press Syndicate.

DEAR ABBY: As a clinical psychologist, I believe your advice to "Protective Mom in the Midwest" (Oct. 26) was oversimplified. You told her she was right in not permitting her husband's brother, a registered sex offender, to visit the family during the holidays. She didn't want her 10-year-old daughter around him.

You have made the common mistake of seeing everyone who carries the "registered sex offender" label as alike. They are no more alike than are people who drink too much. Some alcoholics get drunk, angry and violent, but most do not. Some sex offenders act like Ted Bundy, but most do not. Some are guilty only of having a younger girlfriend.

Many do not directly injure anyone because they only download illegal sexual images. Some do not use force, threats or physical violence. I do not minimize what they do. They all have a mental illness and/or addiction and need intervention and treatment.

Mom and her husband should talk to the brother about what he did and what kind of rehabilitation has occurred. They can then make a better decision about a visit and what safety measures might be appropriate. — DR. WILLIAM S. IN MIAMI

DEAR DR. S.: Your point about lumping all sex offenders together is well-stated. Another reader pointed out that something like urinating outdoors could result in this classification. However, most readers agree with me that the safety of the 10-year-old must be the primary concern. Their comments:

DEAR ABBY: Stand your ground, "Protective Mom"! As a victim of abuse, I can tell you the abuser is sick. She should not leave it up to her daughter to find out if the uncle could still be a predator.

My stepfather's abuse 30 years ago was never reported to the police. He supposedly got "counseling" and was "a changed man." Well, he's currently serving prison time for having molested his granddaughter a year and a half ago. — KNOWS THE SCORE IN ANAHEIM, CALIF.

DEAR ABBY: If Mom allows Jake in the house, local child protective authorities will consider it failure to protect the child, putting the girl at risk of being removed from the home. I am a former child protective worker who went to homes to inform parents of this. I also had to keep my own daughter away from my former in-laws because they allowed a sex offender to visit while she was there. It was difficult being the only one willing to stand up for her safety, but I will never regret knowing I did everything I could to keep my daughter safe. — ANOTHER PROTECTIVE MOM IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR ABBY: All children should be educated as early as they can understand about issues of trust. Mom will have to watch her daughter every second Jake is around, but she shouldn't deny her husband the right to have his family come for the holidays. Perhaps he could arrange for his brother to stay at a hotel. Mom can't be with her child 24/7, so kids need to know how to handle adults who are dangerous. — GLORIA IN CLEVELAND

DEAR ABBY: I am a sex offender and have learned through therapy why I did what I did and how to not go around where "it" may happen again. Would Jake even accept an offer to stay over? If he's like me, he'd say, "Thanks, but no thanks," and not put himself in a situation where someone could cry rape or accuse him of unwanted fondling. — MOVING ON

DEAR ABBY: We have a registered sex offender living in our neighborhood. Despite the fact that I have young children, I am not concerned that he presents a threat. When he was 19, he had sex with a 17-year-old girl. He was tried and served his time, but he now gets to spend the rest of his life on "the list." Without knowing the particulars of the crime, it seems rash to sentence Uncle Jake to family purgatory. —ANDY IN LOUISIANA

GOREN BRIDGE

With Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Caught in the red

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ 7 5 3 2
♥ 8 7
♦ A J 4
♣ J 9 6 3

WEST
♠ Q J 10 8 4
♥ 6 5 3
♦ K 7 6
♣ 7 2

EAST
♠ K
♥ A K Q 10 9 4 2
♦ 8 5 3 2
♣ 4

SOUTH
♠ A 9 6
♥ J
♦ Q 10 9
♣ A K Q 10 8 5

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	4♦	5♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

Prospects for five clubs were not bright when dummy appeared. However, declarer uncovered a lie of the cards that would permit the contract to steal home and made no mistake in technique.

With partner a passed hand and West an unknown quantity, South's five-club overcall was not without considerable risk. Nevertheless, it was reasonably clear that North would not be able to reopen, so South decided that discretion was certainly not the better part of valor in this case.

West led the queen of spades in an attempt to develop tricks for the defense in some suit other than hearts, since it was reasonably clear that one heart trick was all declarer was likely to lose. When dummy hit the table, declarer was faced with the possibility of losing two spades and a heart, besides needing a winning diamond finesse.

The king of spades from East offered some hope. Declarer took the ace, drew trumps in two rounds with the top clubs and then ran the queen of diamonds. When that held, the diamond finesse was repeated and the ace was cashed to clear the suit from both dummy and the closed hand.

Now declarer led the seven of hearts. Down to nothing but red cards, East could do no better than win and continue with a heart higher than dummy's eight. Instead of ruffing, declarer discarded one of his remaining spades. No matter whether East continued with a diamond or a heart, he would be conceding a ruff-sluff. Declarer discarded a spade while ruffing on the table. South claimed the rest, having lost only two heart tricks!

Today's Crossword Puzzle brought to you by Quiroz Custom Home Builders

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have: 5-dynamic; 4-positive; 3-average; 2-so-so; 1-difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011:

This year you tend to be slightly more bohemian and intuitive about certain decisions. You easily could make an investment that to others might look fraught with risks. Truth be told, you have done your homework. Your mind always seems to be thinking, rethinking and analyzing. Consider a yoga class or some other relaxing pastime. If you are single, your antenna is up. Trust your intuition. You will learn much more about a person in the first few encounters than you think. If you are attached, share some of your inner chatter with your sweetie. Perhaps he or she knows how to distract you! AQUARIUS pushes the envelope.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ★★★★ Gossip and information swirl around you. Knowing what to believe and what to discard will take more than talent. Recognize the importance of getting feedback from associates. You want and need to know what is fact and what is gossip. Tonight: Where your friends are.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★ You want to stay on top of your game. How you deal with another person and what occurs at this time could make a big difference. Your sense of humor emerges when having an important conversation. Get all the necessary facts from an associate. Tonight: Know that you will make the right choice.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ Bridge a problem by detaching and understanding what set it in motion. You might feel that someone doesn't care. Be direct when dealing with others, but do whatever you need to do in order not to get into a convoluted situation. Tonight: Let your imagination wander.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★ Deal directly with a partner who can be cantankerous. You'll finally have a conversation that helps clarify what is happening. Open up a conversation involving a work-related matter. Many different ideas come up. Tonight: Continue a talk over dinner.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ You find others to be unusually responsive and touchy. Use the moment to have an important meeting. Allow an associate to have equal say. This person's feedback triggers ideas. If you are single, an encounter might be light yet worthwhile. Tonight: Say "yes."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★ You have so much ground to cover, you could be startled by feedback from someone close. Your mind is everywhere but on your domestic life. You are right to complete one project before moving on to another. Still, make room for a pending personal talk. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise and center yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★★ Keep asking questions, making calls and reaching out for someone you care about. You could discover that a child or loved one wants to share more of his or her feelings. You hold up your hand, trying to slow down this person's pace. Verbalize and set a better time in the next 24 hours. Tonight: Opt for fun.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★ Listen to forthcoming news. You might feel a little odd, as you don't have the control you desire. Involvement in a personal or domestic issue circles around finances. Focusing on other matters could be close to impossible. Tonight: Your treat.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★★★★ You will communicate what you think to an audience — just be sure it is the right audience. You have kept so much pent up that now you are the opposite — an ongoing verbal waterfall. You'll gain balance by tapping into your excellent listening skills. Tonight: Meet friends at a favorite haunt.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★ Use care when dealing with your finances. Any pressure you might feel could be self-inflicted through a judgment you are making. Test out some of your judgments to see if they are grounded. Your instincts guide you with a risk. Tonight: Enjoy the moment.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ Apply yourself to the issue at hand, and you'll come out ahead. Your focus and ability to handle feedback mark your success. A group gets together to celebrate recent events, a long-wished-for success and the impending advent of 2012. Tonight: Any excuse to be with your friends seems to work.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★ Kick back as soon as you can. A conversation with someone in charge could be important. You cannot get around the issues involved. You might choose to listen more than talk. Others follow your thinking more than you realize. Tonight: Take a much-needed timeout.

***

BORN TODAY

Actress Marlene Dietrich (1901), actor Gerard Depardieu (1948), actor John Amos (1939)

DAILY CROSSWORD

Edited By Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

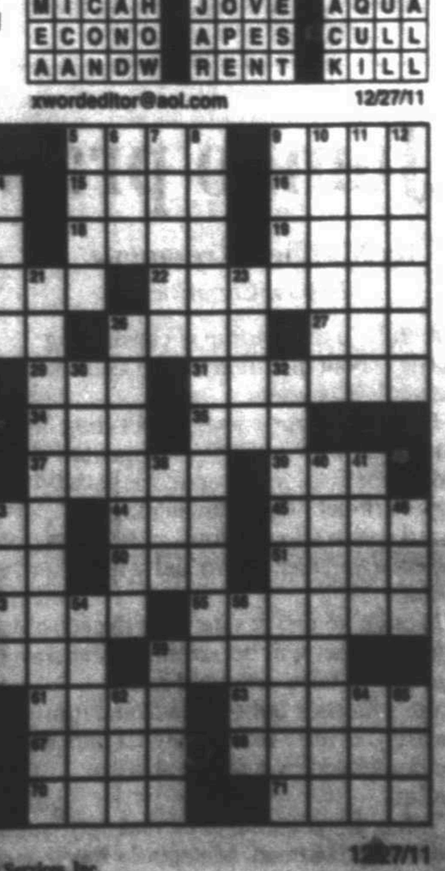
ACROSS
1 Prayer ender
5 Plant used as flavoring
9 Galaxy downloads
13 Underworld figure
15 Jai __
16 Hilarious thing
17 All the world, to Shakespeare
18 Building extension
19 Wild about
20 Farm peeper
22 Unintended radio broadcast silence
24 Merciless
26 Squeal like a stoolie
27 Little piggy
28 Authentic
29 "A mouse!"
31 Castro's smokes
33 Against
34 Etiquette guru Vanderbilt
35 "2001" computer
36 B.S., e.g.
37 Christina of "The Addams Family"
39 Salt Lake City collegian
42 Guys
44 2011 Huffington Post acquirer
45 "It follows that !"
47 Prayer incantation
50 Swingers' go.?
51 Sound of relief
52 Commotion
53 Fail to hit
55 High-tech business
57 Kook
59 Get hitched
60 "Ahe!"
61 Tiny bit
63 Insurance spokeslizard
66 Jazz great Getz
67 Polish target
68 Greek or Caesar follower
69 Rattled (on)
70 Tiny biter
71 Data entry aids

DOWN
1 Commercials
2 Congregated
3 Remove from, as a storm-threatened area
4 Bogeyman deterrent, so it's said
5 Warmonger
6 Inventor Whitney
7 "Amazing" magician
8 Organization leader, in slang
9 Lacking water
10 Whacked gift holder
11 "Love" concoction
12 Puts away for later
14 "I'd just as soon kiss a Wookiee" speaker
21 Unobstructed progress
23 Liquid in un lago
24 "Push-up" garment
25 Rip apart
26 Airport handlers, and in a way, what the first words of 4-, 8-, 21- and 32-Down are
30 U.K. record label
32 Chatterbox's output
38 Gear part
40 Tot's wheels
41 Fought-over food in old 1-Down
43 Author Bombeck
46 Resistance measurement
47 Follower of a Chinese "Chairman"
48 Builds a deck for, say
49 Negotiator's turndown
54 Longtime Utah Jazz coach Jerry
56 FDA and NFL e.g.
58 Give a little
59 Beer base
62 Carrere of "Wayne's World"
64 Mary __ cosmetics
65 Pigs out (on), briefly

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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

xwordeditor@aol.com 12/27/11



By Jeff Chen
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Mike Fuentes/AP

Two young girls walk by police tape that stretches through a Grapevine apartment complex where police found seven people dead in an apartment Sunday in Grapevine. Four women and three men who police believe to be related were found apparently shot to death, and authorities said they believe the shooter is among the dead.

Neighbors horrified at news of family's slayings in Grapevine

By Gloria Salinas, Scott Goldstein and Steve Thompson
The Dallas Morning News

GRAPEVINE — Friends and former neighbors were reeling a day after news broke that a gunman dressed as Santa Claus had killed six family members in a Grapevine apartment before killing himself.

Although the names of those who died had not been released Monday afternoon, news of their identities had begun to spread among those who knew the family well.

Carrie Stewart, 55, held back tears as she gazed at the empty house across the street from the doorstep of her Colleyville home where the family had lived.

"He was very friendly, a very good neighbor," Stewart said as tears rolled down her cheeks. "He was out here often doing yard work and he even watched our house for us when we went to Colorado."

Stewart's husband, Fred Ditmars, 55, said the father, whom police believe was the gunman, was "not a bad man."

"I'm stunned to think he would do something like that to his family," Ditmars said. "I've always felt that he would protect his family with whatever means necessary, but I never could imagine that he could do this to his family if that's what we're saying here."

Neighbors said they had seen him within the last week. Stewart said the family had put up Christmas lights for the last few years and she thought it was odd that there were no lights or decorations this Christmas.

"He had a couple of big yard sales this summer and I noticed the Christmas decorations were in the sale," Stewart said.

Officers were responding to a 911 call in the 2500 block of Hall Johnson Road about 11 a.m. Christmas when they discovered the seven who had died, apparently soon after the family had opened presents.

The call had come from the apartment near State Highways 121 and 360, but no one was on the line when the 911 operator answered.

Police believe that all the slain, ages 15 to 60, had been shot and that the gunman was among the dead.

Police said the slain were four women, two men and a teenage boy, but their names had not been released.

Investigators believe some of the seven lived at the apartment and some were there visiting. There had been no previous police calls to the apartment.

According to records, a 55-year-old woman lived in the apartment with her 15-year-old son and 19-year-old daughter.

Police found two handguns in the apartment. There was no sign of forced entry, and all of the doors and windows were locked from the inside, police said.

"We believe that we have just one shooter that is responsible, and we believe he is among the deceased," Grapevine police Sgt. Robert Eberling said.

He said a Christmas tree and unwrapped presents had been found near the bodies.

The bodies were found in a living room and adjoining kitchen on the first floor of the two-story apartment at the Lincoln Vineyards Apartment Homes, a well-maintained 220-unit complex.

Former neighbors of the family said the woman had recently separated from her 56-year-old husband.

Until the couple's split, the family had lived together in a home in Colleyville. But public records show that they had faced financial trouble, and a bank had foreclosed on the home last year.

The foreclosure had been tied up in bankruptcy proceedings, federal records indicate. But neighbors said the husband was still living in the home, which is a couple of miles from the apartment where the bodies were found.

Grapevine detectives were investigating inside the foreclosed home on Sycamore Court on Sunday evening.

Officers were interviewing relatives of the victims who live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to try to determine what led to the massacre.

But Eberling said police had few details.

"We checked the surrounding apartments; we only found one occupied, and that person didn't hear anything," he said.

Police obtained a search warrant for the property Sunday evening and were continuing to examine the apartment and nearby vehicles into the night.

The slayings were the first in Grapevine this year and the homicide case with the highest death toll in the city's history, police said.

Neighbors expressed surprise at the news of the slayings, saying there were no warning signs that such a thing might occur.

Last summer there was a stalking issue that was reported to Colleyville police, Stewart said.

"He had a gun from this stalking incident because he said the driver, the guy who was harassing him was in a white pickup truck," Stewart said. "He told us to let him know if there was a white pickup on the street."

Stewart said she called the Colleyville police when she saw a white pickup parked a block up from the house earlier this year. She said the father was picking up his daughter from Sam's Club, where she worked, because he was worried about the stalker and because of racial slurs he said his daughter was experiencing at work.

"I'm shocked, it's a huge tragedy," Stewart said.

Fellow neighbor Terri Baum, who lived three homes down from the family, said she had seen the man around the neighborhood in the last couple of weeks.

"They were pretty quiet, but kind, very kind," Baum said. "They were sweet, good parents and they loved their kids very much."

Baum's daughter, Allison, attended Colleyville Heritage High School with the daughter, where the girls graduated together in May.

"Allison would take her to school from ... (her house on Sycamore Court) and then when they moved out she would pick her up from the apartments," Baum said. "It's unbelievable because of the people we knew them to be and their children were good kids, very focused."

Baum said the slayings were unbelievable to her.

"All I want to say is, it is so unbelievably shocking because they loved their kids," Baum said.

About 1 p.m. Monday, co-workers of the suspected gunman's wife arrived at the Colleyville house looking for her after she didn't show up for her shift.

"After an hour and a half of calling her with no answer, we decided to come looking for her," Leah Langford, director of Cold Water Creek Spa, said. "It's not like ... (the woman) to not show up for work or even be late."

The mother who was slain was a nail technician at Cold Water Creek Spa in Southlake for four years, Langford said.

"If she was running just five minutes late and she was down the street she would call," said Sabrina Turley, assistant director at Cold Water Creek Spa.

The woman's co-workers said she was a hard worker and always took care of everyone at the spa.

"She was very sweet and such a hard worker," Turley said. "She always took fruits and food into work, she took care of people."

Langford said her employee loved to dance and talk about her son and daughter.

"She was very private about her personal life," Langford said.

Turley added, "We didn't even know the names of her children, she just always referred to them as my son or daughter, but she was very proud of them."

Langford and Turley said the woman had not spoken of troubles at home and they were not aware that she had separated from the husband. The woman had put in a change of address request at the spa in May, Langford said.

TEXASROUNDUP

FROM WIRE REPORTS

HOUSTON

Speeding driver fatally shot after wreck

Houston authorities said a police sergeant feared for his life when he shot and killed a driver of a speeding car who became combative after a wreck Christmas night.

Police spokesman Kese Smith said Monday the sergeant saw the speeding car strike another vehicle and then crash into a ditch. The driver got out and began walking away. When the officer ordered him to stop, the man initially refused, then appeared to comply when the sergeant pulled his gun.

Smith said a struggle broke out as the officer was escorting the man to the patrol car.

The man's name was not immediately released. The Houston Chronicle reported the sergeant was placed on administrative leave, a standard procedure after an officer-involved shooting.

FORT WORTH

Officers shoot and kill gunman

A 29-year-old man has been shot and killed by Fort Worth police after authorities said he fired at police cars responding to reports of a man firing a weapon.

Christopher Johnson was identified Sunday night as the man shot by officers after screaming at them he was combat trained and ran from his house holding a gun to his head. When he refused officers' commands to drop his weapon and continued running toward police, he was shot.

Neighbors described the shooting to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as like a scene from a movie. They also characterized Johnson as a troubled veteran of the Iraq war.

LEAGUE CITY

Suburban couple shot stopping car break-in

Police said a suspected car burglar shot a suburban Houston couple in their driveway when they confronted him as he was breaking into their car.

The shooting happened before dawn Monday in front of the couple's home in League City, 24 miles southeast of Houston. Police Lt. Bruce Whitten tells the Galveston County Daily News that the couple detected the break-in and confronted the man, who shot them, jumped into a black two-door sports car and sped away.

Whitten said the 41-year-old husband was in critical condition at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston, while the 36-year-old wife was treated at South East Memorial Hospital in Houston and discharged.

No arrests have been reported.

FORT WORTH

Counties may email tax bills in 2012

Texas property owners may get their next tax bills by email because of a new state law that gives counties that option.

Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector Ron Wright said it's a "step into the 21st century for the tax office."

Rep. Charlie Geren pushed the measure unopposed in the Legislature. The Republican whose House district is north and west of Fort Worth credits Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price with the money-saving idea when she was the tax collector-assessor.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported Monday that several counties are considering implementing the service because it's cheaper to send the bill electronically than through the mail, which requires printing and postage costs.

Scott Porter, president of the state's Tax Assessor-Collector Association, said many counties are working out the details before deciding.

SAN ANTONIO

5 wounded in drive-by shooting

Five people, including a 6-year-old boy, were wounded in a drive-by shooting in a neighborhood on San Antonio's East Side.

Police Chief William McManus said a domestic dispute is suspected to be the root cause of the shooting on the residential street Christmas afternoon. Police Sgt. Scott Bell said two men and the boy were shot in the legs, while two women were shot in their arms. None of the wounds were believed to be life-threatening.

The neighborhood has seen increased violence over the past week. Before the Sunday shootings, one man was killed and five others were wounded in three East Side drive-by shootings Tuesday and Thursday. Sunday, McManus said he has built up the police presence in the district and vowed to "get to the bottom of this."

AUSTIN

Arson ruled in party boat fire

Investigators suspect arson in a fire that left a 70-foot-long double-deck, paddlewheel party boat a charred hulk after its propane tanks exploded and sent the burning empty vessel adrift on Austin's Lady Bird Lake.

No one was hurt in the Sunday fire aboard the boat moored at a marina next to a downtown Austin hotel.

Fire Department Capt. Andy Reardon said witnesses reported seeing several people fleeing the vessel.

Damage is estimated at $1 million. The explosion and fire also damaged two smaller vessels and the dock where they were berthed.

Firefighters waded into the lake and used a boat hook to pull the drifting boat to shore.

SAN ANTONIO

Authorities trying to identify bones

Authorities are trying to identify skeletal remains found partially buried in a wooded area of San Antonio.

Homicide Sgt. Larry Ripley said no identification was found and authorities aren't immediately certain if the remains are of a man or a woman. Ripley told the San Antono Express-News only that the remains appeared to be too large to belong to a child.

The bones were discovered Sunday afternoon by a man and his son walking through the woods on San Antonio's southwest side.

Jumbo prawns taking Gulf by storm

By Matthew Tresaugue
Houston Chronicle

A truly jumbo shrimp is causing big worries about the future of the Gulf of Mexico's ecosystem.

The Asian tiger prawn, a foot-long crustacean with a voracious appetite and a proclivity for disease, has invaded the northern Gulf, threatening prized native species, from crabs and oysters to smaller brown and white shrimp.

Though no one is sure what the ecological impact will be, scientists fear a tiger prawn takeover could knock nature's balance out of whack and turn a healthy, diverse marine habitat into one dominated by a single invasive species.

"It has the potential to be real ugly," said Leslie Hartman, Matagorda Bay ecosystem leader for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "But we just do not know."

The tiger prawns from the western Pacific — which can grow up to 13 inches long - have been spreading along the Gulf Coast since 2006, but their numbers took off this year. Shrimpers pulled one from Texas waters for the first time in June.

In all, shrimpers have found three tiger prawns in Aransas Bay, one in Sabine Lake near the Louisiana border and one in Gulf waters about 70 miles from Freeport, according to the Texas Sea Grant program at Texas A&M University.

Marine scientists will conduct genetic studies on the shrimp to determine their origin. Hartman said they will need at least 60 prawns for an accurate analysis.

Some speculate that the Gulf invasion began with an accidental release of farmed prawns in South Carolina in 1988. Another theory: The prawns may have escaped from flooded industrial shrimp ponds in the Caribbean Sea during recent hurricanes.

The threat underscores concerns about large-scale fish farming, also known as aquaculture, in the Gulf. The federal government opened the waters to fish farms in 2009 despite fears from environmental and fishing interests over how to protect wild stocks.

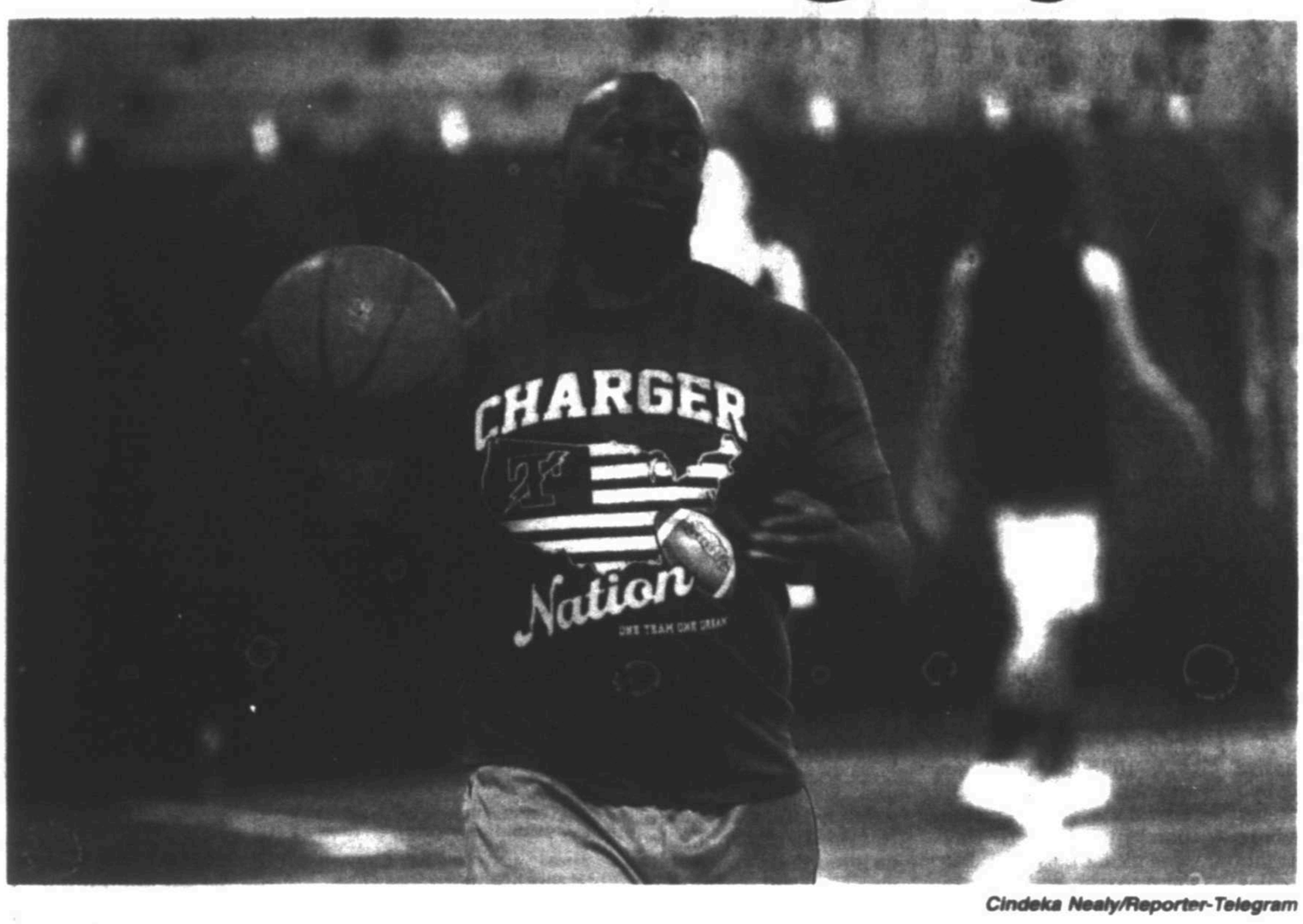
Disease normally would exist in relatively low levels in fish around the Gulf but can run rampant in densely packed fish farms. Tiger prawns are a known carrier of at least 16 viruses, such as white spot, which can be lethal to shrimp.

Courtesy photo

Shrimp trawler Capt. Tony Perez holds a tiger prawn. The foot-long female was caught about 60 miles south of the Louisiana coast near Morgan City in October.

Sports

Return to glory



Cindeka Nealy/Reporter-Telegram

Charles Tatum, who was one of the key contributors to Midland High's 1998 state championship boy's basketball team, is now the head boys basketball coach at Trinity.

Former state champ back in Midland as Trinity's boys basketball coach

By Jordan Mason
Sports Writer

On the Wednesday before Christmas, the Trinity gym was eerily quiet as the Chargers boys start practice.

As the Chargers began with a three-man weave, the only sounds in the gym were feet hitting the floor and one bounce of the ball after it came out of the basket.

The quiet start to practice was fitting for the coach that never screams.

But Charles Tatum doesn't need to raise his voice for his words to ring true.

"He knows what he's talking about," senior Keith Stroup said. "We haven't had a coach like that in a while at Trinity."

Tatum, who started at point guard for Midland High's 1998 state championship team, is a living reminder of a time when basketball ruled in Midland.

A time when courts in Midland were filled with future Division-I players and even professional athletes.

A time when families from outside the Permian Basin flocked to Chaparral Center to watch some of the best basketball in the state.

Tatum misses that time. And he wants to know what happened.

The former Bulldog watched his alma mater take on crosstown rival Lee in both teams' district opener Dec. 16 and said he was disappointed to see Chap Center, once a sea of purple and a sea of maroon, barely filled to half capacity.

> "I'm looking around like 'Where is all the support?' But if you win they will come. That's the nature of the beast
>
> — CHARLES TATUM
> Trinity boys basketball coach

"I'm looking around like, 'Where is all the support?'" Tatum said. "Where is Midland's support of its team? But if you win they will come. That's the nature of the beast."

Yet maybe that's where Tatum can help.

Tatum isn't just helping turn the Trinity program into a winner — his influence can be seen on many courts outside of the Trinity campus

This is Tatum's first head coaching job, but Tatum has been coaching since he played at the University of Arkansas in the early 2000s. There he began coaching AAU teams, like the girls AAU team that he recently coached in Midland, and started his individual training program — Coach Tatum's Hoops School.

He's worked with freshmen sensations like Midland High's Tana Driver and Lee's Daija Stanford and talented seniors like Trinity's Harley Davis.

"There's always talent here," Tatum said, "we've just got to develop it. There's 14 club volleyball teams in the Midland-Odessa area. But can you name four AAU teams? You can't."

And while Trinity may not be exactly like what Tatum experienced at Midland High — at that same practice, Davis checked his final grades on his iPhone in between drills — the players and Tatum say the transition has been smooth because Tatum is fluent in the only language that matters — basketball.

"It's a lot different, but it's so the same," Tatum said. "I've learned a lot, but what I've learned mostly is that basketball is universal."

Tatum's style of coaching is a blend of his own fun-loving nature with the no-nonsense approach of former Midland High coach Jack Stephenson and even a bit of the hard-nosed approach of former Arkansas coach Nolan Richardson.

And his players respect that.

"He's intense in his own way," senior Thomas Schorr said. "He has a lot of fun with it. But then again, once we get down to business, we're going all for it."

Players even say his sense of humor has rubbed off on them.

"I hate him," Davis said sarcastically when asked what he likes most about his coach and former trainer, drawing laughs from his teammates and even Tatum.

But what Tatum hopes rubs off the most is an expectation for success on the

Please see TATUM/2C

Jones says Cowboys 'can count' on Romo playing

By Tom Orsborn
San Antonio Express-News

IRVING — The Dallas Cowboys will be without an offensive starter in the NFC East title game with the New York Giants, but it won't be Tony Romo.

A strained bicep suffered in Saturday's 20-7 loss to Philadelphia landed left guard Montrae Holland on season-ending injured reserve Monday. Jerry Jones told a Dallas radio station Holland will be replaced by veteran Derrick Dockery.

But with the division crown and the No. 4 seed in the NFC playoffs at stake in Sunday's prime-time clash at the Meadowlands, there's only one injury that matters for the Cowboys: Tony Romo's bruised right hand. And the news was good on that front, said Jones, who was in Jason Garrett's office when Romo walked in.

"He knocked and shook hands with the right hand," Jones told KTCK-AM. "We were all laughing at that.

"It looked a lot better than it did the other night. It had an alarming swelling early the other night. We've run every kind of scan you can run on it. He's sound. He's worked on it over the last couple of days. He's getting more strength.

"It looks like we can count on him playing."

Garrett didn't go that far, but the coach was decidedly optimistic.

"It looks like it is getting better," Garrett said of Romo's hand. "All the X-rays and tests that have come back are negative, which is positive for us. It looks like the swelling is going down and we are hopeful he can practice Wednesday."

So can he grip the ball OK?

"He has a relatively firm handshake," Garrett joked.

As for Romo, he turned to walk to the training room when he saw a pack of reporters outside the locker room at Valley Ranch. Shielding his injured hand, he shouted around the corner that the swelling had gone down "a little bit."

Romo hurt his hand when he banged the back of it against the helmet of Eagles defensive end Jason Babin on the Cowboys' first possession Christmas Eve. He didn't return, but he said afterward he would have if the division crown could have been clinched.

Because of Romo's injury, Las Vegas oddsmakers haven't established a line for the winner-take-all matchup yet, but it's hard to imagine the Giants not being favored after they rallied from a 12-point deficit in the final 5:41 to beat the Cowboys 37-34 on Dec. 11 in Arlington.

Eli Manning passed for 400 yards with two touchdowns and one inter-

Please see ROMO/2C

Lawson, Nuggets cruise by defenseless Mavs

By Jaime Aron
Associated Press

Nuggets	115
Mavericks	93

DALLAS — Ty Lawson and the Denver Nuggets opened their season with a performance that sent a clear message to the rest of the NBA.

Not about them. About the Dallas Mavericks.

The reigning champions have quickly become a team everyone wants to play. There's no telling which is worse right now, their offense or defense, their conditioning or chemistry, as they were drubbed for a second straight game, losing 115-93 to the Nuggets on Monday night.

Dallas gave up 20 straight points in the second quarter and had a stretch of 14 straight missed shots during a 9:52 drought between baskets. It was so bad that their player of the game, Sean Williams, threw up when he left the court.

Williams, the 13th and final guy off the bench, was so gassed from scoring 12 points in 11 energetic minutes that he vomited in front of the team's bench. Teammates and owner Mark Cuban laughed, and fans in the arena gave a light-hearted standing ovation while an usher mopped up the mess.

Williams wasn't sick, just not quite in game shape because of the lockout. Of course, the way things are going for Dallas, plenty of jokes were made about that being an editorial statement about their performance.

"We look old and slow and out of shape — a bad combination," said Dirk Nowitzki, who scored 20 points and sat out the entire fourth quarter for a second straight game, yet another indication of how bad things are going. "I still think this team has a lot of potential. But we have to turn the corner."

The Mavs trailed by 33 in the third quarter, a day after being down by 35 in the third quarter against Miami. Counting a pair of preseason games against Oklahoma City, Dallas has been behind by at least 23 points in every game since being crowned champs.

There are plenty of reasons to choose from: an overhaul of their rotation, the shortened training camp and other teams being motivated to take them down.

"We're not comfortable with each other on both ends of the floor," Shawn Marion said. "We're trying to get acclimated and you can tell it's not flowing the

Please see MAVS/6C

Brandon Wade/AP

Denver Nuggets center Nene (31) goes up for a shot as Dallas Mavericks center Brendan Haywood (33) and forward Lamar Odom defend during the first half Monday in Dallas.

Ginobili's 24 helps Spurs get revenge on Grizzlies

By Paul J. Weber
Associated Press

Spurs	95
Grizzlies	82

SAN ANTONIO - - Manu Ginobili never saw the Memphis Grizzlies play that badly in the playoffs, and is pretty sure he won't again.

But the San Antonio Spurs will take it.

Ginobili scored 24 points and San Antonio ran away from what barely resembled the up-and-coming Memphis team that stunned the 61-win Spurs in the first round last season, beating the Grizzlies 95-82 on Monday night.

San Antonio began what could be Tim Duncan's final season with a satisfying bit of payback but otherwise didn't read much into the victory. Take Zach Randolph and Marc Gasol, who utterly bullied the Spurs in that playoff series but combined for just 23 points this time.

"Zac was off. He didn't have of these games in the playoffs," Ginobili said. "That happens the first game of the season. We all need time to get back in shape. "

Rudy Gay led Memphis with 19 points and 10 rebounds in his first game in nearly 10 months. Gay missed the end of last season with a bad left shoulder, including when Memphis knocked out the top-seeded Spurs.

Yet even with the full starting lineup that Memphis would've preferred in last year's playoffs, the Grizzlies still remained winless on opening night since the franchise left Vancouver in 2001.

Not quite the start the NBA's breakout team of last season had in mind.

"We didn't play very well. We did turn the ball over alot, but we didn't guard," Memphis coach Lionel Hollins said. "We didn't guard them in the pick in roll. We gave up transition points. It was not a very well-played game by us at all."

The Grizzlies commit-

Please see SPURS/6C

Brees sets passing mark, Saints top Falcons

By Brett Martel
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees set the NFL record for yards passing in a season, breaking a mark that Dan Marino had held for 27 years, and the New Orleans Saints clinched the NFC South title with a 45-16 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Monday night.

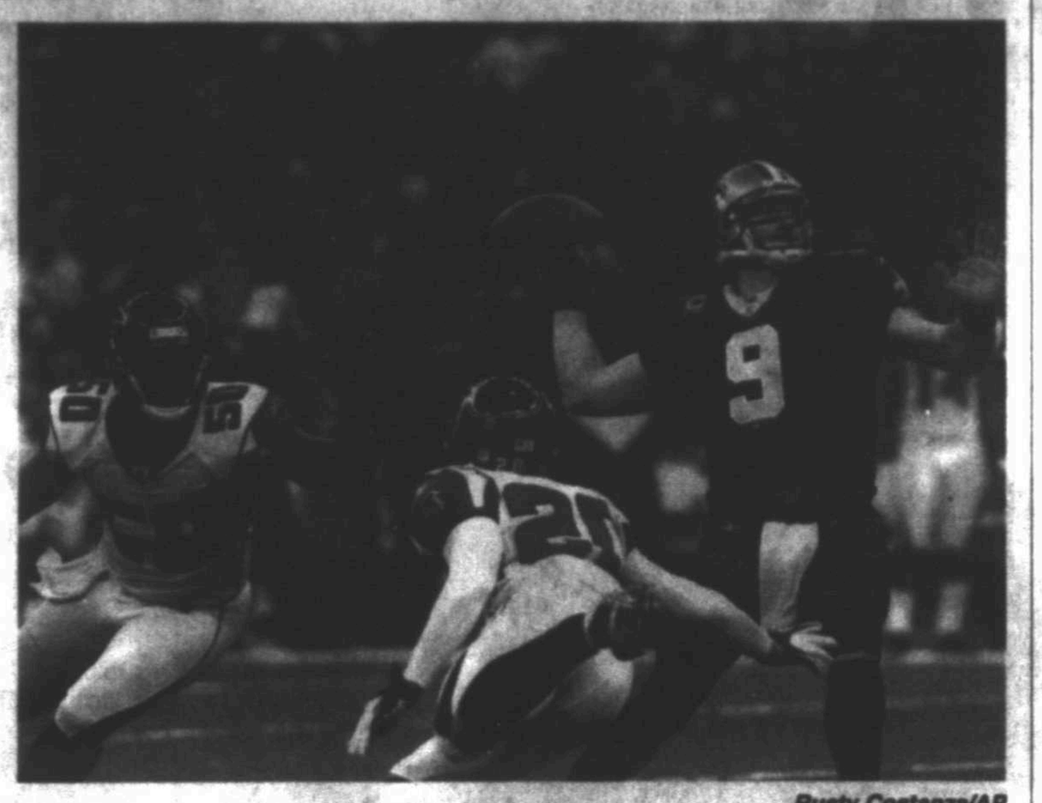
Brees threw for 307 yards and four touchdowns, the last a 9-yard strike to Darren Sproles that set the record with 2:51 to go.

It was Brees' final pass of the game and it gave him 5,087 yards passing — with one game still to play. Marino finished with 5,084 yards for the Miami Dolphins in 1984.

As Sproles spiked the ball, Brees put his arm over his head and started walking toward midfield while the Superdome crowd went wild and his teammates chased him down.

Brees' four touchdowns gave him 276 for his career, moving him ahead of Joe Montana (273) and Vinny Testeverde (275) for ninth all-time. He is the first quarterback in NFL history to pass for more than 5,000 yards twice — he had 5,069 in 2008.

Brees' first scoring pass went for 8 yards to Marques Colston and the second for 9 yards to Jimmy Graham. Graham's TD catch was his 10th of the season, a new franchise high for a tight end. In the third quarter, Brees hit Robert Meachem for a score from 24 yards, which made it 28-10.



Rusty Costanza/AP

New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees (9) throws a touchdown pass as Atlanta Falcons middle linebacker Curtis Lofton (50) and cornerback Brent Grimes (20) pursue in the third quarter Monday in New Orleans.

The Saints also had 463 total yards, giving them more than 6,857 offensive yards for the season, breaking the 2008 club record of 6,571 yards. New Orleans continues to close in on the NFL-record of 7,075 offensive yards in a season set by the 2000 St. Louis Rams.

Brees might have broken the record in the third quarter if not for Sproles' 92-yard kickoff return, which set up John Kasay's 29-yard field goal. Brees also was intercepted twice in the game, once in the Falcons end zone, but New Orleans was still dominant enough to take a three-score lead.

The game became a romp when Julio Jones was stripped by Scott Shanle and Malcolm Jenkins returned it 30 yards for a score to make it 38-16 in the fourth quarter. The Superdome crowd was in full celebration by then, but the play also meant fans would have to wait until later in the fourth quarter before Brees finally got his chance to break the passing record.

Saints	45
Falcons	16

Uncharacteristically, Brees had only a yard passing during a span of a little more than 18 minutes. Knowing he was closing in the record, the crowd howled, "Drewwww" each time he took the field. He finally gave the fans what they wanted after Atlanta failed on a fourth-down try at its own 33. That gave Brees, who needed only 30 yards for the record at that point, just enough space to work with.

HSTOURNAMENTS

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Girls

2011 Byron Johnston Holiday Classic
Bracket play
All games at Chaparral Center unless noted.
Wednesday, Dec. 28
First round
Game 1: Lee vs. Plainview, 9:30 a.m.
Game 2: Canyon Randall vs. Odessa High, 12:30 p.m.
Game 3: El Paso Americas vs. Amarillo Tascosa, 5 p.m.
Game 4: Samuels vs. Midland High, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 29
Consolation bracket
Game 5: Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser, 8 a.m.
Game 6: Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 loser, 11 a.m.
Championship bracket
Game 7: Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner, 3:30 p.m.
Game 8: Game 3 winner vs. Game 4 winner, 6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30
Guarantee game
Game 9: Game 5 loser vs. Game 6 loser, 9:30 a.m., MHS gym
Consolation final
Game 10: Game 5 winner vs. Game 6 winner, 9:30 a.m.
Third-place game
Game 11: Game 7 loser vs. Game 8 loser, 12:30 p.m.
Championship
Game 12: Game 7 winner vs. Game 8 winner, 3:30 p.m.

2011 Grady Black & Gold Cotton Classic
All games at Grady High School
Wednesday, Dec. 28
First round
Highland vs. Paint Rock, 11 a.m., Gym 2
Wink vs. Garden City, 11 a.m., Gym 1
Grady vs. Iraan, 2 p.m., Gym 1
Trinity vs. Loraine, 2 p.m., Gym 2
Champ. Bracket
Semifinals
Highland-Paint Rock winner vs. Wink-Garden City winner, 6:30 p.m., Gym 2
Grady-Iraan winner vs. Trinity-Loraine winner, 6:30 p.m., Gym 1
Thursday, Dec. 29
Consolation bracket
Semifinals
Highland-Paint Rock loser vs. Wink-Garden City loser, 11 a.m., Gym 2
Grady-Iraan loser vs. Trinity-Loraine loser, 11 a.m., Gym 1
Guarantee game, 3:30 p.m., Gym 2
Consolation Final
Semifinal winners, 6:30 p.m., Gym 2
Championship Bracket
Third-place game
Semifinal losers, 6:30 p.m., Gym 1
Championship Game
Semifinal winners, 6:30 p.m., Gym 1

2011 Mary Tatum Holiday Classic
All games at Reagan County High School
Wednesday, Dec. 28
First round
Game 1: Water Valley vs. Ozona, 9:30 a.m.
Game 2: Ballinger vs. Monahans, 12:30 p.m.
Game 3: Sonora vs. Pecos, 3:30 p.m.
Game 4: Grape Creek vs. Reagan County, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 29
Championship bracket
Semifinals
Game 7: Game 3 winner vs. Game 1 winner, 3:30 p.m.
Game 8: Game 2 winner vs. Game 4 winner, 6:30 p.m.
Consolation bracket
Semifinals
Game 5: Game 2 loser vs. Game 4 loser, 9:30 a.m.
Game 6: Game 3 loser vs. Game 1 loser, 12:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30
Guarantee Game
Game 9: Game 6 loser vs. Game 5 loser, 9:30 a.m.
Consolation Final
Game 10: Game 6 winner vs. Game 5 winner, 12:30 p.m.
Third-place Game
Game 11: Game 7 loser vs. Game 8 loser
Championship Game
Game 12: Game 7 winner vs. Game 8 winner, 6:30 p.m.

Boys

Byron Johnston Holiday Classic
Pool play
All games at Chaparral Center unless noted.
Pool A: Midland High, Clear Brook, Waco High, Austin High
Pool B: Lee, Italy, Abel Hastings, Plainview, Little Elm
Wednesday, Dec. 28
Lee vs. Italy, 8 a.m.
Abel Hastings vs. Plainview, 11 a.m.
Clear Brook vs. Waco High, 2 p.m.
Little Elm vs. Lee, 3:30 p.m.
Italy vs. Abel Hastings, 6:30 p.m., MHS gym
Plainview vs. Little Elm, 8 p.m., MHS gym
Austin High vs. Midland High, 9 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 29
Little Elm vs. Italy, 8 a.m., MHS gym
Lee vs. Abel Hastings, 8:30 a.m., MHS gym
Midland High vs. Clear Brook, 9:30 a.m.
Austin High vs. Waco High, 12:30 p.m.
Italy vs. Plainview, 2 p.m.
Abel Hastings vs. Little Elm, 5 p.m.
Clear Brook vs. Austin High, 8:30 p.m., MHS gym
Plainview vs. Lee, 8 p.m., MHS gym
Waco High vs. Midland High, 9 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30
Ninth-place game
Pool B 5th vs. Midland High JV, 11 a.m., MHS gym
Fifth-place game
Pool B 3rd vs. Pool A 3rd, 11 a.m.
Seventh-place game
Pool B 4th vs. Pool A 4th, 12:30 p.m., MHS gym
Third-place game
Pool B 2nd vs. Pool A 2nd, 2 p.m.
Championship
Pool B 1st vs. Pool A 1st, 5 p.m.

2011 Grady Black & Gold Cotton Classic
All games at Grady High School
Wednesday, Dec. 28
First round
Grady vs. Highland, 12:30 p.m., Gym 1
Trinity vs. Paint Rock, 12:30 p.m., Gym 2
Wink vs. Klondike, 6:30 p.m., Gym 2
Iraan vs. McCamey, 6:30 p.m., Gym 1
Loraine vs. Garden City, 3:30 p.m., Gym 1
Seminole JV vs. Rankin JV, 3:30 p.m., Gym 2
Consolation bracket
Quarterfinals
Grady-Highland loser vs. Trinity-Paint Rock loser, 8 p.m., Gym 2
Wink-Klondike loser vs. Iraan-McCamey loser, 5 p.m., Gym 2
Championship bracket
Quarterfinals
Grady-Highland winner vs. Trinity-Paint Rock winner, 8 p.m., Gym 1
Wink-Klondike winner vs. Iraan-McCamey winner, 5 p.m., Gym 1
Thursday, Dec. 29
Consolation bracket
Semifinal, 12:30 p.m., Gym 2
Guarantee Games, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., Gym 2
Consolation Final, 8 p.m., Gym 2
Championship bracket
Semifinal, 12:30 p.m., Gym 1
Fifth-place game, 2 p.m., Gym 1
Third-place game, 5 p.m., Gym 1
Championship game, 8 p.m., Gym 1

81st Reagan County Mary Tatum Holiday Classic
All games at Reagan County High School
Wednesday, Dec. 28
First round
Grape Creek vs. Fort Stockton, 11 a.m.
Water Valley vs. Ballinger, 2 p.m.
Ozona vs. Coahoma, 5 p.m.
Pecos vs. Reagan County, 8 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 29
Championship bracket
Semifinals
Grape Creek-Fort Stockton winner vs. Water Valley-Ballinger winner, 5 p.m.
Ozona-Coahoma winner vs. Pecos-Reagan County winner, 8 p.m.
Consolation bracket
Semifinals
Grape Creek-Fort Stockton loser vs. Water Valley-Ballinger loser, 11 a.m.
Ozona-Coahoma loser vs. Pecos-Reagan County loser, 2 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30
Guarantee game, 11 a.m.
Consolation Final, 2 p.m.
Third-place game, 5 p.m.
Championship game, 8 p.m.

NFL teams take the success stories and failures of 2011

By Barry Wilner
Associated Press

With one week to go in the post-lockout season, it's not too early to look at the success stories and utter failures of the NFL.

Celebrations are warranted in Houston, Detroit and San Francisco. In Denver and Cincinnati, too — even if their teams don't make the playoffs.

Protests already have broken out in Philadelphia, Indianapolis and San Diego over the flops by those cities' teams, and the folks in the New York area might be ready to picket the Meadowlands if both the Jets and Giants fall short of the playoffs.

Some thoughts on triumphs and downfalls this season:

SUCCESS

Start in the Motor City, where Lions fans haven't seen their team in the playoffs since 1999. Worse yet, they've seen the Lions at the bottom of the standings in many years in between, including that humiliating 0-16 in 2008.

Now, at 10-5, the Lions own an NFC wild card — to the astonishment of center Dominic Raiola, who has spent more than a decade losing in Detroit.

I mean, 11 years — it hasn't really soaked in yet," Raiola said. "I don't know how to feel. I've never been here before. It's a long time coming."

Although the Lions don't appear capable of challenging for the Super Bowl quite yet, just having them in the conversation is unplowed territory in Detroit.

Same thing, of course, in Houston, which hasn't had a playoff team since 1993 — and that was the Oilers, who now reside in Nashville and call themselves the Tennessee Titans. The Texans (10-5) commemorated their 10th season by winning the AFC South even though such keys as LB Mario Williams, QBs Matt Schaub and Matt Leinart, and WR Andre Johnson sustained injuries. A vastly upgraded defense under new coordinator Wade Phillips — who himself was sidelined by kidney/gall bladder surgery this month — and a powerful running game have been the catalysts.

Getting this far should be satisfying for now.

One team that deservedly has designs on a run deep into January or beyond is San Francisco. The 49ers (12-3) have doubled their win total of 2010 and by beating St. Louis on Sunday will secure a first-round bye in their first playoff appearance since 2002. A staunch defense, terrific running game, superior kicking and an infusion of confidence/brashness from new coach Jim Harbaugh make the Niners a formidable foe.

Including playoff games. Tim Tebow, Von Miller, Willis McGahee, Elvis Dumervil and, most notably, the acumen of coach John Fox, have put the Broncos (8-7) in position to win the AFC West. That's stunning stuff considering how in flux this franchise was after 2010, and that the Broncos were 2-5 this season.

While many dismiss the Tebow phenomenon and note how ugly many of Denver's victories have been, they still are victories. San Diego and Kansas City, also-rans in the division, would surely take some of those.

Cincinnati (9-6) grabs the last AFC wild card by beating Baltimore on Sunday. Yes, the Bengals were in the playoffs two years ago and also in 2005, but they are contending now with a different cast, led by rookie quarterback Andy Dalton and receiver A.J. Green.

FAILURE

Many teams basically have been underachievers this season, including three — Cowboys, Jets, Giants — who still could make the postseason. While Tampa Bay has taken a huge nosedive a year after going 10-6, maybe that 2010 success was an aberration.

Clearly the biggest rejects are the Eagles, Chargers and Colts.

Indy, of course, can place a disclaimer on its 2-13 mark: Peyton Manning's absence. It's virtually unheard of for a team to collapse in the manner the Colts did without their star and leader, but it's still a valid reason for all the losing.

More troubling is how nobody picked up the slack until the team was threatening to go winless for the entire schedule. That could cost coach Jim Caldwell his job.

San Diego finally sprinted to a strong start under Norv Turner, going 4-1. Then it fell apart as Philip Rivers' struggled, penalties and frustration mounted, and injuries hit. Even though the Chargers (7-8) got back to .500 with a three-game winning streak, that's not the territory people projected for them.

"Every loss is disappointing, but knowing you are not going to the playoffs is even more disappointing," linebacker Shaun Phillips said. "There are going to be positives in your life, there's going to be negatives in your life, so it's what you do with those negatives."

They've piled up the negatives in Philly: The Eagles are sitting out the playoffs despite their talent haul in free agency.

Bringing in such prizes as cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha, DE Jason Babin, DT Cullen Jenkins and WR Steve Smith raised expectations in Philadelphia. Most of the additions, particularly RB Ronnie Brown and backup QB Vince Young, didn't help raise the level of play, though.

"This is an unfamiliar feeling, an unfamiliar sight," wide receiver DeSean Jackson said. "I've never really witnessed this. It's a reality check. Look in the mirror."

TATUM

From 1C

court and in the classroom, something else he feels has been lost since he and his Midland High teammates were maintaining 20-point scoring averages and 4.0 grade point averages.

"I know that when you're coaching it's your job to coach," Tatum said. "But the kids are so much more important than the game. And you should be putting them in positions to be successful."

Tatum's influence can already be seen at Trinity, where opponents have begun scouting the 9-4 Chargers.

"Before, no one scouted Trinity," Tatum said. "You didn't need to figure out what you needed to do against Trinity to beat them. The guys notice. They know, 'We can win,' as opposed to, 'We want to win.'"

Yet Tatum hopes that, eventually, the same expectations are restored for Midland basketball as a whole and the picture of the 1998 state championship team that hangs in the Midland High gym will have some company.

"I never thought that 13 years later we'll still be in the Midland High gym, that picture up there, and nobody else, with the exception of that Lee team that went to the state (semifinals in 2002), would even come close to bringing that kind of recognition to our little city," Tatum said.

Of course, if Tatum has his way, his actions will eventually speak as loudly as that team photo in the Midland High gym of the only state championship basketball team this city has ever seen.

And he's doing it one quiet practice at a time.

Jordan Mason can be reached at jmason@mrt.com.

ROMO

From 1C

ception in that game, a performance that overshadowed Romo's 321-yard, four-TD, no-interception effort.

Given that Manning usually has his way with the Cowboys' big-play challenged secondary, Dallas will need Romo to be at his best. But how reasonable is it to expect him to put together another big game given he might not practice this week?

"That's not really the point," Garrett said. "He needs to play as well as he can play…He's a tough guy. He's played through (a rib) injury this year. He's a great competitor. He's excited about the chance to be a part of this thing."

Because without him, there's little doubt "this thing" will go to the Giants.

"It's an understatement in this league to say that if you don't have a real good quarterback you probably aren't going to win a lot of games," defensive end Marcus Spear said. "And it's been proven (Romo) is one of the elite quarterbacks in this league. Obviously, if he plays at a high level, the team feeds off that. That's when we have our best chance to win."

Rangers C Torrealba suspended by Venezuelan league

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Texas Rangers catcher Yorvit Torrealba was suspended Monday from Venezuela's professional baseball league for 66 games for striking an umpire.

Torrealba issued an apology, saying he was embarrassed about his argument with a home plate umpire after striking out Friday. He angrily put a hand on the umpire's mask and shoved him. He was then ejected.

"I wanted to express my sincere apologies to all parties for my actions," Torrealba said in his statement. "I have extended an apology to the Rangers organization as well. I am embarrassed for my conduct, and personally relayed that feeling to the umpire after that night's game."

Aggies-Arkansas may stop playing in Dallas

By Brent Zwerneman
San Antonio Express-News

COLLEGE STATION — Two Texas A&M officials stressed Monday night that nothing yet is official, but indications are the Aggies will stop playing Arkansas annually at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington prior to A&M's entrance into the Southeastern Conference this fall.

One official said A&M "never" wants to play Arkansas in Cowboys Stadium again, especially with the two as SEC members. Instead, the former Southwest Conference foes would play a true home-and-home series starting in 2012. One official said since the SEC doesn't allow recruits to be hosted at a neutral site in a conference game, the Cowboys Stadium game "loses its edge" in that regard.

The programs have played three games of the original 10-year deal – all Arkansas victories. Razorbacks coach Bobby Petrino recently told reporters that Arkansas would like to continue the neutral-site series but the Aggies "really don't want to play us" in Arlington.

The 6-6 Aggies are gearing up for the Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas in Houston's Reliant Stadium at 11 a.m. Saturday vs. 6-6 Northwestern. The 2012 A&M schedule still has not been released as SEC officials hammer out its final details.

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NFL

Standings

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	12	3	0	.800	484	321
N.Y. Jets	8	7	0	.533	369	344
Buffalo	6	9	0	.400	391	365
Miami	5	10	0	.333	310	298
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Houston	10	5	0	.667	359	255
Tennessee	8	7	0	.533	302	295
Jacksonville	4	11	0	.267	224	316
Indianapolis	2	13	0	.133	230	411
North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Baltimore	11	4	0	.733	354	250
x-Pittsburgh	11	4	0	.733	312	218
Cincinnati	9	6	0	.600	328	299
Cleveland	4	11	0	.267	209	294
West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	8	7	0	.533	326	282
Oakland	8	7	0	.533	333	336
San Diego	7	8	0	.467	368	351
Kansas City	6	9	0	.400	205	335

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-N.Y. Giants	8	7	0	.533	363	386
Dallas	8	7	0	.533	355	316
Philadelphia	7	8	0	.467	362	318
Washington	5	10	0	.333	278	333
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New Orleans	12	3	0	.800	502	322
x-Atlanta	9	6	0	.600	357	326
Carolina	6	9	0	.400	369	384
Tampa Bay	4	11	0	.267	283	449
North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	14	1	0	.933	515	318
x-Detroit	10	5	0	.667	433	342
Chicago	7	8	0	.467	336	328
Minnesota	3	12	0	.200	327	432
West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-San Francisco	12	3	0	.800	346	202
Seattle	7	8	0	.467	301	292
Arizona	7	8	0	.467	289	328
St. Louis	2	13	0	.133	166	373

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

Thursday's Score
Indianapolis 19, Houston 16

Saturday's Scores
Oakland 16, Kansas City 13, OT
Tennessee 23, Jacksonville 17
Pittsburgh 27, St. Louis 0
Cleveland 14, Detroit 10
Carolina 46, Tampa Bay 16
Minnesota 33, Washington 26
Baltimore 20, Cleveland 14
New England 27, Miami 24
N.Y. Giants 29, N.Y. Jets 14
Cincinnati 23, Arizona 16
Detroit 38, San Diego 10
San Francisco 19, Seattle 17
Philadelphia 20, Dallas 7

Sunday's Score
Green Bay 35, Chicago 21

Monday's Score
New Orleans 45, Atlanta 16

Sunday, Jan. 1
Chicago at Minnesota, Noon
Carolina at New Orleans, Noon
Detroit at Green Bay, Noon
San Francisco at St. Louis, Noon
Tennessee at Houston, Noon
Buffalo at New England, Noon
N.Y. Jets at Miami, Noon
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, Noon
Washington at Philadelphia, Noon
San Diego at Oakland, 3:15 p.m.
Kansas City at Denver, 3:15 p.m.
Seattle at Arizona, 3:15 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 3:15 p.m.
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 3:15 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Cleveland, 3:15 p.m.
Dallas at N.Y. Giants, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY'S BOX
SAINTS 45, FALCONS 16

Atlanta	10	0	3	3	— 16
New Orleans	7	14	10	14	— 45

First Quarter
At—FG Bryant 34, 8:53.
NO—P.Thomas 4 run (Kasay kick), 5:25.
At—Jones 21 pass from Ryan (Bryant kick), 1:31.

Second Quarter
NO—Colston 8 pass from Brees (Kasay kick), 12:32.
NO—Graham 9 pass from Brees (Kasay kick), 24.

Third Quarter
NO—Meachem 24 pass from Brees (Kasay kick), 9:28.
At—FG Bryant 51, 4:41.
NO—FG Kasay 29, 3:04.

Fourth Quarter
At—FG Bryant 30, 12:43.
NO—Jenkins 30 fumble return (Kasay kick), 11:08.
NO—Sproles 9 pass from Brees (Kasay kick), 2:51.
A—70,086.

	Atl	NO
First downs	23	26
Total Net Yards	469	463
Rushes-yards	14-35	23-164
Passing	434	299
Punt Returns	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns	1-27	4-147
Interceptions Ret.	2-14	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	40-61-0	23-39-2
Sacked-Yards Lost	0-0	1-8
Punts	3-50.0	2-52.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties-Yards	7-67	4-46
Time of Possession	32:19	26:41

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Atlanta, Turner 11-39, Rodgers 1-minus 1, Ryan 2-minus 3. New Orleans, Sproles 5-67, P.Thomas 9-53, Ivory 8-35, Brees 1-9.
PASSING—Atlanta, Ryan 34-52-0-373, Redman 6-9-0-61. New Orleans, Brees 23-39-2-307.
RECEIVING—Atlanta, White 11-127, Jones 8-128, Gonzalez 5-41, Turner 4-36, Snelling 4-28, Weems 3-33, Palmer 2-19, Rodgers 2-19, Douglas 1-3. New Orleans, Colston 7-81, Graham 4-62, Meachem 3-75, Henderson 3-30, Moore 2-53, Sproles 2-22, P.Thomas 2-4.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None

NFC PLAYOFF SCENARIOS
CLINCHED: Green Bay-North Division and home-field advantage throughout NFC playoffs; New Orleans-South Division; San Francisco-West Division; Atlanta and Detroit-wild-card spots.

SAN FRANCISCO
— Clinches first-round bye with:
Win OR
Tie AND New Orleans tie OR
New Orleans loss

NEW ORLEANS
— Clinches first-round bye with:
Win and San Francisco loss or tie OR
Tie and San Francisco loss

N.Y. GIANTS
— Clinch NFC East Division with:
Win or tie

DALLAS
— Clinches NFC East Division with:
Win

NBA

MAGIC 104, ROCKETS 95
HOUSTON (95): Budinger 1-6 1-1 3, Scola 6-18 3-4 16, Hill 3-9 0-0 6, Lowry 5-12 9-10 20, Martin 1-10 0-0 4, Delemont 5-8 0-0 10, Williams 5-12 1-2 13, Admiral 0-3 0-0 0, Dragic 2-4 0-0 5, Lee 6-10 1-1 15, Morris 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 38-92 17-20 95.
ORLANDO (104): Turkoglu 10-14 0-0 23, Anderson 3-8 0-0 8, Howard 9-15 3-5 21, Nelson 1-6 0-0 2, J.Richardson 5-8 0-0 10, Redick 8-12 1-1 20, Davis 5-11 3-4 13, Walker 1-4 0-2, Duhon 2-4 0-0 5, Harper 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 44-78 7-10 104.
Houston 23 27 23 22 — 95
Orlando 27 26 34 27 — 104
3-Point Goals—Houston 6-27 (Lee 2-3, Williams 2-5, Dragic 1-2, Lowry 1-4, Morris 0-2, Budinger 0-3, Martin 0-6), Orlando 9-22 (Turkoglu 3-4, Redick 3-4, Anderson 2-6, Duhon 1-1, Nelson 0-1, J.Richardson 0-2, Walker 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Houston 47 (Scola, Lowry 7), Orlando 44 (Howard 7). Assists—Houston 26 (Lowry 12), Orlando 19 (Nelson 6). Total Fouls—Houston 17, Orlando 15. Technicals—Houston defensive three second, Redick. A—18,846 (18,500).

SPURS 95, GRIZZLIES 82
MEMPHIS (82) Gay 8-18 2-3 19, Randolph 3-8 4-8 10, Gasol 5-6 3-4 13, Conley 4-10 2-2 11, Allen 1-4 0-0 2, Cunningham 4-6 2-8, Mayo 2-4 0-0 4, Young 2-5 0-0 4, Pargo 2-6 0-0 5, Skinner 0-1 0-0 0, Pondexter 3-5 0-0 6. Totals 34-73 11-19 82.
SAN ANTONIO (95) Jefferson 5-11 1-2 14, Duncan 4-7 2-2 10, Blair 3-4 0-0 6, Parker 8-16 3-4 19, Ginobili 7-15 7-8 24, Splitter 2-7 1-2 5, Leonard 2-9 1-4 6, Bonner 1-6 0-0 3, Anderson 4-9 0-0 9, Ford 0-2 0-0 0, Joseph 0-1 0-0 0. Green 1-2 0-0 3. Totals 35-88 15-22 95.
Memphis 22 22 14 24 — 82
San Antonio 14 29 29 23 — 95
3-Point Goals—Memphis 3-7 (Conley 1-1, Gay 1-1, Pargo 1-3, Pondexter 0-1, Young 0-1), San Antonio 10-33 (Jefferson 3-7, Ginobili 3-8, Green 1-1, Leonard 1-5, Bonner 1-5, Anderson 1-5, Parker 0-1, Ford 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Memphis 58 (Gay 10), San Antonio 49 (Splitter 8). Assists—Memphis 18 (Conley 7), San Antonio 23 (Parker 7). Total Fouls—Memphis 25, San Antonio 20. Technicals—San Antonio defensive three second. A—18,581 (18,797)

THUNDER 104, TIMBERWOLVES 100
OKLAHOMA CITY (104) Durant 12-23 7-33, Ibaka 3-7 0-0 6, Perkins 1-4 2-2 4, Westbrook 10-21 8-8 28, Sefolosha 2-2 0-0 4, Collison 1-2 3-4 5, Harden 5-9 5-6 16, Maynor 0-2 0-0 0, Mohammed 1-2 0-0 2, Cook 2-6 0-0 6. Totals 35-78 26-31 104.
MINNESOTA (100): Beasley 11-27 2-3 24, Love 6-14 9-12 22, Millsap 4-6 4-6 12, Rio 1-3 0-0 2, Johnson 2-4 0-0 5, Barea 6-11 1-1 14, Tolliver 0-3 0-0 0, Rubio 2-3 2-2 6, Williams 6-14 1-2 13, Randolph 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 39-87 19-26 100.
Oklahoma City 23 29 26 26 — 104
Minnesota 24 22 26 28 — 100
3-Point Goals—Oklahoma City 5-16 (Durant 2-5, Cook 2-5, Harden 1-3, Sefolosha 0-1, Westbrook 0-2), Minnesota 3-22 (Johnson 1-3, Love 1-3, Barea 1-6, Rubio 0-1, Rebout 0-2, Tolliver 0-3, Beasley 0-3, Williams 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Oklahoma City 47 (Perkins 8), Minnesota 53 (Love 12). Assists—Oklahoma City 18 (Westbrook 6), Minnesota 22 (Rubio 6). Total Fouls—Oklahoma City 26, Minnesota 24. Technicals—Minnesota defensive three second. A—19,406 (19,356)

NETS 90, WIZARDS 84
NEW JERSEY (90) James 2-7 2-2 6, Humphries 9-14 3-4 21, Petro 5-8 2-2 11, D.Williams 8-20 3-3 23, Morrow 4-13 6-6 16, Okur 0-3 0-0 0, Sha.Williams 0-3 0-0 0. Fergo 0-1 0-0 0, Sha.Williams 0-1 0-0 0. Brooks 3-7 0-0 6, Gaines 3-7 1-3 7, Stevenson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 34-84 16-20 90.
WASHINGTON (84) Lewis 2-8 5-6 9, Blatche 5-13 1-21, McGee 5-11 1-6 11, Wall 3-13 7-13 13, Crawford 7-12 1-1 15, Tunsil 1-4 0-2, Young 6-9 4-4 16, Singleton 1-3 0-0 2, Mack 0-2 0-0 0, Booker 0-1 2-2 2. Minson 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 31-74 21-34 84.
New Jersey 13 24 29 24 — 90
Washington 26 19 22 17 — 84
3-Point Goals—New Jersey 6-24 (D.Williams 4-11, Morrow 2-6, Okur 0-1, Brooks 0-1, Gaines 0-2, Sha.Williams 0-3), Washington 1-8 (Singleton 1-2, Mack 0-1, Crawford 0-2, Lewis 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New Jersey 65 (Humphries 16), Washington 45 (Blatche, Wall 8). Assists—New Jersey 16 (D.Williams 8), Washington 22 (Wall 6). Total Fouls—New Jersey 26, Washington 17. Technicals— Blatche A—17,102 (20,173).

PACERS 91, PISTONS 79
DETROIT (79): Prince 3-10 0-0 6, Jerebko 7-11 3-4 17, Monroe 3-7 2-2 8, Stuckey 5-11 5-5 17, Gordon 4-14 5-6 14, Knight 3-9 0-0 8, Maxiell 0-2 0-0 0, Daye 0-3 0-0 0, Wallace 1-9 0-0 2, Bynum 1-6 3-4 5. Totals 27-79 16-21 79.
INDIANA (91): Granger 6-18 2-4 16, West 3-12 5-6 11, Hibbert 6-11 4-5 16, Collison 3-7 1-2 8, George 3-8 4-4 12, Hill 2-7 0-4 4, Hansbrough 0-5 4-4 4, Stephenson 0-0 0-2 2, Jones 3-6 0-0 7, Totals 32-87 20-25 91.
Detroit 17 21 20 21 — 79
Indiana 28 22 24 17 — 91
3-Point Goals—Detroit 7-19 (Knight 3-6, Stuckey 2-3, Bynum 1-2, Gordon 1-4, Prince 0-1, Jerebko 0-1, Jones 0-2), Indiana 7-15 (George 2-3, Collison 2-3, Granger 2-4, Jones 1-1, Hill 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Detroit 46 (Monroe, Daye, Wallace 7), Indiana 53 (Hibbert 14). Assists—Detroit 17 (Stuckey 6), Indiana 20 (Collison 5). Total Fouls—Detroit 19, Indiana 20. A—18,165 (18,165).

BOBCATS 96, BUCKS 95
MILWAUKEE (95): Ilyasova 1-6 3-3 6, Ilyasova 1-4 0-2, Bogut 7-14 3-4 17, Jennings 8-21 3-3 22, Dunleavy 3-12 4-4 13, Goodwin 1-2 0-0 2, Livingston 6-10 2-3 14, Udrih 5-12 2-4 13, Sanders 2-2 0-0 4, Larkin 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 34-84 19-23 95.
CHARLOTTE (96): Maggette 6-15 0-1 12, Wright 5-7 0-0 10, Carroll 4-9 0-0 9, Augustin 7-16 3-4 19, Henderson 7-14 3-3 18, Walker 3-10 7-7 13, Biyombo 0-0 0-0 0, Brown 1-1 0-2 2, Mullens 5-7 0-0 10, Carroll 2-5 1-2 5. Diop 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 36-86 16-21 96.
Milwaukee 27 26 14 29 — 95
Charlotte 19 22 30 25 — 96
3-Point Goals—Milwaukee 8-23 (Jennings 3-6, Dunleavy 3-8, Jackson 1-4, Udrih 1-4, Goodwin 0-1), Charlotte 4-19 (Augustin 2-8, Diaw 1-2, Henderson 1-2, Maggette 0-2, Walker 0-2, Carroll 0-3). Fouled Out—Jackson. Rebounds—Milwaukee 46 (Ilyasova, Bogut 9). Charlotte 61 (Diaw 11). Assists—Milwaukee 21 (Livingston 6), Charlotte 27 (Diaw 9). Total Fouls—Milwaukee 20, Charlotte 20. Technicals—Goodwin, Jackson. Milwaukee defensive three second. Flagrant Fouls—Goodwin. Diop. Ejected—Goodwin. A—17,173 (19,077).

RAPTORS 104, CAVALIERS 96
TORONTO (104): Butler 1-4 0-0 3, A.Johnson 5-7 3-4 13, Bargnani 5-12 2-2 13, Calderon 5-9 2-2 15, DeRozan 7-13 1-2 15, J.Johnson 2-4 0-0 5, Barbosa 5-14 3-3 14, Bayless 4-8 0-0 10, Davis 7-7 0-0 14, Magloire 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 42-78 11-13 104.
CLEVELAND (96): Cassipi 0-4 2-2 2, Jamison 6-20 3-6 15, Varejao 6-12 2-3 14, Irving 2-7 1-1 6, Parker 3-3 0-0 8, Sessions 6-12 4-5 18, Gee 5-7 2-3 13, T.Thompson 4-6 6-8 14, Gibson 3-6 0-0 6. Hollins 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 35-85 20-28 96.
Cleveland 23 29 26 26 — 104
Toronto 23 19 28 26 — 96
3-Point Goals—Toronto 9-21 (Calderon 3, Butler 1, A.Johnson 1, Bargnani 1, Barbosa 1-3, Butler 1-4, Bargnani 1-4, DeRozan 0-1). Cleveland 6-20 (Parker 2-2, Sessions 2-4, Gee 1-2, Irving 1-5, Cassipi 0-2, Jamison 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Toronto 49 (A.Johnson 13). Cleveland 48 (Varejao 10). Assists—Toronto 35 (Calderon 11). Cleveland 21 (Irving 7). Total Fouls—Toronto 22, Cleveland 16. Technicals—Toronto defensive three second, Cleveland defensive three second. A—20,562 (20,562).

HORNETS 95, SUNS 84
NEW ORLEANS (95): Aminu 6-11 0-2 13, Landry 6-15 2-5 14, Okafor 1-5 2-4 4, Belinelli 4-11 2-2 10, Gordon 8-18 2-3 20, Vasquez 3-7 3-3 10, Ariza 1-3 0-0 2, Ott 0-0 0-0 0, Smith 1-3 2-2 4, C.Johnson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 35-79 13-21 95.
PHOENIX (84): Hill 3-10 0-0 6, Frye 1-6 1-3, Gortat 6-9 1-3 13, Nash 5-10 2-2 14, Dudley 3-11 2-3 9, Lopez 8-12 5-6 21, Morris 2-5 2-2 7, Dragic 3-6 0-0 7, Price 0-3 0-0 0, Brown 1-8 0-0 2, Telfair 0-1 2-2 2. Totals 32-81 15-19 84.
New Orleans 23 24 15 33 — 95
Phoenix 20 21 24 19 — 84
3-Point Goals—New Orleans 2-16 (Aminu 1-2, Vasquez 1-3, Belinelli 0-5, Gordon 0-6). Phoenix 5-25 (Nash 2-3, Morris 1-3, Childress 1-4, Dudley 1-5, Price 0-1, Telfair 0-1, Brown 0-2, Frye 0-2, Hill 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New Orleans 54 (Okafor 9). Phoenix 51 (Morris 9). Assists—New Orleans 10 (Gordon 3). Phoenix 23 (Nash 12). Total Fouls—New Orleans 22. Phoenix 24. Technicals—New Orleans defensive three second. A—17,776 (18,422).

NHL

Standings

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	34	22	8	4	48	102	72
Philadelphia	34	21	9	4	46	118	99
Pittsburgh	35	20	11	4	44	114	91
New Jersey	35	19	15	1	39	97	103
N.Y. Islanders	34	11	17	6	28	77	111
Northeast Division							
Boston	33	23	9	1	47	119	83
Toronto	35	18	13	4	40	110	113
Ottawa	36	17	14	5	39	111	122
Buffalo	35	17	15	3	37	96	103
Montreal	36	13	16	7	33	88	101
Southeast Division							
Florida	36	18	11	7	43	94	96
Winnipeg	35	16	14	5	37	98	104
Washington	34	17	15	2	36	100	104
Tampa Bay	34	14	17	3	31	90	116
Carolina	37	12	19	6	30	95	123

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Chicago	36	23	8	5	51	122	102
St. Louis	35	21	10	4	46	92	77
Detroit	35	22	12	1	45	115	79
Nashville	35	18	14	3	39	96	103
Columbus	35	9	22	4	22	82	121
Northwest Division							
Minnesota	37	20	12	5	45	88	86
Vancouver	35	21	12	2	44	115	85
Colorado	37	19	17	1	39	100	107
Calgary	36	17	15	4	38	90	98
Edmonton	34	16	16	3	35	93	91
Pacific Division							
San Jose	32	19	10	3	41	95	76
Dallas	35	20	14	1	41	95	101
Phoenix	35	18	14	3	39	92	92
Los Angeles	35	16	14	5	37	76	85
Anaheim	34	9	19	6	24	80	113

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Monday's Scores
Colorado 4, Minnesota 2
Buffalo 4, Washington 2
N.Y. Rangers 3, N.Y. Islanders 0
Carolina 5, New Jersey 2
St. Louis 5, Dallas 3
Detroit 4, Nashville 1
Chicago 4, Columbus 1
Edmonton at Vancouver, late
Phoenix at Los Angeles, late
Anaheim at San Jose, late

Today's Games
Carolina at Pittsburgh, 6 p.m.
Calgary at Columbus, 6 p.m.
Montreal at Ottawa, 6:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m.
Toronto at Florida, 6:30 p.m.
St. Louis at Detroit, 6:30 p.m.
Winnipeg at Colorado, 8 p.m.

Wednesday's Games
Buffalo at New Jersey, 6 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Washington, 6:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Nashville, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at Chicago, 7:30 p.m.
Boston at Phoenix, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at San Jose, 9:30 p.m.

MONDAY'S SUMMARIES
BLUES 5, STARS 3

Dallas	0	2	1	— 3
St. Louis	1	2	2	— 5

First Period—1. St. Louis, Stewart 6 (Backes, Cotsonika), 8:24 (pp).
Second Period—2. Dallas, Ribeiro 6 (Goligoski, Ott), 4:22. 3. St. Louis, Craidlehall (Nichol), 6:09. 4. St. Louis, Arnott 6 (Berglund, Shattenkirk), 19:57 (pp).
Third Period—5. St. Louis, Grachev 1 (Pietroran, Berglund), 6:43. 6. Dallas, Nystrom 12 (Duvall, Fiddler), 7:57. 7. Dallas, Ryder 14 (Le.Benn), 14:47. 8. St. Louis, Stewart 7 (Pietroran, Backes), 19:09 (en).
Shots on Goal—Dallas 5-11-7—23. St. Louis 9-16-3—28.
Goalies—Dallas, Bachman, Raycroft. St. Louis, Halak. A—18,842 (19,150). T—2:20

BLACKHAWKS 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

Columbus	0	0	1	— 1
Chicago	0	3	1	— 4

First Period—None.
Second Period—1. Chicago, Sharp 19 (Hossa, O'Donnell), 4:46. 2. Chicago, Stalberg 8 (Seabrook), 8:13. 3. Chicago, Stalberg 9 (Bolland, Keith), 15:48.
Third Period—4. Columbus, Wisniewski 2 (MacKinnon, Letestu), 3:09. 5. Chicago, Hossa 16 (Bolland, Bouma), 15:45 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Columbus 13-11-14—38. Chicago 5-12-5—22.
Goalies—Columbus, Mason. Chicago, Crawford. A—21,845 (19,717). T—2:17

RED WINGS 4, PREDATORS 1

Detroit	1	2	1	— 4
Nashville	0	0	1	— 1

First Period—1. Detroit, V.Filppula 11 (Zetterberg), 16:57.
Second Period—2. Detroit, Datsyuk 11 (Bertuzzi, Franzen), 12:52. 3. Detroit, Cleary 9 (Miller), 19:05.
Third Period—4. Detroit, V.Filppula 12 (Abdelkader, Emmerton), 5:22. 5. Nashville, Blum 3 (Tootoo), 17:46.
Shots on Goal—Detroit 7-9-6—22. Nashville 8-9-15—32.
Goalies—Detroit, Howard. Nashville, Rinne. A—17,113 (17,113). T—2:20

HURRICANES 4, DEVILS 2

New Jersey	0	0	2	— 2
Carolina	1	2	1	— 4

First Period—1. Carolina, Bra. Sutter 7 (Gleason), 11:13 (sh).
Second Period—2. Carolina, Ruutu 13 (Pontikarovsky, Brent), 7:01. 3. Carolina, Stewart 5 (Rod), Brent), 17:13.
Third Period—4. New Jersey, Clarkson 12 (Volchenkov, Foster), 12:38. 5. New Jersey, Henrique 2 (Rolinek, Volchenkov), 17:40. 6. Carolina, Ward 1, 19:30 (en).
Shots on Goal—New Jersey 11-2-12—25. Carolina 10-13-9—32.
Goalies—New Jersey, Hedberg. Carolina, Ward. A—16,121 (18,680). T—2:21

SABRES 4, CAPITALS 2

Washington	0	1	1	— 2
Buffalo	1	2	1	— 4

First Period—1. Buffalo, Pominville 12 (Stafford, Leopold), :51 (pp). 2. Buffalo, Ellis 2 (Vitale), 3:16. 3. Buffalo, Ehrhoff 3 (Hecht, Vanek), 11:15. 4. Buffalo, McNabb 1 (Boyes, Roy) 14:14 (pp).
Second Period—5. Washington, Hendricks 1 (Pennauit), 19:43.
Third Period—6. Washington, Ovechkin 12 (Backstrom, Wideman), 9:51 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Washington 9-5-6—22. Buffalo 8-5-10—23.
Goalies—Washington, Neuvirth. Vokoun. Buffalo, Miller. A—18,690 (18,690). T—2:21

RANGERS 3, ISLANDERS 0

N.Y. Islanders	0	0	0	— 0
N.Y. Rangers	0	1	2	— 3

First Period—None
Second Period—1. N.Y. Rangers, Hagelin 5 (Callahan, Del Zotto), 5:14
Third Period—2. N.Y. Rangers, Hagelin 6 (Del Zotto, Callahan), 6:32. 3. N.Y. Rangers, Gaborik 22 (Stralman), 17:13 (en).
Shots on Goal—N.Y. Islanders 7-12-9—28. N.Y. Rangers 12-10-9—31.
Goalies—N.Y. Islanders, Nabokov. N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist. A—18,200 (18,200). T—2:19

AVALANCHE 4, WILD 2

Colorado	0	2	2	— 4
Minnesota	1	1	0	— 2

First Period—1. Minnesota, Bouchard 7 (Heatley, Brodziak), 9:31 (pp).
Second Period—2. Colorado, O'Reilly 9 (Duchene), 10:34 (pp). 3. Minnesota, Clutterbuck 10 (Koivu, Heatley), 12:00. 4. Colorado, Landeskog 7 (Van der Gulik, Galiardi), 18:58.
Third Period—5. Colorado, Hejda 4 (O'Reilly, Van der Gulik), 10:20. 6. Colorado, Galiardi 6 (Hejda), 13:06.
Shots on Goal—Colorado 7-12-13—32. Minnesota 8-5-9—22.
Goalies—Colorado, Varlamov. Minnesota, Backstrom. A—19,290 (18,064). T—2:21.

MLB

Baseball Calendar
Jan. 9 — Hall of Fame voting announced, New York.
Jan. 11-12 — Owners' meetings, Scottsdale, Ariz.
Jan. 13 — Salary arbitrating filing.
Jan. 17 — Exchange of salary arbitration figures.
Feb. 1-21 — Salary arbitration hearings, St. Petersburg, Fla.
Feb. 15 — Voluntary reporting date for pitchers, catchers and injured players.
Feb. 24 — Voluntary reporting date for other players.
March 2 — Mandatory reporting date.
March 2-11 — Teams may renew contracts of unsigned players.
March 15 — Last day to place a player on unconditional release waivers and pay 30 days termination pay instead of 45 days.
April 2 — Last day to request unconditional release waivers on a player without having to pay his full 2012 salary.
April 4 — Opening day, St. Louis at Miami.
Active rosters reduced to 25 players.
June 4 — Amateur draft.
July 10 — All-Star game, Kansas City, Mo.
July 12-18 TBA — Deadline for amateur draft picks to sign.
July 22 — Hall of Fame induction, Cooperstown, N.Y.
July 31 — Last day to trade a player without securing waivers.
Sept. 1 — Active rosters expand to 40 players.
November TBA — Deadline for teams to make qualifying offers to their eligible former players who become free agents, 5th day after World Series.
November TBA — Deadline for free agents offered arbitration to accept, 12th day after World Series.
Dec. 2 — Last day for teams to offer 2012 contracts to unsigned players.
Dec. 3-6 — Winter meetings, Nashville, Tenn.

Fishing Report

WEST
ALAN HENRY: Water lightly stained; 45-53 degrees; 7.65' low. Black bass are good on finesse jigs, drop shot rigs, squarebill crankbaits and Texas rigs. Crappie are fair to good on jigs and live minnows (also spinnrows combinations). Catfish are fair on prepared bait.
ARROWHEAD: Water off color; 42-51 degrees; 5.33' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, jigs, spinnerbaits and shakyheads. Crappie are fair on minnows. White bass are good on slabs and minnows. Blue catfish are good on live shad.
COLORADO CITY: 17.8' low. No report available.
FORT PHANTOM HILL: Water clear; 43-52 degrees; 9.87' low. Black bass are fair to good on shallow crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps, Texas rigs and jigs. Crappie are fair to good on live minnows. White bass are fair to good on slabs and Rooster Tails. Catfish are fair to good on night crawlers.
HUBBARD CREEK: 44-51 degrees; 14.5' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, weightless flukes, finesse jigs and DT 10s. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and nightcrawlers.
NASWORTHY: No report available.
OAK CREEK: Water stained; 43-51 degrees; 14.24' low. Black bass are fair to good on squarebill crankbaits, Texas rigs, Rat-L-Traps and shakyheads. Crappie are fair to good on live minnows and jigs. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers.
O.H. IVIE: Water stained; 45-54 degrees; 37.94' low. Black bass are fair to good on squarebill crankbaits, Rat-L-Traps, Texas rigs and 1/4-oz shakyheads with a 4.5" Rat-teaNeale. Crappie are fair on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on slabs. Catfish are fair to good on nightcrawlers.
POSSUM KINGDOM: Water fairly clear; 44-54 degrees; 10.67' low. Black bass are fair on DD 22s, drop shot rigs, Texas rigs and jigs. Crappie are fair to good on minnows and jigs. White bass are fair to good on slabs and small swimbaits. Striped bass are fair to good on live shad and 4"-6" swimbaits. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and nightcrawlers.
SWEETWATER: Water murky; 42-51 degrees; 13.8' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, Rat-L-Traps and shakyheads. Crappie are fair to good on jigs and minnows. Catfish are fair to good on prepared bait and nightcrawlers.
WHITE RIVER: Water stained; 43-51 degrees; 23.26' low. Black bass are fair on Texas rigs, jigs and Rat-L-Traps. Crappie are fair on live minnows. Catfish are fair on prepared bait and nightcrawlers.

PANHANDLE
GREENBELT: Water stained; 42-51 degrees; 27.82' low. Black bass are fair Rat-L-Traps, Texas rigs and jigs. Crappie are fair on jigs and minnows. The Old Mustang Point ramp is still open.
MACKENZIE: Water stained; 43-49 degrees; 85.65' low. Black bass are fair on chatterbaits, Texas rigs and medium and shallow running shad pattern crankbaits. Striped bass are fair to good on live shad and swimbaits. Catfish are fair on trotlines. Ramp freshlt is still open.

CENTRAL
BROWNWOOD: Water lightly stained; 54-58 degrees; 15.88' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse Bass Hogg spinnerbaits, Grande Bass Rattle Snakes, and crew colored crankbaits. Hybrid stripper are slow. White bass are good on minnows. LT Fishes, and shad colored crankbaits off lighted docks at night. Crappie are good on minnows and blue tube jigs over brush piles. Channel catfish are good on stinkbait and minnows. Yellow catfish are slow.
BUCHANAN: Water clear; 56-60 degrees; 32.04' low. Black bass are fair on watermelon Whacky Sticks, chartreuse Cuttin's jigs, Beasing Shad Rat-L-Traps, and smoke grubs on flats. Striped bass are good on shad colored Rat-L-Traps, Spoiler Shads, and Pro Models, in 20-30 feet. White bass are fair on minnows and Tiny Traps in deep creeks. Crappie are fair on live minnows over brush piles in 15-30 feet. Channel catfish are slow. Yellow and blue catfish are fair on trotlines baited with live bait.
COLEMAN: Water clear; 58-62 degrees; 15.84' low. Black bass are good on pearl colored spinnerbaits and crankbaits. Hybrid stripper are good on live minnows. Crappie are good on live minnows over brush piles in 15-20 feet. Channel catfish are fair on stinkbait and live minnows. Yellow catfish are fair on trotlines.
LBJ: Water clear; 57-60 degrees; 0.40' low. Black bass are fair on Bleeding Shad Rat-L-Traps, buzzbaits, and wacky rigged watermelon Whacky Sticks in 10-20 feet. White bass are fair vertically jigging Pink Minnows under birds. Crappie are fair on Curb's crappie jigs and live minnows over brush piles in 15-20 feet. Channel catfish are fair on minnows and stinkbait.
TRAVIS: Water lightly stained; 56-59 degrees; 54.42' low. Black bass are good on chartreuse Bass Hogg spinnerbaits, Grande and small spinnerbaits in 20-35 feet. Striped bass are slow. White bass are fair

NHL ROUNDUP

FROM WIRE REPORTS

RANGERS 3, ISLANDERS 0

NEW YORK — Carl Hagelin scored twice for his second multi-goal game in the NHL and Henrik Lundqvist stopped all 28 shots he faced as the New York Rangers beat the New York Islanders 3-0 on Monday night for their fifth straight victory.

Hagelin, in just his 16th career game, scored in the second and third periods for the surging Rangers (22-6-4). The Atlantic Division leaders who leapfrogged defending Stanley Cup champion Boston into first place in the Eastern Conference.

The Rangers finished a 3-0 homestand that included a pair of victories over the Islanders in a five-day span. New York's past four victories have been against division rivals.

Lundqvist improved to 23-11-5 against the Islanders with four shutouts. He has three shutouts overall this season and 38 in seven NHL seasons.

Marian Gaborik sealed the win with his league-leading 22nd goal — an empty-netter with 2:28 left. Gaborik scored for the fifth straight game, netting seven in the span, and matched his goal total for all of last season.

AVALANCHE 4, WILD 2

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Jan Hejda scored the go-ahead goal at 10:20 of the third period and Colorado snapped a nine-game road losing skid by beating Minnesota.

The Avalanche won on the road for the first time since Oct. 22 and extended Minnesota's winless streak to seven games.

SABRES 4, CAPITALS 2

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Brayden McNabb capped Buffalo's four-goal first period with his first NHL goal and the Sabres cruised past Washington.

Jason Pominville, Matt Ellis and Christian Ehrhoff also scored in the first period for the Sabres, who snapped a three-game skid to improve to 4-6-2 in their last 12 games.

HURRICANES 4, DEVILS 2

RALEIGH, N.C. — Cam Ward made 23 saves and was credited with a bizarre empty-net goal, leading Carolina past New Jersey.

Brandon Sutter had a short-handed goal, Tuomo Ruutu and Anthony Stewart scored in the second period, and Tim Gleason and Tim Brent each had two assists for the Hurricanes.

RED WINGS 4, PREDATORS 1

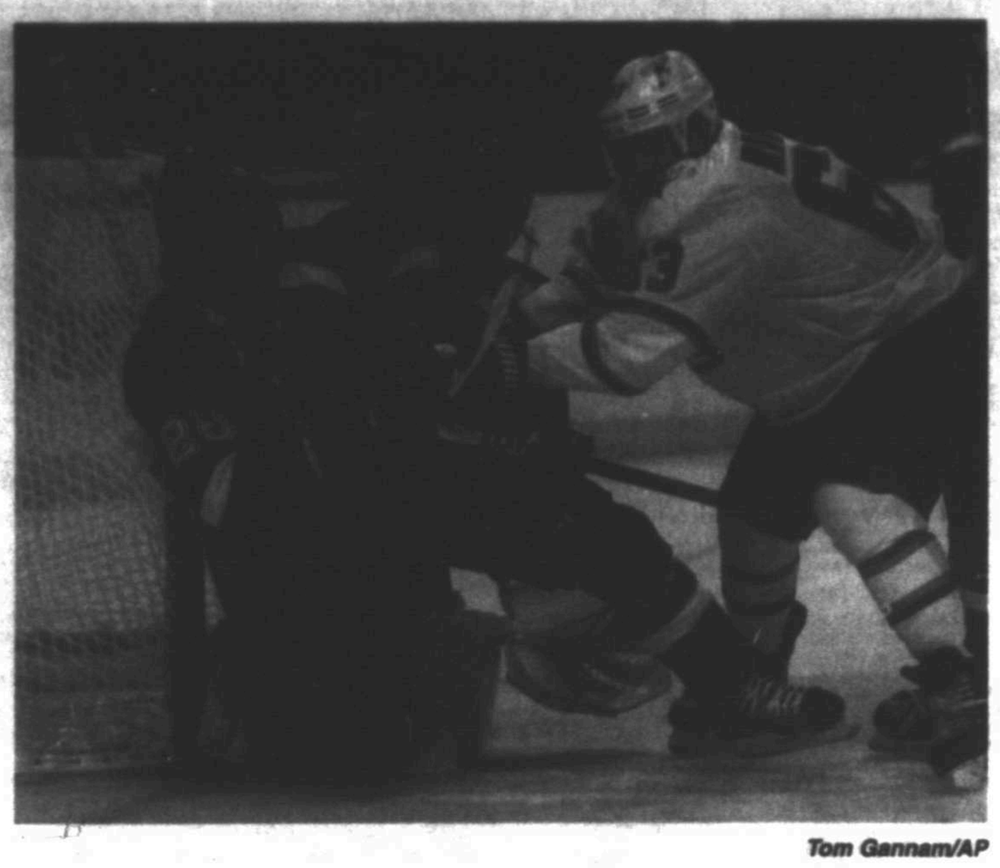
NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Valtteri Filppula scored a pair of goals to lead Detroit over Nashville.

Pavel Datsyuk and Danny Cleary also scored for the Red Wings, who scored twice in a span of 13 seconds during the second period and stopped a two-game skid. Jimmy Howard made 31 saves.

BLACKHAWKS 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

CHICAGO (AP) — Viktor Stalberg scored two goals and Corey Crawford made 37 saves for Chicago.

Marian Hossa had a goal and an assist, and Patrick Sharp also connected for the Blackhawks, who are 9-1-1 in their last 11 games and lead the NHL with 50 points.



Tom Gannam/AP

Dallas' Mike Ribeiro, left, knocks down St. Louis' Carlo Colaiacovo (28) in front of goalie Jaroslav Halak in the first period Monday, Dec. 26, 2011 in St. Louis.

Cracknell scores tiebreaking goal as Blues beat Stars

Associated Press

Blues 5
Stars 3

ST. LOUIS — Adam Cracknell was forced to put his Christmas celebration on hold when he got a surprise call telling him he was being recalled by the Blues.

It was worth it.

Cracknell put St. Louis ahead for good in the second period Monday night and the Blues scored two rare power-play goals in a 5-3 win over the Dallas Stars.

"I'll take that as a Christmas present any day," Cracknell said. "This is a dream come true. You can't ask for anything better than to play in the NHL."

Cracknell spent much of Sunday traveling to St. Louis after a late Christmas Eve call from the Blues.

Cracknell, who scored three goals in 24 games last season, skated with the team for the first time this season Monday morning and then made a big impact later in the evening.

He broke a 1-1 tie with the fourth goal of his career at 6:09 of the second period.

St. Louis, which won its sixth successive home game, improved to 7-1-1 in its last nine. The Blues are 15-3-4 under coach Ken Hitchcock, who took over for the fired Davis Payne on Nov. 6.

Dallas lost for the third time in eight games. The Stars had won the previous five games against St. Louis.

Chris Stewart scored twice for St. Louis including an empty-net goal with 50 seconds left.

Evgeny Grachev and Jason Arnott also tallied for the Blues, who improved to 14-3-1 at home. They lead the NHL in home wins.

The Blues scored two power-play goals in a game for just the second time this season. They broke out of an 0-for-9 slump but still have a league-low 14 goals with the man advantage.

Arnott pushed the lead to 3-1 on a power-play goal with 1.1 seconds left in the second period. Arnott, who has eight goals, scored for the fourth time in the last five games after just four goals in his first 29 games.

Grachev scored his first career goal at 6:45 of the third period to push the lead to 4-1.

Dallas rallied with goals from Eric Nystrom and Michael Ryder. Ryder cut the deficit to 4-3 with his 14th goal of the season with 5:13 remaining.

But Stewart scored an empty-netter with 50 seconds left to push the lead to 5-3.

Hitchcock was pleased with his team's effort especially the season-best two-for-two performance on the power play.

"We played really hard and did a lot of good things," Hitchcock said. "We really dialed it up today. We were firing from everywhere."

Cracknell was recalled to replace center T.J. Oshie, who will miss at least two games with an injured left wrist. Cracknell whipped a wrist shot past Dallas goalie Richard Bachman from a sharp angle to give St. Louis the lead for good 2-1.

"I just moved my feet and tried to catch him off guard and it worked," Cracknell said. "I saw it trickling in, Once it crossed that goal line, I was very happy."

St. Louis winger David Perron, who added a pair of assists, was impressed with Cracknell's first-game contribution.

"Guys like him need to step up and he did a good job of doing just that," Perron said. "We've always got guys like him that can do the job."

United States tops Denmark in hockey worlds

Associated Press

United States 11
Denmark 3

EDMONTON, Alberta — Charlie Coyle had a hat trick and Kyle Rau added two goals and the United States dominated Denmark 11-3 to open the world junior men's hockey championship Monday.

With a 3-2 lead going into the second period, the U.S. (1-0) scored six goals to put the game out of reach.

U.S. captain Jason Zucker, with two assists, Stephen Johns, Jarred Tinordi, Nick Bjugstad, Bill Arnold and JT Miller also scored.

Mathias Bau-Hansen scored twice in the first period to keep the Danes close through 20 minutes.

Thomas Spelling had the other goals for Denmark (0-1).

In other games, Mark Stone had a hat trick to lead Canada to an 8-1 win.

Stone also had an assist for Canada. Jonathan Huberdeau had a five-point effort with a goal and four assists.

Brendan Gallagher, Defenseman Dougie Hamilton and forward Ryan Strome and Brett Connolly of the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning also scored.

Alexander Ruuttu, son of former NHL player Christian Ruuttu, scored for Finland early in the second period.

Canada coach Don Hay went with experience in net, giving Mark Visentin the first start of the tournament. The Phoenix Coyotes prospect made 24 saves on 25 shots for the win.

Visentin was Canada's starting goaltender for the medal round of the 2011 tournament in Buffalo, N.Y.

Finland went with Chris Gibson. Canada finished with 42 shots on the Los Angeles Kings prospect.

Canada has Tuesday off before facing the Czech Republic on Wednesday and Denmark the following day. The hosts conclude Pool B play on Saturday versus the United States.

In Calgary, Sweden defeated Latvia 9-4 in a Pool A game with defending champion Russia set to face Switzerland at night.

The top team in each pool earns a bye to the semifinal round. The second and third teams cross over and meet in the quarterfinals.

Max Friberg scored four goals for Sweden. Ottawa Senators prospect Mika Zibanejad, who plays for Djurgardens of the SEL, scored a pair of power-play goals for Sweden, which led 3-2 after the first period and 6-3 after the second.

Canada beats Finland in opener

Associated Press

Canada 8
Finland 1

EDMONTON, Alberta — Mark Stone had a hat trick to lead Canada to an 8-1 win over Finland to open the world junior men's hockey championship Monday.

Stone also had an assist for Canada. Jonathan Huberdeau had a five-point effort with a goal and four assists.

Brendan Gallagher, Defenseman Dougie Hamilton and forward Ryan Strome and Brett Connolly of the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning also scored.

Alexander Ruuttu, son of former NHL player Christian Ruuttu, scored for Finland early in the second period.

Canada coach Don Hay went with experience in net, giving Mark Visentin the first start of the tournament. The Phoenix Coyotes prospect made 24 saves on 25 shots for the win.

Visentin was Canada's starting goaltender for the medal round of the 2011 tournament in Buffalo, N.Y.

WESTTEXASSPORTS

FROM STAFF REPORTS

To submit an item for West Texas Sports, please either fax, bring in, mail or e-mail your information in hard-copy form to the Reporter-Telegram sports department.

Please make your submission as detailed as possible, including dates of events, deadlines, fees, age groups, etc.

To bring your item to the MRT, come to 201 E Illinois in Midland. To mail your information, send it to Reporter-Telegram, c/o Sports Department, 201 E. Illinois Ave., Midland, Texas, 79701

To fax your information, send to 570-7650.

Baseball

GCM Baseball Academy
What: Professional private baseball lessons & clinics covering pitching, fielding, catching and hitting provided by three former professional players.
Fee: Ages 5-8 up.
Cost: Individual lessons $65 an hour or $40 for 30 minutes. Bulk purchases & group lesson rates available at discount.
For more info: Call (432) 425-6108

Private batting and pitching instruction
For more info: Call Danny Jordan at 230-0086 for instruction on mechanics and pitch selection in a one-on-one setting

Private hitting and catching instruction
For more info: Call Scott Chapman at 967-2364 for instruction in a one-on-one environment.

Pitching, hitting and fielding lessons
For more info: Call Midland High baseball coach Barry Russell at 296-8439

Private Baseball Instruction
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Private Baseball/Softball lessons
For more info: Contact Extra Innings Midland/Odessa at (432) 617-4487 or visit www.extrainnings-midlandodessa.com

Basketball

Permian Basketball Association needs officials
For more info: Jim Cox, 685-4143 or 553-3714

YMCA needs basketball referees
For more info: 682-2551

Vertical jump, speed and agility training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466, www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Summer Prolifics Basketball League
What: Regional Development Basketball League
For: Players 16 and up and teams for summer basketball league to start in June
For more info: Call 685-205-6075, ext. 4399

Billiards

Eight and Nine ball league
When: Every Sunday and Wednesday, 6-8:30 p.m.
Where: Fast Freddy's, Midland
Sign-up at: Stein Billiards or Fast Freddy's
For more info: Contact Bob Schultz, league director, 563-3113

Booster Clubs

Midland High Softball
When: First Thursday of every month, 7 p.m.
Where: MHS Youth Center
For more info: Call Russell at 561-8497

Bowling

Tuesday Night Fatalities Men's League
When: Begin at 6:45 p.m.
For more info: Melton Post 684-5176 or Cactus Lanes 694-0177

Edith McElmore Three-Person League
When: 10 a.m. Wednesdays
Where: AMF Lanes
For more info: Call AMF Lanes at 689-9725

Camps/Clinics

Tae Star All Star Camp
For whom: Boys and girls ages 10-19
For more info: Call (704) 373-0873 for a brochure

COM Aquatic Camps
What: Swimming, diving, snorkeling
Ages: Preschool and grade school
For more info: Call 684-7755

Beginner tennis clinics
Where: Midland High School tennis courts
When: Monday-Thursday from 8:30 to 10 a.m. or 7 to 8:30 p.m.
For: Kindergarten-12th grade, community-based organizations, parents and adults
Deadline: Two weeks before week wanting to attend
For more info: Call Luis Valdez at 570-6245, Brandi at 687-7059 or Elizabeth at 699-8056

YMCA Basketball Skills Clinic
When: Every Saturday
Times: 1 p.m.-3:45 p.m. for grades 3 through 12
Cost: YMCA Family member, free; YMCA Youth member, $5 and program participant, $10 per visit
For more info: Call Midland YMCA at 682-2551

Cycling

Permian Basin Bicycle Association Meetings
When: 7 p.m., third Monday of every month
Where: Amos Energy's Fischer Community Room, 2304 Loop 40, Midland International Airport
Dues: $25/$30 for a family
For more info: Peyton's Bikes 699-1718 or go to www.pbbab.com

Dodgeball

Sticks and Kicks Leagues
Who: Kids, adults, co-ed players
Cost: $35 per player (8 game season)
Where: Register at Sticks and Kicks, 3918 W. Wall
For more info: Call 520-6633

Flag Football

YMCA Officials Needed
What: The YMCA needs officials for Youth Flag Football games Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
For more info: Call 682-2551

Football

Strength, speed, agility and power training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466, www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Permian Basin Officials Chapter seeks officials
Note: Education and training will be provided
For more info: Call Terrell Perez at 559-5024 or Don Orren at 631-2395

Golf

Swing Speed Training
For: All ages and handicaps
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Swing speed and fitness training
Where: Next Level Sports Training
For more info: 262-6466, www.trappieracceleration.com

Gymnastics

Next Level Gymnastics
What: Preschool, Stretch-n-Grow. All-around, T&T, Boys, special needs
For more info: Call 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Martial Arts

Aikido
When: Monday-Friday, 7 to 9 p.m., Saturdays, 12:30 p.m.
Note: Specializing in traditional Hombu style Aikido
For more info: Call John Riggs, 684-7008 or 770-3155

Cardio Kickboxing Class
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: Jimenez Tae Kwon-Do and Fitness Studio, 4400 N. Midland Dr.
Cost: $35 a month
For more info: Call 699-8139

Women's Self Defense Class
When: Monday and Wednesday, 8:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; Friday, 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.
Where: Jimenez Tae Kwon-Do Studio, 4400 N. Midland Dr.
For more info: Call 697-6554

Private Tae Kwon-Do lessons
Where: Jimenez Tae Kwon-Do Studio, 4400 N. Midland Dr.
For more info: Call 697-6554

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
When: 6-8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-3 p.m. Saturdays
Where: Peter Martial Arts Academy, 3500 N. Midland Dr., Suite A
For more info: Call 634-9621 or (469) 248-8472

Matthews Martial Arts
When: Monday through Thursday, 5-8 p.m.
What: Kenpo-Jujitsu-Jujitsu-Kenpo-KungFu
For: Ages 3 and up
Where: 3205 Cuthbert
For more info: Contact Jason Matthews at 488-7467 or 699-9444

Miscellaneous

Student-Athlete Sports Consultant
For: Assisting high school student athletes with academic-athletic scholarships.
For more info: Call Jacob Sandifano at (915) 240-1020

Poker

Lone Star Poker League
What: Free to play Texas Hold'em Poker tournaments.
For: Beginners to experienced players. Ages 21 and up.
When/where: 1 p.m. Sunday, Velvet Room (non-smoking); 7 p.m. Sunday, Woofers & Tweeters; 7 p.m. Monday, Woofers & Tweeters (Shootout); 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Hog Pit; 7 p.m. Wednesday, Woofers & Tweeters; 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Hog Pit; 1 p.m. Saturday, Velvet Room (non-smoking)
For more info: Go to www.lonestarpokertour.net

Rugby

Red Dog Rugby Club Practice
When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays
Where: Hogan Park
For more info: 697-9418

Midland Rugby (Bloodhounds) Club
For more info: Call Joshua 661-7147

HHD Dads & Lads Rugby
When: 7-8:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays
Where: Cowden Park
For more info: 212-8086

Running

Permian Basin Running Club
Cost: $20 per year for individual membership; $30 for per year for family membership
For more info: Go to www.pbrunningclub.com or email Shawn Halley, president at halseyshawn@pbrunningclub.com

Gazelles Training Group
When: 6 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
For more info: Call Popcorn Leonard at 512-762-1020 or 682-0988

Shooting

Comanche Trail Shootists
What: Single Action Shooting Society affiliated club in Midland
When: Monthly shoots first Saturday and third Sunday of each month, first Saturday beginning at 10 a.m., Third Sunday from 1 p.m. (Mandatory safety meeting at 12:30 p.m.) Also shoot on 6th Sunday on months that have them (begin at 1 p.m. and are no cost to the shooter); Mandatory safety meeting at 9:30 a.m.
Where: Timberline Ranch adjacent to Jake's Claye
For more info: Go to comanchetrailshootists.org or call Hoodoo Brown 682-1422.

Midland Shooters Association
What: All types of shooting practice and competition, featuring archery, benchrest rifle, bullseye rifle, high power rifle, pistol silhouette, rimfire silhouette, 3 gun, practical pistol, skeet, trap 5 stale and sporting clays.
When: Members can access rifle and pistol ranges from sunrise to sunset seven days a week. Shotgun ranges open 11 a.m. until dusk Wednesday to Sunday.
For more info: Go to www.midlandshooters.com

Soccer

Permian Basin Soccer Association
What: Registration for women's spring/summer season
Where: Dunegan Park, located at corner of Gist and Terrell
When: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
For more info: Contact Jesus Chavez at 557-7032 anytime or Josh Chavez at 235-6947 after 6:30 p.m.

Speed and Agility Training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For: All Ages
For more info: 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Softball

Throwing velocity and swing speed training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466, www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

MUGSASA Umpires Meeting
When: Each Wednesday at 7 p.m.
Where: MUGS umpire locker
For more info: Call David Edens at 684-0805 or Mack Gipson at 694-3887

Midland Softball Association Tournament Schedule
Now available at www.midlandsoftball.com.
For more info: call Tommy Hankins at 520-0106

Midland Men's Woodfort Fastpitch Association
What: Men's fastpitch softball
For more info: Call 413-3173 or visit www.bookmyfastpitch.com/pages/Midland-Texas-Mens-Fastpitch

Team Infinity Tryouts
What: Team Infinity is looking for 8 and under softball players for a travel team
For more info: Please call Bobby Perez at 432-416-6753

Swimming

COM Pre-competitive swimming
Where: Midwest Aquatic Center
Cost: $40 per month
Prerequisite: Must be able to swim 25 yards or freestyle or backstroke
For more info: 684-7755

COM Water Aerobics Classes
When: All times, Monday through Saturday
When: All skill levels
For more info: Call Tommy McAlister at 684-7755

COM Learn to Swim
Ages: All ages
Note: Private, semi-private and group lessons are available
For more info: 684-7755

COM Masters Swimming
What: Competitive or non-competitive program for adults of all skill levels
When: 5-6 a.m., 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Cost: $40 per month (includes cardio training)
For more info: Call 684-7755

COM Diving Instruction
Who: All ages and levels invited
For more info: 684-7755

COM Learn to Dive
What: Learn basic skills for beginners then advance to pre-competitive and competitive diving that emphasizes skilled diving techniques and participation in diving meets
Ages: 4 and up
For more info: 684-7755

COM Competitive Dive Team
When: Try out for Bronze, Silver, Gold Prep or Gold levels of COM Dive Team.
What: Emphasizes is on diving techniques and participation in local and out of town competitive meets
For more info: 684-7755

COM Elite Dive Team
What: Highest level of COM diving. Concentrates on performing Olympic level skills, national and international level
For more info: 684-7755

COM Competitive Swim Team
When: Try out for COM Swim Team, tryouts available by appointment
What: Emphasizes stroke correction and participation in local and out of town competitive meets
For more info: 684-7755

COM Adult Conditioning
What: Allows adult participation use of top quality lap pools and fitness room during specified hours
For more info: 684-7755

COM Water Walking Class
What: Unstructured, self-paced class
For more info: Call Tommy McAlister at 684-7755

COM Senior Fitness Class
When: Senior citizens that need help with physical conditions resulting from injury, disease, chronic conditions, advanced age, etc.
For more info: Call Tommy McAlister at 684-7755

Central YMCA Water Aerobics Classes
When: Early morning, morning and evening
For more info: Call Leaf Feller 682-2551

Central YMCA Arthritis Water Exercise Classes
When: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
For more info: Call Leaf Feller 682-2551

Central YMCA Swimming Lessons
Who: All ages and ability
For more info: Call Leaf Feller 682-2551

Central YMCA Synchronized Swimming
For: Ages 6 and up
For more information: Call Leaf Feller 682-2551

Tennis

West Texas Tennis Association
What: West Texas Tennis Association, a non-profit community tennis association, promotes and oversees USTA leagues, programs and events in the area.
For more info: Call 432-563-1333 or www.westtexastennis.com for more information.

What: USTA Team Tennis Leagues
When: Adults 18 & older starting April 25
Where: Midland College Tennis Center
Call: Sherry 520-6610 or Email www.midlandtennis@aol.com

What: USTA Women's Lone Star Team League (18 & older) Novices
Where: Midland College Tennis Center
Call: 687-4046 or 290-5921

Midland Tennis Club (MTC)
What: MTC is a non-profit public tennis club having free tournaments and ladders for all ages and all levels for members.
Where: Midland College Tennis Center
Annual dues: $65 Adults, $30 Youths, $140 Families
Call: 687-4046 or 563-1333 to join

Midland College tennis classes
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 to 1:50 p.m.
Where: Midland College
For more info: Midland College 685-4500 or Lance Armstrong 687-4046

Youth Clinics
When: For children 4-8 years of age (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 to 4 p.m.) and 9-15 years of age (Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Where: Midland College Tennis Center
For more info: 687-4046

Midland Women's Tennis Association fall league
For more info: 699-0868

Agility Training & Injury Prevention
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Track & Field

Speed and Power Training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: 262-6466 or www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Volleyball

Vertical jump, agility training
Where: Next Level Sports Training, 704 W. Schauer
For more info: Call 262-6466 or visit www.nextlevelsportstraining.org

Walking

Midland Walkabout 50K Club Meetings
When: Fun Walks, 10K, 3rd Saturday morning of the month; Long Walks, Second Sunday of the month
Where: Fun Walks, very-unique in form 227 First Presbyterian Church, 600 W. Texas Ave.
What: All ages
For more info: Call Alan Ross 697-0896, or go to www.midlandwalkabout.yahoo.com

Missouri beats UNC in Independence Bowl

By David Brandt
Associated Press

SHREVEPORT, La. — Missouri made sure its final football game as a member of the Big 12 was decided early.

James Franklin ran for two touchdowns and threw for another, and the Tigers easily beat North Carolina 41-24 in the Independence Bowl on Monday night.

Missouri (8-5) ends the season on a four-game winning streak for the first time since 1965. The Tigers will join the Southeastern Conference next fall and showed one reason they should be a factor immediately: The 6-foot-2, 225-pound Franklin, a sophomore who generally did as he pleased in both the running and passing games.

Franklin, named the game's offensive Most Valuable Player, rushed for 142 yards and threw for 132 despite less than ideal conditions in the cold and rain at Independence Stadium. He led the Tigers to 31 first-half points — an Independence Bowl record.

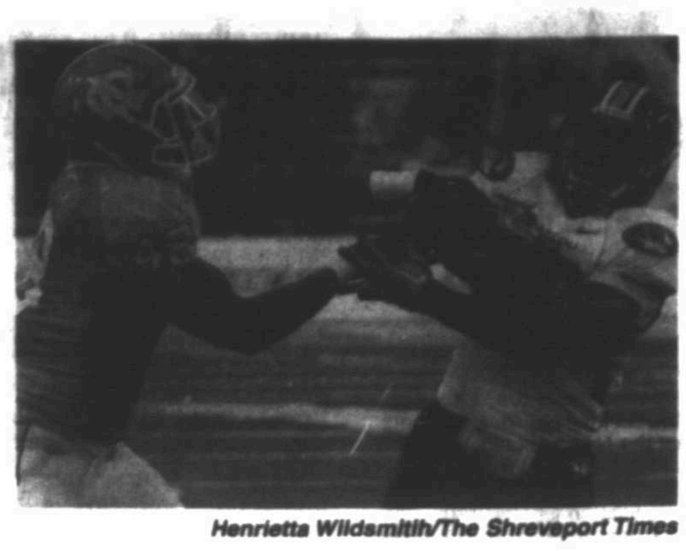
Tigers	41
Tar Heels	24

For North Carolina (7-6), a season that started with a promising 5-1 record ends with a lopsided loss. The Tar Heels lost five of their final seven under interim coach Everett Withers, who leaves to become defensive coordinator at Ohio State under Urban Meyer.

North Carolina had the Atlantic Coast Conference's second-best rushing defense, giving up just 106.2 yards per game. But the Tigers found plenty of running room with Franklin and Kendial Lawrence, repeatedly gashing the Tar Heels for big gains.

Lawrence rushed for 108 yards and a touchdown as the Tigers racked up 337 yards on the ground.

North Carolina's poor defense wasted a productive game by quarterback Bryn Renner, who threw for 317 yards, three touchdowns and an interception.



Henrietta Wildsmith/The Shreveport Times

Missouri's De'Vion Moore, right, tries to get away from North Carolina's Kevin Reddick (48) in the first half of theIndependence Bowl on Monday in Shreveport, La.

BELK BOWL

LOUISVILLE (7-5) VS. NORTH CAROLINA STATE (7-5), 7 p.m. today, ESPN

Line: N.C. State by 1 1/2
Series Record: Louisville leads 3-0

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The winner of this showdown between the Atlantic Coast Conference's Wolfpack and Big East's Cardinals will continue to build momentum into 2012. Both teams come into the game hot, with the Cardinals having won five of their last six and the Wolfpack four of their last five.

KEY MATCHUP: Louisville QB Teddy Bridgewater doesn't always put up the best numbers, but he knows how to win games. He'll face a Wolfpack defense that led the nation with 24 interceptions. Wolfpack CB David Amerson was the nation's leader in interceptions with 11 and was one of three finalists for the Jim Thorpe Award. The Wolfpack is 7-0 in games they've forced three or more turnovers.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

Louisville: WR DeVante Parker had only 17 receptions for the Cardinals, but six went for a touchdown, the most on the team. He's averaging 16.2 yard per catch.

N.C. State: QB Mike Glennon has thrown for 28 touchdowns this season, the third-highest, total in school history, since taking over for Russell Wilson.

FACTS & FIGURES

Louisville is making its 16th postseason appearance with a 7-7-1 record. Charlie Strong is only the third Louisville coach to take his team to a bowl game in his first two seasons. ... The Cardinals are starting six freshmen on offense, including four true freshmen. ... The Wolfpack will be making its 26h bowl appearance and are 13-11-1 in the postseason. ... The Wolfpack will start freshmen at kicker, punter and long snapper.

PIZZA BOWL

WESTERN MICHIGAN (7-5) VS. PURDUE (6-6) 3:30 p.m. today, ESPN2

Line: Purdue by 2 1/2
Series Record: Purdue leads 2-0

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Any time Western Michigan faces a Big Ten team, it's a chance for the Broncos to prove themselves. They last defeated one when they beat Illinois in 2008. Purdue is going to a bowl for the first time since 2007 after winning two of its last three regular-season games, including a victory over Ohio State.

KEY MATCHUP: Western Michigan WR Jordan White against the Purdue secondary. White was a third-team All-American despite playing in relative obscurity in the Mid-American Conference. He has 127 catches for 1,646 yards and 16 touchdowns on the season, and this is his chance to make a name for himself on a bigger stage.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

Western Michigan: QB Alex Carder has thrown for 3,434 yards with 28 touchdowns and only 10 interceptions this season. White is his top target, but he can spread the ball around if need be.

Purdue: CB Ricardo Allen has intercepted three passes this season, and the sophomore leads a defensive backfield that will try to contain White and the Western Michigan passing game.

FACTS & FIGURES

The Little Caesars Pizza Bowl has a tie with the Big Ten, but this is the first time it's been able to welcome a team from the conference since Purdue beat Central Michigan 51-48 in 2007. ... Western Michigan last made a bowl when it lost to Rice in the Texas Bowl in December 2008. ... Purdue announced last week it was extending coach Danny Hope's contract for two additional years, through Dec. 31, 2016. ... Western Michigan has scored at least 38 points seven times this season.

Glennon leads NC State vs. Louisville in Belk Bowl

By Steve Reed
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — When North Carolina State coach Tom O'Brien parted ways with quarterback Russell Wilson in the spring there were plenty of concerns about the Wolfpack's offense.

Replacement Mike Glennon has taken care of that, and then some.

Glennon has flourished as a junior this season. He threw for 2,790 yards and 28 touchdowns and led N.C. State to a berth in tonight's Belk Bowl against Louisville, a game between 7-5 teams playing very well at the moment.

O'Brien, who coached Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan at Boston College, had a hunch the Wolfpack wouldn't miss a beat.

"We've all made the comparison that he's Matt Ryan reincarnated," O'Brien said. "The way he throws the ball, there's a lot of similarities with Matt. It's just a question of playing and gaining experience. He learned a lot as the year went on. You would expect that. He's a kid that studies the game and works at it."

After a 3-4 start, the Wolfpack won four of their last five games to become bowl eligible.

Glennon threw eight touchdown passes in his final two games, including five in the season finale when he brought the Wolfpack back from a 33-point deficit to beat Maryland and clinch a bowl berth.

Western Michigan takes on Purdue in Pizza Bowl

By Noah Tristar
Associated Press

DETROIT — Western Michigan coach Bill Cubit was thrilled after he found out his team would be playing in a bowl close to home.

The Broncos don't even have to leave the state to play in the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl today against Purdue at Detroit's Ford Field.

"It's a perfect situation for us as a university," Cubit said. "Our alumni can get to the game. Our student body can get to the game. Our fans will be able to travel, a lot more families can be at the game than if we went somewhere else."

If last weekend was any indication, Cubit can expect a friendly reception. A contingent from Purdue's team was shown taking in Saturday's Lions-Chargers game at Ford Field and greeted with plenty of boos. Then a group from Western Michigan was introduced to loud cheers.

Still, the Broncos (7-5) will need more than supportive fans to beat Purdue. Western Michigan hasn't beaten a Big Ten team since 2008, although the Broncos did play Illinois tough in a 23-20 defeat in September.

Purdue is returning to a bowl for the first time since 2007, when the Boilermakers beat Central Michigan 51-48 in this same bowl. Another shootout is certainly possible. Western Michigan has scored at least 38 points seven times this season, including a 66-63 loss to Toledo last month.

"Looking at Western Michigan on film, they can score some points," Purdue coach Danny Hope said. "They're obviously on the cutting edge of the spread offense. It's very similar to what we ran at Purdue when I coached there before, and we had Drew Brees. ... It's very similar in a lot of ways — the play calling, the styles, the protections. They're a high-scoring football team, so we'd better be ready to score some points."

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BOWL SCHEDULE

Saturday, Dec. 17
New Mexico Bowl
At Albuquerque
Temple 37, Wyoming 15
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
At Boise, Idaho
Ohio 24, Utah State 23
New Orleans Bowl
Louisiana-Lafayette 32, San Diego State 30

Tuesday, Dec. 20
Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
Marshall 20, FIU 10

Wednesday, Dec. 21
Poinsettia Bowl
At San Diego
TCU 31, Louisiana Tech 24

Thursday, Dec. 22
MAACO Bowl
At Las Vegas
Boise State 56, Arizona State 24

Saturday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
At Honolulu
Southern Mississippi 24, Nevada 17

Monday, Dec. 26
Independence Bowl
At Shreveport, La.
Missouri 41, North Carolina 24

Today
Little Caesars Pizza Bowl
At Detroit
Western Michigan (7-5) vs.Purdue (6-6), 3:30 p.m. (ESPN2)

Belk Bowl
At Charlotte, N.C.
North Carolina State (7-5) vs. Louisville (7-5), 7 p.m. (ESPN)

Wednesday, Dec. 28
Military Bowl
At Washington
Air Force (7-5) vs.Toledo (9-4), 3:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Holiday Bowl
At San Diego
Texas (7-5) vs. California (7-5), 7 p.m. (ESPN)

Thursday, Dec. 29
Champs Sports Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Florida State (8-4) vs. Notre Dame (8-4), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Alamo Bowl
At San Antonio
Baylor (9-3) vs. Washington (7-5), 8 p.m. (ESPN)

Friday, Dec. 30
Armed Forces Bowl
At Dallas
Tulsa (8-4) vs. BYU (9-3), 11 a.m. (ESPN)
Pinstripe Bowl
At Bronx, N.Y.
Rutgers (8-4) vs. Iowa State (6-6), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Music City Bowl
At Nashville, Tenn.
Mississippi State (6-6) vs. Wake Forest (6-6), 5:40 p.m. (ESPN)
Insight Bowl
At Tempe, Ariz.
Oklahoma (9-3) vs. Iowa (7-5), 9 p.m. (ESPN)

Saturday, Dec. 31
Meineke Car Care Bowl
At Houston
Texas A&M (6-6) vs. Northwestern (6-6), 11 a.m. (ESPN)
Sun Bowl
At El Paso
Georgia Tech (6-4) vs. Utah (7-5), 1 p.m. (CBS)
Liberty Bowl
At Memphis, Tenn.
Vanderbilt (6-6) vs. Cincinnati (9-3), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Fight Hunger Bowl
At San Francisco
UCLA (8-7) vs. Illinois (8-4), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Chick-fil-A Bowl
At Atlanta
Virginia (6-4) vs. Auburn (7-5), 6:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Monday, Jan. 2
TicketCity Bowl
At Dallas
Penn State (9-3) vs. Houston (13-1), 11 a.m. (ESPN)
Capital One Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Nebraska (9-4) vs. South Carolina (10-2), Noon (ESPN)
Outback Bowl
At Tampa, Fla.
Georgia (10-3) vs. Michigan State (10-3), Noon. (ABC)
Gator Bowl
At Jacksonville, Fla.
Florida (8-4) vs. Ohio State (9-3), Noon (ESPN2)
Rose Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
Oregon (11-2) vs. Wisconsin (11-2), 4 p.m. (ESPN)
Fiesta Bowl
At Glendale, Ariz.
Stanford (11-1) vs. Oklahoma State (11-1), 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Tuesday, Jan. 3
Sugar Bowl
At New Orleans
Michigan (10-2) vs. Virginia Tech (11-2), 7 p.m. (ESPN)

Wednesday, Jan. 4
Orange Bowl
At Miami
West Virginia (9-3) vs. Clemson (10-3), 8 p.m. (ESPN)

Friday, Jan. 6
Cotton Bowl
At Arlington
Kansas State (10-2) vs. Arkansas (10-2), 7 p.m. (FOX)

Saturday, Jan. 7
BBVA Compass Bowl
At Birmingham, Ala.
Pittsburgh (8-4) vs. SMU (7-5), 11 a.m. (ESPN)

Sunday, Jan. 8
GoDaddy.com Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.
Arkansas State (10-2) vs. Northern Illinois (10-3), 8 p.m. (ESPN)

Monday, Jan. 9
BCS National Championship
At New Orleans
LSU (13-0) vs. Alabama (11-1), 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Saturday, Jan. 21
East-West Shrine Classic
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
East vs. West, 3 p.m., (NFLN)

Saturday, Jan. 28
Senior Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.
North vs. South, 3 p.m. (NFLN)

Saturday, Feb. 5
Texas vs. Nation At San Antonio
Texas vs. Nation, 1 p.m. (CBSSN)

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Magic find shots, down Rockets

By Kyle Hightower
Associated Press

Magic 104
Rockets 95

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Orlando Magic may not know exactly what twists may lie ahead of them during the remainder of this year's fast-paced NBA schedule. What they can count on, however, is that the team as it exists presently will have its best nights when the ball moves around and it takes advantage of open shots on offense.

Orlando accomplished both Monday night in a 104-95 win over Houston in the kind of game the Magic's players said afterward should be saved as a season blueprint as they prepare to take on the first of several grueling stretches.

"I think it was across the board for our team tonight," J.J. Redick said of the Magic earning their first win of the season following a Christmas night loss at Oklahoma City. "We just played better offensively...and when that happens it's a little easier to get into somewhat of a rhythm."

Hedo Turkoglu scored 23 points to lead five Magic players in double figures, and Orlando got 13 points from Turkoglu and eight points from Redick in the fourth quarter to help the Magic stave off a handful of second-half charges by the Rockets. Dwight Howard finished with 21 points and Redick 20 for the game.

Van Gundy derided his team's offensive energy in the loss to the Thunder and said it is far away from normal regular-season form.

"Those guys gave us a lift, and then I thought that Glen (Davis) us a big left there when we were fighting for the lead." said Van Gundy, whose team takes next hosts New Jersey Thursday to kick off a stretch of four games in five days. "We had some guys bounce back and have better games tonight and we had some other guys fall off.

"It's tough right now. We haven't had anybody in the first two games to have two good games. Hopefully, that consistency will come pretty quickly."

Kyle Lowry led Houston with 20 points and 12 assists, Luis Scola added 19 and Courtney Lee 15 off the bench.

The Rockets trailed by as many as 12 points and got within four in the fourth quarter, but the Magic were able to hit some timely 3-pointers late to help secure the victory.

John Raoux/AP

Houston's Luis Scola (4) battles for a rebound with Orlando Magic center Dwight Howard (12) during the first half Monday in Orlando, Fla.

SPURS

From 1C

ted 24 turnovers. Randolph had 10 points and six rebounds and Gasol had 13 and six. In the playoffs series against the Spurs, Randolph averaged 21.5 points.

It's not like the Spurs got any bigger to defend the Grizzlies' big frontline. DeJuan Blair, the 6-foot-7 center deemed too ineffective by coach Gregg Popovich to even play Games 5 and 6 against Memphis, was back in the starting lineup.

The Spurs have precious few alternatives: forward Antonio McDyess officially retired in training camp, and they haven't added a big man to replace him. Yet San Antonio was helped by 7-footer Tiago Splitter, who didn't look as lost as he did as rookie against Memphis last season.

"He was really solid," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "He stayed in good position, he blocked shots and he rebounded. He was real special tonight."

Mike Conley had 11 points and seven assists for the Grizzlies. Memphis led by one at halftime but were blown out in the third quarter after shooting just 29 percent from the floor.

Despite the loss, Gay was satisfied with his return.

"It's kind of bittersweet we lost, but it good that I'm healthy and I can get out there and play," he said.

Richard Jefferson, once thought to be a goner in the NBA's new amnesty clause, added 14 points for the Spurs. Duncan had 10 points in 22 minutes as the challenge of rationing the 35-year-old's minutes in a compressed, grueling schedule began.

Duncan is playing in the final year of his contract but hasn't said whether this will be his last run for a fifth title.

If Duncan and the Spurs have one last championship run left in them, there was no better first test than Memphis. The bigger and quicker Grizzlies gave the aging Spurs fits in the playoffs last April even without Gay, who had been Memphis' second-leading scorer.

For opening night, at least, San Antonio showed it can still keep up.

Leonard can take some credit for that. The 15th overall pick brought a jolt off the bench in the third quarter when the Spurs opened up a 19-point lead despite trailing at halftime. Leonard had six points during the stretch, including hitting a corner 3-pointer after catching a nifty behind-the-back pass from Ginobili.

Leonard is the centerpiece of what the Spurs are calling their youth movement — seven of their 13 players have fewer than three years of experience. But the face and fortunes of the franchise still firmly belong to Parker, Ginobili and Duncan, who started their 10th season together.

Darren Abate/AP

San Antonio's Manu Ginobili, right is defended by Memphis' Marc Gasol during the first half Monday, in San Antonio.

MAVS

From 1C

way it should be and there's going to be some bumps."

The challenge for coach Rick Carlisle is finding the right combination of players. He's trying to squeeze in Lamar Odom, Vince Carter and Delonte West to replace Tyson Chandler, J.J. Barea and others, all with little practice time. Carlisle already has seen a lack of trust on defense, and that throws everything else out of whack.

"We're going to recharge tomorrow, have a hell of a practice on Wednesday and then we've got to go up to Oklahoma City and we're going to have to play a lot better," Carlisle said. "I've got a lot of work to do."

The Nuggets hope this was an indication of what they can be like when they have everything clicking, regardless of the foe.

Lawson made 8 of 9 shots in the first half, and finished with 27 points. Andre Miller and Al Harrington each scored 18 points off the bench, and Denver's deep, athletic roster scored on 19 of its 25 possessions in the second quarter.

"We've been jelling real quick," Lawson said. "I knew we'd come out strong. ... That's when we're good, when we get out and run. It's my job to make sure the tempo is fast and guys are running in those lanes."

Denver made only 12 baskets in the second half, but it hardly mattered. The Nuggets led by 27 at halftime, and stretched it during the third quarter.

"It's way too early to get crazy but it felt good," Nuggets coach George Karl said.

Danilo Gallinari had 15 points and seven rebounds, and Arron Afflalo scored 11.

Dallas was so out of sync that fans were booing before halftime. The jeers came when a turnover near midcourt turned into a three-on-none fast break for Denver. The Nuggets had enjoyed so many easy baskets at that point that they didn't even bother doing anything fancy, with Gallinari softly tossing the ball to Harrington for a routine dunk that made it 65-41.

For Dallas, Jason Kidd scored 12 points, Carter scored 11 and Rodrigue Beaubois scored 10. Aside from Nowitzki and Kidd, the other three starters (Marion, Brendan Haywood and West) scored a combined 11 points.

Odom scored three points, making only 1 of 10 shots.

"We look like a team that's new," he said.

NBA's return draws big TV ratings on Christmas

NEW YORK (AP) — NBA fans seem more excited about basketball's return than bitter about the lockout based on television ratings for the league's delayed openers.

The five Christmas games Sunday averaged 6.2 million viewers based on fast national ratings, up from 6 million last year.

The Bulls-Lakers matchup was the third most-watched regular-season game ever on ABC, behind only last year's highly anticipated Heat-Lakers showdown and another meeting between Miami and LA in 2004.

Chris Paul's Clippers debut in the nightcap against the Warriors earned a 2.2 rating, up 69 percent over last year's Portland-Golden State telecast in the same slot.

It was ESPN's highest-rated Christmas prime-time game. The day's first contest, Celtics-Knicks on TNT, was the most viewed Christmas game ever on cable. The 4.0 rating was up 48 percent from last year's Bulls-Knicks game on ESPN.

NBAROUNDUP

FROM WIRE REPORTS

NETS 90, WIZARDS 84

WASHINGTON — Kris Humphries shrugged off loud booing to finish with 21 points and 16 rebounds, and Deron Williams had 23 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, helping the New Jersey Nets beat the Washington Wizards 90-84 Monday night in the season opener for both teams.

The Nets trailed by as many as 21 points in the second quarter, but began to turn things around with a 16-2 run.

John Wall, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2010 draft, had 13 points, eight rebounds and six assists, but he only shot 3 for 13. Backup shooting guard Nick Young led Washington with 16 points in just 18 minutes. He missed a large part of the second half after jamming his left foot, but returned.

BOBCATS 98, BUCKS 95

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — D.J. Augustin scored 19 points, rookie Kemba Walker added 13, including two free throws with 9.9 seconds remaining, and the Bobcats erased a 14-point deficit to beat the Bucks.

Gerald Henderson added 18 points and nine rebounds for the Bobcats.

Brandon Jennings had 22 points for the Bucks, while Andrew Bogut had 17 points and nine rebounds.

The Bobcats got a huge lift off the bench from Walker and center Byron Mullens, who was acquired in a trade last week with the Thunder. Walker scored nine points in the second half creating shots off the dribble and chipped in with seven rebounds, while Mullens was 5 of 7 from the field for 10 points.

PACERS 91, PISTONS 79

INDIANAPOLIS — Roy Hibbert had 16 points and 14 rebounds to help the Pacers defeat the Pistons.

David West, Indiana's big free agent addition, had 11 points and 12 rebounds, even though he made just 3 of 12 field goals. Tyler Hansbrough had 15 points and 13 rebounds and Paul George added 12 points.

Danny Granger, Indiana's leading scorer last season, finished with 16 points on 6-for-18 shooting. The Pacers shot just 37 percent from the field, but got away with it because they outrebounded the Pistons 53-40. Indiana had 18 offensive rebounds and 14 second-chance points.

Jonas Jerebko and Rodney Stuckey each scored 17 points for the Pistons, who never led.

RAPTORS 104, CAVALIERS 96

CLEVELAND (AP) — Rookie Kyrie Irving scored six points and hardly played like the No. 1 overall pick as the Raptors spoiled the Cleveland guard's NBA debut with a season-opening win over the Cavaliers.

Irving, who played just 11 games at Duke before turning pro, finished just 2 of 11 from the field — he made a meaningless 3-pointer in the final minutes. The Cavs are counting on the 19-year-old to turn around a team that won just 19 games last season.

THUNDER 104, TIMBERWOLVES 100

MINNEAPOLIS — Kevin Durant scored 33 points to lead the Thunder to a victory over the Timberwolves.

Russell Westbrook added 28 points, six assists and six rebounds, and James Harden scored 16 points for the Thunder, who have started off a season loaded with expectations at 2-0.

HORNETS 85, SUNS 84

PHOENIX — Eric Gordon made a 20-footer from the top of the key with 4.2 seconds to play in his New Orleans debut to give the Hornets a victory over the Suns.

Gordon, who came to New Orleans in the trade that sent Chris Paul to the Los Angeles Clippers, gave his team its only lead since the first two minutes of the second half.

Suns rookie Markieff Morris threw the ball away on Phoenix's final possession.

Gordon scored 20 points. Carl Landry added 14 and Trevor Ariza 13 for New Orleans.

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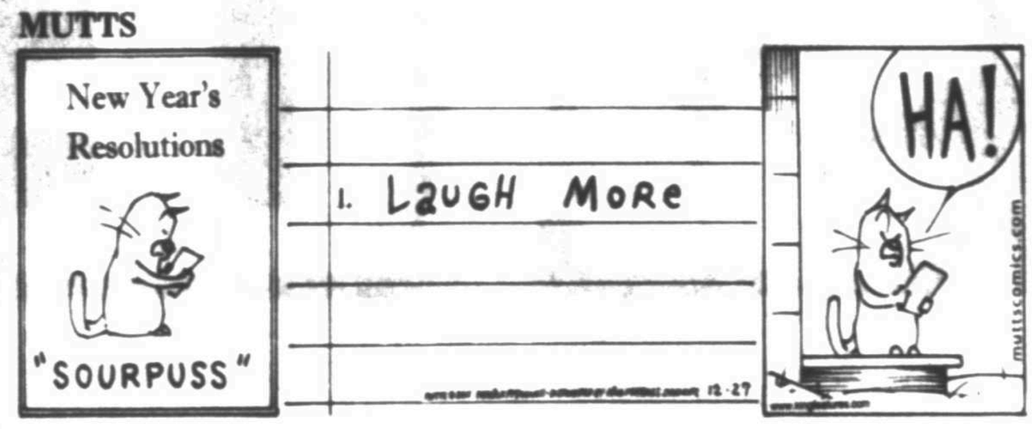


GARFIELD

CLOSE TO HOME

Whenever he had an MRI, Steve liked to slip on his "melted face" mask.

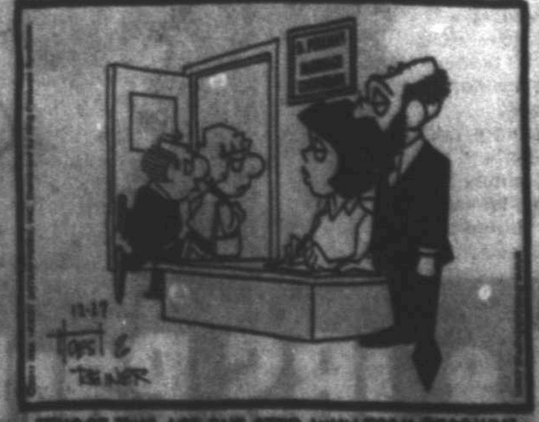
DENNIS THE MENACE

"I GOT MY WISH FOR A WHITE CHRISTMAS. NOW I'M GONNA WISH FOR A MUDDY NEW YEAR."

DUSTIN

WIZARD OF ID

LOCKHORNS



"THOSE TWO ARE ONE STEP AWAY FROM BECOMING A REALITY SHOW."

FAMILY CIRCUS

"We learned the fourth commandment: 'Humor thy father and thy mother.'"

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Classifieds

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 16, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 27, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 08-0273548
Status/Permit No. 728434

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 7, Blk. 38 T1S, T&P RR CO Survey, A-294, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, MARTIN County, being 6.2 miles NE direction from MIDLAND, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 27, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	STIMSON-BURLEY 'D'
Lease/Unit Well No. :	7
Lease/Unit Acres :	322.9
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	670.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	1122.0

Lease Lines : 670.0 F SOUTH L, 864.0 F WEST L
Survey Lines : 1980.0 F NORTH L, 1780.0 F EAST L

As part of this application, applicant also seeks permit authority in 1 additional field: (1) MIDLAND, EAST (STRAWN). No rule exception is necessary pursuant to the field rules for this field.

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres.

MIDLAND, EAST (STRAWN) : Statewide rules 467/1200, 40.0 acres.

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 11130 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, TAMMY SMITH, at (972) 444-9001.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 9, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 20, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 08-0273720
Status/Permit No. 729197

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 46, Blk. 39 T2S, T&P RR CO / PEMBERTON, I M Survey, A-747, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, MIDLAND County, being 8.5 miles SE direction from MIDLAND, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 20, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	TEXAS TEN 'X'
Lease/Unit Well No. :	6
Lease/Unit Acres :	653.3
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	660.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	939.0

Lease Lines : 660.0 F NORTH L, 2066.0 F WEST L
Survey Lines : 660.0 F NORTH L, 660.0 F EAST L

As part of this application, applicant also seeks permit authority in 1 additional field: (1) BRADFORD RANCH (STRAWN). No rule exception is necessary pursuant to the field rules for this field.

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres.

BRADFORD RANCH (STRAWN) : OIL Statewide rules 467/1200, 40.0 acres.

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 11400 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, DEBBIE BAKER, at (972) 969-3986.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 16, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 27, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 08-0273547
Status/Permit No. 728421

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 7, Blk. 38 T1S, T&P RR CO Survey, A-294, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, MARTIN County, being 6.2 miles NE direction from MIDLAND, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 27, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	STIMSON-BURLEY 'D'
Lease/Unit Well No. :	5
Lease/Unit Acres :	322.9
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	660.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	1320.0

Lease Lines : 660.0 F NORTH L, 660.0 F EAST L
Survey Lines : 660.0 F NORTH L, 660.0 F EAST L

As part of this application, applicant also seeks permit authority in 1 additional field: (1) MIDLAND, EAST (STRAWN). No rule exception is necessary pursuant to the field rules for this field.

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres.

MIDLAND, EAST (STRAWN) : Statewide rules 467/1200, 40.0 acres.

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 11130 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, TAMMY SMITH, at (972) 444-9001.

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RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 7C
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 12, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 23, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 7C-0273771
Status/Permit No. 729940

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 139, Blk. 2, T&P RR CO Survey, A-579, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, REAGAN County, being 23.7 miles NE direction from BIG LAKE, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 23, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	PELZEL
Lease/Unit Well No. :	5
Lease/Unit Acres :	323.4
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	480.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	1366.0

Lease Lines : 480.0 F SOUTH L, 1980.0 F EAST L
Survey Lines : 2173.0 F NORTH L, 1980.0 F EAST L

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 9500 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, MECHELLE TESTA, at (972) 969-4088.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 9, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 20, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 08-0273743
Status/Permit No. 729214

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 46, Blk. 39 T2S, T&P RR CO / WOLCOTT, A J Survey, A-762, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, MIDLAND County, being 8.5 miles SE direction from MIDLAND, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 20, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	TEXAS TEN 'X'
Lease/Unit Well No. :	7
Lease/Unit Acres :	324.7
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	486.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	1333.0

Lease Lines : 486.0 F NORTH L, 1980.0 F WEST L
Survey Lines : 2173.0 F SOUTH L, 1980.0 F WEST L

As part of this application, applicant also seeks permit authority in 1 additional field: (1) BRADFORD RANCH (STRAWN). No rule exception is necessary pursuant to the field rules for this field.

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres.

BRADFORD RANCH (STRAWN) : OIL Statewide rules 467/1200, 40.0 acres

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 11300 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, DEBBIE BAKER, at (972) 969-3986.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 9, 2011
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 20, 2012
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas
ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.STATE.TX.US

Rule 38 Case No. 08-0273765
Status/Permit No. 728736

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the PIONEER NATURAL RES. USA, INC., [RRC Operator No. 665748] has made application for a density exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 38 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.38). Applicant seeks exception to the DENSITY requirement of the field rules for the NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 45, Blk. 39, SHACKELFORD, MRS S E Survey, A-1049, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, MIDLAND County, being 13.1 miles SE direction from MIDLAND, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512) 463-6848.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 20, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name :	DONALD L HUTT 'FEE'
Lease/Unit Well No. :	106
Lease/Unit Acres :	4229.8
Nearest Lease Line (ft) :	486.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) :	1328.0

Lease Lines : 3302.0 F SOUTH L, 486.0 F EAST L
Survey Lines : 660.0 F SOUTH L, 1980.0 F EAST L

As part of this application, applicant also seeks permit authority in 1 additional field: (1) AZALEA (STRAWN). No rule exception is necessary pursuant to the field rules for this field.

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:

SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 467/660, 80.0 acres.

AZALEA (STRAWN) : GAS Special Rules 86/20640, 320.0 acres
OIL Statewide rules 467/1200, 40.0 acres.

This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 11050 feet.

If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, MANDY REDGEPETH, at (972) 969-3973.

LOST TEXAS Blue Heeler Mix, no collar. Call to identify, 413-1762.

LOST BLACK and white female Border Collie. Name Sidney. Please call 559-4248 or 559-5668.

Acacia Masonic Lodge
Meeting Communication, 2nd & 4th Tues. @ 7:30pm, 432-557-6041 Miles Patton, W.M. Ed Wilson Sec
Did you know Audie Murphy was a Master Mason?

Business Center

Business Opportunity

WELL ESTABLISHED Successful Franchise business. Owner Retiring. Send serious inquiries to P.O. BOX 8205 Midland, Texas 79708.

Autos For Sale or Lease

Passenger Cars

2008 ES 350 Lexus, black exterior, cashmere interior, fully loaded, 57k miles, $25,000. 425-7769

BMW 2003 330CI 104500 miles, 2 door, 5-Speed transmission good condition. Silver Gray Metallic exterior. Black interior. WBABN53493JU2921 8 2WD All options Loaded $11,000 call 432-889-8279

BUICK 1999 Park Avenue Ultra 107k miles, very nice car $3500. Call 432-664-4690.

CADILLAC 1992 DeVille, 88,000 mi, $4,500, great condition. Serious inquiries only, 432-294-3336.

CADILLAC 2007 DTS, V-8, leather, We finance W.A.C. 24 mo warranty, 683-6222.

CHEVROLET 1972 Chevelle drag race car. Complete body and drive train. $9,000. 556-9945

CHEVROLET 2002 Z28 convertible, 24K, looks and drives new, garaged, non smoker. $12,900. 685-4013

FORD 2002 Mustang, V-6, Auto, low miles. We finance. W.A.C. B&B Auto 683-6222.

FORD 2007 Fusion SE, V6, dark blue, 104K, Good condition. $8,500. 432-556-1901

FORD 2007 Taurus, 76K miles, 24 mo. warranty. B&B Auto Sales 683-6222.

FORD 2006 Focus SE, 4 Door, 4 Cylinder. We finance. W.A.C. B&B Auto 683-6222.

FORD 2010 Fusion SE Charcoal, 4 dr, pwr, 44k. Great car! $13,500. 262-2024

► NEW TODAY! ◄

HONDA 2000 Prelude with 114k, silver, super nice. $6,275. Call 432-682-1706.

LINCOLN 1998 Continental. V8, leather, loaded, 127k miles, $1900. 432-664-4690.

NISSAN 2004 350Z, Touring Roadster, Nice/Clean. $12,800. 432-266-2952

NISSAN 2010 Altima Silver, 4 dr, auto, 2.5L, 47k. Excellent car! $15,000. 218-9941

PONTIAC 2001 Grand AM GT, V6, very sporty. $1900. Call 432-504-4090.

SATURN 1998 SL2, 4 door, automatic, 30+ mpg, $1900. Call 432-504-4090.

SATURN 2004 ION, 4 dr Sedan, 193,990 mi. Engine runs well, needs transmission and other work. Interior poor/exterior good. Great car for parts. AS IS, $1200. Call 432-528-7024 if no answer leave message.

TOYOTA 2010 Camry Hybrid, 23,000 miles, like new condition, [illegible] Call 432-694-4490

TOYOTA 2010 Camry Hybrid. 23,000 miles, like new condition, [illegible] Call 432-694-4490

Sport Utility

FORD 2008 ESCAPE HYBRID, 30MPG City. We finance. W.A.C. B&B Auto 683-6222.

TOYOTA 2008 Prius Hybrid. 36k miles, navigation, leather, rear back up camera, garaged, new tires, 1 owner, $14,975. 432-978-9335.

TOYOTA 2008 Prius white, loaded, plus navigation $14,975. 82k mi. 684-6688

Exotic Cars

230" R.E.D. Dragster, rave ready. $25,000 obo. 28' tag along enclosed pace trailer. $22,500. 559-0600.

LOTUS 2006 Elise, 43K miles, hard and convertible tops, original and custom wheels, XM radio, good tires, $27,500. Call 432-697-7600

Antique & Vintage

FORD 1966 Thunderbird, perfect condition, reduced price, $11000 obo. 432-694-1429.

FORD 1978 150 Pickup XLT interior and race track trim. Call for info. 432-889-4413.

Pickup Trucks

CHEVROLET 2004 LS 2500 HD, 4 dr., long bed, good condition 92k miles. Asking $9,500. Serious inquiries only please 432-894-5728

Passenger Cars

BMW of the Permian Basin
2008 BMW 335i Silver/Gray Prem pkg., sport pkg., Logic 7 sound system, heated seats 22k miles
2009 CHEVROLET MALIBU LTZ White/Tan, Heated Seats, Moon roof, 38k miles
2008 MERCEDES BENZ C300 Sand Beige/Cashmere, Prem. Pkg.II, Multi-Media Pkg., Fold Down Rear Seats Heated Seats - 73k miles
2008 CORVETTE CONVERTIBLE LS3 Blk/Blk, auto trans 9k miles
(2) 2011 BMW 328i Premium Value Package Heated Seats
2007 BMW 525i White/Tan, Prem. Pkg., Moon Roof, 55k Miles, CPO 6Yrs. or 100k Miles

TACK & SADDLE AUCTION
Tues. Jan. 3rd 7pm, Preview at 5pm
Over $1000,000 in merchandise already consigned! Imagine everything you would find in a tack shop. If it is used or around a horse, it will be there.
Consignments Being Added Daily
10% Buyers Premium
Everybody's Welcome
Auctioneer Laughlin
801 Veterans Airport Ln.
Midland, TX 79705
(512) 943-0114
Consignments Now Accepted
TX Auctioneer #10151 Mike Laughlin

mywesttexasjobs

Midland Reporter-Telegram monster.com

CLERICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

Bookkeeper
Confidential FT
Full time Bookkeeper needed for a very casual office. General bookkeeping experience and Quickbooks would be helpful. Please fax resume, references and salary requirements to Paula at 682-9416.

Secretary
Hillard Companies FT
Hillard companies is looking for an experienced secretary to fill a full time position. This applicant must be proficient in Microsoft office, exhibit superior customer service skills, and have the versatility of performing different task. For questions, please call 432-683-9100. To apply, please send resume to sterlingh@mmho.com.

CONSTRUCTION & FACILITIES

Construction Help
Campbell Construction Co. FT
Campbell Construction Company seeking a Superintendent, Carpenter and Laborer. Pre-employment drug test required. Good Benefits & Salary DOE. Apply at 241-A Spring Park Drive, Midland or send resume to PO Box 11293, Midland, TX 79702 or fax to (432)683-5943.

HEALTHCARE

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

- **Certified Nurse Aides**
  $500.00 Sign on Bonus if hired by 01/06/12 with sign on agreement
- **Licensed Vocational Nurse**
  $1500.00 Sign on bonus if hired by 01/06/12 with sign on agreement
- **Certified Medication Aide**
- **Experienced Cook**

We offer an excellent salary and benefits are available. If you are a person dedicated to providing quality care please apply in person or send current resume to:

Sienna Nursing and Rehabilitation, L.P.
2510 W. 8th Street • Odessa, TX. 79763
Phone: 432-333-4511 • Fax: 432-333-6078
www.daybreakventure.com
EOE

Bilingual Providers
St. Joseph Home Health FT
St. Joseph Home Health is immediately hiring for Bilingual Providers. Please contact Stephanie at 432-684-5858.

FRONT DESK CLERK
Seeking an experienced Front Desk Clerk for a busy physicians office, this will be a fulltime position (MSO5000) Please fax or mail your resume to ATTN: Alesha McCoy P.O. Box 5291 Midland, TX 79704 or fax to 432-682-2284. NO WALK-IN'S PLEASE.

MEDICAL ASSISTANT
Looking for an experienced Medical Assistant for a busy physicians office for a PRN position (PCB5053). Please fax or mail your resume to ATTN: Alesha McCoy P.O. Box 5291 Midland, TX 79704 or fax to 432-682-2284. NO WALK-IN'S PLEASE.

MEDICAL RECORDS CLERK
Busy medical facility needs a responsible Medical Records Clerk(PP-5276). Responsibilities include data transfer of medical records to electronic health records. Applicant should be detailed oriented. Will train the right person. Growth opportunities with employer. Fax or mail resume to 432-682-2284 or mail to P.O. Box 5291 Midland, TX 79704 Attn: Alesha McCoy. NO WALK-IN'S PLEASE OR PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

Private Caregivers
HomeCare Plus FT
Now hiring private caregivers. All shifts available. Contact Karen Still at 570-7587 or come by 501 Andrews Hwy in Midland. If you can not pass our drug screening or criminal background check, do not apply.

HOSPITALITY & TRAVEL

Front Desk
Holiday Inn Express FT/PT
5309 N. Loop 250 W. Apply in person
Midland, TX 79707 No phone calls
Now hiring Front Desk FT& PT. Professional appearance required. Will train the right person. Competitive pay. Apply in person only. No phone calls.

Maintenance
Holiday Inn Express FT
5309 N. Loop 250 W. Apply in person
Midland, TX 79707 No phone calls
Now hiring full time & part time Maintenance. Professional appearance required. Will train the right person. Serious inquiries only. Previous applicants need not apply. Apply in person only. No phone calls. Competitive pay.

Various Positions
Travel Lodge #10082 FT/PT
Immediate opening for Housekeepers and Laundry for Day shifts and Front Desk Clerks for rotating shifts. Apply at: 2500 Commerce Dr, Midland, TX.

OTHER JOBS

Detailers
UNSEAL FT
Detailers needed for Local new car dealership. Used experience is helpful. Good pay. Please call 832-499-9574

First United Methodist Church
Tremendous opportunity in a wonderful work environment for the right person. After completing a 90 day probationary period with our custodial crew, health insurance, sick leave, pay raise and paid vacation will be offered. Seeking hard working applicants. Contact Bobby Darst at bobbydarst@firstmethodistmidland.com or 432.682.3701

Free Tuition Tax School
Liberty Tax Service FT
Earn extra income after taking course. Flexible Schedules, convenient locations. Course start 1/3/2011. Call Liberty Tax Service at 694-1990 or 689-7300. Small fee for books.

Kelly Services Now Hiring:
• **General Laborers** - $10.00 hr. - $12.00 hr. • **Shophands** - must have forklift experience, $14.00 hr. • **Admin.**- requires advanced Excel knowledge, salary DOE • **Medical Receptionist** - temp to hire, $9.00 hr. • **Delivery Driver/Merchandiser** - must have valid DL, $10.00 • **Direct Hire Opportunities** - clerks and store managers. • **Engineering Tech** - $14.50, must have basic understanding of well log data formats. Apply in person at 6 Desta Drive Ste. 1260 or call 432-689-9801. Never an applicant fee. Equal Opportunity Employer.

LAND Gaugers & Production Clerks
ISLAND OPERATING COMPANY is seeking LAND Gaugers with a minimal experience of 3 years, and also production clerks with clerical experience, some knowledge of Excel to be responsible for daily production reporting. These positions will require the candidates to work in the Big Lake, Texas area. Island Operating offers great benefits and pay. All interested parties should contact Kim Iste @ 337-652-2516 for more information on this position. Island Operating Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Maintenance
Hillard Companies FT
Hillard companies is looking for an experienced person to mange and maintain Hillard Companies properties. Applicant must be knowledgeable and experienced in plumbing, electrical, automotive, landscaping, with time management, and have the versatility with performing different task. For questions, please call 432-683-9100. To apply, please send resume to sterlingh@mmho.com.

Seasonal Sales Position & Parts Head Position
TRACKER BOAT CENTER FT
1920 N Loop 250 W 432-697-3261
Midland, TX 79707 Apply in Person
"Will Train" Experience not necessary. Drug screening and background

Classified CALL 682-6222

OTHER JOBS

General

Midland Reporter-Telegram

Selling Newspapers On The Street Corners
(avg. income $50.00 - $100.00/day)
MUST BE AT LEAST 14 YEARS OLD
SUNDAYS ONLY
IF INTERESTED CALL
TOMMY 967-2267

NEED EXTRA CASH???

FT /PT

Set Your Own Hours!!

Manager Training Program

Call

505-850-5398

Midland Reporter-Telegram has immediate openings in it's Distribution Department (Mailroom)
Part-Time Shift Work Available
Schedule consists of a combination of day and night shifts. Night Shifts - 12 (midnight) until 3-5 a.m. Starting pay is $9.00 per hour.
Apply in person at: 201 E. Illinois, Lobby Information Desk
Monday-Friday 8-5 or email: elitsworth@hearstnp.com
NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

Route Person Needed
Jordan Amusements FT
Route Person Needed - Must have valid driver's license, communication skills, trustworthy and pass drug test. Apply in person or fax resume to Jordan Amusement Co. 10100 W. Hwy 80 432-563-2740

Staff Members
The Boys and Girls Club PT
Hiring staff members that works well with kids with outgoing personality. Must be able to pass background check and drug screen. Monday-Friday 3pm-8:30pm. $8-$11 per hour. Call Michael at 432-683-0050.

NEWSPAPER CARRIERS NEEDED
EARN EXTRA MONEY
Do You:
Need help paying monthly bills and enjoy early Morning hours
Call Tony Gonzalez (432) 687-9002
*Must have vehicle, insurance, & valid driver's license
Midland and Big Spring Areas Available

Weekend Laundry, Janitorial & Youth Fitness Attendant
YMCA of Midland has PT for weekend laundry and janitorial positions. Apply in person at 800 N. Big Spring. No phone calls please.

REAL ESTATE

Property Manager
Experienced full-time, on-site Property Manager needed. Apply at Santa Fe Apartments. Call Santa Fe Apts 432-520-3751.

RESTAURANT & FOOD SERVICE

All PT/FT Positions
Domino's Pizza, Join the fastest and best Pizza Delivery Co. Now hiring for all PT/FT positions, CSR's, drivers, and shift management. Competitive pay and fun work environment. Drivers earn great tips and full hourly wage. No split wages! Apply at any Midland Domino's Pizza locations. 3300 W. Illinois Ave., 604 N. Big Spring St., 4519 N. Garfield Ste 2410 Rankin Hwy.

SALES JOBS

MCU MARKETING

Account Sales Manager

Set up and Maintain Accounts

Manage a small sales team

2 Years in sales and management

Average Annual Income FT 40-50k

Send resume to:

mkelley@mcumarketing.com

Sales Associate
Now Hiring Full-time Sales Associates!
We are looking for dedicated and responsible individuals to work at a upscale adult boutique. Applicants should have a strong retail background and great customer service. Please apply in person and ask for the manager.
Countyline Adult Video
6947 E. Commerce
Odessa, TX 79761
432-552-0055

Sales
Fender Truck Access. FT
Midland, TX 79701
Position open for person knowledgeable in truck accessories or automotive industry. Salary plus commission, Monday-Friday 7:30 am-5:30 pm, vacation, insurance option. Bilingual a plus. Salary DOE. Send resume to: kerry@fendergroup.com

SKILLED LABOR

Full Time Maintenance
Villa Chateau Apartments FT
Full time maintenance person needed, must have own tools, Drug Screen/ Background Check done, Apply in person at Villa Chateau Apts. 1603 N. Midkiff Rd. No phone calls please.

Landscape Mainteance Foreman
Arbor-Tech Horticulture
Professional Caring of Arboretum
Weekly pay with benefits. Experienced individuals only. Please call 432-682-8222.

Lead Maintenance
Summerhill Apartments FT
Now hiring **Lead Maintenance**. Must be HVAC certified. Apply in person only at: **3001 North Midland Dr. Midland, TX 79707.**

Licensed Experienced Journeyman Electrician
Now hiring! Email resume with references & salary requirements to: journeymanelectrican-resume@yahoo.com.

Operator with Class A CDL
Operator with Class A CDL needed for Excavating Company. Contact Jerry Kibodeaux at 254-622-5807.

RIG HANDS - MIDLAND, TX
Wireline company now hiring! Call 432-694-0712 for an excellent opportunity. We offer top pay, job bonus, insurance, 401k and uniforms. Must have CDL, Haz-Mat a plus, pass drug screen & background check.

Sand Blasters, Painters & Helpers
Accurate, Inc. FT
Hiring sand blasters, painters, helpers. Please call Accurate, Inc. at 432-563-1224 or 512-352-5276 or apply at 9504W CR 127, Midland.

Technician Needed
Jordan Amusements FT
Must have Electronics experience, have valid driver's license, communication skills, trustworthy and pass drug test. Apply in person or fax resume to Jordan Amusement Co. 10100 W. Hwy 80 432-563-2740 fax

TIRE TECHNICIANS
Discount Tire is now hiring! We offer flexible schedules, benefits, and great starting pay. No experience needed; we will train. If you have a great attitude and you are a hard, reliable worker, please apply in person at one of our three Discount Tire Stores: **3100 N. Loop 250 (Midland), 2201 Rankin Highway (Midland), or 4211 Grandview Ave. (Odessa)** No phone calls please.

Welders
Energy Fabrication FT
Now accepting applications for Welders.Top pay, 401K and paid vacation. Please send resume to: 3750 Kermit Highway, Odessa, TX 79764, or apply in person.

TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

CDL Driver - Day/Night Shifts
Mid-West Transport FT
Mid-West Truck Center Odessa, TX has immediate openings for: *CDL Drivers.* Comprehensive Benefits include company paid Health and Life Insurance, plus Vision/Dental/401k! 432-368-6790 / 432-559-9484

CDL/VAC Tank Drivers
Texas Freight Reloceters
Must have valid Class A CDL with endorsement. $17/hour-Dayshift. $18/hour-Nightshift. Health, dental and vision benefits after 60 days of employment. Call (432) 684-5090.

Class A CDL Truck Drivers
Silverline Transportation 432-563-1894
Prefer drivers with Pneumatic Tanker experience. Benefits include: driver sign-on bonus, medical, life & dental insurance, paid vacation, & 401k. Applicants having experience hauling sand and/or dry cement helpful. Good driving record, DOT, drug & alcohol testing required. Apply in person, call for interview or online @ www.silverlinetx.com
Also hiring for Field Coordinators.

Drivers
Drivers wanted asap. Class A with Tanker required. Competitive wages. Call 719-689-1569 or 719-689-8448.

Drivers Wanted
Reagent Chemical & Research, Inc FT
Find out why our average length of driver employment is 9 years. Reagent Chemical, a family owned company dedicated to providing great service to our customers and taking care of our employees, is currently hiring professional drivers in Stanton, Tx. Requirements include Class A CDL with tank and Hazmat Endorsement. Minimum of 2 years driving or 1 year tanker experience. Paid weekly by check or direct deposit. Benefits include family health & dental insurance with no premium contribution by the employee. 401K with company match plus profit sharing. Company paid life insurance, short and long term disability, additional life and disability is available thru group coverage. Up to 10 days vacation starting first year plus 10 paid holidays. Uniforms provided. Call 432-456-3446 or 432-661-4079.

Hot Shot Truck Driver
G & W Trucking FT
Hot Shot truck driver wanted in the Midland area. Class A CDL, and drug screen required. Call 800-572-6336 or Texas Work Force Commission for more information. Email: gwtruck@att.net

Semi Truck Driver
G & W Trucking FT
Semi Truck Driver needed. Must have a Class A CDL, HAZMAT Endorsement required. Drug test required. Call 915-573-6336.

Marty's Marketplace

...leading you to the best bargains in the Permian Basin

Merchandise

Antiques

TOM LOVELL- Ten ORIGINAL paintings. Call 806-236-6619.

Appliances

1 HOUR Free appliance pickup.978-5211

1 Hour Free Pickup AAA Appliances. Call 236-6735 / 528-3046.

Refrigerator $200, dryer $100, electric stove/ microwave up top $150. 432-352-7988

Food, Fruit & Produce

WE BUY pecans come by 302 S. Weatherford. Sandy's Nursery. 432-687-7097

FREE MIX puppies, medium size. Call 432-687-2764.

FREE TO good home adult male Shih-Tzu. Needs a loving home & attention. 563-7617.

FREE WOODEN PALLETS!
Midland Reporter-Telegram (on dock side)

BROYHILL QUEEN Continental Tapestry Bed frame in excellent condition. $500 worth $1500. 432-695-4599.

CORNER TV stand for $50. Wing chair tan, maroon, and olive, $250. Cash only. Call 432-697-0523.

NICE MATTRESS and box spring with headboard and footboard less than 1 yr old. New $1000 asking $250. Call 432-222-6616.

Furniture

25" ZENITH TV with remote $20, 262-1192.

STORAGE UNITS for rent, 10X20, $75 a month! Call 682-7827.

Miscellaneous for Sale

KEN'S RV SALES
3004 W. Hwy 80
Midland, TX
432-697-4447
KENSRVSALES.COM
OPEN
Mon-Fri 8:30am-6:00pm
Sat. 9:00am-3:00pm
Call 432-697-2400

SAVE $1000's ON A LARGE INVENTORY OF QUALITY USED RVs!
TRY US BACK, YOU'LL BE BACK
- A FULL SERVICE DEALER
- INSURANCE ESTIMATES
- ALL TYPES OF REPAIR
- PROPANE

Misc. Items for Sale

NEW CHRISTMAS merry go round & other new to lightly used items for little girl. All for $25, 553-2173.

Tablecloths, Aprons, scarfs, throw pillows, garment bags, curtains, Large box full $10. 694-9491

Tools & Hardware

FREE WOODEN shipping pallets. Come by 1001 South Goode, Midland TX 79701 to pick them up 432-685-3108

Industrial Products & Supplies

Oil & Gas

6 BRAND new acid frac tanks for sale $35,000 each Call 432-770-2426.

Animals & Pets

Pets

LAB PUPPIES AKC & started dogs. Hips/ eyes guaranteed. Training available. Pooles Labs www.pooleslabs.com. Call (806) 633-4364.

MALTESE 4 years old male, $400. Call 432-634-7043.

PETS AT Peace now providing cremations and burials. Pre-need 12 months, 0% interest. 620-8677.

DON'T MISS OUT
The Annual Christmas Sale at Stanton Animal Clinic is on Friday, December 9th from 12 noon - 5pm.
Please bring in your old newspaper to wrap your pet's Christmas gift.

Pickup Trucks

CHEVROLET 2004 Silverado Super Cab LS. V6, 84k miles, bedliner, new tires, $9500. Call 432-689-9374.

CHEVY 2004 2500 HD great condition, extras, 103k, $12,000 firm, 432-238-4825.

CHEVY 2004 Colorado, extended cab, auto, 72K miles, B&B Auto 683-6222.

CHEVY 2006 Extended Cab LS, 24mo warranty, B&B Auto Sales 432-683-6222.

CHEVY 2008 COLORADO Crew Cab. 4 cylinder, $15,900 OBO, 556-6947.

FORD 1995 F350 crew cab, long bed, automatic, great work truck $1500. 432-664-4690

Ford 2001 F150, single cab, long bed, V8 automatic, 61k miles. $5,800. 432-934-2318.

FORD 2003 F350 Super Crew Lariat. 130k miles, will financing. $12,800. 661-0173

FORD 2006 F150 SuperCrew XLT. Black with gray interior. Nice truck, 67K mi., 3-year transferrable warranty available. $15,500. Pictures @ www.chipmccarver.com 432-553-9972.

GMC 2007 2500, HD, crew cab, 4x4, LS, $17,999, 24 mo. warranty, 683-6222.

MITSUBISHI 2008 Raider, crew cab, 34k miles, w/ warranty, B&B Auto 683-6222.

NEW TODAY!

TOYOTA 1995 Tacoma. $3,995. 432-967-2285 or 432-522-2155.

TOYOTA 2006 Tundra TRD, 4.7 L V-8, 2WD, Towing Package, 71k, $15,000, 770-6643

Real Wheel Deals!
only $35 w/Photo
Call for Information
432-682-6222

Minivans

MINI BUS for Sale 2000 Ford H50 Mini Bus, wheel chair accessible, air conditioner/ heater works. 250,000 Hwy miles. $8,000 OBO. Call Chuck @ 432-296-1826

PONTIAC 2004 Montana minivan, 7-passenger seating Nice van. $2800. 432-664-4690.

4WD & SUV

2003 CHEVROLET Suburban, LS, extra clean, only 87,000 miles, 3 seats, good tires, Bose Sound, new detail, 2nd owner, $9,900 432-853-5229

CADILLAC 2007 SRX, leather, 3rd row seat, we finance W.A.C. B&B Auto 683-6222

CHEVROLET 1997 Suburban, 4WD, runs good, like new tires, $2000. 432-686-9214.

CHEVROLET 2007 Trailblazer SS with a D-1SC Intercooled ProCharger, Kooks headers, Magnaflow muffler, packed with power, loaded, black with black leather, 20 inch chrome wheels with oversized tires, clean, non-smoker. $28,200. Call Chip 638-8372

CHEVY 1997 Blazer V6 S10, 4dr., 166k mi, needs transmission work $1600, 934-1104

CHEVY 2005 2500HD 75000 miles 4 door, burgundy exterior, tan interior, 4WD, 8.1 Big Block V8, Allison 5 speed Automatic Transmission, Entertainment DVD System, loaded, priced $5000 below KBB $17000. 432-425-4553

CHEVY 2005 Tahoe Z71 4X4, black/tan leather, 126k mi., non-smoker, DVD, very good cond., $15,750. Tiffany 432-940-3531

DODGE 1987 Ram Charger, great shape & ready to drive. 133k, $4,800 OBO. Call 432-664-3557.

DODGE 2008 Nitro, 48,000 miles, 4 door, automatic transmission, like new condition, black exterior, 2WD, A/C, power windows, highway miles, 20" black rims. $17,527. O.B.O. 432-664-0722. bobbyburnholder@yahoo.com

FORD 1994 Explorer XLT. New tires, 147k miles, $1800. Call 432-664-4690.

FORD 1995 Explorer XLT. 4WD, loaded, all power, $2250 OBO. 432-661-5874.

JEEP 2003 Wrangler Sport, black on black, 6cyl., 61k mi., Mickey Thompson wide mud tires and wheels. Great Christmas gift for that hunter. Slightly wrecked, lists for 12-14k, $8500 OBO. Serious, call 631-8268.

LEXUS 2004 GX470 4WD. 4 or 6 seats. All options, 39k mi, 1 owner, always garaged, KBB $28,800 OBO. 432-685-1865 or 432-267-1000.

NISSAN 2008 Pathfinder SE, 38K miles. Warranty to 100K miles. Third row seat. Very nice, $19,000. Call 432-664-9191

NISSAN 2011 MURANO SL, 2800k mi, nav, $34000. 432-528-9487.

VOLVO 2005 XC90TG, 3rd row seat, premier, sound, leather, roof, rack, loaded, 105K miles. $12,500. Call 432-689-1822.

Fax Your Ad 682-6999

Commercial Vehicles

Heavy Equipment

CHEVY 2007 C5500, diesel, single cab, flat bed, 97k mi, $25,500. 432-686-7949.

INTERNATIONAL 1982 Winch Truck, $10,000. Only 16,000 miles. If interested contact Jerry at 288-1064 or jlewis129@suddenlink.net

Recreational Vehicles

Motorcycles

23T ALTERED 1999 454 with 2speed power glide. New paint, comes with 35 ft Sidhan trailer, over head air, winch, generator & new tags. Ready for use. $15000 obo. 634-3034

2003 Harley Davidson V-Rod 100th Anniversary. Custom paint. Tons of Chrome $7500. 432-230-9417.

HONDA 2000 Valkyrie Interstate 1500 19k/mi black and red very nice bike $7200. 432-413-5107

2011 POLARIS SPORTSMAN 800. Only 7 hours on 4 wheeler. 4X4 with about $800.00 worth of add-ons. Hunting ready with lots of storage. Paid $9200.00 Plus add-ons, Will take $7000 bought 9/23/2011. 432-556-3992.

RVs

2008 LEXINGTON
Forest River, 21ft., like new. 10k miles, $37,000
Call 432-262-3598

2009 ROCKWOOD Hi-Wall pop up trailer with slideout. Bryan 432-349-3547.

2010 5TH WHEEL, 37 3 slides, W/D, many extras, $26,000, 817-875-0374.

2011 TRAVEL Trailer. Luxury By Design, located in Big Spring. 38 ft. self-contained, double slideout, 2 A/C's, washer, dryer, immaculate, $26,500. Call 281-924-7125.

FLEETWOOD 2007 Excursion 39y2 slides. 350 diesel. 20k miles. $128,000. Call 432-686-7949

ROCKWOOD 2002 1540 LTD Pop-up Camper, great condition, heated bed covers, fridge, sleeps six. $3000. 432-352-1126, leave message before 5:00p

SANDPIPER 2011 5th Wheel. 39ft. Fiberglass. 3 slideouts, 2 A/C'S. Washer/Dryer. Perfect condition, must see! $36,500 call 956-239-1647

YAMAHA 2009 R6. Black/Gold!! Only 656 miles!! $5,500 (432) 631-1214.

Auto Services and Parts

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Special Hours 10-6
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3306 EDGEMONT. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 2 car garage. 1668 sq ft, granite, new tile, new shower. Includes all appliances, $189,500. Call 432-664-5834.

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Homes for Sale

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BY OWNER Wallace Patio Townhouse, 1410 W. Pine, 3BD, 2BTH, 2 car, 2430 sq. ft., 1 owner, new roof, lrg living area, huge master bdrm, and 2 fireplaces. For appointment call 432-697-4010.

HOUSE FOR Sale Two lots. 3 bed, 2 ba brick. Shop 40'x60' with apartment. $175,000. 1112 E. Spruce, Midland, Tx. 661-0737

Residential Sales

Homes for Sale

FOR SALE BY OWNER. Wallace Patio Townhouse. Brick floors in living, dining, eat-in-kitchen, laundry, hallway & patio. 2011 Updates: double pane insulated windows, A/C with gas heat, faux wood floors in bed rms, new paint, 50 gal hot water heater. 683-1989 / 553-1207

Gorgeous Spacious home in Vista Del Norte between Midland & Odessa. 16 La Promesa Circle. Price $595,000 with 5 Bedrooms Plus Study, 4 Baths, 2 Living, 2 Dining, 3 Car Garage. Trade In Considered. **Contact Realty Unlimited Phone 432.362.3566 or 432.682.7777.**

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HOUSE FOR sale completely remodeled cute. 3/1. Eastside. 817-938-5634

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1904 S COUNTY RD 1121-Country estate with two homes-main house has 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 2 living areas, pretty kitchen, 2 car garage, in ground pool with a privacy fence, guest house has 2 bedrooms, 1bath, 2 car garage & a 2 car carport, lot is 1.76 acres cross fenced with a pond fed by a windmill, barn, storage bldgs lots of extras. All this for only $465,000

2101 S COUNTY RD 1067-New construction in Greenwood, tile flooring, granite countertops, great den with fire place and built-ins, 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, formal dining, breakfast nook, office/study could be 5th bdrm, sequestered master bedroom, master bath has his and hers sinks, jetted tub, large walk-in closet, large fenced backyard, plus white pvc fence around the 4 acre lot $399,900

10104 E COUNTY ROAD 103-New construction in Cielo Vista, Greenwoods newest subdivision - 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, formal dining, cozy den with fireplace, great kitchen with granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, breakfast nook, office/study, covered patio/ Fenced backyard and white fence around the 1.04 Acre lot, priced to sell $335,900

4800 YEARWOOD-A new home in Greathouse area, tile flooring and granite countertops, den with fireplace, 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, formal dining room, great kitchen with stainless steel appliances, breakfast nook, covered patio, landscaped yards, 2 car garage, only $305,900

2222 CIMARRON-A great house with a rustic flare, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, den with fireplace, 2 living areas, 2 car garage, workshop, covered RV parking, pretty yards. Reduced to $197,500

3210 W. LOUISIANA-This lovely home has been remodeled from top to bottom!! 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 living areas, 2 car carport, covered patio, large fenced yard. The roof has been replaced, new windows, ceiling fans, electrical updated, hardwood floors refinished, tile flooring installed, baths updated and new ac and heater. All that is left to do is move in and enjoy. Only $129,900

2112 E I-20 SOUTH SERVICE ROAD-4.73 acres zoned LR-3 ready for you to build on. Great location for a small store $570,000

5707 FM 307-Commercial location in Greenwood. 2.436 acres, extra acreage is available $90,000

1609 W. FRONT-Commercial location, large tile bldg with a large display floor area, office, storage rooms and over head in the bay area. High traffic area zoned C-3 ..... $210,000.

If you would like additional information or to see inside these properties, Please call Clemmie Sorge, listing agent at Legacy Real Estate 687-6500 ext 142 or 432/553-0136 Cell.

Attention Readers In Observance Of New Year's

The Midland Reporter-Telegram will be closed Monday, January 2, 2012

Advertising Deadlines

Classified Word Ads Publishing On:	Deadline is:
Fri., Dec. 30th	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Fri., Dec. 30th, 12 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Fri., Dec. 30th, 3 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Fri., Dec. 30th, 5 PM

Classified Display Ads Publishing On:	Deadline is:
Fri., Dec. 30th	Wed., Dec. 28th, 3 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Wed., Dec. 28th, 5 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 12 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM

Retail Display Ads Publishing On:	Deadline is:
Fri., Dec. 30th	Wed., Dec. 28th, 5 PM
Sat., Dec. 31st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 12 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st	Thur., Dec. 29th, 3 PM
Sun., Jan. 1st (All Report Offices in Texas Observing Holiday)	Tues., Dec. 27th, 5 PM
Mon., Jan. 2nd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM
Tues., Jan. 3rd	Thur., Dec. 29th, 5 PM

Circulation Hours
Customer Service calls will be taken Saturday, December 31st and Monday, January 2nd from 7 AM-11 AM only.
We will re-open Tuesday, January 3rd for regular business hours.

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SUDOKU

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

12/27/11

Level: 1 2 3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

SOLUTION TO MONDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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MSRP $70,050
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REBATE $4,000
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BERG DISCOUNT $3,331
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REBATE $3,005
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REBATE $3,505
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STK# BR332224
MSRP $46,043
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SPACE DREAMS

New operating system for space: High-tech tycoons

By Donna Blankinship
and Seth Borenstein
Associated Press

SEATTLE — The tycoons of cyberspace are looking to bankroll America's resurgence in outer space, reviving "Star Trek" dreams that first interested them in science.

Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen made the latest step Tuesday, unveiling plans for a new commercial spaceship that, instead of blasting off a launch pad, would be carried high into the atmosphere by the widest plane ever built before it fires its rockets.

He joins Silicon Valley powerhouses Elon Musk of PayPal and Jeff Bezos of Amazon in a new private space race that attempts to fill the gap left when the U.S. government ended the space shuttle program.

Musk, whose Space Exploration Technologies will send its Dragon capsule to dock with the International Space Station in February, will provide the capsule and booster rocket for Allen's venture, which is called Stratolaunch. Bezos is building a rival private spaceship.

Allen is working with aerospace pioneer Burt Rutan, who collaborated with the tycoon in 2004 to win a $10 million prize for the first flight of a private spaceship that went into space but not orbit.

Allen says his enormous airplane and spaceship system will go to "the next big step: a private orbital space platform business."

The new system is "a radical change" in how people can get to space, and it will "keep America at the forefront of space exploration," Allen said.

Their plane will have a 380-foot wingspan — longer than a football field and wider than the biggest aircraft ever, Howard Hughes' Spruce Goose.

It will launch a space capsule equipped with a booster rocket, which will send the spacecraft into orbit. This method saves money by not using rocket fuel to get off the ground. The spaceship may hold as many as six people.

"When I was growing up, America's space program was the symbol of aspiration," said Allen, who mentioned his love of science fiction and early human spaceflights. "For me, the fascination with space never ended. I never stopped dreaming what might be possible."

Allen is not alone in having such dreams, and the money to gamble on making them come true.

Bezos set up the secretive private space company Blue Origin, which has received $3.7 million in NASA start-up funds to develop a rocket to carry astronauts. Its August flight test ended in failure.

"Space was the inspiration that got people into high-tech ... at least individuals in their 40s and 50s," said Peter Diamandis, who created the space prize Allen won earlier and is a high-tech mogul-turned space business leader himself. "Now they're coming full circle."

Diamandis helped found a company that sends tourists to space for at least $25 million a ride, and seven of the eight rides involved high-tech executives living out their space dreams. One is a former Microsoft colleague of Allen's, Charles Simonyi, who paid at least $20 million apiece for two rides into orbit and attended Allen's Tuesday news conference, saying he wouldn't mind a third flight.

"Space has a draw for humanity," not just high-tech billionaires, Simonyi said, but he acknowledged most people don't have the cash to take that trip.

Space experts welcome the burst of high-tech interest in a technology that 50 years ago spurred the development of computers.

"Space travel the way we used to do it has a '50s and '60s ring to it," said retired George Washington University space policy professor John Logsdon. "These guys have a vision of revitalizing a sector that makes it 21st century."

But Logsdon said the size of the capsule and rocket going to space seemed kind of small to him, only carrying 13,000 pounds. It didn't seem like a game-changer, he said.

Stratolaunch's air-launch method is already used by an older rocket company, Orbital Sciences Corp., to launch satellites. It's also the same method used by the first plane to break the sound barrier more than 50 years ago.

Stratolaunch, to be based in Huntsville, Ala., bills its method of getting to space as "any orbit, any time." Rutan will build the carrier aircraft, which will use six 747 engines. The first unmanned test flight is tentatively scheduled for 2016.

NASA, in a statement, welcomed Allen to the space business, saying his plan "has the potential to make future access to low-Earth orbit more competitive, timely, and less expensive."

Unlike its competitors, Allen's company isn't relying on start-up money from NASA, which is encouraging private companies to take the load of hauling cargo and astronauts to low Earth orbit and the International Space Station. The space agency, which retired the space shuttle fleet earlier this year, plans to leave that more routine work to private companies and concentrate on deep space human exploration of an asteroid, the moon and even Mars.

Allen's company is looking at making money from tourists and launching small communications satellites, as well as from NASA and the Defense Department, said former NASA Administrator Michael Griffin, a Stratolaunch board member who spoke at a Tuesday news conference.

Just three months ago, Griffin was testifying before Congress that he thought the Obama administration's reliance on private companies for space travel "does not withstand a conventional business case analysis."

This is different because it's private money, with no help or dependence on government dollars, said Griffin, who served under President George W. Bush.

Allen and Rutan collaborated on 2004's SpaceShipOne, which was also launched in the air from a special aircraft in back-to-back flights. Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic licensed the technology and is developing SpaceShipTwo to carry tourists to space. But Allen's first efforts were more a hobby, while this would be more a business, Logsdon said.

SpaceShipOne cost $28 million, but this will cost much more, officials said.

Allen left Microsoft in 1983, and has pursued many varied interests since then. He's the owner of the Seattle Seahawks football team as well as the NBA's Portland Trailblazers. He also founded a Seattle museum that emphasizes science fiction.

Allen said this venture fits with his technology bent.

"I'm a huge fan of anything to push the boundaries of science," Allen said.

Predictions for technology in 2012

Dear PropellerHeads: Will the world come to an end in 2012?

A: Mmmm, this question is not really in our comfort zone, but what the heck. I can provide as good of an answer as any other so-called prognosticator. In fact, this is an appropriate time to get all Nostradamus on you and make some bold technology predictions for 2012.

Will Facebook hit one billion users? Don't they have that many already? Actually it depends on if you count registered users or active users (somebody who has logged in during the past 30 days). Facebook (www.facebook.com) quite correctly counts active users and they reached the 800 million milestone back in September.

With monthly growth rates in the 3-4 percent range, it isn't a matter of if, but when. And I don't see Google+ stemming this outrageous growth. This PropellerHead makes the audacious prediction Facebook will announce one billion active users on April Fools Day. No foolin'.

ASK THE PropellerHeads

Windows 8 — Hit or Miss? Actually, whether Windows 8 comes out at all in 2012 is a bit of a prediction in itself. I think it will be ready just in time for the Christmas rush. But regardless of when, the real question is how. As in, how well will it be received? Microsoft is taking a big gamble on Windows 8 as it tries to blend desktop and mobile operating systems into one to rule them all.

My prediction is that it will be both a hit and a miss. I know, lame, but let me explain further. I feel that although it will be generally perceived as a miss by the public at large (not as bad of a miss as Vista mind you, but certainly not an outlandish success either), that there will be a lot of nifty ideas present that will pervade all future Windows releases. In other words, as Windows 95 defined the user experience for the next 17 years, Windows 8 will do the same, and in the end, we will end up liking it quite a bit.

Apple leads the way, again. The iPhone 4S was a rather mild improvement over its predecessor with one major exception. Siri, the intelligent software assistant, hit a grand slam, a hole in one and a last second touchdown all in one. Finally, speech recognition has left the laboratory and hit the mainstream. This is one of the Holy Grail technologies that has been promised to us since the first science fiction movies came out and it can't come soon enough. Banish the keyboard and my carpal tunnel syndrome!

Expect to see a lot of Siri clones popping up on the other smart phones next year, as well as the standard computing environments of your laptop and desktop. They won't be as good as Siri, but as long as they aren't called Bob, Clippy, Duke, or Moosuene they should be sufficient.

Games go Old School. It seemsvideo games are on a constant crusade to burn up the video cards on your computer. And while games like Star Wars: The Old Republic, Elder Scrolls V, and Battlefield 3 are visually stunning, they probably combined pale in comparison to the popularity of, say, Angry Birds. I predict games will go back to their ancestors for inspiration while still maintaining a quality, though not mind-blowing, appearance.

This trend could start with Legend of Grimrock (www.grimrock.net), a classic dungeon crawler being programmed by Almost Human Ltd. with a release date in early 2012. All of those lost hours of youth playing The Bard's Tale, Wizardry, Betrayal at Krondor and Alter-nate Reality are going to be added to with lost hours playing Grimrock!

And as far as the world ending in 2012? I think the Mayans thought the world would end about as much as you thought it would with Y2K.

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