Give Thanks

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WT-Int. Crude - $27.28
WTIC Posted - $24.00

THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

THURSDAY
Nov. 25, 1999
Vol. 51 No. 177
16 Pages 50¢

Home Of Julie Doolittle

Residents pause to offer thanks

Snyder City Hall and the Scurry County Courthouse are closed Friday as the Thanksgiving holiday continues.

All local financial institutions are closed today as well.

West Texas State Bank, Texas Savings Bank and Snyder National Bank will all close at noon Friday as part of their holiday schedule.

Also on Friday, American State Bank will close at 3 p.m. and First American Bank will close at 5 p.m.

The city's landfill will be open Friday, but closed Saturday.

Snyder Post Office will be open as usual on Friday as employees received a one-day holiday today.

The Scurry County Library is also closed and will not reopen until Monday.

The Texas Workforce Commission and the Scurry County Museum, both located on the WTC campus, will also be closed until Monday.

Snyder, Ira, Hermleigh and WTC are out for the holiday and students return to classes Monday.

Snyder Rotary Club is serving its annual Thanksgiving meal at The Shack from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m.

THE SDN COLUMN

By Roy McQueen

The feller on Deep Creek says, "Today is when millions of Americans gather around the table to feast and give thanks – right about halftime."

Thanksgiving dressing is exposed, but there will be no change in the traditional menu.

Contrary to popularly-held images, the pilgrims of the first Thanksgiving didn't likely wear black suits, square white collars, black steeple hats and buckled shoes.

Experts say buckles didn't come into fashion for several decades after the Mayflower docked down in 1620. Instead, men and women wore low-heeled shoes fasted with ties – often garnished with ribbon roses, not buckles.

What's more, earthy-green, brown and beige were the colors of the day for the fashion-conscious colonist.

Some, however, were ahead of their time. Historians say Elder William Brewster owned green knickers, a purple coat, a blue suit and a red cap. He may have been the forefather of Liberace.

Mayflower passenger John Howland sported a red waistcoat. Even Plymouth Governor William Bradford had a green gown, violet cloak and red jacket.

Only on Sundays and other fancy occasions did settlers don black formal wear.

Both men and women wore lacy and rounded cuffs and collars, not oversized square dickies. Also Pilgrim men sported a wide variety of hats.

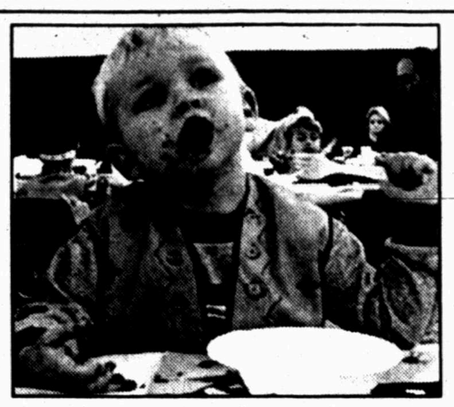
The Pilgrim clothing myth arose, it is said, because there are few paintings of daily life from the early 17th Century America. When 19th Century historians tried to imagine what the pilgrims looked like, they turned to paintings from the 1650s.

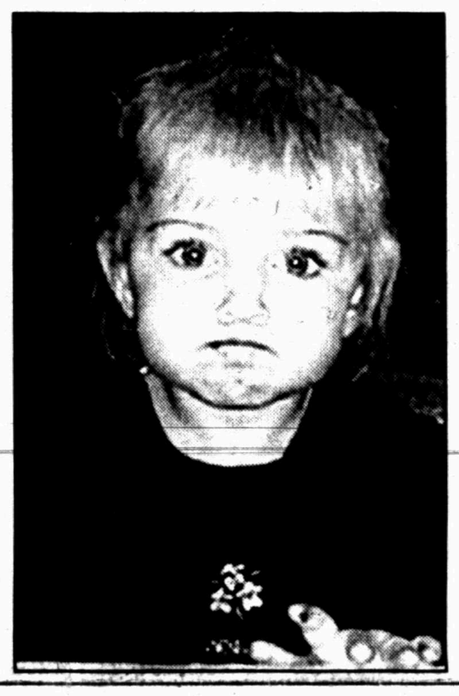
Carolyn Travers, research librarian at Pilmoth Plantation in Plymouth, Mass., said it was the closest that artists could get to the period.

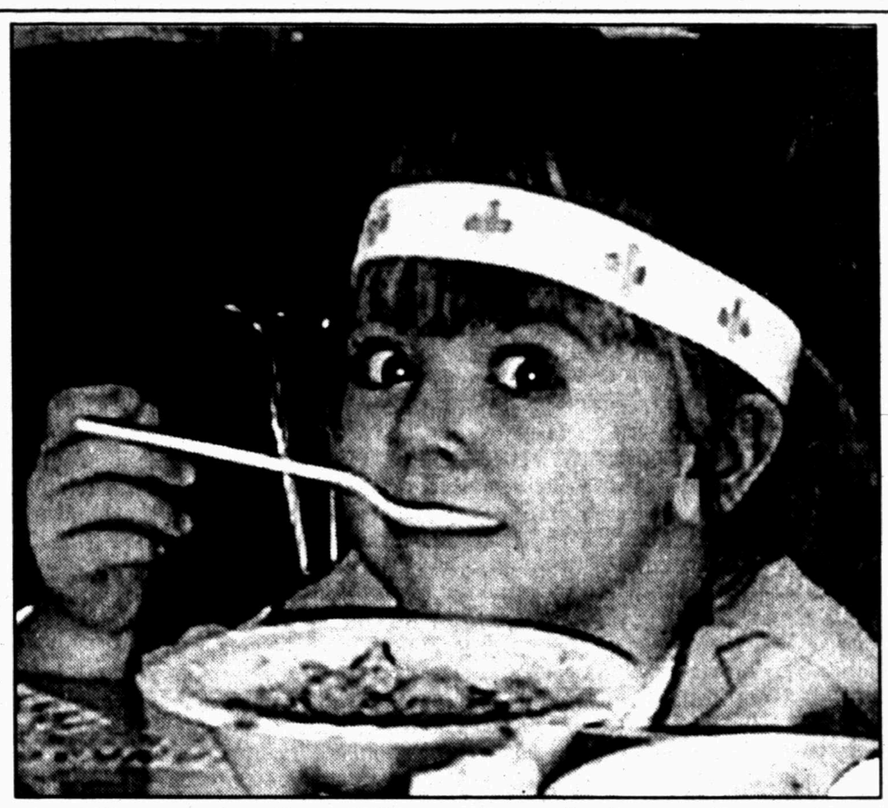
"It would be like dressing people from the 1950s with clothes from the '80s," she said. "Images of pilgrim costumes got weirder over time. Buckles grew bigger until they evolved into those great hulking square things.Historians today turn to inventory lists from the colony as well as surviving garments from the period. They even dig up clothes from gravesites.

But everybody knows the important thing about Thanksgiving – it's not what you wear but what you eat that matters.

Pass the dressing.







Faces of a Thanksgiving feast

In the top left photo, Samuel Cross finds his brownie just dreamy. Chloee James, bottom left, looks like she has had her fill. In the top right photo, Rikki Box gets a spoonful of soup. The three attend King's Kids at First Baptist Church. The school held a Sharesoup Monday in which everyone pitched in and brought canned vegetables. Church workers prepared the soup and the children's families brought cornbread, crackers and desserts. The children also presented Thanksgiving entertainment. (SDN Staff Photos by Joyce May)

Guilty plea nets 10 years

William Eric Bailey, serving a five-year probated sentence for car theft, will now spend 10 years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice following a guilty plea entered Tuesday in 132nd District Court.

Bailey, 33, of 2506 Ave. C pleaded guilty to the Sept. 11 burglary of the First Baptist Church.

Bailey was on probation for the 1995 charge of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. The probated sentence was also revoked by District Judge Ernie Armstrong.

Bailey was charged with the theft of electronic equipment for the downtown church.

Also pleading guilty Wednesday was 41-year-old Joseph Ernest Luera of 315 33rd, charged with possession of marijuana on July 9.

Judge Armstrong assessed a two-year sentence in a state jail facility, probated for five years. Laura was also fined $750 and ordered to spend 45 days in the Scurry County Jail and complete a court-approved treatment program.



Inmates reflect on Thanksgivings past

By Joyce May
SDN Staff Writer

This Thanksgiving Day most "free world" families will be sitting down enjoying what inmates can only dream about — mom's pumpkin pie, family and freedom.

Twelve Price Daniel Unit inmates got a small taste of that freedom Tuesday when they were treated with a Thanksgiving dinner complete with turkey, dressing and giblet gravy - courtesy of Snyder Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber manager Donna Fowler said the dinner was given as a token of appreciation.

"It is a thank you for all they do for the community," Fowler said.

The inmates work throughout the year for the city and county as well as at the schools, coliseum, and parks.

This is the fifth year the chamber has provided the dinner.

A visit with some of the inmates showed that of all the things they miss about the free world, family tops the list.

"Mostly what I miss is not being with my family and loved ones," said Richard Chavez, 44, of San Angelo.

Chavez has been in prison for eight years, but says even though he is incarcerated, Thanksgiving is more than just another day.

"It is a day to remember and a day to give thanks, regardless," he said. He said there is a lot he is thankful for.



Chavez

"One thing is that I am alive. I am thankful because of God. He's been real good to me regardless of what I have done," Chavez said. "He has blessed me in a mighty way. I am grateful because God sent Jesus Christ to die for me. I thank Him for making me a new person through Christ."

Carlos Patterson of Denison has been an inmate since October, 1991 and says his family is what he misses most on this holiday.

"I miss the times I used to spend being with my son and my parents. I miss Thanksgiving dinners we had together and visiting with family members and friends."

Patterson, 40, said he is actually thankful that he was sent to prison.

"It may sound strange, but I am thankful for this time here that I spent in prison because before I came here I did not know God," he said. "Since I came here, I have been blessed to come to know Him and I have been blessed by His love."

Patterson said he was also grateful to be at the Price Daniel Unit. "I am thankful to be on the unit that I'm on. It is a really good unit to be on. We have good wardens and good officers."

Most of all, he said he gives thanks to God.

"More than anything, I am thankful to know God. I've come to realize that without Him there is no true meaning to life. More than anything, that is what I have to be thankful for."

A native of Denton, Dwayne Goldsmith has been confined for eight and a half years.



Goldsmith

The 39-year-old inmate says he too misses his family most of all.

"I miss the fun time that we have during the holidays and I miss my children for sure." Goldsmith has two boys and two girls.

He said he is most thankful to be alive. "For sure I'm thankful for life. Now I have three grandbabies. I thank God for them as well."

Lee Howard, 45, of Kaufman has been in prison two years.

Asked what he missed most, he replied, "That's an easy one. My kids, my family."

Howard said this time of year is particularly hard for inmates.

"Holidays are really a difficult period of time. There is a lot of depression on the unit because of the holidays and inmates missing their families," he said. "Depression and stress are high. It is so thick you can cut it with a knife."

Howard also is thankful.

"It is one less day to do," he said. "I know that sounds silly, but in our world, any day you do is one they can't make you do again. It's one day closer to home, one day closer to my kids." Howard is the father of two girls.

Still expressing gratitude, Howard added, "The food in there was awful good. It is good to be out like this."

Howard said he was thankful that the community gives him and the other inmates the chance to get out and work.

"It gives us that little bit of freedom we normally don't have. I'm thankful for that little bit of freedom."

Charles Robinson, 35, of Midland has been in prison for eight years.

His wife, his stepdaughter and his step grandkids are who he misses most this Thanksgiving Day. He's reminded of how long it has been since he had the opportunity to sit down and eat a holiday meal with his family.

"They come visit, but it's been eight years since I sat down and ate a turkey dinner with them."

He said he misses a lot. "We'd watch the football game and play video games with the kids." He too expressed gratitude for his family and his relationship with Jesus.

"I am thankful for my wife and just being alive and having Jesus in my life."

Most all of the inmates interviewed had a special Thanksgiving dish they miss. For Chavez, it was his mom's dressing and dinner rolls.

"Well, I miss the way Mom makes her dressing and her dinner rolls. I almost forgot about the dinner rolls."

The traditional dinner is what Patterson remembers.

"One of the main things I miss is my mom's turkey and dressing and all the sweets," he said.

For Goldsmith, it is his sister's pecan pie that he'll be dreaming about this year while Robinson will just miss everything.

"I'm not a picky eater. I eat everything," Robinson said.

Howard will be missing the "pink stuff" his sister-in-law makes."I'm not sure what you call it. We always called it 'pink stuff'.

All Price Daniel inmates will be served a traditional dinner of turkey and the fixings today.

ASK US

Q-Why weren't there any high school playoff games in Snyder this year? Sweetwater has three scheduled this weekend.

A-The chamber worked with several teams and had games tentatively scheduled depending on whether or not the teams won. So far, none have.

FORECAST - ALMANAC

Area Forecast: Thanksgiving night, partly cloudy, cold. Low 25-30.
Friday, partly cloudy. High 60-65.



Tilatha Akins
Partly Cloudy

Sunset:
5:41 p.m.
Sunrise:
7:20 a.m.
Of 328 days in 1999, the sun has shone 321 days in Snyder.

TODAY'S THOUGHT

In all things, give thanks.
—I Thess. 5:18

Snyder EMS receives honor

Snyder EMS received the EMS Private Provider Award during ceremonies Tuesday during the annual Emergency Medical Services Conference in Austin.

The EMS service was recognized for "providing quality, compassionate pre-hospital service" to Scurry County.

The only other area EMS service recognized during the conference was Aerocare of Lubbock.



RETIRED TEACHERS PROGRAM — Retired Teachers Association members were honored with a luncheon Monday in the fellowship hall of Colonial Hill Baptist Church. Judy Brown's West Elementary sixth-grade honors choir performed. Ronda Haire, high school choir director, accompanied at the piano. Marge Mathis will host an open house for retired teachers at her rural home next week. SISD Supt. Gayle Lomax was master of ceremonies. (Staff Photo By JoAnn Nunley)



HMOs now target of lawsuits

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — The legal team that successfully challenged Big Tobacco has reunited to bring lawsuits accusing five of the nation's biggest HMOs of unscrupulous business practices.

The lawsuits, filed in Mississippi, where the first state tobacco case originated, seek class-action status on behalf of the 32 million people who are members of Pacificare Health Systems, Foundation Health Systems, Cigna Healthcare, Prudential Health Care and Humana.

Several of the companies said the lawsuits are similar to others filed over the past two months and will be vigorously fought.

The five lawsuits filed Monday in federal court in Hattiesburg claim the companies are violating racketeering laws and have offered bonuses to doctors who restrict patients' access to expensive procedures, treatments and tests.

The plaintiffs' lead attorney Richard Scruggs said nearly half of the lawyers involved in cigarette cases teamed up again because "we learned lessons together in tobacco in how to resolve these big national issues when the political process gets stalemated."

"We believe we can be a big catalyst to force action to break up a logjam," he said Wednesday.

Lawsuits brought against the tobacco industry by states resulted in $246 billion in settlements. Scruggs and his team led the Mississippi lawsuit, enlisted other states and then helped lead the settlement talks.

There are now at least nine recent class-action suits alleging violations of federal law by managed health plans.

"Certainly it has investors concerned because of the notoriety of the attorneys involved. On the other hand, the case to be made with the HMOs is tougher than it was with tobacco," said Robert Mains, a health care analyst for Advest Inc.

The only major HMO not sued was United Health Care, which Scruggs said has agreed to meetings next week with the lawyers. In October, Scruggs sued Aetna, which has about 18.3 million customers. That same week suits were also filed against HMOs in Philadelphia and Miami.

Mains said the suits could be part of a legal strategy to shake the confidence of investors, who will then pressure the industry to settle.

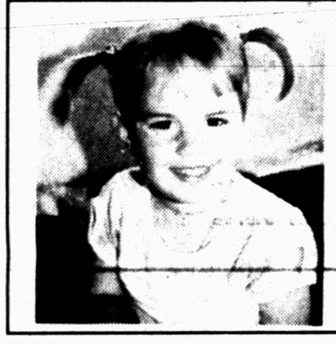
"That strategy speeds up the process of getting a one-third contingency payment in the lawyers' pockets," Mains said. Alan Hoops, head of Pacificare, said the lawsuits will result in "unwarranted, costly and protracted litigation" that will ultimately mean higher costs for patients.

Humana spokesman Dick Brown said the company will "vigorously defend ourselves on behalf of our members and physicians."





SHARESOUP — First Baptist Church's King's Kids held its second annual Sharesoup Monday. In the top photo, little Indians (from left) Lauren Floyd and Rikki Box are "happy and they know it." In the middle photo, (from left) Savannah Richards, Courtney Pollard and Brittany Rios are in their own little world. Singing along in the bottom photo are (from left) Austin Forbes, Cherie Northcutt and Boomer Fowler. (SDN Staff Photos by Joyce May)



Happy 21st Birthday Julie Doolittle

Maker and promoter of zinc lozenges OK settling charges

WASHINGTON (AP) — A company and cable network that touted a brand of zinc lozenges as a way to prevent colds and alleviate allergy symptoms have agreed to settle federal charges that they could not back up those claims, regulators announced Tuesday.

Quigley Corp., which makes Cold-Eeze brand zinc lozenges, and home-shopping network QVC, which promoted the products in its programming, said in their proposed settlement that they would no longer promote benefits of the lozenges without adequate support.

The Federal Trade Commission had sued the companies, saying that they had made unsubstantiated claims that Cold-Eeze could prevent colds, relieve the symptoms of allergies and hay fever, reduce the risk of contracting pneumonia and reduce the severity of cold symptoms in children. Many of the claims were made on QVC programming, according to the FTC, both by QVC show hosts and by Quigley representatives featured on the network.

Quigley also made claims in radio advertising and on the Internet, including touting that another product, Kids-Eeze Bubble-Gum, could reduce the severity of cold symptoms in children, the commission alleged.

Quigley said it has scientific evidence to substantiate its claims that its lozenges reduce common cold symptoms in adults. But the company admitted it cannot guarantee that its product will prevent colds, relieve or reduce the symptoms of hay fever and allergies or prevent children from catching colds.

"With the cold and flu season fast approaching, many consumers are looking for products to help them stay healthy or feel better," said Jodie Bernstein, director of the FTC's bureau of consumer protection. The settlement "will help remind marketers of their responsibility to back up all advertising claims."

By law, dietary supplements cannot promise to directly treat or prevent disease, but they can make more vague claims of "supporting bodily functions." The FTC can take action if a product's advertisement makes a false claim.

Under the settlement, the companies would need competent scientific evidence to corroborate claims made about the product.

Excess caffeine doubles the risk of having miscarriage

By The Associated Press

Pregnant women can drink a couple of cups of coffee per day without raising the danger of a miscarriage, but six or more cups can double the risk, a study found.

Pregnant women generally are urged to limit their caffeine intake, though studies on this subject have been unclear. Some have found harm in a cup or two a day. Others found the higher miscarriage risk only in women who suffered morning sickness, and still others found no increased risk.

"This research not only shows a risk of miscarriage from consuming large amounts of caffeine, it also provides a valuable research tool for other investigators studying caffeine consumption," said Dr. Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The study, conducted by doctors from the institute and the University of Utah, was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The researchers examined stored blood samples that were taken from thousands of pregnant women at 12 sites from 1959 through 1966. That period was about when U.S. coffee consumption peaked.

The researchers measured blood levels of paraxanthine, the primary substance produced when the liver breaks down caffeine. Paraxanthine stays in the blood at more consistent levels than caffeine, so the scientists considered it a good measure of daily caffeine consumption. Besides coffee, tea, soft drinks and chocolate contain caffeine.

THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

Published each Sunday morning and each evening, except Saturday, by Snyder Publishing Co., Inc., 3600 College Ave., Snyder, Texas 79549.

Periodicals postage paid at the post office at Snyder, Texas, Publication Number USPS611-520.

POSTMASTER send change of address to P.O. Box 949, Snyder, Texas, 79550.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: By carrier in Snyder, $9.00 per month.

By mail in Scurry and adjoining counties, one year $85.80 balance of Texas and out of state $113.85.

Roy McQueen, Publisher
Wade Warren, Managing Editor
MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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EARLY BIRD SALE

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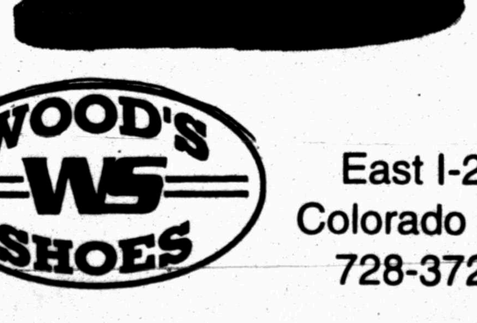
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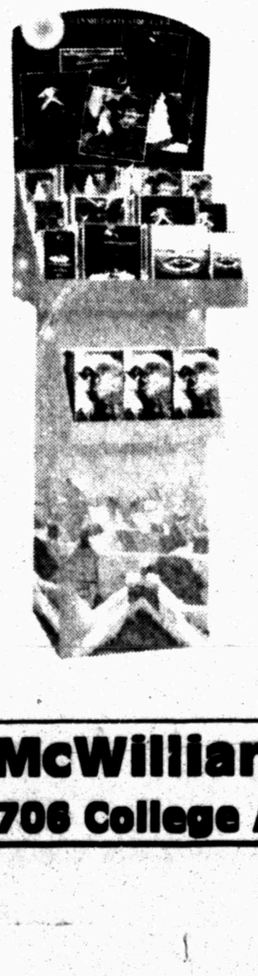
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WINKLES, SCULL WEDDING SHOWER — Valarie Winkles, bride-elect of Thomas Scull, both of San Saba, was honored at a miscellaneous shower on Nov. 14 in the home of Ralphene Canon. Valerie is the daughter of Wayne and Cheryl Winkles of Midland, former Snyder residents. From left are Mrs. Milton Winkles of Snyder, paternal grandmother of the future bride; Mrs. Glenn Foster, her maternal grandmother from Hermleigh; the honoree; Cheryl Winkles, her mother; and Vanessa Winkles, her sister from Midland. The couple will marry at 3 p.m., Saturday in the Hermleigh First Baptist Church. (Contributed Photo)



BABY SHOWER HELD — Mrs. Kevin Tate was honoree at a baby shower on Oct. 22 in the 37th Street Church of Christ Family Center. From left are Janna Peterson, her sister-in-law from Abilene; Caroline Peterson, her niece; Cheree Tate, the honoree; and Kathryn Tate, her mother-in-law. Abby Elizabeth Tate was born on Nov. 23 in Cogdell Hospital. She weighed six pounds, 12 ounces. (Contributed Photo)

Community Calendar

THURSDAY

Al-Anon brown bag; Park Club in Winston Park; for information call 573-4203, 573-8626, 573-2101 or 573-0695; noon to 1 p.m.

Horseshoe Pitching For Fun; horseshoe courts located at the coliseum; everybody welcome, for further information call 573-9762; 7 p.m.

New Horizons AA, closed meeting; for information call 573-8626, 573-9458 or 574-1292; 8 p.m.

Nuestra Nueva Esperanza AA; Park Club; for information call 573-8626, 573-9458 or 574-1292; 8 p.m.

FRIDAY

Free blood pressure clinics; senior Citizens Center; 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Blood pressures will be taken at Cogdell Hospital Home Health Services, 1800 Cogdell Blvd., Suite B; 1-2 p.m.

Bridge

By Phillip Alder

North 11-25-99
♠ 10 9 7 2
♥ ---
♦ A 8 6 2
♣ A K 6 4 2

West
♠ Q 8 3
♥ J 7
♦ J 10 9 7 5
♣ 9 7 5

East
♠ ---
♥ A K 10 8 5 3
♦ K Q 3
♣ Q J 10 8

South
♠ A K J 6 5 4
♥ Q 9 6 4 2
♦ 4
♣ 3

Vulnerable: Both
Dealer: East

South	West	North	East
			1 ♥
1 ♠	Pass	6 ♠	All pass

Opening lead: ♥ J

Ten years on and going strong

By Phillip Alder

The second independently published English magazine is Bridge Plus, which began almost 10 years ago. It supplies material for most levels of player, but concentrates on the intermediate. In particular, I like The Improve Page by Dave Huggett. How would you declare this six-spade contract after West leads the club jack?

North's leap to six spades is aggressive, but not unreasonable.

Huggett goes through an A-B-C-D-E routine. Analyze the lead: As East has five-plus hearts, West must have a singleton jack, J-x, or J-10-x. Bidding: West probably has a weak hand. Count the tricks: You should aim for these 12: six spades, one diamond, two clubs and three heart ruffs in the dummy. As you need that many ruffs, you mustn't start by drawing all the missing trumps, even if they are 2-1. Danger: In particular, a 3-0 spade break offside. Entries: No problem.

At the table, after trumping in the dummy, declarer played a spade to his ace. He continued with a heart ruff, two top clubs, discarding a heart, the diamond ace, a diamond ruff in hand, and another heart. However, West ruffed in with the spade queen and returned his last trump, leaving declarer with an unavoidable heart loser: one down.

A little unlucky, true, but declarer shouldn't touch trumps. He should take the top clubs, throwing a heart, and the diamond ace, then crossruff in the red suits. Everything is hunky-dory.

An annual subscription costs 33 pounds seamail (about $54) or 43 pounds airmail; go to the Web site at www.bridge-plus.co.uk.

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The computer language COBOL is an acronym for *COmmon Business Oriented Language.*



WEDDING SHOWER — Mrs. Eloy Chavez, nee Twylla Brown, was honoree at a bridal shower at 37th Street Church of Christ Family Center on Nov. 10. The couple married on Oct. 23 at 3 p.m. in the Western Texas College courtyard. From left are Tiffany Brown, the bride's sister; the honoree; and Frances Williams, the bride's grandmother. (Contributed Photo)

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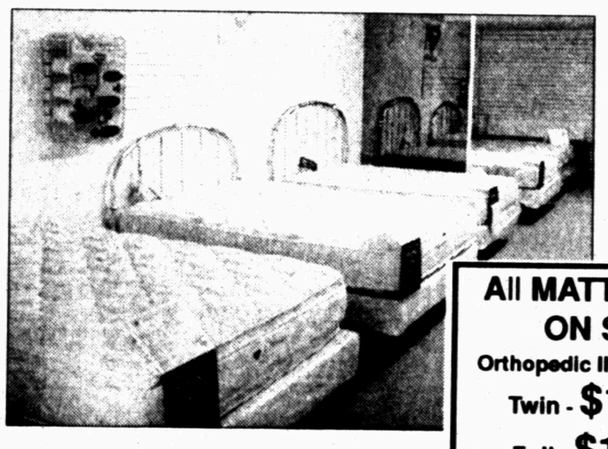


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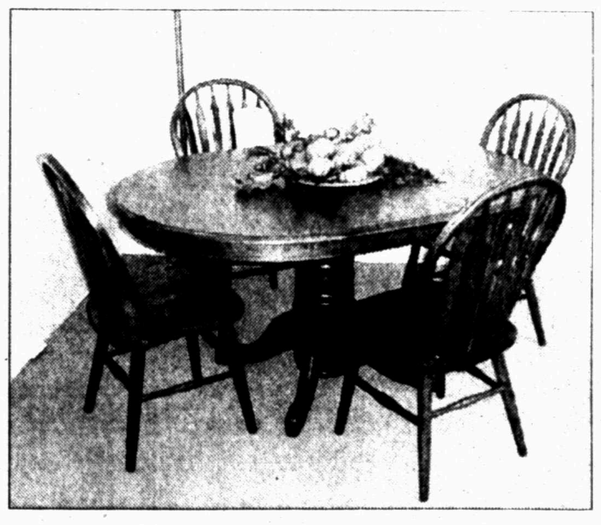
All CARPET on sale.



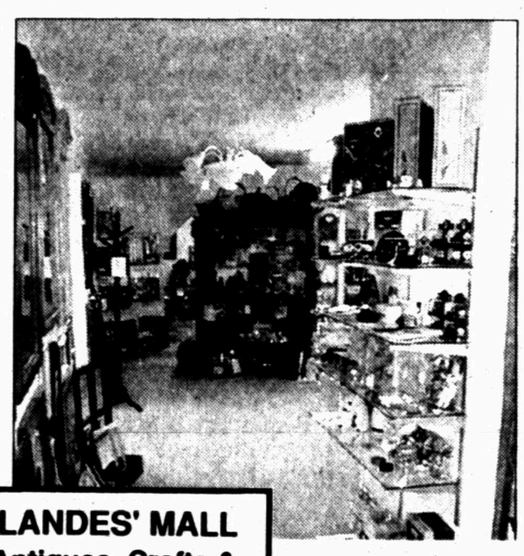
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Snyder, TX 79549



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Government battles fraud in fed workers' compensation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Albert Slugocki had collected more than $300,000 in federal workers' compensation for a disabling back injury when investigators received an anonymous tip: He was leading adventure tours on the Amazon River.

While captain of the tour boat, Slugocki was receiving as much as $1,888 per month in tax-free disability benefits for an injury he sustained in 1980 as a deputy U.S. marshal. To keep the checks coming, he simply filled out a form each year saying he wasn't employed.

Slugocki said in an interview that the company run out of his Fort Lauderdale, Fla., home was his wife's business and he wasn't paid. "I never made any money," he said.

The government requires employees to report any work they do — paid or volunteer. Slugocki was convicted in 1996 of making false statements, served a year in prison and was ordered to repay $217,000.

Federal watchdogs say they fear many others are taking advantage of the government's $1.9 billion workers' compensation program, which is more generous than most state programs.

About 49,000 federal workers are on long-term disability — which pays most of them three-quarters of their salaries tax-free after 45 days out of work — and nearly half have collected benefits for 10 years or longer.

The annual cost of long-term cases is now $1.1 billion, compared with $740 million in 1988.

Administrators contend abuse is rare, noting that only 160 workers, out of hundreds of thousands receiving benefits, have been convicted of fraud in the last five years. The number of disability cases has held mostly steady the past few years as the federal work force became smaller and agencies stepped up monitoring for fraud.

Several investigators who check for abuse in the program told The Associated Press that they believe many people are getting away with fraud.

The investigators at the departments Labor and Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies estimate fraud could be involved in 3.5 percent to 10 percent of cases, at a potential cost of tens of millions of dollars.

"It's a great program if you're really hurt, but it's so generous that it's tremendously abused," said Jim Reed, manager of financial investigations for the Tennessee Valley Authority, the federal agency that runs the nation's largest power producer.

Nearly 265,000 of 3 million federal employees collected benefits for job-related injuries or illnesses in 1997, the last year for which figures are available. More than half received just reimbursements for medical expenses; the rest got wage benefits.

A congressional audit showed some employees' tax-free benefits exceeded their pre-injury take-home pay. Such benefits can be collected indefinitely, even past retirement age.

Federal managers have recommended cutting benefit levels to make fraud less tempting.

Shelby Hallmark, deputy director of workers' compensation at the Labor Department, said ineligible employees are weeded out by case monitoring and other safeguards.

The Labor Department began two projects to monitor cases more closely in 1992 and 1993. Officials say the screening already has helped reduce long-term cases by 8 percent and saved $400 million by getting people who could work or were no longer eligible for benefits off the rolls.

When Veterans Affairs' inspector general took a closer look at the program, it discovered hundreds of fraudulent cases. Auditors at the VA, which spent about $140 million on workers' compensation benefits last year, estimated that as many as 567 out of the 15,753 cases active in 1996 were fraudulent. Poor case management at some facilities was to blame, they concluded.

The agency has caught just 38 employees cheating the program since 1993. The VA has begun monitoring cases more closely, said David Gamble, deputy assistant inspector general for investigations.

Federal watchdogs say they don't have enough resources to go after every case of suspected fraud and instead focus on big money cases.

Employee union officials say fraud estimates are overblown and create an unfair and inaccurate perception that injured federal workers, who by law can't sue the government, are cheating.

"No one can come forward showing any significant evidence of widespread fraud," said Richard Boutwell, special assistant for federal injury compensation at the American Postal Workers Union.

Pursuing cheaters has paid off. Labor Department investigations saved $40 million in the last five years. The U.S. Postal Service, which accounts for one-fourth of all workers' compensation payments, says it saved $374 million by uncovering fraud in the last five years.

Under increased monitoring, long-term cases are now referred to nurses who coordinate treatment to get employees back to work. Workers



PILGRIMS AND INDIANS — Rebekah Thornton's fifth grade students at Northeast Elementary put on their annual Thanksgiving re-enactment Tuesday. Back row, from left, Chris Kuliga, Kazual Moore, Staci Lee, Rayna Alaniz, Candace Chandler, Gloria Benitez; next row, Lisa Rivera, Teisha McGlouthin, Kriston Alarcon, Amanda Lawrence, Sarah Covington, Adrian Sosa; next row, Judith Rodarte, Norma Aguilar, Omar Herrera, Joey Harvey, Keith Manlief; front, center, Danny Courtney, Johnathan McDonald. (Staff Photo By Shirley A. Gorman)

Aggie 'family' runs deep with tradition

By JIM VERTUNO
Associated Press Writer

Howdy."

It's a casual greeting that in Texas can carry with it a world of tradition and camaraderie.

For graduates of Texas A&M, the official Aggie greeting is verbal acceptance and understanding and part of a deep sense of tradition. Once a military school populated by blue-collar boys, A&M's passionate traditions — Bonfire, Muster and Silver Taps — have survived even as the school grows and changes in ever-urbanizing Texas.

Former students say A&M is a rarity among institutions, creating an extended family that grieves for the 12 current and former students killed last week when the bonfire stack collapsed.

"If you're on the inside, you can feel the spirit and you know what it is," said Larry Zatopek, a 1968 Aggie graduate living in Austin.

"But there's no way you can relate that to somebody on the outside."

Last week's tragedy gave the "outside" an intimate, if sad, look at the Aggie family and its community.

Work was well under way for the annual bonfire before Friday's football game against the University of Texas when the 40-foot log pyramid collapsed as students worked on it.

Eleven of the dead were enrolled at A&M. The 12th was a recent graduate who returned to help build the bonfire stack. Dozens more were injured.

The accident prompted an outpouring of grief for the men and women who died while doing what generations of Aggies had done before them.

"You had 100,000 people who could immediately relate to what they were doing," said Brit McDermett, a '92 graduate who worked on previous stacks as a member of the Corps of Cadets.

"Smelling the same smells, the excitement. Everybody in the Corps worked on bonfire. I work with a guy who graduated in the late 50s. He worked on bonfire. It's the same with him as with me," McDermett said.

Once an Aggie, always an Aggie, said Lt. Gov. Rick Perry, who served in the Corps of Cadets and graduated from A&M in 1972.

"When I was a pilot in the Air Force, you would see someone with an Aggie ring and with nothing said but a handshake you knew that person and you had an extraordinary bond," Perry said.

Perry, who worked on the 1969 bonfire that reached 109 feet before university officials capped the height of future stacks at 55 feet, said he cried when he learned of the accident.

The grieving stretched across the state.

About 16,000 attended a memorial service the night after the accident. Thousands more attended the victims' funerals.

Even in death, Aggie spirit was strong. Services for the victims included playing the Aggie War Hymn and caskets draped with A&M blankets. And like at a football game, those in the congregation locked arms, swaying as the hymn was played.

Even A&M rivals at the more cosmopolitan University of Texas, where students crack jokes about A&M's agricultural history, changed their annual "hex rally" Monday to a "unity rally." The event drew about 10,000, including hundreds of current A&M students.

"Some of my fellow Aggies fell and I'm here to honor them. There is no other place for an Aggie to be," said Brandon Hepburn, an architecture and design major at A&M. "We lost our brothers and sisters. We must be here to show them honor. Where would you be if you lost your brothers and sisters?"

Texas students respect A&M and the concept of "Aggieland," said UT senior Aaron Schmidt.

"There is spirit at UT, but it's not something that's as pronounced as at A&M," Schmidt said. "I admire A&M for its courage in handling this situation."

The core of the Aggie spirit is its rituals.

Muster is a ceremony celebrated in more than 400 places around the world each April 21 since 1883. Begun as a way for students to get together and relive their college days, the candlelighting ceremony has evolved into an event to honor all students, including the deceased, as well as Texas' freedom.

Silver Taps is a solemn event to pay final tribute to any student who has died. Campus flags are flown at half-mast and a notice of who is being remembered is posted at the flagpole in front of the Academic Building. The lights on campus are turned off that night.

Another tradition, Yell Practice, which dates to 1913, helps students perfect their school spirit for football games or other events. Students gather at midnight at Kyle Field to practice yells.

One the most famous traditions is the 12th Man, in which A&M students remain standing during an entire football game, ready to be called to the sideline to play if needed. The tradition dates to 1923 when a rash of injuries forced coach Dana X. Bible to call a student from the stands. Although he didn't play, E. King Gill put on a uniform and waited as A&M won 22-14.

And there is the bonfire, which started in 1909 when A&M was still an all-male military academy. Until this year, the bonfire had been canceled only once, after President Kennedy's 1963 assassination.

Now, university officials, students and graduates are grappling with whether the event should be abolished. The majority seem to favor resuming the rite next fall, under stricter supervision and with new engineering plans in place.

"If they do away with the bonfire, they might as well do away with all the other traditions. It's really the bonding of all the other traditions," said Mississippi State coach Jackie Sherrill, who coached the Aggies from 1982-88. "To say it is a worthless cause is not showing much dignity to those kids who were there, believed in it and now they're gone."

Retired Marine to head A&S Museum

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gen. John R. Dailey, a top official at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, has been named the new director of the National Air and Space Museum, the Smithsonian Institution said Wednesday.

Dailey, 65, served 36 years in the U.S. Marines and seven years as NASA's assistant deputy administrator.

State, engineering board study bonfire

AUSTIN (AP) — Builders of the Aggie bonfire violated Texas A&M's published safety regulations by putting freshmen and sophomores to work on the upper levels of the tiered log stack, students said.

Also, this year's construction omitted key safety features developed in previous years, Dallas-Fort Worth television station WFAA reported Tuesday, quoting a former A&M professor of construction science.

The bonfire collapsed early Thursday morning, killing 11 A&M students and a recent graduate and injuring 27 others.

About 70 people were stacking the 40-foot-high pyramid of logs for the annual bonfire before the football game against rival Texas when the pile gave way. Some students were hurled from the structure and others were trapped beneath shifting logs.

Larry Grosse, the former A&M construction science professor, told WFAA he thought the structure collapsed because of a failure to follow safety features he developed during 13 years of advising students on the bonfire.

"Sadly, there was not someone overseeing all of this to make sure it was being done," said Grosse, who is now at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

Rusty Thompson, an A&M administrator who has served as bonfire adviser for two years, acknowledged that students breached the procedures set out in the 1994 "Bonfire Safety Handbook." But he said he felt comfortable with the safety measures that were in place.

"I don't think the fact that there were freshmen or sophomores on the stack was the reason it fell," Thompson told The Dallas Morning News. "Something went wrong somewhere within that stack."

Also, questions about design and oversight of the bonfire have prompted the state's engineering board to examine Texas construction law to see whether it applies to A&M's 90-year-old tradition, officials said Tuesday.

The eight-member board will look at the Texas Engineering Practice Act on Dec. 10 to see whether bonfires fall under the law, said Jimmy Smith, interim executive director of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and a professor of civil engineering at Texas Tech University.

"The law does not mention anything about a pile of logs that are going to be burned," Smith said. "We have not discussed this, or even a case like this. There is no precedent."

Texas A&M spokesman Lane Stephenson said he understood the bonfire was exempt from the law. "There is no question that we have been abiding," he said.

State and local governments must file plans with the engineering board and arrange for a licensed professional engineer to supervise construction before beginning projects that involve public safety, health or welfare.

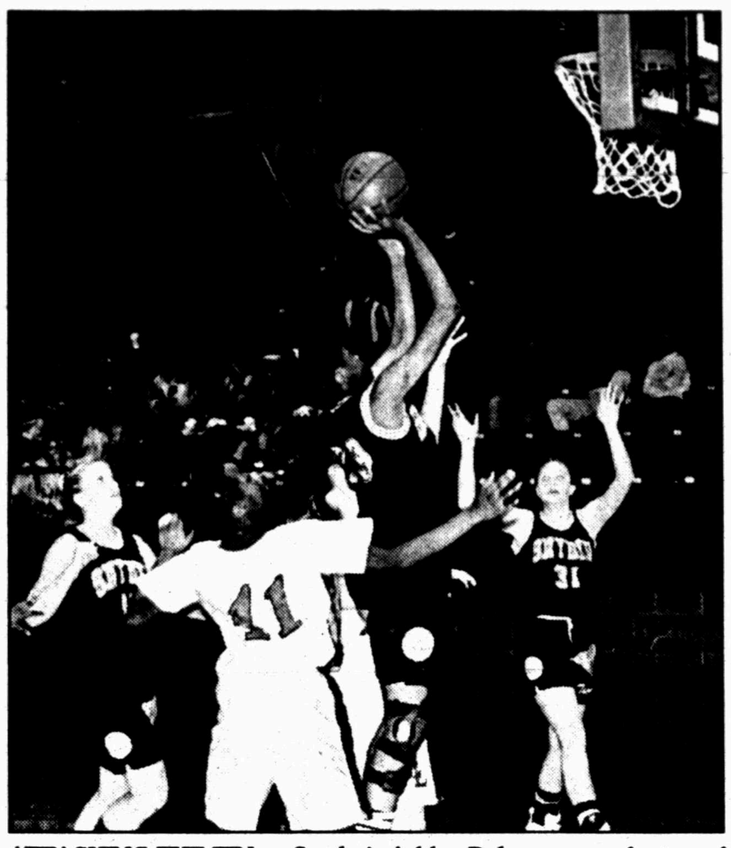
Smith said the Aggie Bonfire could be exempt because volunteers build it and because the law typically applies to public buildings. The bonfire began as a trash pile in 1909 and in recent years has peaked around 55 feet.



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SPORTS



ATTACKING THE TIN — Snyder's Ashley Delce goes up for two of her team high 12 points, while teammates Kameron Kallemeyn (left) and Kristen Murray (right) get in rebounding position during non-district action Tuesday night in Levelland. Following the Thanksgiving holiday, the Lady Tigers return to action Tuesday when they host Lubbock High. (SDN Staff Photo)

JV boys fall to Levelland

LEVELLAND — Snyder had a hard time keeping up with Levelland's torrid scoring pace Tuesday night, as the Tigers suffered their first setback of the season, 73-48, in boys' junior varsity action.

Snyder, now 2-1 on the year, was led by Shay Franks who poured in 12 points. Jamaal Pruitt also finished in double digits with 10.

Wade Pinson and Chris McLeod dropped in eight points apiece, with Brandon McGuire and Tate Thompson adding three each. Tovares Brandon and Nick Landes registered one bucket apiece.

The setback to the Lobos came on the heels of the Tigers' 48-37 win over Abilene Cooper.

McLeod poured in 13 points to lead Snyder against the Cougars, with Landes posting 12 more. Both players drained a pair of three-pointers.

McGuire also nailed a long-range bucket and tallied seven points, along with Pruitt. Brandon accounted for five points, and Thompson and Pinson chipped in two points apiece.

Snyder will put its 2-1 record to the test Saturday when it travels to Wolfforth for an 11 a.m. match-up with Frenship.

Rotan players garner honors

ROTAN — The Rotan Yellowhammers placed seven players on the 12-A All-District football team.

Senior lineman Baldomar Frausto led the Yellowhammers' honors, garnering first team spots on offense and defense.

Other first team selections from Rotan were D.J. Alvarado, Jason Powell, Ryan Posey, Byron Kennedy, Robert Helms and Craig Leach.

12-A All-District Football Team

Coach of the year: Bob Shipley, Rotan

Offensive MVP: Travis Stucker, sr., Sterling City

Defensive MVP: Ryan Posey, sr., Rotan; Mario Saenz, sr., Roscoe

Newcomers of the year: Clay McWilliams, soph., Roby; Stewart Millican, fresh., Robert Lee

First Team Offense

Quarterback: Chase Holland, jr., Roscoe

Running backs: D.J. Alvarado, jr., Rotan; Jason Powell, jr., Rotan; Eli Millican, sr., Water Valley; Lance Moore, jr., Roby.

Tight end: Ryan Posey, sr., Rotan

Receivers: Garrett Brown, jr., Robert Lee; Levi Hallmark, sr., Sterling City

Linemen: Byron Kennedy, sr., Rotan; Baldomar Frausto, sr., Rotan; Noah Albeita, sr., Roscoe; Dan McCown, sr., Robert Lee; Skipper Michulka, sr., Sterling City; Mario Saenz, sr., Roscoe

Kicker: Levi Hallmark, sr., Sterling City

Second Team Offense

Quarterback: LeePat Thomas, sr., Sterling City

Running backs: Robert helmas, soph., Rotan; Nick Anthony, jr., Roscoe; Mike Vick, jr., Water Valley.

Tight end: J.R. Sanders, sr., Roscoe

Receivers: Mark Copeland, jr., Rotan; Joseph Galvan, sr., Roscoe; Justin Gaston, sr., Sterling City

Linemen: Jacob Price, sr., Rotan; Tanner Mayfield, jr., Roscoe; Brian Bolding, sr., Water Valley; Joel Gallegos, sr., Water Lee; Matthew Zapata, jr., Roscoe

Kicker: Ryan Posey, sr., Rotan

First Team Defense

Linebackers: Robert Helms, soph., Rotan; Chase Hord, jr., Sterling City; Douglas Ince, sr., Roscoe; Lance Moore, jr., Roby

Secondary: Adrian Aguillar, sr., Roscoe; Jeremy Griffeth, jr., Roby; Brandon Morey, sr., Water Valley; LeePat Thomas, sr., Sterling City

Ends: Adrian Deloyas, sr., Sterling City; Eli Millican, sr., Water Valley

Linemen: Baldomar Frausto, sr., Rotan; Craig Leach, jr., Rotan; Noah Albeita, sr., Roscoe; Willie Cantu, sr., Roscoe; Skipper Michulka, sr., Sterling City

Punter: Beau Boxell, jr., Robert Lee

Return specialist: Gareth Pipes, sr., Rotan

Second Team Defense

Linebackers: Joel Gallegos, sr., Robert Lee; J.R. Sanders, sr., Roscoe; Travis Stucker, sr., Sterling City; Mike Vick, sr., Water Valley

Secondary: Mark Copeland, jr., Rotan; Jason Powell, jr., Rotan; Joseph Galvan, sr., Roscoe; Matthew Pitcock, sr., Robert Lee

Ends: Dan McCown, sr., Robert Lee; Toby Nash, sr., Roscoe

Linemen: Byron Kennedy, sr., Rotan; Jacob Price, sr., Rotan; Cory Rains, jr., Rotan; Joe Garcia, jr., Roscoe

Punter: Jeremy Griffith, jr., Roby

Return specialist: Colby Eubanks, soph., Robert Lee

SDN Sports Briefs

Basketball games changed

Snyder's JV and varsity boys basketball games scheduled for Friday at Frenship have been moved to Saturday, due to the football playoffs.

JV action will begin Saturday at 11:30, with the varsity getting underway at 1 o'clock.

Phillips waived by 49ers

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Lawrence Phillips' stormy tenure with San Francisco ended when the 49ers waived the running back, still serving a three-game suspension for defying the coaching staff.

Phillips, who also lost jobs with the St. Louis Rams and Miami Dolphins because of a string of personality clashes and run-ins with the law, filed a grievance earlier seeking to overturn the suspension.

The team has 10 days to respond to Phillips' grievance, filed last week through the NFL Players Association.

Phillips was suspended when he refused to practice and ignored or mocked coaching directives Nov. 12.

NFL bans slashing gesture

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL is banning the new fad among players — a throat-slash gesture used to taunt an opponent or celebrate a big play.

A letter was sent to all 31 teams to ban the gesture.

If it is done on the field, it will be deemed taunting or unsportsmanlike conduct and be subject to a 15-yard penalty. If done in the bench area, the player will be subject to a league fine.

Iverson out with 3-6 weeks

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — NBA scoring leader Allen Iverson will miss 3-6 weeks with a broken thumb on his shooting hand.

Iverson was hurt in the first half of the 76ers' 94-91 loss to San Antonio when he took a hard fall. He played the rest of Monday's game, scoring 35 points but missing 21-of-34 shots.

Iverson, averaging 30.8 points, has missed only 10 games in three-plus seasons since Philadelphia drafted him No. 1 in 1996.

Memphis coach admits affair

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Former Memphis basketball coach Tic Price, who resigned nine days ago, admitted an affair with a university student.

Price said he paid the 23-year-old student $17,000, but did not specify what the money was for.

Price, 43, formerly head coach at New Orleans, was about to start his third season after succeeding Larry Finch as coach.

Jerry Jones vs. Jimmy Johnson...

Heated feud has lost its sizzle

IRVING (AP) — A few days before Jimmy Johnson's last game at Texas Stadium, he called a radio station to guarantee that the Dallas Cowboys would win the NFC championship game.

A few days before his next game at Texas Stadium — his first as a rival coach since an ugly divorce from the team and its owner, Jerry Jones — Johnson was watching his words much more carefully.

Johnson and Jones have said nothing but nice things about each other this week, taking all the sting and much of the fun out of the buildup for Thursday's game between Miami and Dallas.

So far, the juiciest tidbit is something Jimmy told his father: "This will be the best game that Dallas plays because they'd love to beat me. I feel the same way towards them. I want to win."

Not exactly worthy of 3-inch headlines, as Johnson suggested for his boast before the January 1994 NFC championship against San Francisco. But that's about as good as it's gotten in a week where everyone is talking about how much they respect each other.

Much of the bitterness came out of the Jimmy-Jerry feud in December following the death of Johnson's mother.

As family and friends gathered at the Johnsons' home in Port Arthur, caterers began delivering platter after platter of food sent by Jones.

"And he sent a beautiful, beautiful wreath," C.W. Johnson said. "Jimmy knew all about it. He was very pleased with it. I think it kind of helped their relationship."

The former University of Arkansas teammates were reunited in 1989 when Jones bought the Cowboys and made Johnson the coach. The Cowboys went 1-15 that season, but were Super Bowl champions by 1992.

"Actually, when you cut through everything, the No. 1 reason I left Dallas is I wanted to live in South Florida," Johnson said. "That was the bottom line."

So it had nothing to do with Jones saying any of 500 coaches could've won the Super Bowl with the Cowboys? Or anything else Jones did to take credit for the franchise's dramatic turnaround?

"I think there was tension because Jerry and I are both tremendous competitors," Johnson said. "I think people made more out of it than what there really was. Not being in the same situation anymore, I think our relationship has gone right back to what it was prior to me coaching the Cowboys.

"I've got tremendous respect for Jerry. I like Jerry. I think our relationship is extremely positive now."

Cowboys who played under Johnson are looking forward to seeing him before the game. But once the ball is kicked off, they don't expect his presence to be a factor.

"I know it makes for a great story about Jimmy's tenure here and how it all ended, but we're not playing Jimmy," quarterback Troy Aikman said. "Jimmy is on the sidelines and I don't pay a whole lot of attention to any of the coaches, no matter who we are playing."

Defensive lineman Chad Hennings said: "If you want you could use it as a mental boost. Do I? No. I've got enough on my mind besides worrying about who the opposing coach is."

While seeing Johnson might not fire up the Cowboys, Dallas running back Emmitt Smith said he expects Johnson to use his return to motivate the Dolphins.

"He's probably telling them this is one team I don't want to lose to," Smith said. "I can hear him now: 'The trap is set. They're no 5-5 team.' "

'Horns' defense could be key against Aggies

AUSTIN (AP) — It wasn't long ago the Texas defense didn't scare anybody.

This season, anchored by a large, veteran front line, the No. 7 Longhorns are pushing everybody around.

While the offense and sophomore quarterback Major Applewhite have grabbed most of the attention this season, the team's defenders have quietly had one their best seasons in years.

The UT defense is rated No. 6 overall, giving up 287.3 yards per game with just 92.5 on the ground going into Friday's game against No. 24 Texas A&M.

"That's what we've been waiting for since I got here," said Texas junior defensive lineman Casey Hampton. "It's good to finally have a good defense."

Texas (9-2) gave a glimpse of things to come against A&M last year, when the Longhorns held the Aggies (7-3) to minus-7 yards rushing and 173 overall in Texas' 26-24 victory.

"Last year, we didn't have any luck running the ball," said A&M center Seth McKinney. "They are great players and I give them all the respect but we have to run the ball good.

"Our practices lately have been really intense running the ball. This will probably be our biggest challenge. Nebraska was good, but these guys are the biggest."

"Those guys" would be the Texas front four of 300-pound tackles Hampton and Shaun Rogers and ends Cedric Woodard and Aaron Humphrey.

Local Schedule

BASKETBALL

Saturday

Snyder JV and varsity boys at Frenship, 1:30 and 1 p.m.

FOOTBALL

Saturday

Borden County vs. Groom, six-man quarterfinal playoff at Floydada, 6 p.m.

National Football League

AMERICAN CONFERENCE	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
East						
Miami	8	2	0	.800	219	183
Indianapolis	8	2	0	.800	294	198
Buffalo	7	4	0	.636	211	166
New England	6	4	0	.600	225	201
N.Y. Jets	4	6	0	.400	167	174
Central						
Jacksonville	9	1	0	.900	257	102
Tennessee	8	2	0	.800	206	181
Pittsburgh	5	5	0	.500	182	140
Baltimore	4	6	0	.400	173	181
Cleveland	2	9	0	.182	116	284
Cincinnati	1	10	0	.091	161	336
West						
Seattle	8	2	0	.800	236	164
Kansas City	5	5	0	.500	219	167
Oakland	5	5	0	.500	206	189
San Diego	4	6	0	.400	156	217
Denver	4	7	0	.364	221	226

NATIONAL CONFERENCE	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
East						
Washington	6	4	0	.600	310	270
Dallas	5	5	0	.500	235	182
N.Y. Giants	5	5	0	.500	170	188
Arizona	4	6	0	.400	128	196
Philadelphia	3	8	0	.273	166	256
Central						
Detroit	6	4	0	.600	218	197
Minnesota	6	4	0	.600	237	199
Tampa Bay	6	4	0	.600	158	138
Green Bay	5	5	0	.500	192	209
Chicago	5	6	0	.455	190	221
West						
St. Louis	8	2	0	.800	323	135
Carolina	4	6	0	.400	227	221
San Francisco	3	7	0	.300	163	281
Atlanta	2	8	0	.200	127	235
New Orleans	2	8	0	.200	170	226

Thursday, Nov. 25

Chicago at Detroit, 11:40 p.m.

Miami at Dallas, 3:15 p.m.



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010 LEGAL NOTICES

REQUEST FOR BIDS
ON TEXAS HIGHWAY
CONSTRUCTION

Sealed proposals for 38.336 mi of crumb rubber seal coat on US 84 at BU 84-G North of Snyder covered by CPM 53-8-58, on US 84 seven miles South of Snyder at BU 84-G covered by CPM 53-9-63, and on US 180 seven miles East of Bordon County Line to Bordon County Line covered by CPM 295-4-37 in Scurry County, will be received at the Texas Department of Transportation, 200 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas, until 1:00 P.M., December 7, 1999, and then publicly opened and read. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that the sealed proposal arrives at the above location and is in the hands of the letting official, by the specified deadline regardless of the method chosen by the bidder for delivery.

Plans and specifications, including minimum wage rates as provided by Law, are available for inspection at the office of Michael Molter, Area Engineer, Snyder, Texas, and at the Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, Texas. Bidding proposals are to be requested from the Construction Division, 200 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704-1205. Plans are available through commercial printers in Austin, Texas, at the expense of the bidder.

The Texas Department of Transportation hereby notifies all bidders that it will ensure that bidders will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex or national origin, in having full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation, and in consideration for an award.

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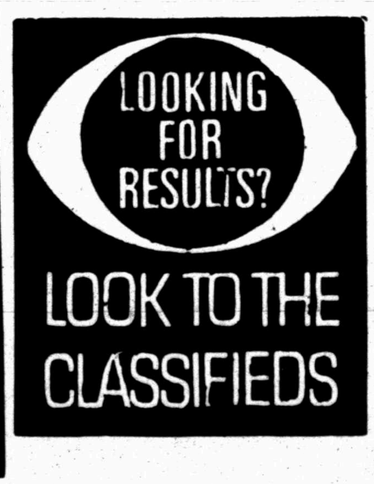
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Residents of flooded N.C. town thankful

PRINCEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — After losing their homes and just about everything they own to Hurricane Floyd's floodwaters, people in Princeville have plenty to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, it turns out.

"I just thank the Lord I'm alive," Delois Morgan said as she picked up a free Thanksgiving turkey.

So does everyone else.

Floyd drenched eastern North Carolina with up to 20 inches of rain Sept. 16, causing the worst flooding in the state's history. It was blamed for at least 51 deaths. But none of them happened here.

"It's a blessing how this whole place was squashed and nobody was lost," said Anna Bell Brown, 73, whose home will be torn down and rebuilt.

Still, the town of 2,100 founded by freed slaves after the Civil War sustained worse damage than any other community flooded by Floyd. Townspeople lost furniture, personal keepsakes and clothing when waters surged above rooftops and destroyed 850 of Princeville's 1,154 homes.

Most residents are living with friends and relatives or in a government trailer park 16 miles away in Rocky Mount, where a community dinner is planned for Thursday in tents donated by a church.

The people living in the trailers will be able to line up for donated turkey, ham, dressing, gravy, potato salad, green beans, collard greens and corn bread and eat off paper plates with their fellow Floyd refugees.

Police Sgt. Gary Foxx, 42, married five days before Floyd struck, said this will be the first Thanksgiving in 10 years he hasn't had to work. The celebrating will be done 22 miles from Princeville in a rented home he and his new wife are sharing with his son and 72-year-old aunt. Both his home and his wife's house were lost in the flood.

"I'm going to enjoy it with my family," Foxx said. "We never had a chance to get our houses together."

Shirley Ruffin, 60, planned a Thanksgiving dinner with her children in her rented home outside town. She is eager to return to her own flood-damaged home, yet frets about the cost of repairing it.

Mental health professionals expect the flood aftermath will worsen the normal holiday blues. Across the region, damage to farms, homes and businesses may top the $6 billion caused by Hurricane Fran in 1996.

"People who are emotionally tired from the incredible stress of Hurricane Floyd need to be kind to themselves during the holidays," said Dr. Phillip Veenhuis, medical director for the state mental health division. "Many people are already worn out just coping with the recovery effort from the storm."

But there was some cause for optimism in Princeville this week, after the town Board of Commissioners voted Monday to ask the Army Corps of Engineers to repair the town's Tar River dike rather than accept a government home-buyout program that might have dismantled the community.

"There is hope," said Sam Knight, the town's planning and zoning director. "Everyone is happy about the decision."

While Princeville's recovery will require the destruction of many homes, officials hope that a healthy business district will emerge and that the rebuilding will teach residents trades that will help them find jobs.

"We're looking at possibly six months of demolition," said Willie Snead, manager of the recovery project. "That's what's giving the people hope, seeing some activity."

Studies finding disparities in kidney failure patients' care

By The Associated Press

Kidney failure patients getting dialysis at for-profit centers are less likely to get on a transplant waiting list and more likely to die than those at not-for-profit institutions, researchers found.

The researchers mainly blame understaffing. But the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine study also raises the possibility that profit-making centers may sometimes be reluctant to arrange kidney transplants because they don't want to lose their patients' dialysis business.

"If the person gets a transplant, the facility loses that stream of revenue," said lead author Dr. Pushkal Garg. "That's pretty speculative and that's probably the lesser of the two causes."

In a second study, Harvard Medical School researchers tried to explain the well-documented racial gap when it comes to kidney transplants. They speculated that prejudice and a breakdown in communication between white doctors and black patients may help explain why whites are nearly twice as likely to get a transplant or get on a waiting list.

Those findings prompted the federal agency that administers Medicare to announce Wednesday that it will strengthen enforcement of Medicare rules requiring that all kidney failure patients be evaluated for transplants and informed of their options.

Both studies were published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

Kidneys filter out toxic substances and excess fluid, so if disease, injury or infection ruins them, survival depends on a transplant or three-times-a-week dialysis. During the several-hour, often-tiring procedure, a machine pumps blood through tubes and filters, then back into the body.

About 240,000 Americans undergo dialysis. For most, a transplant can mean a longer, stronger life.

Garg's team found that the for-profit centers' patients were 20 percent more likely to die and 26 percent less likely to get a transplant or a spot on a waiting list within 18 months of starting dialysis.

He said other studies show that for-profit dialysis centers generally have less staff than not-for-profits, which limits patient care and education about transplants.

Garg's study examined medical records from a federal database covering about 3,500 patients treated at dialysis centers in the early 1990s. The authors concluded that with Medicare reimbursements stagnant since 1983, for-profits may be cutting costs more aggressively than other centers.

Terry Bahr, president of the National Renal Administrators Association, representing executives of both kinds of centers, said the conclusions may have merit, but more recent figures show patients are living longer and are healthier. Amid increasing industry consolidation, for-profit centers now treat more than two-thirds of patients, he said, so if the researchers were right, patients would be getting worse.

Bahr said doctors decide who gets referred for transplant evaluation.

Dr. Josephine Briggs of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, which helped pay for the study, said the trend raises concerns. But "whether this is a trend worrisome enough that it should be changing public policy, it's extremely premature to say."

Medicare generally pays transplant costs, about $92,000, and covers 80 percent of dialysis costs, about $48,000 annually, for a yearly tab of about $12 billion, according to the Health Care Financing Administration.

In the study on the black-white gap, the Harvard researchers asked 1,392 patients whether they wanted kidney transplants and found that just a few percent more of white patients wanted them than black patients.

After following patients from 1996 through last March, they found that white patients were about 30 percent more likely to be referred for evaluation for a transplant and were nearly twice as likely to get a transplant or get on a waiting list.

Differences in patients' treatment preferences, overall health and socioeconomic factors explain only about 40 percent of the disparity, said lead author Dr. John Ayanian. He theorized that wealthy white doctors don't communicate as well with their black patients.

"There may be some element of bias" by physicians, Ayanian added.

As a result of the findings, the HCFA said it will work to make sure that Medicare rules on transplants are being followed.

More and more, life in the fast lane wrapped up in circles in America

VAIL, Colo. (AP) — Wayne Allgeyer admits it: He was confused when he encountered his first roundabout.

The Wisconsin native went round and round again before managing to steer his car out of the British-style traffic circle. On repeated trips, he eventually got the hang of slowing down and watching to his left as he entered.

"I thought this is actually kind of nice," Allgeyer said of the roundabout, built four years ago in this upscale resort to solve traffic congestion.

These things have been, well, around for a while. While some states are phasing out their traffic circles, cities in Colorado, Maryland, California, Florida and Vermont are putting them into service, deeming them a safer alternative to traditional four-cornered intersections.

In principle, motorists approaching roundabouts are supposed to slow down and yield to traffic, then enter and proceed counterclockwise, exiting when they arrive at their intended route.

Roundabouts often have flared entry ways and smaller circumferences to slow down traffic, although stop signs or lights leading to the circle can decrease traffic even more.

Richard Retting, senior transportation engineer at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, said most studies show roundabouts can reduce accidents by at least half.

"Usually we're delighted to see a 10 percent drop," Retting said.

While defenders also point out that roundabouts are attractive and save electricity and maintenance costs, critics complain they can often become frightening free-for-alls.

Jon V. Gottlieb of West Roxbury, Mass., believes the circles can turn mild-mannered people into enraged drivers as they jockey to get in and out of the swift-moving traffic.

He recalled a time when he tried to get to a bus stop by crossing through a roundabout. Some cars stopped, others did not. "I was like the roadrunner trying to get across," he said.

Massachusetts officials want to build a road over the traffic circle in Sagamore to spare the experience for drivers coming and going from Cape Cod, highway department spokesman Doug Cope said.

New Jersey once had 67 circles, but 30 have been turned into stoplight intersections after they were overwhelmed by too many cars, state Department of Transportation spokesman John Dourgarian said.

"What was safe 60 years ago no longer applies today," he said.

Reducing bottlenecks was the focus of a study Tuesday by the American Highway Users Alliance, which found that fixing the most serious congested areas nationwide would save lives, reduce pollution and shorten delays.

The alliance called for more funding for synchronized traffic lights, computerized systems to route traffic and using reversible commuter lanes and moveable barriers during rush hour.

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Consumer group has issued its annual toy safety report

WASHINGTON (AP) — Toys are safer than in recent years, but hazardous items still can be found in stores, according to an annual report issued by a consumer lobbying group that the toy manufacturers denounce as annual "pre-holiday toy-bashing."

"The number of toy hazards appears to be declining and the vast majority of toys finally include tough new choke hazard warnings that will help prevent future deaths," said Rachel Weintraub, a staff attorney for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. "But parents must remember that just because a toy appears on the shelf ... doesn't mean that it is safe."

Fourteen people died from injuries related to toys in 1998, eight of them from choking, said group said.

The Toy Manufacturers of America, which represents 250 producers and importers of toys, attacked PIRG's annual report. "The bottom line is that any product that is misused is potentially dangerous," the trade group said in a statement. "To suggest that a toy is potentially dangerous when no real danger exists is irresponsible."

Among the toys that the research group said were dangerous were children's makeup and jewelry toys, erasers in the shapes of bloodshot eyes, bats and pumpkins; replicas of cars, trucks, jeeps and other vehicles; soft-bodied dollars made with small parts; multicolored balls in small sacks; soft baby blocks and various balloons.

In its 14th annual report, the group said it found that toy manufacturers try to circumvent the Consumer Product Safety Commission's ban on small parts or small balls in toys intended for children younger than 3 years old by "incorrectly identifying such toys as having play value for children over 3. Often such toys contain small parts or small balls that would be banned if the toy was correctly labeled as a toy for a child under 3 years old."

Manufacturers continue to market balloons in shapes and colors that are attractive to very young children, the report said. Choking on small toy parts, balloons and small balls is a leading cause of toy-related deaths, it said.

Weintraub said the group also is warning parents about the dangers of toys containing chemicals known as phthalates, which are added to some plastic toys as a softener.

"The chemicals are linked to liver and kidney damage, are probably human carcinogens and have already been banned by several European countries in toys for children under 3 because exposure to toxic chemicals is especially dangerous to small children," the statement said.

Tests have shown that many plastic toys, including common baby teethers, contain as much as 40 percent phthalates, the report said.

The toy manufacturers group said the report's allegations about vinyl toys are off the mark. The organization cited a report issued this year by the American Council on Science and Health, a consumer education and advocacy group led by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop.

The New York-based council reported that plastic softener found in vinyl toys and medical devices is not harmful to children and adults. "The panel's findings confirm what the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Consumer Product Safety Commission have been saying about these products all along. There is no scientific evidence that they are harmful to children or adults," Koop said.





PRE-K INDIANS — Barbra Jones' pre-kindergarten students at Northeast dressed up like Indians on Tuesday, wearing the headbands and vests they made. Morning students (top photo) include back row, from left, D'Vincent Allison, Landon Jones, Austin Morris, J.D. Lujan, Jessie Alaniz; seated, from left, Kendall Benitez, Stephanie Hart, Mercedes Guzman, Hally Taylor, Alexis Guzman. Afternoon students (bottom photo) include from left, back row, Daphny Torres, Dawn Carillo, Jonathan Torres, Sabrina Salinas: front row, seated, Jamie Ramirez, Adam Cabrera, Aaliyah Wesley. (Staff Photos By Shirley A. Gorman)

Warning alarms sounded as plane crashed, NTSB reveals

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cockpit alarms, including one that signals cabin pressure problems, were sounding when golfer Payne Stewart's plane crashed nose first into a field in South Dakota last month, federal investigators say.

The National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday that the 30-minute cockpit voice recording includes noises similar to alarms on the Learjet 35 that warn pilots when cabin air pressure is below normal or when the plane is flying at a speed or angle that cannot sustain flight.

No one is heard talking on the tape.

"Analysis of the aircraft's cockpit voice recorder continues," the NTSB said in a statement. "The tape contains no voices but there are sounds consistent with various alarms" related to cabin altitude and low pressure and stall warnings.

The NTSB has not determined why the plane crashed Oct. 25 near Aberdeen, S.D., killing Stewart and five others on board. But some aviation analysts have speculated that Stewart's plane suffered from depressurization that incapacitated those on board after the plane took off from Orlando, Fla., and continued on a steady northwest course, apparently on autopilot.

The human body has a limited ability to function above 10,000 feet because there is less oxygen in the air and there is less pressure to force that oxygen through the lungs. Airplanes are pressurized so that the atmosphere inside never feels higher than about 8,000 feet even if the aircraft is flying much higher.

Federal Aviation Administration officials said Stewart's plane climbed as high as 51,000 feet during its flight across the nation's heartland. The jet, which was supposed to have gone to Dallas, instead flew four hours — some 1,400 miles — to South Dakota before running out of fuel and crashing. Controllers last talked to the pilots when they confirmed an instruction to climb to 39,000 feet.

Dave Franson, a spokesman for Learjet based in Wichita, Kan., said a loud cabin altitude horn in the Learjet 35 automatically sounds when cabin pressure reaches an equivalent of 10,000 feet altitude. Under normal conditions, pilots correct the problem by manually activating an emergency pressurization system, donning their oxygen masks and initiating a descent, Franson said.

NTSB investigators said various fragments of the aircraft, including parts of the pressurization and oxygen systems, have been taken to several manufacturers for examination.

Investigators have finished work at the accident site and have stored most of the wreckage at Aberdeen Regional Airport. They are interviewing passengers who took earlier flights on the plane as well as pilots who had previously flown the aircraft. They also are reviewing the airplane's records and service history and finalizing radar tracking information.

More women being arrested

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — There was a time when police officers handled a domestic violence call by telling angry men to take a walk and cool off. They still do, but the walk is straight to jail. And increasingly, it's the woman who takes the hike.

Police in at least 24 states now receive training in how to decide who is the "primary aggressor," a term that doesn't necessarily mean the person who struck the first blow or even caused the most damage, according to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

"Primary" means "most significant." The definition requires officers on the scene to go down a long checklist of things to look for, including a history of violent or coercive behavior.

Backers of the "primary aggressor" law hoped it would reduce domestic violence and the number of women arrested for defending themselves.

In 1987, women were arrested in 5 percent of California's domestic violence cases; that rate had risen to 15 percent by the time the state passed its primary aggressor law in 1997.

Last year, as overall domestic violence arrests declined in California, the percentage of women arrested rose still further, to 16 percent: 9,373 arrests compared with 47,519 for men.

Just why more women are being arrested is unclear. Social scientists and police departments are stumped. But some possibilities are that women are being more aggressive, that women are beating other women, and that male victims are increasingly likely to come forward and be believed by officers.

Another possible reason is that there are more female police officers, said Katharine Killeen, director of the California District Attorney Association's Violence Against Women Project.

"They don't just let a woman go the way some men cops might," she said. "Also, men are learning how to work the system better and bring charges."

Women's groups campaigned heavily for primary aggressor laws, which were designed to prevent battered women from also having to go through the trauma of being arrested for fighting back.

New York Gov. George Pataki made note of that in 1997 at the signing ceremony for his state's law. "Women who are the targets of domestic violence should not be victimized again by being arrested simply for defending themselves," Pataki said.

That is one reason the increase in the arrests of women under primary aggressor laws is surprising.

"This is geared to the prosecution of men," said Deputy Public Defender Lidia Stiglich, who handles arraignments in San Francisco's domestic violence court.

Whoever calls the police first wins, she said. And that is usually the woman. "If you are a man, you are toast," she said.

The guidelines police in California use to determine who is mainly responsible for domestic violence suggest she may have a point.

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2nd Front Page

THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

Trucking deadline unlikely to be met

HOUSTON (AP) — A Jan. 1 deadline for allowing trucks to cross the U.S.-Mexico border unrestricted is likely to pass without action, the Houston Chronicle reported Wednesday.

The date proposed by NAFTA framers was to have allowed Mexican trucks to deliver goods to destinations across the U.S., then return cargo to Mexico. But like a 1995 deadline that would have opened Mexico trucking to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, the new date is likely to pass without action, the newspaper reported.

Mexican truck drivers and politicians believe the United States has reneged on its end of the bargain. Fed up with the lack of response by the United States, Mexico refused to allow U.S. trucking to its border states and filed a complaint with a NAFTA dispute resolution panel two years ago. Those panelists have yet to meet.

"It's a blatant violation of NAFTA," Ken Hoffman, an Austin-based attorney representing transportation clients on both sides of the border, told the Chronicle.

The Jan. 1 date had been set after President Clinton refused to meet a 1995 deadline, citing safety concerns. Those concerns remain, as does pressure from the Teamsters and other unions who want to keep the border closed, the Chronicle reported.

Under current restrictions, American companies must deliver cargo to a warehouse in a U.S. border community, where another truck hauls that cargo to a warehouse on the Mexican side of the border. Then, Mexican trucks haul those goods south.

Those trucks, called drayage trucks, typically return to the United States empty. In Laredo, 1.3 million trucks make that trek annually.

Clinton said committed to WTO session

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton is looking forward to "a very robust and good session" even though several world leaders will not join him at next week's World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Wednesday.

"We are looking forward to a very important and useful conference," she said optimistically at a news conference. Not only did world leaders turn Clinton down but trade diplomats meeting in Geneva failed to set an agenda for the new round of free trade negotiations.

The trade envoys, who had been working in the Swiss city for 14 months, gave up on Tuesday because their differences were too great.

Albright said Clinton "is fully committed to an agenda which allows us to move forward with very important WTO initiatives in the next round."

There are "lots of valleys and peaks" in trade negotiations, she said, and the president is "committed to having a very robust and good session in Seattle."

Albright said the work will not be impaired by the failure to attract world leaders to the session.

"It would have been nice if some of them had been able to come," Albright said. "But I have found now in my many, many international meetings that there are genuine scheduling difficulties that come up. And while it's nice to have certain people there, the international system is capable of working with deputies."

Among the disagreements that cloud prospects for accord are centered on agriculture, child labor standards, market access and investment and competition.

Was EgyptAir plane downed by blast?

(AP) — The crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 was not caused by a suicidal co-pilot, as U.S. investigators have suggested, but possibly by an explosion in the plane's tail, an Egyptian transportation ministry official said Wednesday.

Gen. Issam Ahmed, head of the country's flight training program, urged Egyptian investigators to look closely at what happened in the rear of the plane and not to let their U.S. counterparts impose the suicide scenario.

Ahmed was the first senior Egyptian official to say an explosion caused the crash.

U.S. investigators discounted the theory of an explosion or mechanical difficulties early in their investigation of the Oct. 31 flight. All 217 people on board were killed when the plane plunged into the Atlantic Ocean off the eastern U.S. coast.

Egyptians were outraged by a U.S. theory, offered by investigation sources, that co-pilot Gameel el-Batouty might have put the plane into a dive when he was alone at the controls.

Ahmed said Egyptian investigators in the United States should concentrate on investigating the tail, which "carries the mystery of the accident."

The flight data and voice recorders held in the rear of the plane were severely damaged, he said.

"This confirms that the tail of the plane, where the two boxes are located, was subjected to an explosion at the height of 33,000 feet. It was either an internal or external explosion," Ahmed said in an interview.

Before heading the flight training program, Ahmed headed the Ministry of Transportation's plane accidents committee. He is not involved in investigating the Flight 990 crash.

The ministry official also said the Egyptian experts should "be on the alert" about reports detailing the suicide theory.

"Methods aimed at condemning EgyptAir and its pilots have been taken by preparing public opinion to accept what they (Americans) want to impose, which is the suicide theory," he said.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board has said that data from the flight recorder shows the autopilot was disengaged at an altitude of 33,000 feet, and that the plane went into a steep dive with engines at full power. The engines were turned off at 21,000 feet. The data stopped recording at 16,400 feet.

Ahmed dismissed the U.S. suggestion that el-Batouty put the plane into a dive and the pilot rushed into the cockpit and tried to regain control, as was indicated by his pleas taped on the cockpit voice recorder.

Sizzling U.S. economy stoked by strong consumer spending

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sizzling U.S. economy, stoked by strong consumer spending, zoomed ahead to an annual rate of 5.5 percent in the third quarter, the best showing since the end of last year.

The Commerce Department reported today that the increase in the gross domestic product in the July-September quarter followed a sluggish 1.9 percent rate of growth in the April-June quarter.

The revised third-quarter increase was stronger than the 4.8 percent rate the government previously estimated and was even higher than the 5.2 percent rate many analysts were forecasting.

It marked the biggest spurt in growth since a 5.9 percent rate of increase posted in the fourth quarter of 1998.

Last week, the Federal Reserve bumped up interest rates for a third time this year to slow down the economy and keep inflation under control. Fed policy-makers signaled that they may be content to leave rates alone for the rest of the year.

"The econony really was booming in the third quarter and although inflation pressures started to creep, the econony is expected to slow in the fourth quarter," said Paul Kasriel, economist with The Northern Trust Co. "The real question is whether the economy will slow enough on its own to alleviate those inflation pressures. Many economists think it won't and will need help from the Fed." However, he doesn't expect the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates again until at least March.

A number of factors contributed to the uptick in third-quarter growth, including robust consumer spending, a strong buildup in inventories held by businesses and an improvement in the trade deficit.

Obituaries

Vada Holman

1919-1999

Funeral service for Vada Holman of Snyder is set for 2 p.m. Friday in the Bell-Cypert-Seale Funeral Home Chapel. The Rev. Sam Earp, pastor of the Northpark Assembly of God in Abilene, will officiate. Burial will follow in the Snyder Cemetery.

Mrs. Holman, 80, died Tuesday, Nov. 23, in Coronado Nursing Home in Abilene.

Born Jan. 6, 1919 in Snyder, she married Archie Holman on Nov. 21, 1952 in Lovington, N.M. He died on Nov. 14, 1990.

Mrs. Holman was a homemaker and a member of the Church of God in Andrews.

She also was preceded in death by four brothers and three sisters.

Survivors include a son and daughter-in-law, Bobby and Jean Price of Gardendale; a daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Charles Foust of Merkel; a sister, Lorance Wilburn of Abilene; two brothers, L.W. "Red" Pinkerton of Snyder and James Pinkerton of Newton, N.M.; three grandchildren, Shannon Price and Christy Price, both of Gardendale, and Sue Cox of Granbury; two great-grandchildren, Ashlynd and Kyle Cox of Granbury.

Ronnie Porter

1955-1999

Ronald "Ronnie" Wayne Porter, 44, died Tuesday, Nov. 23, in Cogdell Memorial Hospital after a lengthy illness.

Graveside service for Mr. Porter is set for 2 p.m. Saturday in Hillside Memorial Gardens. The Rev. Carl Shroyer, pastor of the Trent Baptist Church, will officiate. Arrangements are under the direction of Wright Colonial Funeral Home.

Born Feb. 9, 1955 in Snyder, Mr. Porter worked in the oilfield.

Survivors include two sons, Jeremey Porter of Snyder and Jonathan Porter of Dallas; a daughter, Angie Porter of Dallas; his mother, Helen Porter of Snyder; a sister, Carolyn Bruno of Stephenville; four brothers, Charles Porter, Alvin Porter and Jimmy Taylor, all of Snyder, and James Taylor of Seattle; his maternal grandmother, Valree Shroyer of Snyder; and two grandchildren.

Vivian Kyle

1911-1999

Graveside service for Vivian Kyle of Snyder is set for 2 p.m. Friday in Forest Park Cemetery in Shreveport, La. A brother-in-law, Casey Kyle, will officiate.

Mrs. Kyle, 88, died Wednesday, Nov. 24, in Cogdell Memorial Hospital.

Born on Nov. 10, 1911 in Tyler, she married Murph Kyle on Sept. 30. 1946 in Fouke, Ark. He died in January of 1988. She was a homemaker and a member of the Parkway Baptist Church in Natchez, Miss. She moved to Snyder in 1989 from Natchez, where she had lived for 23 years. She had also lived in Shreveport.

Mrs. Kyle was also was preceded in death by two sisters and one brother.

Survivors include a brother and sister-in-law, C.A. "Mac" and Mary McCown of Snyder; three nephews, Tommy Melton of Onalaska, Tex., Randy McCown of McKinney and Lawrence McCown, Lakewood, N.J.; and one niece, Bettye Sprayberry of Vandalia, Ill.

Memorials may be made to the Texas Lions Camp, P.O. Box 290247, Kerrville, Tex. 78209-0247.

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Wednesday slow day for officers

Wednesday activity was light for local law enforcement.

Officers did assist several motorists who had locked themselves out of their vehicles.

Contact was made with a subject in the 3200 block of Avenue L at 2:11 p.m. in reference to a child shooting a BB gun.

At 2:23 p.m., a criminal trespass warning was issued to a subject to stay away from a residence in the 2500 block of Avenue C.

Dispatchers also received several 911 hang-up calls that turned out to be people trying to dial long distance and misdialing.

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events

WHAT'S UP?

ONGOINGS

3 on 3 tourney

The Boys and Girls Club will sponsor a 3 on 3 Tournament Friday and Saturday. There will be a boys and a girls division for ages 11-12 (Grades 5 and 6). There may be up to four players per team and entry fee is $35 per team.

Choir Poinsettia sale

The SHS choir and booster club are selling Christmas Poinsettias. Red, white and a jingle bell variety are available for $10. Place orders with any choir member or call the high school. Poinsettias will be here Monday and will be available for pickup or delivery next week.

Quilting Club

The Rock and Roll Quilting Club meets from 8 a.m. until noon each Monday at the Hermleigh Community Center. Everyone is invited for free quilting lessons. Call 863-2426 for more information.

Bible study tapes

Bible study video tapes air each week on cable TV channel 2. The tapes to be shown at 7 p.m. Monday are "The Salt of the Earth," followed by "Why Did Jesus Come?"

Ira picture retakes

Picture retake day for Ira School will be Tuesday. This is for anyone who was not photographed in September or anyone wanting to get another package made. Also, pictures will be taken for the basketball teams as well as class favorites (grades 9-12), junior FFA, NHS, Student Council, high school FFA, FHA, and FCA. Envelopes for the basketball pictures and retakes will be passed out on Monday.

Tiger's Lair senior dedications

Dedications for the SHS yearbook are due Wednesday. The cost is $40. To reserve a space, call Katie Henson at 573-6301.

Rotary Christmas dinner

Members and spouses of the Snyder Rotary Club will have a Christmas dinner and party at 6:30 p.m. next Thursday at the Wagon Wheel Ranch. To make reservations call 573-6963 or 573-0187 by Monday.

Auxiliary Discovery Toys show

The Cogdell Hospital Auxiliary will sponsor a Discovery Toys show from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3 in the hospital board room.

Christmas open house

The Scurry County courthouse employees will host an open house on Saturday, Dec. 4, immediately following the lighted Christmas parade. Refreshments will be served.

Library extends hours

Scurry County Library has extended its Saturday hours and will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. M-W-F and from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday.

WTC planetarium open

The planetarium at Western Texas College is now open with its fall lineup of new programs, developed for specific age groups: pre-K and kindergarten, grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7 through adults. The 60-seat planetarium is open for group showings, by reservation, for Friday morning and afternoon programs. It is also available, by reservation, for group showings Thursday through Saturday evenings. For reservations, call Sharon Gill at WTC, 573-8511, ext. 312.

Road to Recovery program

Volunteers are needed to take patients to Abilene or Lubbock one day a week for cancer treatment. Following approval American Cancer Society, drivers will be provided liability insurance and can be reimbursed for fuel expenses incurred for the trip. For more information, contact ASC Road to Recovery volunteer coordinator Martha Schiebel at 573-8626 and leave a message, or Sammie Jarrell at 573-5993.

WTC nursing program

Students wishing to enroll in the March class for Licensed Vocational Nursing at Western Texas College need to contact the counseling office to take the pre-entrance exam. Tests will be given through Dec. 7 and interviews will be scheduled through Jan. 10. Classes begin March 1. Contact the counseling office at 573-8511, ext. 313, or toll-free at 1-888-GO TO WTC.

Support groups

Support groups for Cancer, Grief and Divorce Recovery meet at 6:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church. For information call 573-263. A new group for sexual assault survivors will meet at a confidential time and location. For information call 573-1822. Childcare is provided.

Fewer households married with children, survey shows

CHICAGO (AP) — A new survey finds only about a quarter of U.S. households contain married couples with children — a trend that may mean more than half of the nation's children won't be living with both parents after the turn of the century.

The General Social Survey, conducted periodically by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, found only 26 percent of households have married couples and kids, compared with 45 percent in the early 1970s.

The survey, released today, paints an even starker picture of marriage in the 1990s than U.S. Census officials, who found that married couples with children younger than 18 fell from 50 percent in 1970 to an estimated 36 percent of all families in 1997.

Tom W. Smith, director of the survey, said if current trends continue, most households won't even contain children — largely a testament to the increasing number of people waiting to have children and the ever-growing number of baby boomers becoming "empty nesters."

Surveyors found that Americans seem to be accepting of what Smith called the "modern family."

For example, 67 percent of Americans surveyed last year disagreed that parents ought to stay together just because they have children. That question was not asked in previous surveys, Smith said.

Americans are becoming more accepting of divorce — due in part to the fact that many people who are starting families may be products of divorce themselves, said Stephen Kraus, a Connecticut-based market researcher.

"It's very much a sense of tolerance. People can do what they want," says Kraus of Yankelovich Partners, a market research and consulting firm that tracks attitudes about family, among other things.

One researcher says that's because Americans continue to see marriage as an ideal — even if they don't think it's always best to get or remain married.

"We are a very marriage-happy society. There's a basic ideology that building a family means stability," says Professor Bahira Sherif.

Campaign ads are blitzing some states

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House hopefuls are bolstering their images and challenging their rivals with a flurry of television advertisements targeting voters in early voting states.

Two months before the first votes are cast, the blitz of fresh material includes ads in which:

—Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes tells rival George W. Bush to keep his "liberal supporters" in line.

—Vice President Al Gore distinguishes himself from his Democratic foe on health care.

— In a sign that he may be worried about Gore's criticisms, former Sen. Bill Bradley is unveiling his own 60-second ad, featuring Maureen Drumm, the same Upper Darby, Pa., mom who appeared in his biographical spot and credited Bradley with his effort on behalf of women in childbirth.

—Gary Bauer pledges to "expand the circle of human rights" to ban abortion.

Forbes, who cut his teeth in politics with a negative ad campaign in the 1996 race, takes his first shot at Bush in ads airing this week in Iowa and New Hampshire.

"George W. Bush says he wants a positive campaign. Then why are Bush's liberal supporters running this negative ad attacking Forbes?" says a moderator. She is referring to a TV ad by the Republican Leadership Council, a moderate group with ties to Bush.

A moderator in the RLC ad says Forbes "just might start" running negative ads and implores voters to "tell that Steve Forbes that if he doesn't have anything nice to say — don't say anything at all."

The group spent $100,000 on the ad, which ended its run on Tuesday, even though Forbes had not aired a negative ad. He tabled plans to draw a sharp distinction with Bush in his advertising campaign.

RLC director Mark Miller said he based the ad on news reports suggesting that Forbes was braced to go negative.

It should be no surprise that Miller called Forbes' response ad negative.

"This move by a desperate candidate proves that he has got an itchy finger on his negative firing button and shows he will use any pretext to move into his negative 1996 campaign mode," Miller said. Forbes officials did not disclose the size of their ad buy, but said their spot will be seen at least as much as the RLC ad.

The Bush campaign had no immediate comment, though aides have denied any role in the RLC spot. Bush backers make up a majority of the RLC board.

Bauer, a conservative activist, unveiled the first abortion-related commercial of the 2000 presidential campaign on Tuesday. He pledged to expand "the circle of human rights and dignity" to unborn children just as lawmakers throughout history have granted new freedoms to slaves and women.

In the first of a pair of campaign ads that he will begin airing Friday in Iowa, Bauer overtly links his opposition to abortion with his position on a variety of rights. He is against slavery, for example, and favors religious freedom and civil rights.

"From freedom of religion to the emancipation of slaves, from civil rights to equal opportunities for women," Bauer says. "I won't stop until every one of God's children is welcomed into the world and protected by the law."

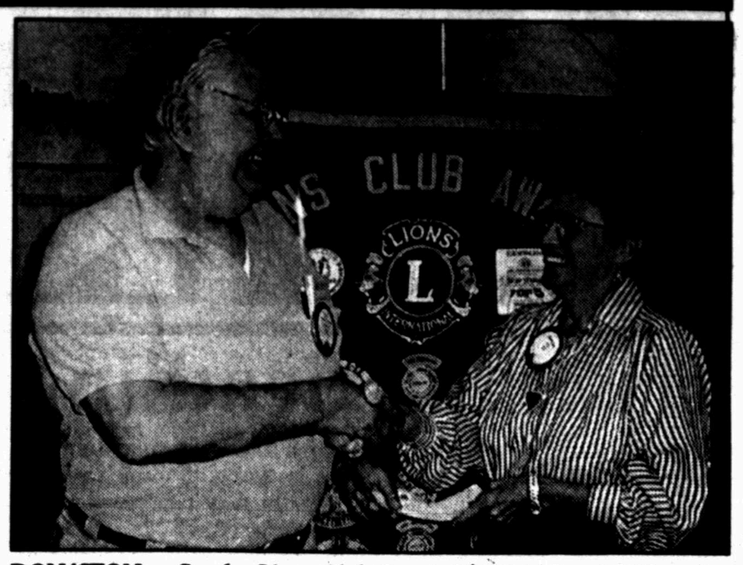
Bauer has been battling Forbes, the millionaire publisher, to establish himself as the conservative alternative to Bush, the GOP front-runner.

Bauer's second commercial is a biographical spot filmed with the help of his mother in his childhood home in Newport, Ky.

He talks about his youth in the blue-collar town, his support for a 16-percent flat tax, the right to sue HMOs and his belief that the Social Security system must be saved for both his mother's and future generations.

"And if you ever do forget," Betty Bauer says, wagging a finger at her son, "I'll be here to remind you." Bauer replies: "I know, Mom, I know."

Both spots will air at a cost of about $130,000.



DONATION — Snyder Lions Club donated $400 to Special Olympics which was accepted by Juanita Glass, Lions member and special education staff member. Funds were used for the Special Olympic State Bowling Tournament in San Antonio. Awards received were Bobby Wood, 2nd; Michael Cotton, 3rd; Hope Martinez, 3rd; Susie Mullen, 3rd; Randy Underwood, 4th; Tom Crawley, 4th; Marvin Butler, 4th; and Jimmy Wells, 5th. Wood, Butler and Wells are with SISD, and others are with the training center. Coaches were Tommy Cotton, Jerry Tucker and Glass. Chaperones were Wanda Wells and Lee Birchfield. (Staff Photo by Jo Ann Nunley)

International adoptions are on the rise

WASHINGTON (AP) — After 10 years of infertility treatments, Susan Hutler desperately wanted a baby and finally turned to adoption. But adopting an American baby seemed filled with complications, so like thousands of other would-be parents, she looked abroad.

"We could have tried to adopt privately, which would mean we would have to find a birth mother who was interested in giving her baby to us," said Hutler, a Washington attorney. "You're really kind of in a position of having to compete with other prospective parents and then convince them that you are in fact worthy to parent this child. Frankly ... I just did not have the emotional energy to go through that."

In July, Hutler and her husband brought home a 1-year-old girl from Russia. "It's pretty quick and you are guaranteed success," she said.

More than 17 percent of children adopted by American parents in 1996 were born abroad, as the number of domestic adoptions falls and international adoptions skyrocket, according to a report released Tuesday by the National Council for Adoption.

For infants, children under 2, international adoptions account for nearly a third of the total, the report said.

Meanwhile, between 1992 and 1996, domestic infant adoptions fell by 11 percent, a decrease experts attribute in part to fewer single mothers giving babies up for adoption.

The council, a private group that advocates adoptions, based its report on a survey of the states and data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Adoption data is notoriously hard to come by, and the new report is among the most comprehensive to date, experts said.

The report looked at 54,496 adoptions in 1996 involving U.S.-born children and found more than half came from the foster care system. The overall adoptions of American children edged down from 55,706 in 1992, according to the council, which did similar surveys in 1982, 1986 and 1992.

At the same time, about 11,000 children were adopted from other countries in 1996, up from 6,500 in 1992, the report said. By last year, the number of foreign adoptions topped 15,000.

In 1992, international adoptions accounted for just 10.5 percent of all unrelated adoptions, te director of New York-based Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. In the 1970s, about one in five unmarried white mothers gave babies up for adoption. Now, it's less than 1 percent, she said.

"The stigma of being a single parent in most quarters of this country no longer carries the weight that may have been true a decade or two decades ago," she said. "It's just a very different environment."

At the same time, fueled by well-publicized horror stories, some prospective parents worry about complications with U.S. adoptions, such as when birth parents change their minds after agreeing to an adoption. Such battles often end up in court.

"The attorney could simply say — and they do say: 'Hey, domestic adoption is too risky. We can get you a healthy kid from Russia or China in six months,'" said William Pierce, executive editor of the National Council for Adoption.

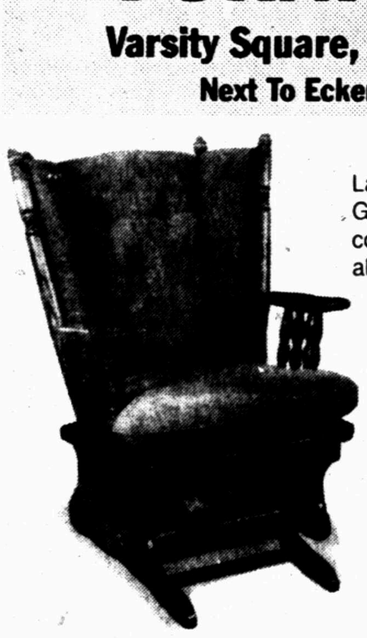


GAG GIFT — A "tongue in cheek" plaque for membership to the Price Daniel Unit was given to District 2-T2 Governor Bernard "Bernie" Gradel Jr. of Lubbock. Gov. Gradel was a special guest. The presentation was made by local president Bill Overhulser at the Partners in Service meeting held at the Martha Ann Woman's Club. (Staff Photo by Jo Ann Nunley)

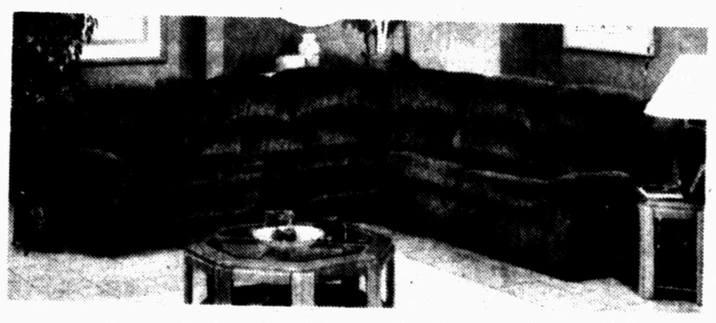
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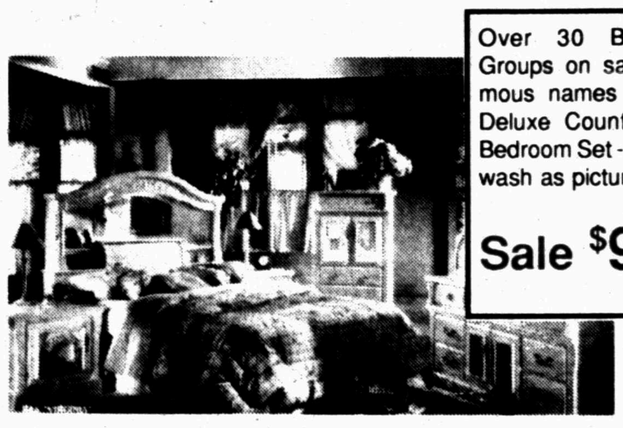
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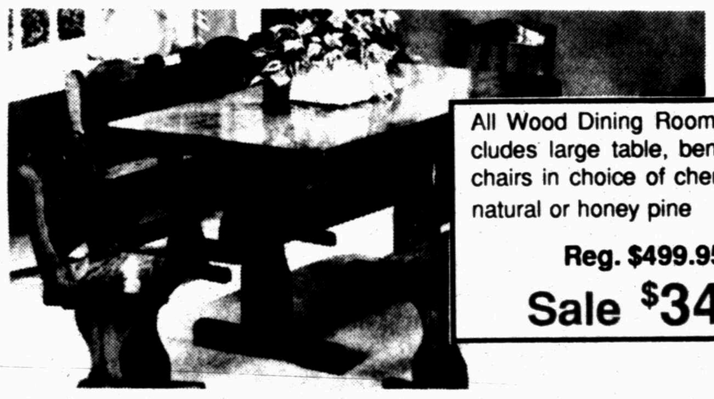
Large Selection of Glider Rockers - all colors and styles - all on sale
Sale $168 Up



Super Sectional Sale - several styles, colors and manufacturers - 14 sectionals on sale.
Sale $988 Up



Over 30 Bedroom Groups on sale - Famous names - 5 Pc. Deluxe Country Style Bedroom Set - in white, wash as pictured
Sale $988



All Wood Dining Room Set - includes large table, bench and 4 chairs in choice of cherry-pecan-natural or honey pine
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Sale $348



Large Group Decorator Curio Cabinets - several styles, sizes, finishes - all on sale
Sale $138 Up

Sofa and Loveseat - in a rich glove soft vinyl, sturdy construction - great value - 2 pc. set.
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TIMELY FINANCE DONATES — Timely Finance donated a television and VCR to the STAR Boot Camp to be used for training videos such as "The Power of Choice." Drill Sergeants Terri Kincaid and Willard Norman express appreciation to Leroy Ochoa, outreach/education coordinator for Area Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and Butch Evans, owner of Timely Finance. These programs are planned every other Friday. Parents of STAR students are welcome to attend. From left are Sgt. Kincaid, Ochoa, Sgt. Norman, and Evans. (Staff Photo by Jo Ann Nunley)

Exxon, Mobil offer to reduce ties to service stations by 15%

NEW YORK (AP) — Exxon Corp. and Mobil Corp. have offered to cut most ties to about 2,400 service stations, or about 15 percent of their nationwide total, to get government approval for their $81 billion merger, The Wall Street Journal reported today.

The newspaper, citing company documents and people familiar with the talks with the Federal Trade Commission, said that under the plan the companies would sell stations they own and sever most ties with independent stations carrying their brands.

The nation's two largest oil companies have a combined total of 15,700 gas stations.

Exxon spokesman Tom Cirigliano said the Irving, Texas-based company would not comment on any divestiture reports. "We're still in ongoing discussions with the commission, and we're hoping to have them completed soon," he said.

A spokesman for Fairfax, Va.-based Mobil was not immediately available for comment.

The FTC deal now in the works would require Exxon to leave the Northeast and Mobil to vacate the mid-Atlantic states, the newspaper said.

It said Mobil's station network would divest about 1,220 stations in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the District of Columbia and of an additional 300 stations in Texas.

Exxon is expected to divest itself of about 520 stations in New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. In addition, Exxon is expected to shed 360 stations in California, along with its Benicia, Calif., refinery, the Journal said.

The newspaper said the deal under discussion would require the buyers to keep the Exxon and Mobil brand names for 10 years after the divestitures. The station buyers would buy gasoline from companies other than Exxon and Mobil, but Exxon and Mobil would provide their special additives to the gasoline sold at the stations.

If the companies and FTC staff reach an agreement, it must still be approved by a majority of FTC commissioners.

Date Book

Thursday, Nov. 25, 1999

Today is THANKSGIVING: it is the 329th day of 1999 and the 64th day of fall.

TODAY'S HISTORY: On this day in 1867, dynamite was patented by Alfred Nobel.

On this day in 1920, Texas radio station WTAW broadcast the first play-by-play coverage of a football game. The game was between the University of Texas and Texas A&M.

On this day in 1952, Agatha Christie's play "Mousetrap" opened in London.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Spanish dramatist; Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), tycoon-philanthropist; Carry A. Nation (1846-1911), temperance advocate; Angelo Roncalli (1881-1963), Pope John XXIII; Virgil Thomson (1896-1989), composer-music critic; Joe DiMaggio (1914-1999), baseball great; John Larroquette (1947-), actor, is 52.

TODAY'S SPORTS: On this day in 1951, Dub Jones of the Cleveland Browns scored six touchdowns against the Chicago Bears.

TODAY'S QUOTE: "Harmony is pure love, for love is complete agreement." — Lope de Vega, "Fuenteovejuna"

TODAY'S MOON: Between full moon (Nov. 23) and last quarter (Nov. 29).

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Town founded by ex-slaves opts to rebuild dike rather than leave

PRINCEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Leaders of this flood-ravaged historic town, founded by ex-slaves, have decided to repair a river dike instead of accepting government buyouts that would have forced hundreds of residents to move away or to higher ground.

The Town Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 Monday night to ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to repair the Tar River dike — an action that should effectively remove Princeville from the flood plain and make residents ineligible for a buyout proposed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Susan Moran, a Princeville spokeswoman, said today.

The decision had bedeviled the town of 2,100 residents since Hurricane Floyd drenched the region in up to 20 inches of rain in mid-September. About 600 Princeville homes were heavily damaged or destroyed by floodwaters.

"If they can build the dike back, a whole lot of people want to go back home," Mary Ann Straton, a Princeville resident, said today. She was displaced by the floodwaters and is living with a sister in Tarboro.

Under the buyout, FEMA would have bought homes for their pre-flood market value. Then the buildings would have been removed and the open space deeded back to the town with the stipulation that no structures be built there.

The option not to take the buyout money means that residents without flood insurance will have to seek other sources of funds to rebuild. But commissioners decided that accepting the buyout might destroy the town, which was founded after the Civil War by ex-slaves, Moran said.

"Princeville officials decided that repairing the dike ... was a better decision for the residents and the future residents of Princeville," she said.

Hurricane Floyd pushed rivers, including the Tar, to record levels. The Tar crested 24 feet above its 19-foot flood stage, breaching the dike built in 1965 by the Corps of Engineers to protect Princeville.

Hacker admits role in hacker attack on the White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — At age 19, hacker Eric Burns has already wandered the underpinnings of the Web where few had gone before, including an illicit visit inside computers at the White House in May.

"I didn't really think it was too much of a big deal," said Burns — hacker name Zyklon — who admitted responsibility for some of the most sensational attacks on corporate and government Internet sites.

He was sentenced Friday in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., to 15 months in prison and three years of supervised probation and ordered to pay restitution of $36,240. And under a judge's order, he won't be allowed to touch a computer for three years after his release.

Burns pleaded guilty Sept. 7 to a single felony count of intentionally hacking into one computer, but he admitted involvement in the spate of electronic assaults.

Burns was initially indicted May 13 on charges of breaking into computers for the U.S. Information Agency and two businesses. That was four days after the White House Internet site — at www.whitehouse.gov — was electronically assaulted.

Initially, Burns said he wasn't directly involved in that White House attack in which the altered site included the phrase, "following peeps get some shouts" — hacker slang for "hello" — and listed a dozen names, including Zyklon.

Zyklon is the name of a poison gas used by Nazis against Jews.

But federal prosecutors said Burns boasted of the White House attack online even before it happened, and Burns admitted at his sentencing Friday he was among three people who altered the site briefly to show a black Web page with the names of hacker organizations, along with messages, "Your box was own3d," and, "Stop all the war."

He said Monday in a telephone interview from his home in Shoreline, Wash., that he will refuse to identify his two partners to the Secret Service, partly because he believes the criminal penalties for hackers are too steep. His punishment didn't fit his crime, he insisted.

"I'd rather not have what happened to me happen to anyone else," Burns said. "I don't really agree with the kind of sentencing range there is for the crime."

The seriousness of the trouble facing Burns didn't sink in, he admitted, even after FBI agents raided his home and took his computer.

"I just gave them a confession," Burns said. "I didn't think it was too big a deal."

Prosecutors indicated otherwise.

U.S. Attorney Helen Fahey said Burns attacked computers on the Internet controlling Web sites for NATO, a U.S. embassy and consulates and even Vice President Al Gore. The USIA Web site was shut down for eight days after Burns' attack.

All told, the attacks cost the government and businesses more than $40,000, prosecutors said.

When the White House site was vandalized, experts "had to shut down the Web server, disconnect both the public and private computer networks from the Internet for two days and reconfigure the computer system," Fahey said in a statement.

Gates Foundation gives $26 million to UNICEF

SEATTLE (AP) — The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has given $26 million to UNICEF to pay for programs fighting maternal and neonatal tetanus, which caused more than 215,000 deaths in developing nations last year, the foundation announced Sunday.

The disease, which killed just one U.S. newborn in 1998, is one of the world's most serious ailments afflicting infants and their mothers. It can be prevented by immunizing women with tetanus toxoid vaccine.

The billionaire Microsoft founder and his wife "are dedicated to improving the health of families in the world's poorest countries," said Gates' father, William H. Gates Sr., a foundation co-chairman.

The foundation is joining Becton Dickinson, a manufacturer of injection devices, as well as the World Health Organization and other agencies in the effort.

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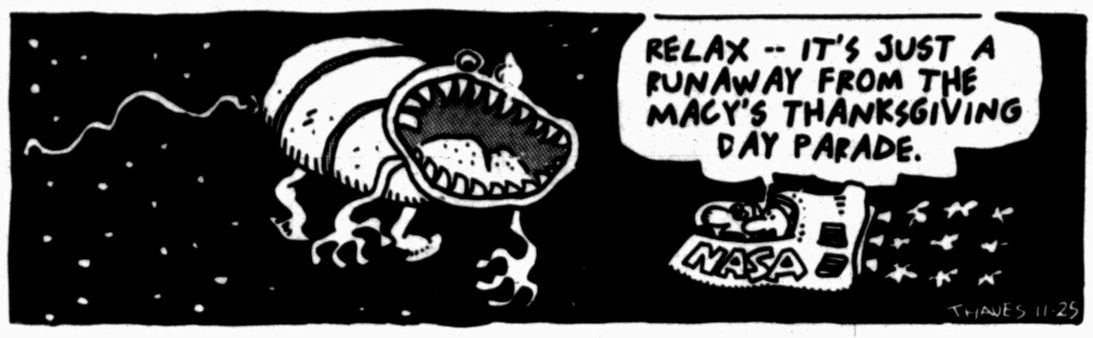
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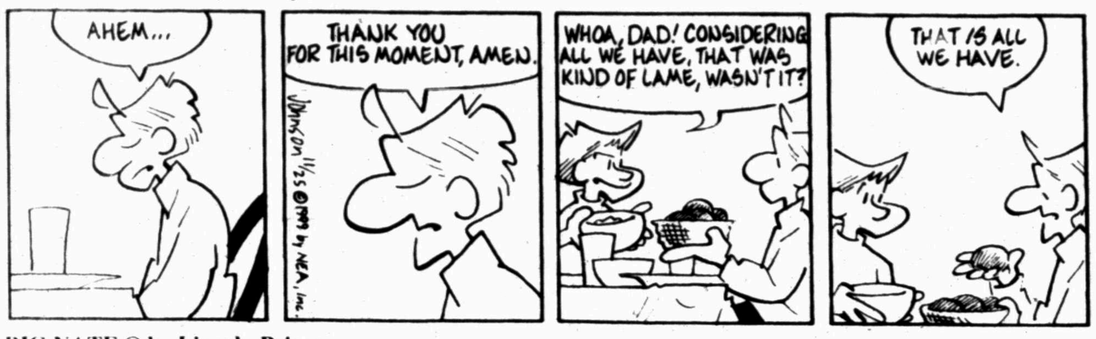
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NEA Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

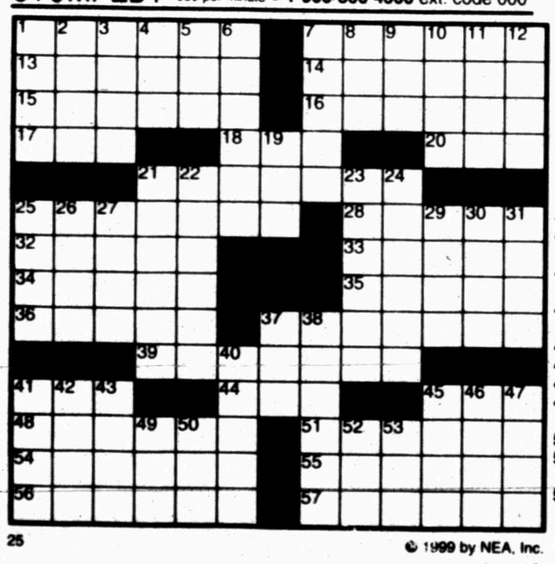
1 Did yard work
7 Boll —
13 Antiseptic liquid
14 Cold period (2 wds.)
15 New Orleans team
16 Where Buckingham Palace is
17 Chemical suffix
18 ClO's partner
20 Paris season
21 Medieval minstrel
25 Arab chieftain's domain
28 Keyboard instrument
32 Type of surgery
33 Coronet
34 Snooze
35 Of birds
36 Kate Nelligan movie
37 Aerial
39 Doorways
41 Potassium hydroxide
44 "Graph" end
45 "— Kapital"
48 Haifa's country
51 Repetitive recital
54 Vex
55 Opening matter
56 Walks
57 Baltimore bird

DOWN

1 Like an owl?
2 Of the dawn
3 Singer Adams
4 Loud clamor
5 Noun suffix
6 Make sea water fit to drink
7 Writer Cather
8 Author Umberto —
9 "Velvet" end
10 — mecum (handbook)
11 "— — Rhythm"
12 Unaspirated
19 "Shame!"
21 Actor Lorne —
22 Rowboat part
23 Revolve
24 Operates a Volvo
25 Different
26 Shopper's paradise
27 Words of understanding
29 Opposite of lose
30 — Islands of Ireland
31 Zola heroine
37 Museum fill
38 Metal decoration
40 Mosaic parts
41 It's caught in the dryer trap
42 River in Belgium
43 Art deco illustrator
45 Pedestal part
46 Dye plant
47 Auld Lang —
49 — — standstill
50 Old age
52 Comparative suffix
53 Siamese native

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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



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TOP SELLERS — These three students were the top sellers during Northeast Elementary School's recent fund-raiser where students sold gift wrap. Allie Brewster, left, sold $280 for first place. She received $50. Matthew Schoolcraft, center, sold $241 for second place and $30. Kriston Alarcon, sold $234 for third place and $20. Total sales for the school was $10,687. (Staff Photo By Shirley A. Gorman)

Twins sent to reformatory for killing dad, wounding 2

HENDERSON, N.C. (AP) — Twin brothers who turned 12 Tuesday were sentenced to up to six years in a state reformatory for killing their father and wounding their mother and sister earlier this year.

The Bawcum boys, known as Twin N and Twin J, can be confined at a state training school until they turn 18 on Nov. 23, 2005. Their records then will be wiped clean. Under state law, children under age 13 cannot be charged as adults.

The twins' mother, Deborah Bawcum, 44, was shot in the arm at the family's Kittrell home April 1 after she found an assault rifle owned by the family in the boys' bedroom. One of the boys began tussling with her over the rifle and then the other boy opened fire with another gun, a revolver.

Their father, William, 45, heard the gunfire and ran upstairs, where he was fatally shot in the face and neck. The twins' 16-year-old sister, Robin, was shot as she tried to call 911. She staggered outside and collapsed bleeding in the porch swing.

District Attorney David Waters said after the twins were sentenced Tuesday that the length of their confinement will depend on how well experts think they are rehabilitated.

"From a personal point of view, we believe that justice was accomplished in the case," Waters said. He has said there was no evidence the twins intended to injure anyone before the tussle began over the rifle.

Ms. Bawcum and her daughter attended the twins' sentencing hearing. Authorities gave no details on what they said or whether they made any recommendations.

Originally charged with first-degree murder, the boys avoided a public trial by admitting responsibility and were found delinquent Aug. 2. They have been in detention centers since the shootings.

Higher health insurance costs but fewer restrictions possible

NEW YORK (AP) — Stores have Christmas. Beach resorts have summer. Makers of allergy pills have ragweed season.

For health insurers, the busiest time of year is right now, during fall re-enrollment season, the one time each year that companies usually allow their workers to switch health plans.

With the deadline approaching, employees are finding a host of changes, some good, some bad.

Most are facing higher premiums and higher co-payments for prescription drugs and office visits. Premiums are rising on average about 8 percent for 2000 — the biggest increase since 1993.

On the positive side, many employees are seeing less bureaucracy, gaining more flexibility in choosing doctors, getting coverage for alternative treatments such as acupuncture and gaining Internet access to health information from their insurer. Also, some companies are providing report cards that grade various health plans on customer satisfaction and other categories.

Consumer demand for more flexible health plans is one reason premiums are rising so fast. Another big factor is the escalating cost of prescription drugs, which at many plans is increasing by about 20 percent.

At the same time, however, many companies are so desperate to find employees that they are willing to absorb much of the premium increases themselves.

Many employees are benefiting as health maintenance organizations drop some restrictions.

The nation's largest health insurer, Aetna U.S. Healthcare, is adding an "open access" type of HMO that lets members use specialists in the plan's network without first getting approval from their primary care doctor.

United HealthCare, the nation's second-largest managed care insurer, is doing one better: It is dropping all pre-authorization requirements and giving doctors the final say on all patient care matters.

HMO Illinois, owned by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, is even letting its members for the first time choose a chiropractor as a primary care doctor. Until now, all HMOs required a medical doctor in that role.

Most employers are now offering workers a three-tiered prescription coverage plan. In this system, workers pay a nominal fee for generic drugs (usually about $5), a higher fee for the insurer's preferred brand-name drugs (usually $10 to $15) and an even higher fee for brand-name drugs that are not on insurers' approved lists ($25 or more).

Added flexibility, though, could end up costing employees more money through higher premiums.

"People want lots of freedom of choice, and that is more expensive," said Bill Sullivan the former president of Oxford Healthcare Plans, which operates in New York and Connecticut. Oxford is one of several health insurers that provide discounts to members who visit acupuncturists, massage therapists and other alternative health providers.

Among other changes in the industry, Aetna has begun letting members enroll over the Internet. They can also check their benefits on Aetna's Web site and determine which doctors are in the plan's network. In addition, the company has its Intellihealth.com Web site, a source of health news and information on diseases.

Some employers are setting up programs to help workers choose the right plan.

Pitney Bowes, the Stamford, Conn.-based manufacturer of office equipment, is distributing a report card that grades HMOs on such things as their preventive-care performance and the size of their doctor networks.

"People are confused about all the material they get, and could not decipher the difference between plan A and plan B and wanted us to be more active in helping them make a selection," said David Hom, executive director of corporate benefits.

Death penalty will be sought in killing

REDDING, Calif. (AP) — The district attorney said Tuesday he will seek the death penalty for two brothers accused of murdering a gay couple.

District Attorney McGregor Scott cited the "significant amount of planning that went into these murders."

No trial date has been set for the defendants, Benjamin Matthew Williams, 31, and James Tyler Williams, 29. They are accused of robbing and shooting to death Gary Matson, 50, and Winfield Mowder, 40, on July 1 at the couple's Happy Valley home.

Benjamin Williams admitted in a jailhouse interview earlier this month that he shot the men because their homosexuality violated God's law.

"I'm not guilty of murder," he told The Sacramento Bee. "I'm guilty of obeying the laws of the Creator."

He said his younger brother wasn't present when the two men were killed.

Investigators also suspect the brothers of participating in the June firebombings of three Sacramento synagogues. No charges have been filed in those attacks.

Astro-graph

By Bernice Bede Osol



Your Birthday

Friday, Nov. 26, 1999

It's quite likely that you could begin to experience a number of beneficial changes in important areas of your life in the year ahead. The trick is to capitalize on them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) If you prematurely reveal how eager you are to have what someone else is offering today, that person might try to make the terms more lopsided than they should be. Don't be gullible. Know where to look for romance and you'll find it. The Astro-Graph Matchmaker instantly reveals which signs are romantically perfect for you. Mail $2.75 to Matchmaker, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 1758, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Take with a grain of salt promises made to you today, especially by family members of relatives. They're the ones who know you'll forgive them if they don't follow through.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) By brushing aside matters that need attention today and believing you'll get around to them later, you could foul up your schedule for the next few days. Stay on top of things.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Even if financial conditions may have been showing good improvements, this is not the day to become extravagant or wasteful. Any surpluses you've accumulated could be depleted.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Impulsiveness that causes poor judgment is a threat with which you may have to deal today. Allow yourself plenty of time to think through all your moves before you take action.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) It's always good to be optimistic regarding the outcome of events, but don't behave in ways where you rely more on luck than on your abilities. Be realistic.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Due to poor judgment on your part today regarding a friend or group with whom you'll get involved, you could suffer some sort of financial loss if you're not careful. Watch your spending.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You could be your own worst enemy if you allow yourself to slack off in a situation that requires self-discipline today. A lot of precious hours could be lost if this attitude persists.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Distinguish between persons who are truly deserving of your help from those who are simply taking advantage of your easy-going nature today before you offer assistance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) It'll only work against you if you attempt to make your presence felt with your peer group through aggressive behavior. Be cooperative, not combative or demanding.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Don't pretend to be anything but what and who you are. Affectations or boasting always proves to be counterproductive in the long run and today is no exception.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Relatively easy tasks or assignments will prove to be extremely difficult for you today if you magnify their difficulties. Don't let your imagination or dislikes defeat you.

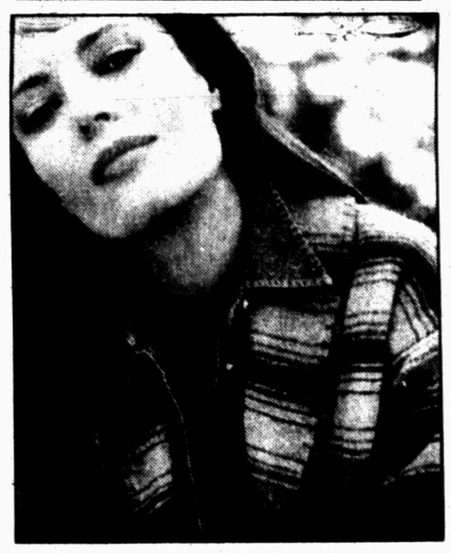
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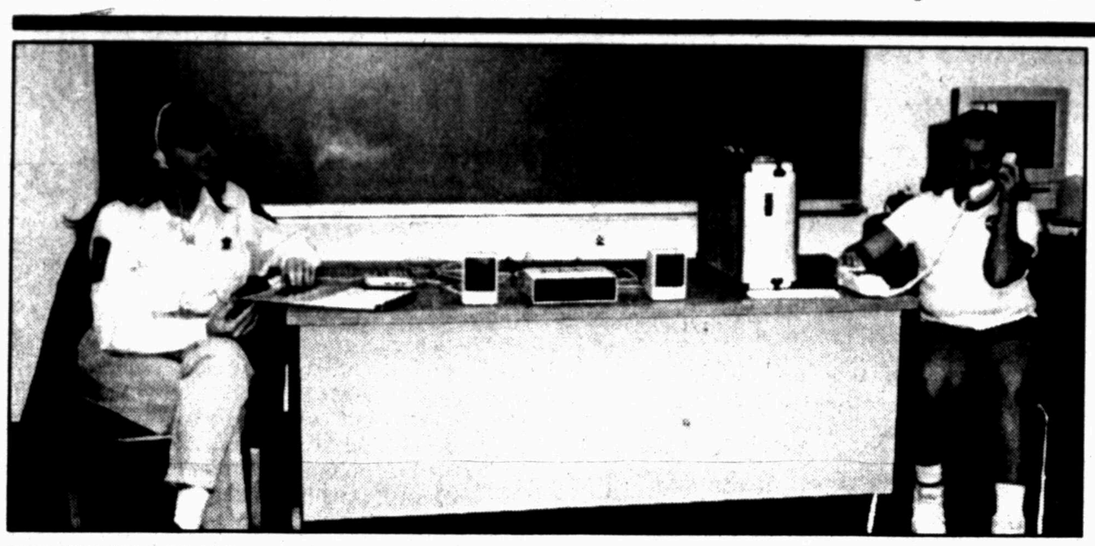
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SPECIAL PROGRAM — Cathy Beckman's fifth graders at Hermleigh recently learned about 911 emergency calling from Jeanette Claxton, left, dispatcher for Scurry County's Sheriff's Office. Also shown is Megan Kariainen, fifth grader. The 911 For Kids Program is sponsored by the West Central Texas Council of Governments. (Contributed Photo)

Search for answers in 1921 race riot turns to cemetery

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — A commission investigating one of the nation's worst acts of racial violence will seek city permission to dig in a Tulsa cemetery in a search for mass graves.

The Tulsa Race Riot Commission agreed Monday to move ahead with a plan for limited excavation at Oaklawn Cemetery in its effort to define what happened here 78 years ago.

Also Monday, the commission took up the issue of reparations, including scholarships, museums, memorials and direct payments to race riot survivors and victims' families as restitution for one of the nation's worst acts of racial violence.

The proposed reparations would cost nearly $33 million, not including any direct payments to survivors and victims' families. It was not clear how much direct payments could total.

Historians say up to 300 people, mostly blacks, were killed when deputized white mobs burned 36 blocks of the city's black Greenwood business district in May 1921. The National Guard has been accused of being slow to respond and of also being involved in the attack.

Rumors of mass graves from the riot have long been disputed.

State archaeologist Bob Brooks says ground-penetrating radar has shown signs of disturbed soil and a pit at a roughly 15-square-foot unmarked site in the Oaklawn graveyard. And an elderly man has told investigators that, as a boy, he saw crates of black bodies there in the riot's aftermath.

Brooks said excavation of a 3-foot by 6-foot area would enable forensic scientists to determine if any bones date to the time of the riot.

"We're not trying to disturb these people," he said. "We're just trying to determine if they're there or not."

Even with city approval, no excavation will likely take place this year, Brooks said.

The commission is scheduled to issue its findings and make a recommendation on reparations to the Legislature in January. A vote on reparations is expected at the commission's next meeting, which has not been scheduled.

"I think money talks," said commission member Eddie Faye Gates. "It shows you're serious. It's a justice issue."

But state Sen. Robert Milacek, a fellow commission member, said legislators may not support reparations.

"If you do this for Tulsa, where do you stop?" he said. "... With the Native Americans, you could go on forever."

The committee on reparations suggested direct payments based on the precedent set by the Florida Legislature in the case of the 1923 Rosewood Massacre. Florida awarded victims' families as much as $150,000 each.

Ms. Gates, who has located 64 race riot survivors, said she isn't afraid to fight for reparations.

"The Oklahoma Legislature has never gone along easily with laws that benefited minorities and women," she said.

Study pinpoints America's 18 worst highway bottlenecks

WASHINGTON (AP) — The "Big Dig" in Boston. The "Mixing Bowl" in the Washington area. The "Hillside Strangler" in Chicago. All three are among the nation's top 18 highway bottlenecks, according to a private study today that suggests highway improvements where traffic snarls are the worst.

In addition to identifying bottlenecks in nine metropolitan areas, the study from the American Highway Users Alliance found that fixing the most serious congested areas nationwide would save lives, reduce pollution and shorten delays.

Spending more on synchronized traffic lights, computerized systems to route traffic around congested areas, and using reversible commuter lanes and moveable barriers during peak travel times will help. But in some instances, America's overstressed road system needs additional capacity at key points, the study said.

"Freeing these bottlenecks is a critical starting point for curing the gridlock on our roadways," said William Fay, president of the alliance, a Washington-based advocacy group that represents motorists, truckers, insurance companies, oil refiners and others with an interest in safe, uncongested roadways.

Reconstruction projects and other traffic flow improvement efforts are planned or under way at a number of the 18 bottleneck sites.

The study estimates that improving 167 bottlenecks nationwide would, during the next 20 years, prevent 287,200 crashes, reduce smog-causing emissions and cut delays by an average of 19 minutes a trip — nearly 40 minutes a day for commuters who must negotiate a bottleneck to and from work.

Steve Hayes, a spokesman for the American Automobile Association, said the study focuses attention on expanding the capacity of America's road system. "The number of automobiles and trucks on the highways has grown dramatically in the past 30 years, but the miles of new road has only increased very, very slightly," Hayes said. "They certainly have a point that attention needs to be paid, and especially to these bottlenecks."

Deron Lovaas, representative for the Sierra Club's "Challenge to Sprawl" campaign, said easing congested bottlenecks makes sense in the short-term, not the long-term. Money needs to be invested in alternative transit like buses or commuter trains.

"Building new lanes for existing roads, or building new roads to deal with road congestion is like buying a bigger pair of pants to deal with a weight problem," Lovaas said. "New roads act as magnets for cars. People see this uncongested road and they opt out of taking the train, riding the bus and walking. You end up with more people driving more miles."

Nation's top bottlenecks list

By The Associated Press

The nation's top 18 highway bottlenecks, according to the American Highway Users Alliance. (Proposed improvements in parenthesis):

1. Los Angeles, Interstate 405 at I-10.
2. Houston, U.S. 59 at I-610.
3. Seattle, I-5 at I-90.
4. Boston, I-93 Central Artery downtown at U.S. 1 known as the "Big Dig." ("An $11.6 billion federal highway project, called the "Big Dig," is under way to put the main north-south highway passing through Boston underground.)
5. Washington, D.C./Maryland, I-495 at I-270.
6. Washington, D.C./Virginia, I-95 at I-495 and I-395 known as the "Mixing Bowl." (A $350 million, eight-year reconstruction project is under way.)
7. Los Angeles, U.S. 101 Ventura Freeway at I-405.
8. Los Angeles, State Route 55 Newport Freeway at State Route 22.
9. Los Angeles, I-10 Santa Monica Freeway at I-5.
10. Albuquerque, I-40 at I-25. (State highway officials are in the bidding process of a $250 million project to rebuild the intersection and nearly 5 miles of freeway approaching the interchange.)
11. Atlanta, I-285 at I-85 in De Kalb County. (State officials are considering a $170 million plan that would re-engineer interchanges between three major interstates to keep trucks from overturning; truckers also would be asked to voluntarily stay off the area's busiest stretches of road during rush hours.)
12. Atlanta, I-75 at I-85.
13. Chicago, I-290 at the junction of I-88 and I-294 called the "Hillside Strangler." (Illinois Gov. George Ryan has proposed spending $82.1 million for construction of auxiliary lanes, interchange reconstruction, bridge widening, utility adjustments and engineering. Construction is scheduled to begin next spring; open to traffic by 2002.)
14. Denver, I-25 at I-225.
15. Houston, I-610 at I-10.
16. Washington, D.C./Virginia, I-66 at I-495.
17. Washington, D.C./Maryland, I-95 and I-495 at the U.S. 1 to I-95 North junction.
18. Atlanta, I-285 at I-75.

Bombing remains to be buried

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — More than four years after the Oklahoma City bombing, unidentified remains of some of the victims will be buried in a memorial grove of trees at the state Capitol.

The Capitol-Medical Planning and Zoning Commission on Monday agreed to allow the burial of a single casket containing the remains. A ceremony is scheduled for Dec. 11.

All 168 victims of the April 19, 1995, bombing that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building were identified.

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Microsoft also facing wave of private lawsuits

NEW YORK (AP) — A growing wave of private lawsuits against Microsoft Corp. suddenly has the company fighting on several legal fronts at once, raising the stakes in its antitrust battle in Washington and intensifying pressure on Microsoft to settle the case.

At least seven lawsuits, including one filed Monday in San Francisco, have been filed on behalf of computer users in response to a judge's Nov. 5 finding that Microsoft is a software monopolist that routinely bullies high-tech rivals. The finding provided grist for allegations by computer users that Microsoft's monopoly gave it substantial leeway to overcharge for its Windows software program.

Microsoft is viewed as rich enough and legally savvy enough to weather a continued onslaught of private lawsuits, which may be consolidated into a federal case. Among the world's most profitable companies, Microsoft has about $19 billion in cash and no debt.

But legal experts say the state and federal lawsuits, filed in Alabama, California, Louisiana and New York, could create a short-term challenge at Microsoft as it tries to ensure its legal arguments and trial maneuvers are consistent across different jurisdictions.

Moreover, the lawsuits are likely to reinforce pressure on the software giant to reach an out-of-court settlement with the Justice Department, particularly after the judge appointed a mediator Friday to oversee voluntary negotiations. A settlement would make it far more difficult for private plaintiffs to use the judge's findings to bolster their cases.

"As more of these lawsuits are filed, you have to assume that Microsoft will look for some way to try to prevent the trial from going to conclusion," said Richard Thomas Delamarter, an expert on corporate monopolies who teaches antitrust history and technology at Yale University.

"These private cases only add to the pressure."

Indeed, the appointment of a mediator and the prospect of a settlement offset any concern by investors that Microsoft may get swamped by lawsuits. The company's stock was sharply higher Monday, rising more than 4 percent, or by $3.811/4 at $89.811/4, as of the 4 p.m. EST close of trading on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

So far, consumers have filed three cases in San Francisco; one in Orange County, Calif.; and one each in New York; New Orleans and Birmingham, Ala. They all seek class-action status, potentially on behalf of millions of consumers.

The lawsuits in Alabama and Louisiana are federal cases, while the ones in New York and California are in state courts. New York and California are among more than a dozen states that make it easier for consumers to sue for allegedly overcharging for products.

Microsoft said it has plenty of legal resources to fight the suits. "It's unfortunate that plaintiffs' attorneys have decided to file baseless lawsuits," said company spokesman Jim Cullinan. "We believe our actions have been pro-competitive and fully legal."

Regardless of the eventual outcome of the antitrust case in Washington, the broadened legal assault could compel Microsoft to tone down its aggressive behavior in the computer industry.

Consider the long-running antitrust case against IBM, another famous computer industry monopoly. IBM had to defend itself not only against a Justice Department lawsuit, but also against competitors and private individuals whom the government's action prompted to file similar complaints.

Government seeks to reduce injuries caused by needles

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hospitals and other health facilities could protect thousands of workers from dangerous infections by using safer needles and syringes — types with retractable sharp ends or other safety features, the government says.

Some 600,000 to 800,000 health workers accidentally stick themselves each year with needles they are using on patients, putting themselves at risk for such diseases as the AIDS virus and hepatitis.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved sale of 50 types of specially protected needles and syringes, along with numerous other protective devices. But the American Nurses Association says just 15 percent of hospitals have adopted safer needles.

On Monday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged more health facilities to use protective devices as part of a comprehensive program to better prevent needle accidents.

"The public attention and awareness of this problem has lagged behind the scope of it," said Dr. Linda Rosenstock, director of CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. "For every 100 beds a hospital has, on average it has 30 needle stick injuries per year."

"Too many people see needle stick injuries as a routine part of doing business," she added. "We want to change that view — it shouldn't be the case."

The CDC's strongly worded safety alert, to be sent to hospitals, nurses and physicians groups and other health facilities this week, is the latest in a trend toward safer needles that manufacturers say may soon increase sales.

California last summer ordered use of the protective devices, two other states have passed similar laws, and some 20 other states are considering the issue. In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration this month strengthened its own rules in a way that may let OSHA inspectors cite health facilities for failing to use safer needles.

Now, "the game isn't just, 'Let's get a needle,' the game is, 'Let's get the most effective device,'" said Carol Coburn, a spokeswoman for Bio-Plexus Inc., which sells needles with a blunt tip that pops out to cover the sharp needle as soon as it's used.

The safety features often work as simply as a ball-point pen, said James Donegan, chief executive of Med-Design Corp., which develops retractable needles and syringes. For example, push a syringe plunger an extra time and it makes the needle retract inside its plastic coating before it's ever removed from the patient, explained Donegan, whose company has licensed five safer needles to Becton-Dickinson, the world's largest needle manufacturer.

There is even a vaccine injector with no needle at all: Bio-Ject's vaccine gun uses pressure to force certain vaccines through the skin.

Yet these safer needles have been slow to spread largely because they cost more, manufacturers and health experts say. A standard blood-collection needle, for example, costs about 6 cents, while a safer version costs about 25 cents. That adds up, considering the nation uses about half a billion of those needles each year.

Nurses are injured most often, but doctors, laboratory staff and other workers also get stuck, the CDC said. The accidents are estimated to give at least 1,000 injured workers a year HIV or hepatitis.

Rosenstock said worrying that safer needles cost more is "a shortsighted approach."

Dear Abby

By Abigail Van Buren



Count Your Blessings Today And Be Thankful Year-Round

by Abigail Van Buren

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DEAR READERS: By popular demand, here is my traditional Thanksgiving column:

Today is Thanksgiving Day, so take a few minutes to reflect upon all the things for which you are thankful.

How's your health? Not so good? Well, thank God you've lived this long. A lot of people haven't. You're hurting? Thousands — maybe millions — are hurting even more. (Have you ever visited a veterans hospital? Or a rehabilitation clinic for crippled children?)

If you awakened this morning and were able to hear the birds sing, use your vocal cords to utter human sounds, walk to the breakfast table on two good legs, and read the newspaper with two good eyes, praise the Lord! A lot of people couldn't.

How's your pocketbook? Thin? Well, most of the world is a lot poorer. No pensions. No welfare. No food stamps. No Social Security. In fact, one-third of the people in the world will go to bed hungry tonight.

Are you lonely? The way to have a friend is to be one. If nobody calls you, pick up the phone and call someone.

Are you concerned about your country's future? Hooray! Our system has been saved by such concern. Your country may not be a rose garden, but neither is it a patch of weeds.

Freedom rings! Look and listen. You can still worship at the church of your choice, cast a secret ballot, and even criticize your government without fearing a knock on the head or a knock on the door at midnight. And if you want to live under a different system, you are free to go. There are no walls or fences — nothing to keep you here.

As a final thought, I'll repeat my Thanksgiving prayer; perhaps you will want to use it at your table today:

O heavenly Father:
We thank thee for food and remember the hungry.
We thank thee for health and remember the sick.
We thank thee for friends and remember the friendless.
We thank thee for freedom and remember the enslaved.
May these remembrances stir us to service
That thy gifts to us may be used for others. Amen.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and may God bless you and yours.

LOVE, ABBY

An afterthought: Want an instant high? The surest cure for the holiday blues is doing something nice for someone. Why not call a person who lives alone and invite him or her to share dinner?

Better yet, call and say, "I'm coming to get you, and I'll see that you get home." (Some older people don't drive, and those who do may not like to go out after dark.)

Try it. And let me know the results.

P.S. Special greetings to those of you in the military who wrote from remote corners of the world to tell me that you are using my prayer on this Thanksgiving Day.

***

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $3.95 ($4.50 in Canada) to: Dear Abby's "Keepers," P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Dr. Gott

By Peter Gott, M.D.

What does teeth-clenching signify?

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

DEAR DR. GOTT: Is clenching your teeth a sign of trouble?

DEAR READER: Sometimes. Teeth-clenching may be a sign of tension. We all experience tension, of course; but if we take out the stress on our teeth (especially while sleeping at night), bite problems and headaches can result. In fact, such activity can lead to the troubling condition called temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction — constant headache and pain from stress on the jaw joint. Teeth clenching may be the earliest manifestation of stress that should be directly addressed, not ignored.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I am 46 years old and the mother of two beautiful children. After a traumatic divorce 16 years ago, I became a single parent. At that time, I vowed to find love before sex, even though I was sexually enthusiastic during my marriage. I have concentrated on getting my college degree, working hard and putting my children through school. Chastity did not come easily.

Last year, I met a man and fell in love. I was so happy that I seemed to be eternally turned on. Therefore, you can imagine my disappointment when the magic time occurred and my female department turned into a cauldron of warm mush. My lover had no semblance of traction. Is it possible that I was so lubricated that I felt huge? He was well-endowed, so that wasn't the problem.

He never called me back again.

DEAR READER: Well, that's his loss and your gain. The jerk probably didn't realize that you had far more to offer than a roll in the hay. You're probably better off without him.

Clearly, your sexual arousal led to lubrication that reduced friction. This is normal and could have been overcome by a variety of alternatives, including using techniques other than sexual intercourse.

Nonetheless, your anatomical concerns are valid. Women who have had children are often left with a widened vaginal aperture, which may be accentuated by arousal. In my opinion, you should be examined by a gynecologist to make sure that there is nothing wrong. I would be particularly interested in the condition of your birth canal, and whether your pelvic muscles need some toning up.

Now a word of advice. Don't get hung up on your (incorrect) assumption of inadequacy. As you know, the sex act is blessed by a wide variety of expressions. You did not fail because of a lubricated loss of friction. You are you and have the capability of finding a strong and lasting relationship; whatever anatomical variation you have is inconsequential. Don't blame yourself and retreat. Reach out and keep trying to find happiness and security. To give you related information, I am sending you a copy of my Health Report "Where to Find Sex Information." Other readers who would like a copy should send $2 plus a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 2017, Murray Hill Station, New York, NY 10156. Be sure to mention the title.

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DR. GOTT



PETER GOTT, M.D.

Medical professor stabbed to death

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A Louisiana State University medical professor who led a national council on disabled children was found stabbed to death in his home.

Police said they had no motive or suspect in the slaying of 51-year-old James David Sexton, whose naked body was found Monday.

He had been stabbed more than a dozen times.

He served as president of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood.

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Direct federal spending in Scurry increases

Direct federal spending in Scurry County increased five percent from $63,764,000 during fiscal year 1997 to $66,938,000 during fiscal year 1998, according to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The federal fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Direct federal spending in Scurry County had increased slightly by 1.8 percent from fiscal 1996 to fiscal 1997, having been $62,654,000 during fiscal 1996.

This same report indicated that total direct federal spending in the U.S. had increased from $1,431.1 billion during fiscal 1997 to $1,484.2 billion during fiscal 1998 or by 3.7 percent. Nationally, direct federal spending increased by 2.4 percent from fiscal 1996 to fiscal 1997 having amounted to $1,398.2 billion during fiscal 1996.

Direct federal spending in Texas was $92,018,565,000 during fiscal 1998, jumping 3.5 percent from $88,897,575,000 during fiscal 1999. Direct federal spending in the state had increased by 2.4 percent from fiscal 1997 through fiscal 1998, having been $86,782,734,000 during fiscal 1996.

Per capita direct federal spending in Scurry County was $3,704 during fiscal year 1998 compared to a national per capita average of $5,5,491. Per capita direct federal spending in Texas was $4,657 during fiscal 1998.

The Commerce Department report breaks direct federal spending down into five categories: retirement and disability payments, all other direct payments to individuals, grants, procurement contracts and salaries and wages.

The report did not include any international transactions. It did not include interest payments on the national debt, which were estimated to be $243.0 billion during fiscal 1998. Additionally, it did not include figures for expenditures by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, or the National Security Agency.

Retirement and disability payments include all types of Social Security payments, federal retirement and disability benefits and certain veterans' benefits. This category of direct federal spending is expected to increase significantly as the "baby boom" generation begins retiring.

Retirement and disability payments in Scurry County were $31.7 million during fiscal 1998 having increased slightly by 1.1 percent from $31.3 million in 1997.

Retirement and disability payments accounted for 47.4 percent of all direct federal spending in Scurry County during the fiscal year.. The local per capita figure for retirement and disability payments was $1,755.

Nationally, retirement and disability payments were 34.2 percent of all direct federal spending, while accounting for 33.0 percent of direct federal spending in Texas. National per capita retirement and disability payments were $1,876 during fiscal 1998 while per capita retirement and disability payments were $1,538 in Texas.

All other direct payments to individuals include all federal payments made to individuals besides retirement and disability payments. These include a large number of programs ranging from food stamps through payments made under the Protection of Ships from Foreign Seizure program.

All other direct payments to individuals had increased by 8.0 percent from $304 billion during fiscal 1997 to $320.4 billion during fiscal 1998. The largest and best known single program falling into this category of direct federal spending was Medicare which accounted for $209 billion or nearly two-thirds of these expenditures during the fiscal year.

All other direct payments to individuals in Scurry County had increased sharply from $17 million during fiscal 1997 to $22.4 million during 1998, or 31.9 percent. All other direct payments to individuals in Texas increased by 6.5 percent from $19.4 million. Texas had increased by 6.5 percent from $19,498,282,000 during fiscal 1997 to $20,764,481,000 during 1998.

All other direct payments to individuals accounted for 33.6 percent of direct federal spending in Scurry County during fiscal 1998 compared to 22.1 percent of direct federal spending nationally and 22.6 percent of direct federal spending in Texas.

The per capita figure for this category of federal spending in Scurry County was $1,244 compared to a national per capita figure of $1,215 and a per capita figure of $1,051 in Texas.

Nationally, grant awards had increased by 6.8 percent from $251.9 billion during fiscal 1997 to $269.1 billion during fiscal 1998. Almost every department and agency of the federal government provides grants of some sort.

The Department of Health and Human Services expends the majority of federal grant funds having dispensed $153.5 billion in grants during fiscal 1998.

Grant funding in Scurry County was $10.4 million during fiscal 1998, having increased 26.9 percent from $8.2 million during 1997. The volume of federal grants in Texas had increased by 8 per cent over the period from $14,644,099,000 during fiscal 1997 to $15,809,020,000 during fiscal 1998.

Grants accounted for 15.6 percent of direct federal spending in Scurry County during fiscal 1998 compared to 16.1 percent of direct federal spending nationally and 17.2 percent of direct federal spending in Texas. Per capita grants in Scurry County were $579 while per capita grants nationally were $996, and per capita grants in Texas were $800.

Expenditure for federal procurements include all outlays for goods and services made by the federal government under formal contractual agreements. Total procurement expenditures increased by 8.4 percent over the period from $193 billion during fiscal 1997 to $209.3 billion during fiscal 1998.

Expenditures through federal procurement contracts in Scurry County were $446,000 during fiscal 1998, falling sharply by 31.9 from $655,000 during fiscal 1997. Total procurement expenditures in Texas had increased by 4.6 from $13.2 million during 1997 to $13.8 million by fiscal 1998.

Procurement contracts accounted for 0.7 percent of direct federal spending in Scurry County during fiscal 1998 compared to 14.1 percent of direct federal spending nationally and 15.1 percent of spending in Texas. Per capita procurement spending in Scurry County was only $25 compared to a national per capita figure of $774 and a per capita figure of $703 in Texas.

Federal wages and salaries were $170.1 billion during fiscal 1998 up by 2.4 percent from $166.1 billion during fiscal 1998. These figures include both civilian and military payments. Federal wages and salaries in Scurry County had increased slightly by 1.3 percent from $1.8 million during 1997 to $1.8 million during 1998. Federal wages and salaries in Texas had increased by 2.4 percent from $10,897,259 during fiscal 1997 to $11,163,680,000 during fiscal 1998.

Wages and salaries accounted for 2.7 percent of total direct federal spending in Scurry County during fiscal 1998 compared to 11.5 percent of national direct spending and 12.1 percent of direct federal spending in Texas. Per capita spending for wages and salaries in Scurry County was $101 during 1998 while national per capita spending for this category was $630. Per capita wage and salary spending in Texas was $565 during fiscal 1998.

Florida approves license plates with 'Choose Life' idea

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A specialty license plate with a crayon drawing of two children and the message "Choose Life" won final approval Tuesday despite criticism it is a political statement against abortion.

Money raised by sales of the plate — which is expected to become available in two to three months for an extra $22 — will go toward organizations that serve pregnant women who plan to put their babies up for adoption.

Florida is the first state to adopt such a plate, said Lynda Bell, president of Florida Right to Life.

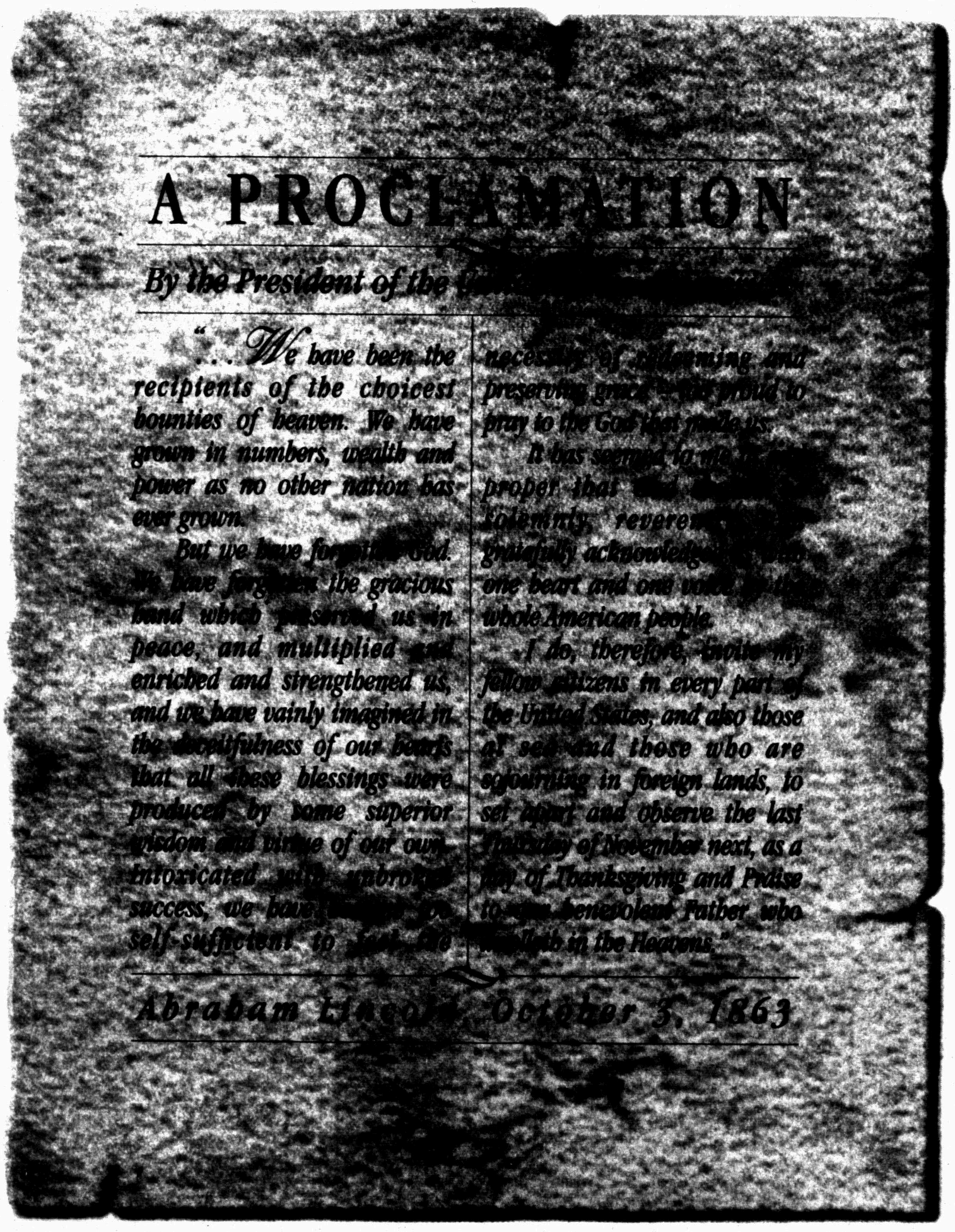
The National Organization for Women has said it will go to court to try to block the tag's release.

Florida already offers more than 45 specialty plates devoted to everything from the endangered manatee to the Florida Panthers hockey team. Legislators approved the tag earlier this year; the last step was for Gov. Jeb Bush and the six-member Cabinet to approve the color and design.

The Republican governor joined four Cabinet members in approving the tag. Attorney General Bob Butterworth and Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson, both Democrats, voted against it.

Legislation for the "Choose Life" plate was first passed in 1998 but vetoed by Democratic Gov. Lawton Chiles. Bush signed a similar measure in June.

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