

Tomorrow's Weather

HIGH
42
LOW
24

See expanded weather on Page 2

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THE PAMPA NEWS

Tuesday, January 1, 2008

Volume 103 • No. 231

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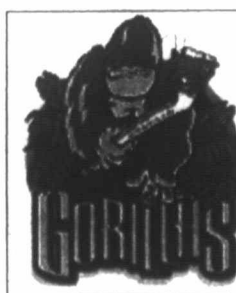
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A look back at events in Pampa during 2007

By MARILYN POWERS
Staff Writer

The year 2007 was a heartbreaking one for some Pampans, while others got down to basics such as wind and water.

Six-week-old Kenzee Renae Bolin of Pampa died May 21 as a result of blunt force trauma to the head, according to autopsy results. At 1:15 a.m. May 21, a member of the infant's family called 911 to report that the child had breathing problems. The baby died about an hour after being transported by ambulance to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

Mary Lou Bolin, 27, the victim's mother, was indicted June 28 for capital murder in connection with

her daughter's death.

Alejandra Ramirez, 13, of Pampa was killed when a motor vehicle struck her as she rode her bicycle along Gwendolen Street at about 10 p.m. May 26, according to police reports.

Steven Lee Stamps II, 26, of Pampa was arrested and charged with intoxication manslaughter in connection with the incident, which occurred in the 1500 block of Gwendolen. Ramirez was dragged about a block when Stamps' 2001 Chevrolet Trailblazer allegedly struck her, according to police reports.

Ramirez was deaf and was reportedly on a waiting list for an organ transplant at the time of the accident. She had just completed sixth grade

at Pampa Junior High School.

Stamps was indicted Sept. 6 for intoxicated manslaughter with a vehicle in connection with the accident.

Terry Lee Boaz, 41, of Pampa was driving a 1997 Harley-Davidson motorcycle on the evening of June 6 when he died after being involved in a motorcycle/pickup accident in the 800 block of North Wells.

A passenger on Boaz' motorcycle, Tina Sue Hoskins, 37, also of Pampa, survived the accident, as did Cynthia Rachelle Young, 36, of Pampa, the driver of a 2004 Dodge pickup which was following Boaz at the time of the wreck.

Young was indicted June 28 for first-degree murder and aggravated assault causing serious bodily injury

in connection with the vehicle accident.

At least four collisions involving motor vehicles and trains occurred in the last quarter of the year and resulted in death for two of those involved.

The first accident, which involved a tractor-trailer rig driven by Ted Wayne Faatz, 34, of Iowa, occurred around 2 p.m. Oct. 14 at a railroad crossing on private property about one mile west of Pampa. Faatz survived the collision, but the driver of the car involved in the next such accident was not so fortunate.

Annette Louise Adkiss, 45, of Pampa died at the scene of an accident in which a train struck her car

See 2007, Page 3



Above - Bee keepers and Pampa Firefighters spray foam over the hive of aggressive bees. Top right - The science labs and library are demolished at Pampa High School to make room for a new addition. Below - Pampa Firefighters and Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers work to free a man trapped inside the cab of this truck after it was struck by a train.



Bush signs bill to expand government transparency

CRAWFORD, Texas (AP) — President Bush on Monday signed a bill aimed at giving the public and the media greater access to information about what the government is doing.

The new law toughens the Freedom of Information Act, the first such makeover to the signature public-access law in a decade. It amounts to a congressional pushback against the Bush administration's movement to greater secrecy since the terrorist attacks of 2001.

Bush signed the bill without comment in one of his final decisions of the year.

The legislation creates a system for the media and public to track the status of

their FOIA requests. It establishes a hotline service for all federal agencies to deal with problems and an ombudsman to provide an alternative to litigation in disclosure disputes.

The law also restores a presumption of a standard that orders government agencies to release information on request unless there is a finding that disclosure could do harm.

Agencies would be required to meet a 20-day deadline for responding to FOIA requests. Nonproprietary information held by government contractors also would be subject to the law.

Lovett Library long-range plan

By DAVID BOWSER
Staff Writer

The shelves at Lovett Memorial Library are beginning to look bare.

It's not a post Christmas sale, said Misty Guy, the library director. It's a weeding out of old books in order to replace them with the new, but the replacements will be a while in coming.

The reason is the state-mandated Long Range Library Plan.

"That is something that is required by the state," Guy said. "Every library has to have it in place."

It gives the librarian and the staff directions for the next five years, she said.

For the Lovett Memorial Library, she said the main issue for the current five year plan is to bring the children's department downstairs.

"Every time a little kid is on the stairs," she said, "we hold our breath, hoping they don't fall."

Guy said she feels it would be better to have the children downstairs.

She said they have been weeding out dated books from the shelves at the library. Guy said she's getting rid of some books that have mold in them and those books that aren't circulating in order to get ready for new material that will circulate.

Guy hopes to move after the weeding process and before the new books go on the shelves. That, she said, will make the transition easier. There will be fewer books to move and less labor to move them.

"The weeding is the big thing to get ready for that," Guy said.

Some of the books will go to the annual Friends of the Library book sale. Some of the books, those damaged by mold, will have to be destroyed.

"That's where the inter-library loan program comes in...it's a free service."

— Misty Guy
Lovett librarian

Guy said that there have been huge changes just since she began her library career.

"When I was starting at AC, the World Wide Web was just starting to evolve," Guy said.

The amount of information available over the internet was fantastic, she said.

She said the Harrington Library Consortium was

coming into existence as well at that time.

"That involves the whole Texas Panhandle," Guy said.

Through the Harrington Library Consortium, she said that library patrons have access to material at all the libraries in the panhandle, not just Pampa. That gives patrons more choices at lower costs because now each library doesn't need to stock all the books. If a patron needs a particular book and it's at another panhandle library, a carrier will deliver it to the patron's home library and the library will notify the patron it's in.

"That's where the inter-library loan program comes in," Guy said. "It's a free service."

She says that system allows libraries to expand their material to their patrons without increasing costs.

The libraries also share costs of online services, such as the World Book.

"You can link to it from our home page," Guy said.

Pampa is also a member of the Texas Panhandle Library System, she says.

"We all work together," Guy said.

While the Long Range Plan is developed by the library board and submitted

See LOVETT, Page 3

NEXT DAY FORECAST

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



Mostly sunny Mostly sunny Mostly sunny

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 42. Wind chill values between 5 and 15. West wind 5 to 15 mph becoming south.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 24. Wind chill values between 12 and 22. South wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 53. South southwest wind around 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 30. South southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 59. West southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 37. West southwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

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Happy New Year from the staff of The Pampa News.

Top 5 picks for the week

FILM

1. "National Treasure: Book of Secrets," Disney.
2. "Alvin and the Chipmunks," Fox.
3. "I Am Legend," Warner Bros.
4. "Charlie Wilson's War," Universal.
5. "Juno," Fox Searchlight.

TELEVISION

1. "Sunday Night Football: Washington at Minnesota," NBC.
 2. "CSI: Miami," CBS.
 3. "60 Minutes," CBS.
 4. "NCIS," CBS.
 5. "Criminal Minds," CBS.
- (From Nielsen Media Research)

New Year's ball drop celebrates 100th year

NEW YORK (AP) — More than a million revelers in Times Square cheered as the giant crystal ball made its 100th drop on Monday night and a ton of confetti rained down on the urban canyon, ushering in the new year.

A century ago the tradition began with a 700-pound ball of wood and iron, lit with 100 25-watt incandescent bulbs. This year's event featured an energy-efficient

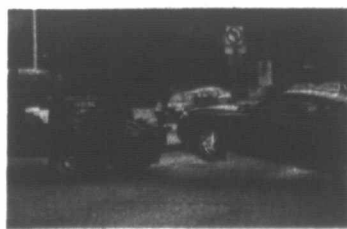
sphere clad in Waterford crystals, with 9,576 light-emitting diodes that generated a kaleidoscope of colors.

Organizers said well over a million people attended the festivities.

They were treated to an entertainment lineup that included Dick Clark and Ryan Seacrest handling the countdown to 2008 and musical performances by Carrie Underwood, Miley Cyrus and others.

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Obituaries

Steven Dampier, 56

McLean — Steven "Steve" Dampier, 56, died Sat., Dec. 29, 2007, in Amarillo, Texas. Memorial services are scheduled for 2 p.m. Sat., Jan. 5, 2008, at Trinity Church in McLean, Texas, with Minister Jim Reyna officiating.

Steven Loyd Dampier was born Dec. 24, 1951, in San

Diego, Calif., to Loyd and Dorothy Dampier. He married Diane Warren on Dec. 31, 1979, in San Diego, Calif. They were married for 28 years.

Mr. Dampier was a professional musician/composer who led praise and worship music for many churches over the last 20 years. He

toured throughout the Texas Panhandle with his last band, "Empty Pockets."

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Survivors include his wife, Diane Dampier of McLean; two daughters, Alexis Ritchie and husband Andy and Danielle Jones and husband Nick, both of

McLean; one son, Cole Dampier of McLean; three sisters, Terri Zimmer, Sandy Faella and Cindy Dettmer; and five grandchildren.

To help defray costs, a memorial fund has been established at the Bank of Commerce in McLean.

Dennis Dehn, 78

Pampa — Dennis Dehn, 78, of Pampa, Texas, died Sunday, Dec. 30, 2007, at Pampa. There are no services scheduled. Cremation and arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-

Whatley Funeral Directors of Pampa.

Mr. Dehn was born Oct. 5, 1929, in Minnesota. He had been a resident of Pampa since 1953, moving here to work for KPDN Radio,

where he was employed for 29 years. He was an associate with Focus Magazine for 24 years and assisted Jeanne Willingham with the production of "The Nutcracker" for many years. He was a veter-

an of the U.S. Army.

There are no known survivors.

—Sign the on-line register book at www.carmichael-whatley.com.

Lura Mae Manning, 85

Pampa — Lura Mae Manning, 85, of Pampa, died Sat., Dec. 29, 2007, in Pampa. No services will be scheduled. Cremation and arrangements are by

Carmichael-Whatley Funeral Directors.

Miss Manning was born Oct. 21, 1922, in Mineral Wells, Texas, and had been a resident of Pampa for the

past 40 years. She was preceded in death by her parents and two brothers.

Survivors include two close friends, Myrtle Carey and Betty Hopson, both of

Pampa.

—Sign the on-line register book at www.carmichael-whatley.com.

Emergency Services

Pampa PD

Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents during the period from 7 a.m. Dec. 28 through 7 a.m. Dec. 31.

Friday, Dec. 28

Twelve traffic stops were made, resulting in two arrests.

Traffic complaints were reported at the intersections of Beech and 17th and Dwight and 21st, the 1600 block of Somerville and the 2300 block of North Nelson.

An abandoned vehicle was reported in the 1000 block of Crane.

Motorist assistance was provided in the 800 block of South Hobart.

Accidents were reported at the intersections of Kentucky and Duncan, 18th and Duncan, 2200 block of Perryton Parkway, the 1700 block of Beech, the 400 block of South Barnes and the 2800 block of Charles.

Animal control officers made calls concerning animals in the 2400 block of Navajo, the 1700 block of Dogwood, the 1300 block of Garland the intersection of Hobart and Alcock, the intersection of Primrose and 23rd, the 1100 block of East Foster and the 700 block of Ballard.

Welfare checks were made in the 800 block of North Nelson, the 1400 block of North Hobart, the 1400 block of Somerville, the 600 block of Plains and the intersection of Banks and Alcock.

Building checks were made in the 100 block of East Craven, the 400 block of West Foster and the 600 block of West Foster, which resulted in one arrest.

Telephone harassment was reported in the 100 block of West 27th.

Harassment was reported in the 1000 block of Crane.

911 hang-ups were reported in the 1200 block of South Barnes, the 1700 block of Gwendolen and the 900 block of Gray.

Warrant service was attempted at four locations.

Violation of city ordinance was reported in the 900 block of Twiford.

Suspicious persons were reported in the 100 block of South Cuyler, the intersection of Oklahoma and Barrett and the 1100 block of Huff.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 400 block of Graham and the 900 block of East Francis where damage to a porch, awning and fence were estimated at \$600 and in the 1700 block of Dogwood, where a window was broken with a brick.

Criminal trespass was reported in the 600 block of Plains.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 1400 block of Somerville.

Three alarms were reported.

Theft was reported in the 900 block of South Sumner.

Burglary of a motor vehicle was reported in the 800 block of South Banks, where a carburetor valued at \$600 was stolen off of a vehicle.

Saturday, Dec. 29

Twenty traffic stops were made, resulting in two arrests.

Traffic complaints were reported in the 1200 block of East Francis and the 2800 block of Charles.

An accident was reported in the 1900 block of North Sumner.

Animal control officers made calls concerning animals in the 2500 block of Chestnut, the 500 block of North Dwight, the 700 block of Denver and the 600 block of Deane.

A welfare check was made in the 1400 block of Williston and the 1100 block of Darby.

A building check was made in the 100 block of Somerville.

Suspicious persons were reported in the 1100 block of Huff, the 1100 block of South Hobart, the 500 block of Oklahoma, the intersection of Starkweather and Atchison, the 700 block of Kentucky and the 700 block of West Francis, where an arrest was made.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 500 block of Sloan, the intersection of Mary Ellen and Georgia and the 100 block of West 30th.

Criminal mischief was reported in the 800 block of East Browning and in the 1300 block of Terrace, where a front window of a residence was broken, which was valued at \$200.

A suicide attempt was reported.

Warrant service was made at one location where an arrest was made.

One alarm was reported. Burglary was reported in the 200 block of North Nelson.

A prowler was reported in the 200 block of North Nelson.

A gas drive-off was reported at Allsup's, 309 N. Hobart, where gas valued at \$57 was stolen.

Sunday, Dec. 30

Twelve traffic stops were reported, resulting in one arrest.

Traffic complaints were reported in the 1600 block of Highway 60 East and the 1900 block of North Hobart.

Accidents were reported at the intersections of Finley and Craven and Cuyler and Brown and in the 2500 block of Perryton Parkway.

Animal control officers made calls concerning animals in the 1000 block of Coronado, the 800 block of East Francis and the intersection of Somerville and Wells.

Found property, a boy's bicycle, was reported in the 1800 block of North Banks.

Suspicious persons were reported in the 1900 block of North Hobart, the 700 block of Murphy and in the police department lobby.

Criminal mischief was reported in the police department lobby, the 400 block of Roberta and the 400 block of West Foster.

Disorderly conduct was reported in the 300 block of Miami.

A domestic disturbance was reported in the 600 block of North Zimmers and the 1200 block of North Hobart.

One suicide attempt was reported.

Theft was reported in the 2800 block of Charles, the 200 block of Craven, where elk antlers valued at \$300 was stolen, and in the 1200 block of East Francis.

A gas drive-off was reported at Allsup's, 1025 W. Wilks, where \$50 in gas was stolen.

Monday, Dec. 31

Five traffic stops were made, resulting in one arrest.

Suspicious persons were reported in the 600 block of Crawford, the 1100 block of Huff, the intersection of Neel and Crawford, the intersection of Oklahoma and Gray, the 300 block of Gray and at the intersection of Bradley and Jordan.

A suspicious vehicle was reported in the 900 block of Wilks.

Found property was reported in the 700 block of North Nelson.

A prowler was reported in the 700 block of South Barnes and in the 1100 block of East Kingsmill.

Fire

Pampa Fire Department reported the following calls during the 24-hour period ending at 7 a.m. today.

Monday, Dec. 31

7:00 a.m. — Two units and six personnel responded to the 11000 block of Highway 60 East on a hazardous material clean-up.

Tuesday, Jan. 1

1:01 a.m. — One unit and three personnel responded to the 300 block of Miami on a medical assist.

Sheriff

Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests.

Monday, Dec. 31

Marvin Monrow Finney III, 32, was arrested by GCSO for assault causing bodily injury.

Jerry Lynn Norwood, 42, was arrested by GCSO for possession of marijuana less than two ounces and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Aaron Randol Jones, 27, was arrested by GCSO for expired registration of Oklahoma tags.

Joe Reyes Solis, 42, was arrested by Pampa Police Department for failure to identify.

Jesus Abel Chavez, 20, was arrested by PPD for minor driving under the influence and no valid driver's license.

Jamie Lee Aleman, 21, was arrested by PPD for violation of probation on possession of a controlled substance in Ochiltree County.

Tuesday, Jan. 1

Nicole Ramey, 25, was arrested by GCSO for theft of property more than \$500 and less than \$1,500.

Felipe Soria, 22, was arrested by PPD for public intoxication.

Dock Allen Mackie, 19, was arrested by PPD for failure to identify and minor in possession of alcohol.

Abel Salazar, 24, was arrested by PPD for evading arrest with a vehicle, abandoning or endangering a child, resisting arrest and criminal mischief.

Ambulance

Guardian EMS Ambulance Service reported the following calls.

Monday, Dec. 31

7:08 a.m. — A MICU responded to the 1300 block of Willington and transported a patient to Pampa Regional Medical Center.

11:05 a.m. — A MICU responded to the 600 block of North Faulkner and transported a patient to PRMC.

1:09 p.m. — A MICU responded to the 1200 block of South Faulkner and transported a patient to PRMC.

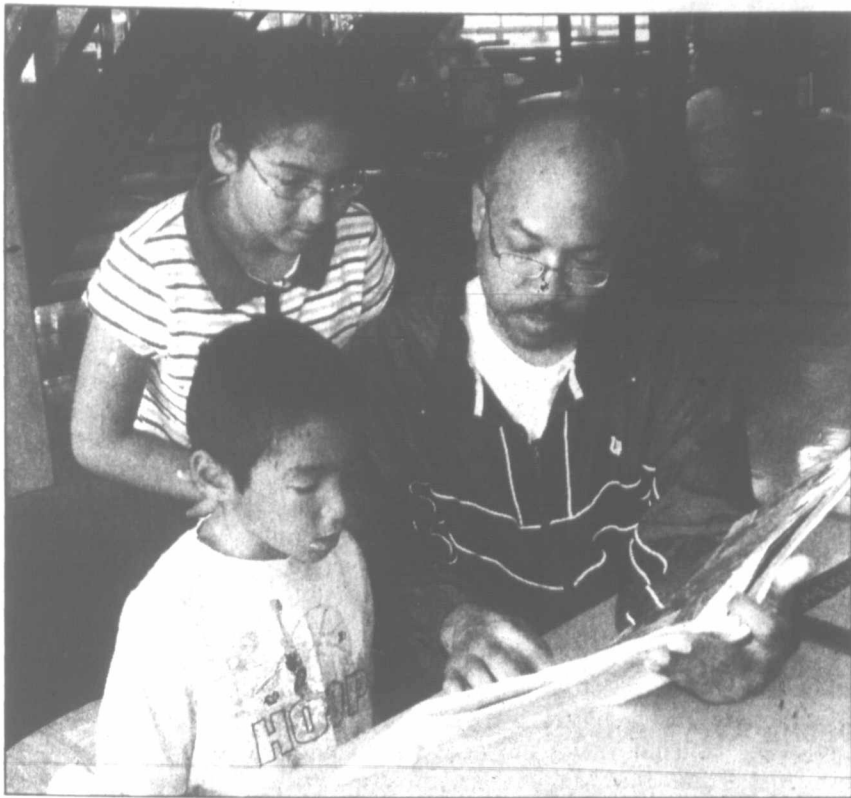
Tuesday, Jan. 1

12:45 a.m. — A MICU responded to the 2100 block of Christine and transported a patient to PRMC.

12:57 a.m. — A MICU responded to the 300 block of Miami, but not transport was made.

6:13 a.m. — A MICU responded to the 1100 block of South Dwight and transported a patient to PRMC.

Reading



This family reads a book together at Lovett Memorial Library. The long-range plan for the library is to weed out old books, get new books, make all reading material more accessible to everyone and move the children's section to the first floor.

Lovett

Continued from Page 1

ted to the city commission every five years in accordance with state requirements, Guy said they are always looking and thinking of way to make the library more efficient and to serve the patrons better.

She keeps a copy of the plan in her office, so if the state ever asks for it, she has it. It was presented and approved in December by the city commission.

Guy said she hopes to move the children's department by Spring Break, but it may take longer than that because there is an extensive process that goes with the weeding process and checking of the books.

In addition to moving the children's department, Guy said they are also moving some books and reclassifying them.

"In adult fiction, we have general fiction, mysteries, science fic-

tion, westerns, inspirational and large print," Guy said. "We are in the process of putting books in genres because some are shelved just as general fiction, and they could be better placed elsewhere."

She says they are replacing labels on the books and that's taking a lot of time.

Guy said she's also trying to get the books up off the bottom shelves so people won't have to bend down so low.

"We are planning to put the magazines and newspapers back upstairs," Guy said.

She is planning to also put adult biographies and maybe the automotive books upstairs.

"That would be all that we would put up there," Guy said.

Guy also has an active educational program to try to get new patrons in. She said they have an outreach program to students and parent groups.

Jo Sikes, the children's librarian, does a lot of outreach in Pampa schools, Guy said.

Guy said that after they finish moving the departments around,

they plan on instituting more adult outreach programs.

"I would like to get to the people that are maybe homebound," Guy said, "and have my staff get books to them."

She also said that the library would like to expand its audio book program.

"Those are becoming so popular," Guy said.

She said that there is a place on the library's Web site -- www.lovetlibrary.net -- where people can download audio books.

The Web site is also set up to help students with their homework -- all the way from elementary school to high school and even some college courses.

"All that is provided through the Harrington Library Consortium," Guy said. "There are a lot resources online."

She said that she's encouraging people who have a favorite author to bring it to her attention.

"If there's a title that we don't have that we should," Guy said, "put it in and we'll consider it."

2007

Continued from Page 1

about 11:30 a.m. Oct. 19 at the railroad crossing at National Oilwell Varco off Highway 60 west of Pampa.

Two Pampa men were involved Nov. 25 in a pickup/train collision at the railroad crossing on Price Road near Highway 60. Rodrigo Rodriguez, 27, and Evaristo Jimenez, 54, both survived the accident.

Another Pampa man did not survive a Dec. 8 collision between a 1994 Ford Explorer and a train at the railroad crossing on Starkweather Street.

Antonio Miera, 30, died Dec. 18 at Northwest Texas Hospital in Amarillo as a result of injuries suffered in the 2:30 a.m. crash.

Another victim in 2007 was the miniature horse which had been given by the Make-A-Wish Foundation to a 4-year-old Pampa cancer patient. The horse died Oct. 22 as the result of an attack by two pit bulls.

Animals also figured in at least two other incidents for the year. Three malnourished horses which were being kept in "horse alley", an area outside Pampa city limits near Price Road, were seized from their owner last July. The animals were later returned to the owner.

A swarm of aggressive bees attacked and stung at least five people in north Pampa on July 17. The incident sparked roadblocks and activation of the city's emergency warning system until the bees could be controlled.

Wind and water have been topics of interest to some Pampans ever since T. Boone Pickens, oil and gas tycoon and Roberts County rancher, began developing plans to sell Texas Panhandle groundwater and electricity to other parts of the state.

Pickens is the owner of Mesa Water and Mesa Power. He held about 200,000 acres of water rights in the Texas Panhandle as of mid-August. He gained the power of exercising eminent domain in November when the Roberts County Fresh Water Supply District Number One was established.

The new district consists of eight acres in the middle of Pickens' Roberts County ranch. It was voted into existence via ballots submitted by two people of the five eligible to vote in the election. The two were Pickens' ranch manager and Pickens' wife.

Pickens also expressed interest in the seat on Panhandle Ground Water Conservation District's board of directors which Kim Flowers of Miami

announced she would vacate.

He has also begun enacting plans for a wind farm which will cover parts of Gray and other counties. Pickens' wind farm plans prompted Gray County commissioners to create a reinvestment zone made up of approximately the northern half of the county. A spokesman for Pickens said he plans to seek tax abatements for wind energy farms to be placed on the land.

Pickens is now awaiting Carson County commissioners' decision on whether to create a reinvestment zone in the northeastern corner of that county for another part of Pickens' wind energy project.

Pickens may lay his own electricity transmission line and water line from the Panhandle to customers as far as 320 miles south in order to sell his goods.

Wind and water have been topics of interest to some Pampans ever since T. Boone Pickens began plans to sell Texas Panhandle groundwater and electricity to other parts of the state.

The reinvestment zone in the northern part of Gray County was not the first created by commissioners. In March, they approved a zone in the southern part of the county for a wind energy company which expressed plans to install a wind farm in southern Gray and northern Donley counties.

Pickens wasn't the only one who gained in the November elections. Pampa Fire Department firefighters earned the ability to engage in collective bargaining after voters approved a proposition on the subject on the Nov. 6 ballots.

Pampa Independent School District property showed the effects in 2007 of decisions made by the district's board of trustees. Sam Houston School, which was built in 1930, was demolished during March and April.

Work is underway at Pampa High School to replace portions of the north side of the building. The renovated part of the school will include a "commons," a combination cafeteria and seating area; a new library and more science labs.

Pampa schools also got a new dress code after a series of public meetings and discussions by a panel appointed to provide input on the issue.

Public employees who are no longer at their posts include Gray County Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Joe McDonald, who died Nov. 29 after being involved in a traffic accident while on duty. Pampa City Secretary Phyllis Jeffers, Pampa City Attorney Don Lane, Pampa/Gray County Emergency Management Coordinator Ken Hall, Pampa Police Sgt. Alvin Johnson and Pampa Fire Marshal Keith Fisher all retired from their posts in 2007. Assistant Pampa Police Chief Dennis Burton resigned.

A new office, created by county commissioners, is that of elections administrator. Linda Lewis has been chosen to fill the position.

Two retail landmarks closed their doors in Pampa in 2007. Dunlap's department store and Tarpley Music Company both closed up shop.

Not only did Pampa lose businesses, but gained as well. Companies which opened their doors in 2007 include CVS Pharmacy, Holiday Inn Express, The Shoe Department and Mesa Power.

The City of Pampa gained a new communications tower and generator, but backed down on buying a mesh network after city commissioners cast a less-than-unanimous vote in favor of the new communications system.

Lake McClellan reopened after more than a year of being closed to the public after the 2006 wildfires damaged many of the trees at the recreation area south of Pampa.

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Viewpoints

Did the Mayans know something we don't?

Happy New Year!

Each January 1 brings with it a sense of starting over, of getting another chance to get things right this time or make them better. New calendars are put on display, old ones are tossed in the trash, and everyone has to train themselves to write the new year's numerals on their checks and correspondence.

Those who observe the Chinese calendar, however, will have to wait until Feb. 7 for 2008 to begin. The Chinese calendar has two systems of names for the years. One system is 12 animal names, and the other is the "Stem-Branch" system with 60 names.

According to the Chinese, 2008 will be the Year of the

Rat, of the year of Wu Zhi.

The 11 other animals used to name the years are, in order after the rat, the ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and boar.

Not only does the Chinese calendar begin the new year at a different time from our own, it is also much older than the Gregorian calendar which is the basis for the Western one. The Chinese calendar considers 2008 to be the year 4705.

The Vietnamese use the 12 animals of the Chinese calendar, with the exception of the hare. The Vietnamese replace it with the cat.

The Japanese have their own calendar, as do Buddhists.

Asian countries aren't the

only ones with calendars differing from those we use in the U.S. Even though the Gregorian calendar is the basis of the one used in Europe as well as the U.S., European calendars show Monday as the first day of the week, not Sunday, as on American calendars.

The Hebrew calendar generally starts each month with the new moon. The Hijra calendar, used in the world of Islam, starts each month with the crescent moon.

Some calendars are lunar calendars, based on the moon's phases. The

Gregorian calendar is one example of a solar calendar, and other calendars are based on both lunar and solar data. Every few years, a whole month is inserted into some non-solar calendars, such as the Chinese and Hebrew, to bring them back into line with solar calendars, which feature leap years that have an extra day each four years.

One interesting calendar was created by the Mayan people of southern Mexico and northern Central America. Their calendar is actually a system of distinct calendars and almanacs

which interlock.

The most important Mayan calendar spans 260 days. Another Mayan calendar consisted of 18 months of 20 days each plus a period of five days at the end of the year. The Mayan calendar which may contain the most interesting tidbit of information, however, is their long count calendar, which, like their other calendars, begins on Aug. 13, 3114 B.C.

That interesting tidbit is that the Mayans' calendar ends on Dec. 21, 2012, according to some who have studied it.

This has caused some to wonder if the Mayans knew something we don't know. Is the world going to end on that day? Will some natural disaster strike in four years,

perhaps wiping out humanity across the face of the globe? What other reason could there be for the calendar's ending on that date?

I think some calendar scholars may be misinterpreting or overlooking something in the Mayan calendar or giving the Mayans too much credit for knowing something we have all wondered about but have no way of knowing. After all, their calendar doesn't begin at the same time others do, so why should everyone worry about the date their calendar ends?

The variety of calendars reminds me of a verse from a song by the rock band Chicago: "Does anybody really know what time it is?"

Marilyn Powers

Staff Writer



Black interracial crimes seldom come to light

If you're like I am, you've heard scores of media reports about the 2006 Duke University rape case, in which three white lacrosse players were falsely accused of raping a black stripper at a wild party at the home of one of the team members. These guys, convicted by the news media and Duke faculty, were later found innocent. It turned out that Durham County District Attorney Mike Nifong was running for re-election. In seeking the black vote, he concealed DNA evidence that would have exonerated the lacrosse players.

You might remember hearing scores of stories about the 1998 murder of James Byrd, a black man who was stripped, chained to a pickup truck and dragged through the streets until he was decapitated in Jasper, Texas. The incident provided fodder for the NAACP and others to attack then-Texas Gov. George Bush, during his 2000 election campaign, for not supporting hate crime legislation. It turned out that two of Byrd's murderers were sentenced to death, and the other, life in prison.

I don't know about you, but it was just

recently that I heard about a gruesome murder in Knoxville, Tenn., that is far worse than the false charges in the Duke rape case and is at least as horrible, if not more so, than the dragging death of James Byrd. Unlike the Duke rape case and the Jasper lynching, the national news media's coverage of the interracial Knoxville murders paled in comparison. On Jan. 6, 2007, University of Tennessee student Channon Christian and her boyfriend, Christopher Newsom, were carjacked and kidnapped in Knoxville. Both of them were later murdered.

According to a 46-count indictment, suspects Darnell Cobbins, Lemaricus Davidson, George Thomas and Vanessa Coleman, all blacks, are charged with committing rape, including sodomy against Christian and Newsom, both of whom are white. After being raped, Newsom was shot several times and his body was found burned along nearby railroad tracks. Christian was forced to wit-

ness her boyfriend's rape, torture and subsequent murder before she was ultimately raped, tortured and murdered. The police discovered her body inside a large trash can in the kitchen of the home where the murders took place. Before disposing of her body, the murderers poured bleach or some other cleaning agent down her throat in an effort to destroy DNA evidence. Trial dates have been set for next May.

What have we heard from the NAACP, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and others who rushed to judgment and outrage as they condemned whites in the cases of the "Jena 6" and Don Imus when he referred to the Rutgers ladies basketball team as "nappy-headed ho's"? Where were the national news media and public officials? You can bet the rent money that were the victims black and the perpetrators white, Knoxville would have been inundated with TV crews, with Jackson, Sharpton and other civil rights

Walter Williams

Columnist



Texas Thoughts

The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

n Dec. 23
Austin American-Statesman on evolution:

Is Texas destined to become the next Kansas, where bitter evolution politics produced three changes in the science curriculum standards in six years? At one point, religious conservatives forced the study of evolution out of Kansas public schools. Outrage, ridicule and state school board elections got evolution back into the curriculum, but the fight continues.

Texas can ill afford that kind of high-profile battle over established science. But there is a good chance it will happen here because Texas is now ground zero in the battle over teaching evolution in public

school science classes.

Now is the time for Gov. Rick Perry to step up and halt the bloodletting before it does serious harm to the states reputation, economy and future.

Last month, the science curriculum director for the Texas Education Agency, Chris Comer, was ousted after she passed along an e-mail about a lecture criticizing intelligent design, the latest assault on evolution. It was an unmistakable signal of the clash looming for Education Commissioner Robert Scott, a Perry appointee.

This month, an institute that teaches we should rightly say preaches the biblical account of the creation is seeking state approval to offer masters degrees in science education. The Bible-based Institute for Creation Research moved to Dallas last year from

California and is seeking approval from the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Raymund Paredes, Texas higher education commissioner, said he is evaluating the report from the team that recommended approving the science course. Hes not happy with it and is actively gathering more information ahead of next months board meeting.

Paredes wants the head of the institutes science program to reconcile the appropriate teaching of science with the institutes mission to teach the creation account revealed in Genesis.

The solution, Paredes said, is to have the institute call the course what it is creation studies not science. There would be little objection to that, he said. All this is happening as teams from Scotts Texas Education

Agency prepare to update the science curriculum for public schools. That review begins next month, though a final decision on curriculum wont be made by the State Board of Education until the summer or later.

That leaves a lot of time to fight over how to present evolution in science classes. Unfortunately for Texas, the chairman of the state board, Bryan dentist Don McLeroy, is a creationist who wants evolution challenged in science classes. Perry named him chairman of the board earlier this year.

Challenges to teaching evolution themselves have evolved. Intelligent design, not the biblical account, is now the accepted alternative.

But intelligent design is based in religion, too.

Ever since Kansas reaped

such a whirlwind when it banned the teaching of evolution, the new tactic is to push for criticism of evolution to be taught alongside the accepted theory.

Thats a clever move to get intelligent design into science classes. Anti-Darwinists label evolution as "dogma" and argue that there should be alternative viewpoints. The problem is that intelligent design is a religious belief, not science.

As the debate unfolds, there is a lot at stake for Texas. Texas is investing billions of dollars in high-tech and biotech ventures, and state voters last month agreed to spend \$3 billion on a cancer research program designed to make Texas a leader in that field.

If Texas becomes the new Kansas and is viewed as retreating from teaching evolution as science, top scientists

spokesmen and politicians from both parties condemning racism, possibly blaming it all on George Bush.

According to the 2004 FBI National Crime Victimization Survey, in most instances of interracial crimes, the victim is white and the perpetrator is black. In the case of interracial murder for 2004, where the race of victim and perpetrator is known, more than twice as many whites were murdered by a black than cases of a white murdering a black. The failure of civil rights leaders, people like Jackson and Sharpton, as well as politicians to vocally condemn black-on-white crime — and the relative silence of the news media in reporting it — is not simply a matter of double standards. It's dangerous, for it contributes to a pile of racial kindling awaiting a racial arsonist to set it ablaze. I can't think of better recruitment gifts for America's racists, either white or black.

—Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University.

THE PAMPA NEWS

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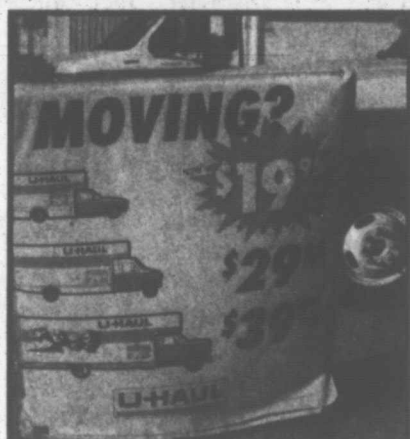
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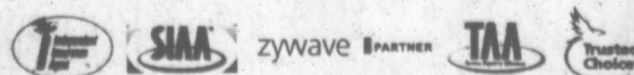
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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR READERS: The new year has arrived, and with it our chance for a new beginning. This is the day we discard destructive old habits for healthy new ones. With that in mind, I am sharing Dear Abby's often-requested list of New Year's resolutions -- which were adapted by my mother, Pauline Phillips, from the original credo of Al-Anon.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will live through this day only. I will not brood about yesterday or obsess about tomorrow. I will not set far-reaching goals or try to overcome all of my problems at once. I know that I can do something for 24 hours that would overwhelm me if I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be happy. I will not dwell on thoughts that depress me. If my mind fills with clouds, I will chase them away and fill it with sunshine.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will accept what is. I will face reality. I will correct those things I can correct and accept those I cannot.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will improve my mind. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration. I will not be a mental loafer.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will make a conscious effort to be agreeable. I will be kind and courteous to those who cross my path, and I'll not speak ill of others. I will improve my appearance, speak softly, and not interrupt when someone else is talking. Just for today, I will refrain from improving anybody but myself.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will do something positive to improve my health. If I'm a smoker, I'll quit. If I am overweight, I will eat healthfully -- if only just for today. And

not only that, I will get off the couch and take a brisk walk, even if it's only around the block.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will gather the courage to do what is right and take responsibility for my own actions.

And now, Dear Readers, I would like to share an item that was sent to me by I.J. Bhatia, a reader who lives in New Delhi, India:

DEAR ABBY: This year, no resolutions, only some guidelines. The Holy Vedas say: "Man has subjected himself to thousands of self-inflicted bondages. Wisdom comes to a man who lives according to the true eternal laws of nature."

The following prayer of Saint Francis contains a powerful message:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

"Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

"Where there is injury, pardon;

"Where there is doubt, faith;

"Where there is despair, hope;

"Where there is darkness, light;

"Where there is sadness, joy;

"O Divine Master, grant that I may not as much seek to be consoled as to console;

"To be loved as to love.

"For it is in giving that we are pardoned;

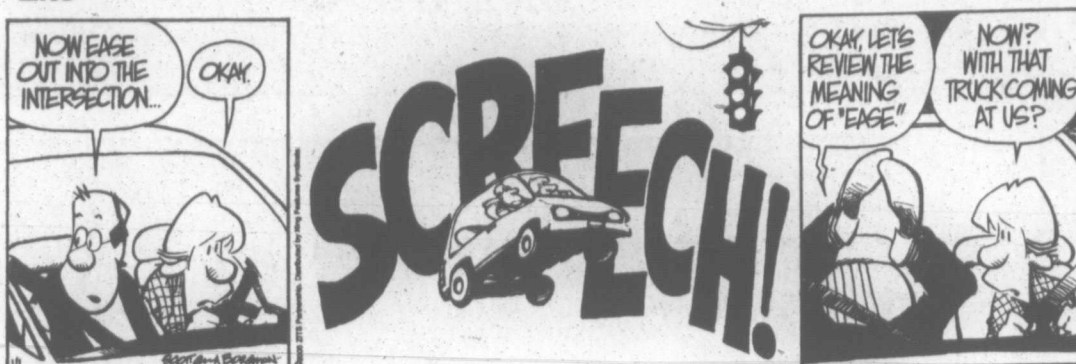
"It is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

And so, Dear Readers, may this New Year bring with it peace and joy. — LOVE, ABBY

For Better Or For Worse



Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS DOWN

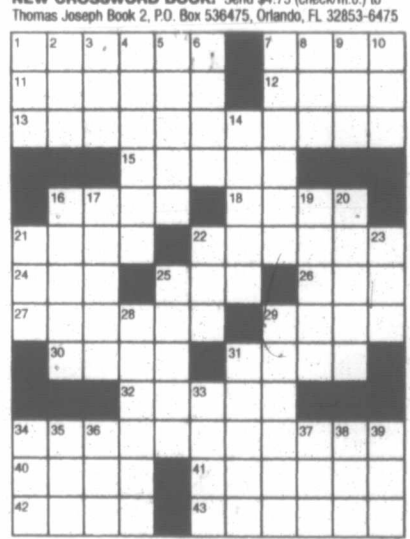
- 1 Algiers
- 2 Had chow
- 7 Bounders
- 11 "Lawrence of Arabia" star
- 12 Visitor to Siam
- 13 Time to make 34-
- 15 Dutch bloom
- 16 Location
- 18 Sassy
- 21 Not at home
- 22 Turned into a thick liquid
- 24 Casey Affleck's brother
- 25 Unruly do
- 26 Sauna site
- 27 Be furious
- 29 Accomplishment
- 30 Novel need
- 31 Cast a ballot
- 32 Elementary
- 34 They're often broken in January
- 40 Scads
- 41 Danseur's forte
- 42 Brooches
- 43 Like winter weather

COATS JEEPS
ADLAI AGREE
WEEKS GOOSE
ESAU SOD
STRAYCAT
KIEV TRACEY
IDIOT SKATE
MENTOR ELAN
EYEBALLS
POD SPAN
IRISH SOBER
CAMEO ITALY
SLEEP CEASE

Yesterday's answer

- 20 Plains abode
- 21 Crunch targets
- 22 Okra
- 23 June unit
- 24 Shred
- 25 Chimney cleaner
- 27 Gauge setting
- 28 Mechan-ical men
- 29 Calm holder
- 31 Imperative
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- 34 Music genre
- 35 Yalie
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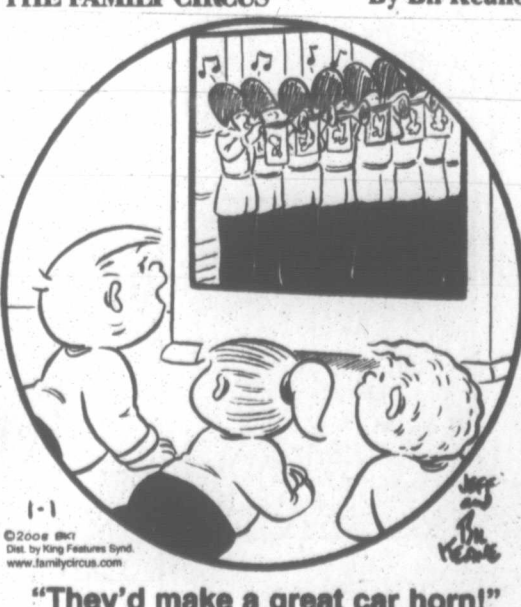
Marmaduke



The Family Circus

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

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B.C.



Haggar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



Sean Penn and wife of 11 years to divorce

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (AP) — Robin Wright Penn has filed for divorce from Sean Penn after 11 years of marriage.

Wright Penn filed the papers Dec. 21, citing irreconcilable differences. The couple, who live in Northern California, are seeking joint custody of their two teenage children.

The pair met while Sean Penn was filming the 1990 Irish mob movie "State of Grace." At the time, he was considered one of the bad boys of Hollywood. He had married and divorced Madonna and occasionally tussled with photographers.

Robin Wright Penn once said she and her husband complemented each other. She seemed to provide a calming influence over him, and he helped her gain confidence.

"He helped me to believe that I could be strong and stand up for myself," she told the Los Angeles Times.

In 2004, Penn won a best actor Oscar for "Mystic River" for his role as an ex-hoodlum who reverts to his criminal ways as he seeks revenge for his daughter's death.

Penn directed this year's "Into The Wild," which is considered a front-runner for major awards, about a young idealist whose journey to Alaska ends in tragedy. He also starred as a death row inmate in 1995's "Dead Man Walking."

Wright Penn is best known for her role in "The Princess Bride" in 1987 and "Forrest Gump" in 1994 opposite Tom Hanks. Her other acting credits include "Beowulf" and "Breaking and Entering."

High school combats truancy problems

AUSTIN (AP) — Trying to combat truancy at an East Austin school, administrators are passing out gift cards to students with good attendance, making calls to those who don't show up and will soon have parental patrols to alert them if students are leaving campus.

Johnston High School principal Celina Estrada-Thomas said in October and November, about 60 percent of students had two unexcused absences a week. By the end of the semester, that figure had dropped to 47 percent.

The campaign to combat absences began this school year and includes raffling off Sonic restaurant gift cards on Fridays to students who had perfect attendance that week.

"Last year, the emphasis was all on the students who weren't attending," Estrada-Thomas said. While that remains a primary concern, "a lot of the focus this year is on recognizing the kids who are here," she said.

Last school year, 51 percent of Johnston students had more than 10 unexcused absences. Only Garza High

School, an alternative campus, had a higher percentage — 60 percent. Other campus totals ranged from 11 percent at Austin High to 47 percent at Travis High.

Daily attendance at Johnston — around 85 percent — has trailed the district average, which is typically above 90 percent.

District officials have said truancy is a major obstacle to raising student achievement at Johnston, which state officials could close or place under alternative management if performance doesn't improve this year.

Six school staff members spend about two hours daily on the phone trying to locate as many as 100 students. Eighty percent of the numbers workers called in the first few weeks were either disconnected or incorrect.

Geneva Oliva, president of the Johnston parent-teacher-student association, said she hopes a new program starting in January will help. Parental patrols will alert school staff members when they suspect a student is leaving campus without permission.

Man saves trash for one year

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Ari Derfel leads a trashy life. He just wants to remind everyone else that they do, too.

The 35-year-old Berkeley caterer said he has saved every piece of trash he has generated over the past year to see how much garbage one person creates. In his case, it was about 96 cubic feet.

The experiment began as a way to examine his own consumption habits, Derfel said, but grew into a state-

ment about consumerism and the environment.

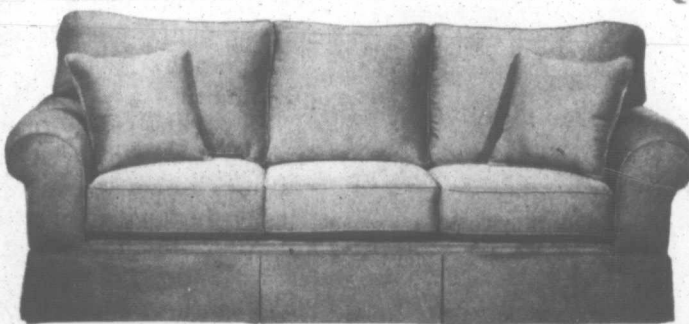
"When we throw something away, what does 'away' mean?" Derfel said. "There's no such thing as 'away.'"

The refuse — including every tissue, receipt, food wrapper and plastic bottle — lies in bins in the kitchen and living room of Derfel's apartment. He composts his food scraps.

Derfel said he eventually hopes to donate his accumulated waste to a sculptor.

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Sports

Holiday tournament



Pampa News photo by JORDAN REAGAN
Pampa's Jasmayne Moore (12) and Carlyn Teichmann (14) prepare to play some defense against El Paso Austin in their second-round game at the Caprock AMBUCS tournament this past Friday. Moore had six points on the game and Teichmann led with nine. The Lady Harvesters will hit the road again Friday when they take on the Lady Demons in Dumas.



Pampa News photo by JORDAN REAGAN
Junior Hayden Skinner (30) looks for a teammate to pass the ball to early in the team's second-round game against Wichita Falls Rider this past Friday. Harvesters standing in the background are Blake Sieck (12), Cobran Harris (22), and Matt Smith. The Harvesters plan to pick up a win Friday in Plainview where they will face the Bulldogs for the third time this season.

ALUMNI SOCCER SCRIMMAGE

The annual PHS Alumni Soccer Scrimmage will take place Saturday at the Travis Elementary soccer fields.

Any and all PHS soccer alumni and current high school athletes are invited to attend and compete.

The girls game will take place at noon and the boys will play at 2 p.m.

For more information, please contact the Pampa High School Soccer Booster Club.

Billick fired after 9 seasons in Baltimore

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) — Brian Billick was fired as coach of the Baltimore Ravens on Monday, less than a day after his team concluded a disappointing 5-11 season.

Players were told of the dismissal as they packed up their lockers at the team's practice facility.

Billick won the 2001 Super Bowl in his second season with the Ravens, and led the team to a franchise-best 13-3 record in 2006. But Baltimore lost a team-record nine consecutive games this season before ending the skid Sunday with a 27-21 win over Pittsburgh.

"This is the reality of our business," cornerback Samari Rolle said.

Billick's nine seasons with Baltimore was tied for third with Philadelphia's Andy Reid as the third-longest current run with the same team. He took the Ravens to the playoffs in 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2006, but Baltimore won only one postseason game since its Super Bowl run after the 2000 season.

"Sometimes the message can get repetitive after a while," 12-year offensive tackle Jonathan Ogden said.

Ogden said this month that Billick had

informed the team he would be returning in 2008. But owner Steve Bisciotti evidently changed his mind.

The Ravens expected to compete for a world championship this season after bringing back almost every starter from last year's AFC North champions. But injuries and a turnover-prone offense contributed to a complete collapse after a 4-2 start, and Baltimore finished last in the division.

"This year the injury bug not only hit us, (it) hit our prime-time players," linebacker Bart Scott said.

Billick, 53, was hired as Baltimore's second head coach in January 1999, succeeding Ted Marchibroda. In Billick's first season, the Ravens reached .500 (8-8) for the first time. Then he led Baltimore to a 12-4 record and a berth in the Super Bowl, where the Ravens beat the New York Giants 34-7.

Billick was 80-64 as Baltimore's coach. He was the offensive coordinator of the Minnesota Vikings before being coming to the Ravens.

"I'm not saying I agree with it," kicker Matt Stover said of Billick's dismissal, "but sometimes things have to change."

Missouri hoping to make most of Cotton Bowl matchup with Arkansas

DALLAS (AP) — Missouri has had a month to get over its disappointment after being left out of a BCS bowl.

The Tigers still have plenty to be enthused about, like their first New Year's Day game since 1970.

"We're excited about playing in this level of a bowl game," said coach Gary Pinkel, whose seventh-ranked Tigers face No. 25 Arkansas in Tuesday's Cotton Bowl. "It's a different experience for our players. Every time your players go through these experiences, expectation levels change."

Expectations increased so much at Missouri this season the Tigers were initially upset about their postseason fate. Missouri was ranked No. 1 in the nation before losing to Oklahoma in the Big 12 championship game.

After squandering a chance to play in the BCS title game, the Tigers (11-2) were left out of the Bowl Championship Series entire-

ly. A couple teams they beat ended up in BCS bowls — Kansas in the Orange Bowl and Illinois in the Rose — which didn't sit well with Tigers fans.

The Cotton Bowl is a pretty big stage, though. Missouri hasn't played in it since 1946 and hasn't played on New Year's Day since the 1970 Orange Bowl. The Tigers appear motivated by the chance to prove themselves against a Southeastern Conference team.

"Speed's everywhere," said Missouri's Jeremy Maclin, an All-American this season as an all-purpose player. "It's not just the SEC. That's what everybody thinks, especially from the SEC. They think they're going to be the fastest team on the field. But we've got some guys that can run out there."

Missouri's spread offense is high-powered and fast-paced. Arkansas (8-4) relies more on a powerful offensive line and spectacular tailbacks Darren McFadden and

Felix Jones. McFadden, the Heisman Trophy runner-up in 2006 and 2007, has rushed for 1,725 yards this season. Herschel Walker holds the SEC record of 1,891.

McFadden, a junior, can turn pro after this game. There's even been concern his college career could be over earlier. The university was looking into his eligibility after an Arkansas television station last week linked McFadden and an agent to the purchase of a vehicle. After strong denials by the agent and McFadden's parents, the station apologized Friday, saying its report was flawed. Coaches expressed confidence McFadden would play against Missouri as expected.

"Darren McFadden is a great, great, great person," said Arkansas interim coach Reggie Herring, who took over when Houston Nutt stepped down in late November. "He would never do anything to hurt the University of Arkansas or his

3 Cal starters held out of lineup for rules violations

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — California receivers DeSean Jackson and Robert Jordan and leading tackler Thomas DeCoud were held out of the starting lineup and didn't play the first quarter of the Armed Forces Bowl on Monday against Air Force.

Coach Jeff Tedford said the three

didn't start "due to violations of team rules." He didn't elaborate. All three players entered the game in the second quarter. The Bears trailed 21-0 before Jackson and Jordan got on the field.

Jackson, one of the top receivers and punt returners in the nation, had 60 catches for 681 yards and five touch-

downs in the regular season. Jordan, a senior, had 41 catches for 541 yards and two TDs. Sam DeSa and Lavelle Hawkins started in place of Jackson and Jordan.

Brett Johnson, a sophomore, made his first career start in place of DeCoud, a senior with 106 tackles.

Arkansas leads nation in wins, is unbeaten and finally in Top 25

Arkansas has the most wins in the country, and now it's getting some votes. The Lady Razorbacks, one of only three unbeaten teams, joined The Associated Press rankings Monday at No. 25.

Connecticut held the top spot for the second straight week. The Huskies received 49 of the 50 first-place votes. Stanford, which received the other first-place vote, held the No. 2 position.

The Lady 'Backs lead the nation with 14 victories after winning the 2007 Blue Sky Classic on Sunday. UConn and Georgia are the only

other unbeaten teams.

"Not many people realize that we're off to a 14-0 start," Arkansas coach Tom Colten said. "The difference between 26th and 25th is a huge gap. People know who you are when you're in the Top 25. A lot of it has to do that we don't have a signature win against a Top 25 team."

The Lady Razorbacks, who were last in the Top 25 on Jan. 8, 2007, don't play until Saturday when they host Texas Tech in the final nonconference game on their schedule.

"I was hoping it would be a Top-25 matchup for both schools," said Colten, who has now led three different teams to the Top 25 (Colorado State and Louisville). "Texas Tech is similar to us in that they go out and play hard and have that lack of exposure. They are a good team."

Arkansas opens its SEC season on Jan. 10 against LSU.

After almost four years away from the top spot, UConn fared better in its first game as No. 1 than its last appearance.

The Huskies (10-0) last reached the top spot on Feb. 23, 2004, and promptly lost to Villanova in their next game.

This time, Connecticut routed Hartford 70-24 Saturday in its first game as the top team, then blew out Army 82-33 Monday afternoon. Coach Geno Auriemma said the ranking has given his team a boost.

"The guys that we have right now, they're not exactly the most confident guys in the world to begin with," Auriemma said. "So, something like this probably

makes them feel like they are 10 feet tall.

"If that's what it does, then, great," he said. "They've never been there and that is something they've aspired to, and the fact that they are there can only help them."

There was no movement among the top seven teams. Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Rutgers and Georgia all held their spots after Connecticut and Stanford.

The top seven cruised this week, winning by an average of 35 points. Georgia (12-0)

was the only team that had a tough contest, beating Florida State in overtime Saturday night in the Florida International University Sun & Fun Classic.

Oklahoma, Baylor and California moved up a spot, passing LSU, which fell to No. 11 after splitting a pair of games without All-American Sylvia Fowles. She is sidelined after having knee surgery Dec. 21 and is expected back in a few weeks.

It's the first time that California has ever been ranked in the top 10.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2008:

You have a strong sense of direction this year. As a result, you might be about to make your wish list a reality this very year. If you tumble into a disagreeable event, know that you might be clearing out a problem to make room for something better. Sometimes remaining optimistic in times like this might be challenging, but worthwhile. Learn to deal with your high energy properly and vent emotions appropriately. If you are single, you'll make headlines on the singles scene. A friendship could play a substantial role in your next relationship. If you are attached, with cooperation, your relationship will work. You also will achieve many landmarks. SCORPIO is a friend indeed.

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ★★★★★ A partnership inspires you to head in a new direction and experience more success. Tempers can flare if you aren't communicating well. Don't allow this kind of uproar in your life right now. Tonight: Anchor in. TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ Others are in control, yet you do have the power to make some very important decisions about your finances and spending. Know when you have had enough, and allow others to know it too. Question what is occurring without stepping into an uproar. Tonight: Go with another's plans. GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ Take care of errands and work, and start to focus on accomplishment and getting the job done. Relax with someone you care about dearly. Avoid a controversy at any cost. Nurture someone directly. Tonight: Easy does it. CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Allow greater happiness into your life. How you see a situation could be different from many. Others do not honor what you deem to be serious. Be careful with your temper; it could explode out of nowhere. Tonight: Fun and games. LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★★★ Take your time, and don't feel pressured by anyone or anything. You might not be able to continue with the hectic pace any longer. There is no reason to, either. Retreat and relax, knowing what you want and expect. Tonight: Stay close to home. VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ You reach out for many people, making each person feel unique in his or her own right. This attitude comes through no matter what you do or with whom. Express your broadening interests. Tonight: Hanging out is fun to do. LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★★★★ You might be adding up the "damages" of recent holiday spending. There is no need to pull back or get upset. You are more in control than you realize. Someone could be creating an uproar. Decide whether you want to participate. Claim your power. Tonight: Curb indulgence. SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ You are all smiles. In some sense you feel as if the holidays have given you a reprieve. You feel better than you have in a while. Let go and relax. Know what you want and make it so. Keep that smile. Tonight: It's your call. SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Know when to slow down and take your time. Know when you are looking at a no-win situation, and happily back off. Understand your limits, and you will be a greater success. Someone might be unduly stern. Tonight: Vanish before you are noticed. CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ It seems you can do no wrong. With this in mind, continue as you have with a smile and a sense of purpose. Process another person's anger. Avoid reacting; rather, just deal with what you must. Tonight: Friendship plays a role. AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★★★ At times you might question what you are doing. Be as direct as possible. Your sense of leadership comes through no matter what. A friendship might be pushing the line. Listen to news and process it. Work with another's dissatisfaction. Tonight: Deal with facts: Everyone wants to be around you. PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Understanding what might be going on in someone's head could make a substantial difference. Listen to news carefully, recognizing your limits. Understanding grows with information. Ignore an irritating person. Tonight: Togetherness is the theme. BORN TODAY Actress Tia Carrere (1967), singer Roger Miller (1936), author Isaac Asimov (1920) *** Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at <http://www.jacquelinebigar.com>. © 2007 by King Features Syndicate Inc.

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2008

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!" That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple of weeks as a new year gets under way. But the day celebrated as New Year's Day in modern America was not always January 1.

ANCIENT NEW YEARS... The celebration of the new year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring). The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical nor agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary.

The Babylonian new year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the new year in late March, but their calendar was continually tampered with by various emperors so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization with the sun.

In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1 to be the beginning of the new year. But tampering continued until Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established what has come to be known as the Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the new year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

NEW YEAR TRADITIONS... Other traditions of the season include the making of New Year's resolutions. That tradition also dates back to the early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to lose weight or quit smoking. The early Babylonian's most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment.

The Tournament of Roses Parade dates back to 1886. In that year, members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their carriages with flowers. It celebrated the ripening of the orange crop in California.

Although the Rose Bowl football game was first played as a part of the Tournament of Roses in 1902, it was replaced by Roman chariot races the following year. In 1916, the football game returned as the sports centerpiece of the festival.

The tradition of using a baby to signify the new year was begun in Greece around 600 BC. It was their tradition at that time to celebrate their god of wine, Dionysus, by parading a baby in a basket, representing the annual rebirth of that god as the spirit of fertility. Early Egyptians also used a baby as a symbol of rebirth.

Although the early Christians denounced the practice as pagan, the popularity of the baby as a symbol of rebirth forced the Church to reevaluate its position. The Church finally allowed its members to celebrate the new year with a baby, which was to symbolize the birth of the baby Jesus.

The use of an image of a baby with a New Years banner as a symbolic representation of the new year was brought to early America by the Germans. They had used the effigy since the fourteenth century.

FOR LUCK IN THE NEW YEAR... Traditionally, it was thought that one could affect the luck they would have throughout the coming year by what they did or ate on the first day of the year. For that reason, it has become common for folks to celebrate the first few minutes of a brand new year in the company of family and friends. Parties often last into the middle of the night after the ringing in of a new year. It was once believed that the first visitor on New Year's Day would bring either good luck or bad luck the rest of the year. It was particularly lucky if that visitor happened to be a tall dark-haired man.

Traditional New Year foods are also thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes "coming full circle," completing a year's cycle. For that reason, the Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune.

Many parts of the U.S. celebrate the new year by consuming black-eyed peas. These legumes are typically accompanied by either hog jowls or ham. Black-eyed peas and other legumes have been considered good luck in many cultures. The hog, and thus its meat, is considered lucky because it symbolizes prosperity. Cabbage is another "good luck" vegetable that is consumed on New Year's Day by many. Cabbage leaves are also considered a sign of prosperity, being representative of paper currency. In some regions, rice is a lucky food that is eaten on New Year's Day.

AULD LANG SYNE... The song, "Auld Lang Syne," playing in the background, is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year. At least partially written by Robert Burns in the 1700's, it was first published in 1796 after Burns' death. Early variations of the song were sung prior to 1700 and inspired Burns to produce the modern rendition. An old Scotch tune, "Auld Lang Syne" literally means "old long ago," or simply, "the good old days."

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