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VOLUME 111, NUMBER 368 COPYRIGHT 2015

## City lawsuit begins negotiations

*Former firefighter claims race played a role in his termination*

**By STEVE REAGAN**  
 Staff Writer



Butler

Months of legal wrangling between the city of Big Spring and a former firefighter may be nearing an end. During its most recent meeting, the

Big Spring City Council authorized officials to begin negotiations toward a possible settlement of the city's lawsuit against former firefighter Fabian Butler, who was "indefinitely suspended from the local fire department last April. If a settlement is ultimately reached, it will end a legal

tug-of-war between Butler and the city that began with an incident at the Big Spring Federal Correctional Institute last February. Butler, a lieutenant with the local fire department's emergency medical service, was part of a crew that responded to a medical call at FCI. However, he was denied

access into the facility because he did not have proper identification. After being denied entry, Butler allegedly displayed "rude behavior" toward FCI personnel. After investigating the incident, Big Spring Fire Chief Craig Ferguson first placed Butler on administrative leave with pay before indefinitely

suspending him from the department for several reasons, including "neglect of duty" (not having his ID and being unable to supervise the crew while it was inside FCI) and "discourtesy to the public" (the alleged rude behavior). See, **LAWSUIT**, Page 3A



HERALD photo/Julie Bass

Howard County Volunteer Firefighters fight a house fire Friday morning in Sand Springs. The house was a total loss.

## Sand Springs family loses home, pets to fire

**By LYNDEL MOODY**  
 Staff Writer

A Sand Springs family has lost their home and their three family pets after an early morning fire destroyed their family residence Friday. According to Howard County Volunteer Fire Chief Tommy Sullivan, no persons were injured in a structure fire located in the 100 block of Collins Road which was reported to the HCVFD at 8:20 a.m. Both residents had left the home for work before the fire began, Sullivan said. "When I got there — I was in the first fire unit on the scene — the carport was fully engulfed and the upper floor above was also," Sullivan said. "The fire had already started moving into the house." Once firefighters had assessed the scene, Sullivan said they began to attempt to save the what was left of the home and search for the owners' three dogs.



Sullivan

See, **FIRE**, Page 3A

## PBUWCD personnel to begin annual water level measurements In Howard and Martin Counties

**By Misty Mims**  
 Special to the Herald

Stanton — Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District (PBUWCD) personnel are set to begin annual depth-to-water level measurements after the first of January. The data collected helps determine the effect of the 2015 pumping on groundwater levels in the aquifers within the district's two-county service area. These measurements are made in a network of 115 wells, most privately owned. After the measurement is made, a blue vinyl sticker with the observation well number, the depth-to-water level measurement,

See, **WATER LEVEL**, Page 3A

## A look at the search for Texas teen in 'influenza' case

DALLAS (AP) — A manhunt is underway for a Texas teenager sentenced to probation in 2013 for killing four people in a drunken-driving wreck after his defense lawyers claimed he suffered from "influenza." Authorities say he missed an appointment last week with his probation officer and the juvenile equivalent of an arrest warrant was issued for him. He's believed to have fled with his mother, with whom he'd been living. Here are a few questions surrounding the case involving 18-year-old Ethan Couch:

See, **Q&A**, Page 3A

## Big Spring Herald website to provide link to NORAD Santa Watch

**By AMANDA ELSTON**  
 Managing Editor

Lights are up, presents are wrapped, and cookies are made. Now all that's left to do is wait for Santa! With the help of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) your family can track Santa from the comfort of your own home on the night of Christmas Eve. This year marks the 60th year NORAD has tracked down St. Nick and his eight tiny reindeer after a misprint in a Colorado Spring based Sears Roebuck & Co advertisement. The misprint directed children to call CONAD, (the predecessor to NORAD) rather than Santa Claus. "The Director

of Operations at the time, Colonel Harry Shoup, had his staff check the radar for indications of Santa making his way south from the North Pole," according to the NORAD Santa website. "Children who called were given updates on his location, and a tradition was born." When the governments of Canada and the United States created a bi-national air defense command, CONAD became NORAD and the tradition continued. The NORAD Santa website, www.noradsanta.org, keeps a long list of statistics on Santa that they have taken over the years such as Santa's route paths, Santa's age, and theories on how the magical man gets to every house in one night in addition to explaining how their sophisticated Santa tracker operates. "It all starts with the NORAD

See, **NORAD**, Page 3A

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# Carol of Lights

Fundraising throughout the year pays off at MHMR

Story by:  
Valerie Avery

The annual celebration of Carol of Lights kicks off the holiday season at the state hospital which culminates with the opening of presents on Christmas morning. Each patient receives two gifts from the Volunteer Services Council.

The Volunteer Services Council raises money through sales at the Chalet Resale Shop and fundraisers such as Cars, Stars and Handlebars to provide Christmas gifts for the patients to open on Christmas morning.

"Our volunteers have always prided ourselves on providing a gift for our patients to open on Christmas morning," Director of Community Relations Dee Lindsey said.

The large evergreen tree in the lighting of the large evergreen tree in the Activity Therapies Department courtyard following the singing of 'O Christmas Tree'.

"The Carol of Lights is just the first of many enjoyable events we host for our patients," Lindsey said.

The volunteers also provided each patient with a fleece blanket and a \$5 gift card when they left the Carol of Lights.

It was a special treat for the patients who had just finished singing holiday carols and snacking

on sandwiches, cookies, and cupcakes provided by the Volunteer Services Council. They also enjoyed a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Rita Self, a longtime employee of Big Spring State Hospital and her husband, Lonnie Self, appeared as Santa and Mrs. Claus much to the patients' delight.

"It's really a very enjoyable time," Lindsey said. "We were especially excited this year when First Church of the Nazarene youth group came to the Carol of Lights and entertained the patients with a number of Christmas carols."

"Our employees also enjoy spending time with our patients in a festive setting. It was nice to see everyone dressed up and enjoying themselves," said Lindsey. "We have to remember that this is how our patients celebrate Christmas and we want them to enjoy the holidays as much as possible. Many of them are not able to be with friends and family so we want them to have a really nice time."

"The Volunteer Services Council and the hospital have worked together for a very long time to keep this tradition going, and I was thankful for the volunteers fund-raising throughout the year so they could provide all these extras for our patients," Lindsey said.



Courtesy photos

Top right going clockwise: The patients of MHMR made the decorations for the community Christmas tree. Amanda Kleeb, First Church of the Nazarene Worship Minister, leads the youth group in singing to patients. RN Nurse Manager Vanessa Munoz passes out cupcakes to patients. Rehab Therapy Tech Shelly Dominey encourages patients to sing. Mrs. Claus (Rita Self, a longtime clerk at Big Spring State Hospital) and Santa Claus (Lonnie Self) paid a visit to the Activity Therapies Department Atrium.



*Merry Christmas!*

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## Obituaries

## Patsy Jeanne Odom



Patsy Jeanne Odom, 84, of Stanton, died Friday, Dec. 18, 2015 in a Big Spring nursing home. Viewing will be Monday, Dec. 21, 2015 from noon to 7 p.m. with family visitation from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Gilbreath Funeral Home in Stanton, Texas.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015 at the Stanton Downtown Church of Christ, with Kendall Tomlinson

minister, and Ben Mereness of Amarillo, officiating. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery in Stanton.

She was born May 11, 1931 in Big Spring, Texas and married RP Odom Sr. on Jan. 21, 1950 in Stanton, Texas. She was a dedicated member of the Church of Christ. Patsy was primarily a homemaker with a strong entrepreneurial spirit who

loved being in the insurance and travel business as well. She was an incredible cook, artist, and so many more things. She was a warm and caring woman who loved her family and friends, and will be forever missed by her family and by a legion of friends.

Survivors include one grandson, Robert P. Odom III of Stanton; one granddaughter, Angie Odom of Fort Worth, Texas; and her brothers Charles and John Dale Kelly, Jr.

She was preceded in death by a son, Robert Payne Odom, Jr.; her husband Robert Payne Odom Sr.; and by her parents Mr. & Mrs. J.D. Kelly Sr.

The family requests in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to Medina Children's Home, 21300 State Hwy.16 North, Medina, Texas 78055 or Eastern European Mission, P.O. Box 670928, Dallas, Texas 75367

Arrangements are under the direction of Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton. Online condolences may be made at [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com)

*Paid obituary*

## Sam Wells



Sam Wells, 95, of Big Spring, died Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015 at his residence. Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 21, 2015 at the Peace Chapel at Trinity Memorial Park with his son, Rev. Bruce Wells, officiating.

The family will receive friends from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015 at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home.

Sam was born Feb. 11, 1920 in Milen, Ga., to Julian and Jo Ward (Weeks) Wells. While in the United States Air Force, he met Mary Ann Findley. They married Dec. 24, 1943 in Big Spring and she preceded him in death Nov. 14, 1989. He then married Emma Lee Spivey June 25, 1990 and she preceded him in death Feb. 25, 2008.

Sam was a pilot and aircraft mechanic during

World War II. He became an aircraft inspector for the Civil Service and was stationed at Webb Air Force Base. He loved to fish and travel and was a Deacon and Sunday School teacher at Airport Baptist Church.

Sam is survived by his son, Rev. Bruce Wells and wife, Patsy of Central, S.C.; his daughter, Joetta Beck and husband, Bill of Big Spring; two stepsons, Tim Spivey and Roy Lee Spivey, both of Big Spring; one step-daughter, Judy Garner and husband, Richard of Abilene; 13 grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren.

Honorary pallbearers will be Chad Newsom, Justin Newsom, Robert Sloane, Sammy Ferrel, Sammy Spivey, Jacoby Allen, Tristan Allen, Mike Spivey, Chris Spivey, and Will Green.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences may be made at: [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com)

*Paid obituary*

## Alvin Glenn Johnke



Alvin Glenn Johnke, 73, of Big Spring, went home to be with the Lord, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015 in Georgetown, Texas. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, Dec. 21, 2015 at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel in Big Spring. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring.

The family will receive friends from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015 at the funeral home.

Alvin was born April 23, 1942 in Howard County, Texas. He was a lifelong resident of Big Spring, beloved father and grandfather. He graduated Big Spring High School, Class of 1962. He married Joy Dell Miller in 2006 in Big Spring. She preceded him in death May 30, 2013.

Alvin was a service technician at Sears Roebuck

Co. for 37 years. Upon retirement he owned and operated a small business for a number of years specializing in appliance repair as well as HVAC. An avid fisherman and gardener, Alvin remained a devout Christian throughout his life.

Alvin was a member of Trinity Baptist Church.

He is survived by two sons; Adam Johnke of Austin and Allan Johnke of Sandy Springs, Ga.; one grandchild, Haleigh Johnke; one brother, Wayne Johnke of Big Spring; one sister, Charlene Henson of Baton Rouge, La.; and a very special cousin, Alvine McCasland of Big Spring.

In addition to his wife, Alvin was preceded in death by his daughter, Amanda Johnke; his parents, Alfred and Betty Ida (Speaker) Johnke; and two sisters, Georgia Harmonson and Verlene Atkinson.

Arrangements are under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences may be made at: [www.npwelch.com](http://www.npwelch.com)

*Paid obituary*

## Bill Alexander

January 22, 1925 – December 16, 2015

Billy (Bill) Charles Alexander, age 90, went to be with Jesus on Dec. 16, 2015. A funeral service celebrating his life will be held on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 10 a.m. at Grace Gardens Funeral Home, 8220 Woodway Drive, Waco, Texas. Interment will follow at Waco Memorial Park. Visitation with family will be Friday, Dec. 18, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Grace Gardens.

Bill was born in Grand Saline, Texas to Charlie Monroe and Laura Mae Alexander. He attended school in Grand Saline, Texas and was an active boy scout in Troop 379. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Bill enlisted in the United States Navy and attended boot camp at San Diego, Calif. He enrolled in Aviation Radio School and Aviation Gunnery School and upon completion was assigned to Bombing Squadron VB-138 at Whidbey Island, Wash. His squadron was transferred to Pearl Harbor and eventually deployed for combat to the South Pacific in 1943. The squadron flew to Espirito Santo Island, the Fiji Islands, Wallis Island, New Caledonia and Guadalcanal after these territories were secured from the Japanese. The squadron was then sent to the Solomon Islands. His squadron flew 56 bombing missions during the following six months.

His next assignment was to Squadron VPB-124 and was sent to Hutchinson, Kan., to train in four engine bombers called "Liberators." Bill was sent back to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii and assigned to VPB-119 in the Philippines. He flew 54 combat missions to the Chinese coast and to French-Indo China. When World War II was over, his crew landed the

first American aircraft on Japanese soil.

Bill was honorably discharged from the United States Navy on Jan. 21, 1946. He had earned the Combat Air Crew Wings with 3 stars, Asiatic Pacific Medal, Air Medal with 3 stars, Philippine Liberation Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bill then began working for the Texas and Pacific Railway in October of 1946 as a telegrapher. He later became a communications maintainer for the Union Pacific Railroad in Big Spring, Texas and retired from the railroad after 42 years of service.

Because flying was his first love, he started pilot training and received his private, commercial and instructor pilot licenses. He also had a love for Amateur Radio and received his general, advanced and extra class licenses with a call sign W5TOC.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Charlie Monroe and Laura Mae Alexander, his sisters, Ruby Teal, Georgia Pegg, and Maudie Alexander and two brothers, Clifton and Clyde Alexander.

Bill is survived by his high school sweetheart and love of his life, Mary Lou Alexander, whom he married on Aug. 29, 1947. He is also survived by his daughter, Teresa and husband, Ed Contreras of Waco, Texas, and his beloved granddaughters Lisa and Laura Contreras of Austin, Texas, nieces Becky Hudgins of Colorado City, Texas, Judy Rankin of Midlothian, Texas, Deb Gibson and husband, Don, of Granbury, Texas, and nephew Jim Brown and wife, Liz, of Bulverde, Texas.

Pallbearers will be Jim Brown, Sean Clarke, John Contreras, Ronald Cunningham, Don Gibson and Rowan Meyer.

*Paid obituary*

## James "Jim" Rider

James "Jim" Rider, 53, of Big Spring passed away Friday, Dec. 18, 2015 at his residence. The family will receive friends Sunday from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral service will be Monday, Dec. 21, 2015 at Myers & Smith Chapel at 10 a.m. with Chaplain Joel Miller. Burial at Clairemont Cemetery in Clairemont, Texas will be at 3 p.m.

He was born Sept. 14, 1962 in Pampa, to Larry and Alta Faye Rider. He grew up in Jayton, Texas where he graduated in 1981. He came to Big Spring in 1988 when he began his career in Law Enforcement. He married Donna Rider, Sept. 15, 1997 in Big Spring. He was a detective/investigator with the Big Spring Police Department for 20 years, retiring in April 2008. He was associated with Homicide Investigators of Texas. He was a DA Investigator in Howard County from April 2008 to October 2013.

He is survived by his wife, Donna Rider of Big Spring; four son, Mitch Rider of Victoria, R.C. Leitgeb and wife, Stacey, of Killeen, Skyler and Justin Rider of Big Spring; one daughter, Taylor Rider also of Big Spring; three grandchildren, Jr Talamontes, Ethan Leitgeb and Lila Leitgeb; two sisters, Kathleen Rider of Jayton and Grace Clark and husband, Larry Don, of Big Lake; two nephews, Shane Long and Bailey Clark. He is also survived by All of his Brothers in Blue and his Law Enforcement Family.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at [www.myersandsmith.com](http://www.myersandsmith.com)

## Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

• **JOEL SALGADO MORENO**, 32, of 3608 W. Co. Rd. 3 was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.

• **JUAN ANTONIO MONTEZ**, 33, of 805 N. St. Paul St. Stanton, Texas was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **ERLINDA EVETTE RIOS**, 27, of 1906 Winston St. was arrested on warrants for criminal mischief – impair/interrupt/divert public water and theft, more than \$500 but less than \$1500.

• **TOM ARTHUR BARAJAS**, 40, of 500 N. Lenzner Ave Apt. D11, Sierra Vista, Ariz. was arrested on a charge of theft of property, more than \$750 but less than \$2,500.

• **TRAVIS JOSHUA BENNETT**, 36, of 407 College St., Coahoma was arrested on a warrant for injury to a child – reckless bodily injury.

• **DALTON WILL WHITE**, 38, of 410 Davis Rd. was arrested on charges of assault that causes bodily injury to a family member and assault on a family/household member and intentionally/recklessly impeding normal breathing or circulation.

See, **POLICE**, Page 3A

## BIG SPRING HERALD

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# Lillie Walker Robinson to turn 100 years old

Lillie Walker Robinson was born to M.W. Walker and Gerogia Mae Paton Walker on De. 21, 1915. Lillie is the last living of 12 children. She married Woner Robinson on

Dec. 24, 1934 and was married until his passing in March of 1984. Lillie was the mother of five children; Duane who passed away at birth, Darrell Robinson and wife Kathy of Woodlands; Mac Robinson and his wife Lorita of Grandbury; Zena Kay Robinson Morse and husband Lloyd of Midlan and Sherilyn Robinson Gilmore and husband Gary of College Station.

She also has numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Lillie and her husband were cotton farmers. She loved to cook for her family and friends. She also loved teaching Sunday school classes at the First Baptist Church of Coahoma.

Though she has dementia, she still sings hymns and remembers bible scripture.

The family will celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on Dec. 27.



## ▶ Menus

### Big Spring Senior Center

**Monday**  
Barbecue sandwich, pinto beans, pickle and onion, mandarin oranges and milk.

**Tuesday**  
Oven fried chicken, cream gravy, hash brown potatoes, green beans, lime Jell-O with pineapple, rolls and milk.

**Wednesday**  
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**Thursday**  
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**Friday**  
Closed for Christmas

To make a reservation, please call 267-1628 the day before by 3 p.m.

## Club News

### Boy Scouts giving back Sunday

Boy Scouts from Big Spring and Howard County will be at WalMart on Sunday from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. to assist shoppers to get their packages to their cars and loaded in.

This is a project to say thank you to the community for their contributions and support of scouting in Big Spring and Howard County.

"We want this to be our opportunity to give back," states a press

release from Gary Tidwell with Boy Scouts of America.

The scouts are seen at WalMart and around the community throughout the fall selling popcorn and asking for the communities help as they raise funds for the various activities and programs that are provided year round.

"We want to be seen carrying out the long held slogan of the Boy Scouts of America, 'Do a

good turn daily,'" said Tidwell.

While the Boy Scouts will be active in helping to carry bags and load items into patron's cars, they will not be accepting tips or donations.

"This is our way to actively communicate our gratitude to the citizens of Big Spring and Howard County for all that they have done this year to support scouting," said Tidwell.

## Parent's Corner: Precious Christmas memories

**W**e all have memories of Christmas. Some may not be as good as others but the memories are still there. As parents, we are in the business of making memories for our children. The memories we give them will endure for the rest of their lives, now that is an awesome responsibility. So as we consider the things we are doing we should ask ourselves, are these things worth remembering?



DARRELL RYAN

Are the memories that I am in the process of creating the things I want my children to keep in their memory banks and possibly share with their children someday? Take a moment to collect your thoughts and do a bit of remembering. What do you remember about Christmas?

I remember going to the Christmas

tree farm and walking endlessly in the freezing cold until we found the perfect tree and tying it to the top of our car to take home. I remember the trouble of getting the tree to stand straight and working with mom to decorate it with shiny ornaments, tinsel and angel hair then putting the gifts we had around the bottom. I remember sneaking around to watch my grandmother as she surveyed the gifts around the tree to see which was hers and I remember doing the same thing when she wasn't watching.

I remember our church having special services prior to Christmas to prepare us with knowledge of the reason we celebrated the season. I remember our family traditions of sitting in a large circle and hearing the Christmas story read and giving thanks for the true meaning of Christmas. Then the ceremony of gift opening on Christmas Eve and each person waiting his turn to open the next gift and wondering who it was from.

I remember listening to my favorite Christmas songs and singing along with them. I remember helping my mom make cookies and getting to lick the last of the batter off the mixing bowl. I remember a clump of mistletoe that was always hung above the doorway and watching people trying to avoid walking under it.

I remember singing Christmas carols at the nursing home, watching the old folks sing along with us, and smiling as it filled my heart with gladness.

I remember the Christmas day meal when our family got together with our extended family to give thanks for the occasion and eat until we were totally filled of Grandma's turkey and dressing and pumpkin pie, and mom's special potatoes, green beans homemade bread and lemon pie.

I also remember my mom sharing her memory of Christmas which was different than mine. Her mom had died when she was young and her Christmas gift was usually either an

apple or an orange, and on special occasions she might get both. That certainly made me aware of how truly fortunate that I was. And I will never forget how my mom's eyes would literally light up when she watched me open my gifts and it was only when I had kids of my own that I truly understood this.

Santa would come to visit me on Christmas Eve, so when I awoke on Christmas morning, I would discover his gift. It was never a large gift but it was always something I really wanted to have. I miss those days, but I love the traditions that were established for me to remember and to continue as part of my gift to my kids.

As we are creating Christmas memories for our families let's remember that the greatest of memories is love and really that's what Christmas is all about. Merry Christmas to all of you.

*Darrell Ryan is BSISD director of school safety.*

### Tiny kitten rescued from conveyor belt at recycling plant

GALT, Calif. (AP) – A worker at a Northern California recycling center saved a tiny kitten from certain death when he spotted the animal heading down a conveyor belt.

Tony Miranda tells television station KCRA that (http://bit.ly/1NTvDoG) he was sorting recyclables Tuesday when he found the

pink-nosed, white-pawed cat between the debris and scooped it up.

It's not clear how the kitten got in with the trash, but it may have survived a ride in a dump truck before a tractor pushed it onto one of two conveyor belts.

A call went out to employees of Cal-Waste Recovery Systems that a baby cat had been discovered at the facility in Galt, a city about 90 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Another worker decided to adopt the kitten and named it Murphy.

### Vegas showgirl spectacle Jubilee to end after 30-plus years

LAS VEGAS (AP) – The showgirls of the long-running Las Vegas spectacle Jubilee are hanging up their elaborate headdresses.

Caesars Entertainment announced Sunday that the show at Bally's Las Vegas casino-hotel would end Feb. 11.

Jubilee got its start in 1981. It's the longest-

running show currently on the Strip.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority citing UNLV records says the Folies Bergere showgirl show was the longest running show at 50 years before it ended in 2009.

Caesars has said hundreds of thousands of Swarovski crystals

were used on the costumes when the show debuted 34 years ago.

The show had recently been reimagined to coincide with renovations at Bally's Las Vegas, including a tower of hotel rooms dubbed the Jubilee Tower.

The company says it's considering a new show featuring showgirls.

Life! forms can be found at [www.bigspringherald.com](http://www.bigspringherald.com)

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**Q&A**

Continued from Page 1A

**DO AUTHORITIES KNOW WHERE COUCH MAY BE?**

Officials say they don't know his whereabouts and have expressed concern that he may have left the country, although Sam Jordan, a spokeswoman for the Tarrant County district attorney's office, says there's no specific indication that he has crossed the border.

"He and his mother have the means to be able to travel to wherever they may want to travel," Jordan said.

Couch was supposed to be accompanied by a parent for a regular visit Dec. 10 with his probation officer. When he didn't show, authorities issued an order for his arrest the next day.

The U.S. Marshals Service has issued a wanted poster promising a reward of up to

\$5,000 for information leading to Couch's whereabouts and capture.

**WHY WOULD HE HAVE FLED?**

Tarrant County investigators were looking for Couch to ask him about a video posted online a few weeks ago showing people at a party playing drinking games. One of them appears to be Couch, and if found to be drinking, his parole could be revoked and a 10-year prison sentence could be imposed. Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson said Friday that he believes Couch fled in the days after the video came to light. He said Couch and his mother may have left the area in late November, shortly after Couch attended a mandatory meeting with his probation officer and well before their next scheduled meeting on Dec. 10.

**WHY WASN'T COUCH ALREADY IN PRISON FOR KILLING FOUR PEOPLE?**

In June 2013 at age 16, Couch was driving drunk and speeding on a dark two-lane road south of Fort Worth when he crashed into a disabled SUV off to the side, killing four people. Among the injured were some of the seven minors who were in Couch's pickup. Couch pleaded guilty to four counts of intoxication manslaughter and two counts of intoxication assault causing serious bodily injury. Because of his age, he wasn't certified as an adult for trial and a judge sentenced him in juvenile court to 10 years' probation and a stint in a rehabilitation center.

**WHAT IS 'AFFLUENZA'?**

During the sentencing

phase of his juvenile court trial, Couch's attorneys relied on a defense expert who argued that Couch's wealthy parents coddled him into a sense of irresponsibility — a condition the expert termed affluenza. The condition is not recognized as a medical diagnosis by the American Psychiatric Association, and its invocation drew widespread criticism and ridicule.

**IS COUCH'S MOTHER FACING CHARGES?**

Terry Grisham, a spokesman for the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, said investigators haven't confirmed whether Tonya Couch fled with her son and he declined to say whether she's facing any charges.

"We are only assuming that they're together," Grisham said. "They're both missing. But no one has placed them together outside of Tarrant County."

**WATER LEVEL**

Continued from Page 1A

and the date of the measurement is affixed to the well equipment or other appropriate surface near the well site.

PBUWCD personnel measure the same wells in the observation well network each year, as long as the individual wells are accessible and provide satisfactory data. The current depth-to-water measurements in individual wells are compared to that of the previous years to determine the annual change in water levels of the aquifers within the district. The data collected is put in to a spreadsheet, which lists observation wells in each county within the district and this year's water levels.

Additional information about the observation well and water level measurement programs is available by contacting the Permian Basin Underground Water Conservation District at 432-756-2136 or by visiting our website at [www.pbuwcd.com](http://www.pbuwcd.com).

**FIRE**

Continued from Page 1A

"About 50 percent of the single-floor part of the house was still intact," Sullivan said. "Initially, our attack was to the save part of the house and go in and find the dogs which we did but they were already deceased."

After the fire was extinguished, firefighters stayed on the scene for most of the day until early evening to sure make the blaze did not reignite. The house is a complete loss, Sullivan stated, and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

Staff Writer Lyndel Moody can be contacted at 263-7331, ext. 234, or by e-mailing [citydesk@bigspringherald.com](mailto:citydesk@bigspringherald.com).

**NORAD**

Continued from Page 1A

radar system called the North Warning System," the NORAD Santa web site reads. "This powerful radar system has 47 installations strung across Canada's North and Alaska. NORAD makes a point of checking the radar closely for indications of Santa Claus leaving the North Pole every holiday season. The moment our radar tells us that Santa has lifted off, we begin to use the same satellites that we use in providing air warn-

ing of possible missile launches aimed at North America." NORAD's satellites, located 22,300 miles above Earth, have infrared sensors that not only sense rockets or missiles, but Rudolph's nose! "Rudolph's nose gives off an infrared signature similar to a missile launch," the web site reads. "The satellites detect Rudolph's bright red nose with no problem." In addition to NORAD's satellites and radar system, NORAD has been using SantaCams since 1998 (the year they began putting their Santa tracker online) to capture images of the jolly

old man in different countries. "We turn the camers on about one hour before Santa enters a country, then switch them off after we capture images of him and the reindeer," the website reads. "We immediately download the image onto our web site for people around the world to see. SantaCams produce both video and still images." In order to join in the fun on Christmas Eve, go to [www.bigspringherald.com](http://www.bigspringherald.com) and click on the NORAD link to track Santa with your family. The countdown begins now!

**POLICE**

Continued from Page 2A

• **STOLEN VEHICLE** was reported in the 700 block of E. I-20.

• **THEFT** was reported in the 600 block of Sgt. Paradez St. and the 200 block of W. FM 700.

• **BURGLARY OF A HABITATION** was reported in the 3100 block of Sherman.

• **MINOR ACCIDENT** was reported in the 1100 block of N. Lamesa Hwy.

• **DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 2600 block of S. Gregg St.

• **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 200 block of Davis Rd.

**CRIMINAL MISCHIEF**

was reported in the 1300 block of Lindberg, the 1900 block of E. 11th Place, the 1100 block of Marijo, the 1100 block of Pickens St., the 800 block of W. 18th St. and the 1700 block of E. FM 700.

**MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL**

24th & Johnson 267-8288

Bradley Ugstad, 62, died Tuesday. Memorial service will be at 3 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Chapel.

James "Jim" Rider, 53, of Big Spring died Friday. The family will receive friends Sunday from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral service will be at 10 a.m. Monday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Burial will be at 3 p.m. Monday Clairemont Cemetery in Clairemont, Texas.

**LAWSUIT**

Continued from Page 1A

City officials claim Ferguson did not decide to indefinitely suspend (Butler) solely because of the one incident that occurred at FCI, but also because of Butler's "long history" of performance and disciplinary issues, and reprimands in his file. Prior to the FCI incident, Ferguson allegedly gave a document to Butler warning him that "any additional problems that surfaced would cause him to have significant discipline."

Butler appealed his termination before a third-party hearing examiner in August. In November, the examiner issued a ruling reducing the indefinite suspension to a temporary suspension of one week and ordering the city to reimburse Butler for lost back pay. However, the city, claiming the examiner exceeded his authority, filed suit in

118<sup>th</sup> District Court in late November seeking to overturn the examiner's ruling and uphold the termination.

Butler joined the fire department in 2006 and had worked his way up to the rank of lieutenant and had tested for an assistant chief position at the time of his termination.

In a recent interview, he admitted not having identification the night of the FCI incident, but said that was the first time prison officials had ever asked for ID. He also took issue with rude behavior charge.

"They said I was rude and discourteous," Butler said. "I asked them, 'What did I say?' ... and they never told me.

He also disputed claims that he had numerous reprimands on file.

"I didn't violate any rules," he added. My file's clean. If my file's clean, you've got to ask what the real problem is

here."

Butler, who is African-American, also claims race played a role in his termination.

"I sure do (think race played a factor)," he said. "I was the first African-American lieutenant in the department and I would have been the first African-American deputy chief. In addition, I made the highest score (on the deputy chief exam) and I had seniority."

City officials declined comment, citing the

pending litigation.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 235 or by e-mail at [reporter@bigspringherald.com](mailto:reporter@bigspringherald.com)

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# Holiday sales pattern skews online; malls lose some luster

NEW YORK (AP) – More often shoppers are making the decision to sit on their couches rather than head to stores this holiday season.

Online sales growth so far this holiday season is surpassing growth in sales at physical stores, according to First Data, which analyzed online and in-store payments from Oct. 31 through Monday.

Sales growth for stores is up 2 percent, while online sales rose 4.6 percent, according to First Data, which declined to give dollar figures, citing proprietary reasons.

Total spending, including sales in both physical stores and online, climbed 2.4 percent, stronger than the 1.8 percent growth during the same period last year.

While physical stores still account for the majority of spending, the uneven growth between buying at locations and on websites signals the continuation of a big shift in how U.S. consumers are shopping.

This season, Mother Nature appeared to provide an extra lift to online sales, analysts said. While unseasonably warm weather has hurt overall sales of cold-weather items, it appears to be driving more shopping to buy on their PCs or mobile phones since they don't want to waste a pleasant day inside a mall.

"Store traffic is down everywhere, and it's compounded by the weather," said Steven Barr, U.S. retail and consumer sector leader for PwC. "We do believe that warm weather is driving consumers online."

The big question, he asks, is whether warm weather is the number one reason or a secondary reason shoppers are heading online this season.

The overall shift to online spending is largely due to more retailers working to improve their websites and offer speedier delivery on orders placed online. As a result, shoppers, who increasingly are looking for convenience, are spending more of their holiday budgets online.

That's led to a big gap in some product categories between online and physical stores. According to First Data, clothing and accessories stores had a 2.9 percent sales decline so far this season, compared with a 3.7 percent increase online. Furniture and home furnishings store sales slipped 0.5 percent, while online increased 8.1 percent.

And while the average order for key product areas remained largely the same as last year, clothing and accessories got hit hard because of deep discounting. Stores have needed to ramp up price cuts to get rid of excess goods amid the mild temperatures that have extended into December. As a

result, the average ticket size for those products went to \$88.30 from last year's \$83.43.

Amy Kemper said she's been shopping more online because of the convenience of doing so. Her family travels for the holidays, and it's easier to buy online and then have things shipped to where they are going.

"I do come to the mall to look around and see what's out there and then go back online," said Kemper, who lives in Indianapolis.

First Data doesn't make predictions for holiday sales. But the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, expects sales for November and December to rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion. There's still plenty of time for that estimate to come true: Christmas is a week away and there are some of the biggest shopping days left.

And as cutoffs to order online to get gifts shipped to stores approaches, retailers are relying on die-hard traditionalists like Ann Rabbit during the final stretch.

Rabbit picked up a sweater for herself for 40 percent off at Old Navy in East Harlem in New York on a recent weekend.

"I don't do online. I like to touch things," she said.

# More telecoms let you watch video without dinging data caps

NEW YORK (AP) – Cellphone and broadband providers are excluding some video from data caps, meaning consumers have more data available for other apps and services.

But that's not necessarily good, according to advocates of net neutrality, the concept that Internet access providers shouldn't discriminate against some Web traffic in favor of others. They say innovation could be curtailed if smaller video providers couldn't afford to pay for an exemption.

The exemptions come as mobile video booms. But video eats up a lot of data. On a smartphone, an hour or two of video consumes about 1 gigabyte. AT&T and Verizon, the biggest wireless companies, have been phasing out unlimited plans, so customers pay more to watch more over cellular networks.

Even home Internet providers are testing data caps. About 13 percent of Comcast's customers are in a market with caps, according to research firm MoffettNathanson. Comcast exempts its own video, but not video from rivals like Netflix. Critics say that could hurt competition, as consumers would be drawn to the service that's exempt.

The Federal Communications Commission has adopted rules to protect net neutrality, but these exemptions aren't banned under the rules. The FCC says consumers could benefit in some cases and will address complaints as they come up.

Here's a look at what major U.S. companies are doing:

### T-MOBILE

The No. 3 wireless carrier exempts major streaming music and, as of

November, many popular video services from data caps on most of its plans. The company says the video providers don't have to pay for that, but do have to meet certain technical requirements. YouTube and Facebook video aren't covered; T-Mobile says it couldn't tell when those services are delivering video.

### COMCAST

This fall, the cable TV giant started offering a streaming alternative, with channels delivered to customers' homes without the need for a cable box. That video, and any streaming that regular cable customers do on the company's Xfinity TV app in their homes, aren't counted toward data caps. That's because they're cable services on a "managed network," which Comcast considers separate from the public Internet, says spokeswoman Lisa Scalzo.

But in a complication for customers, she says logging into a channel's app, like HBO or ESPN, or video using another Comcast app, Xfinity TV Go, would count toward caps because data go over the public Internet.

The company used to have an Xbox app that let customers watch Comcast-supplied TV without counting toward data caps, but Comcast says the app was scrapped in late August.

### AT&T

Since early 2014, the No. 2 wireless carrier has exempted some Internet services from data caps on its main wireless plans. Instead, AT&T says it has pilot agreements with a handful of businesses under its "Sponsored Data" program. On its website, AT&T lists six companies as participating,

including Aquato and Syntonic, which specialize in sponsored content.

The company would not say who pays for the data that are exempted from consumers' plans under these programs.

As for AT&T's cable business, AT&T agreed not to exempt streaming of its own U-verse or DirecTV online video from its home Internet data caps in order to win FCC approval of its July purchase of DirecTV.

### VERIZON

The country's biggest wireless company has said that its mobile video service, go90, launched in October, will include sponsored content. That means Verizon customers watching that video will be exempt from data caps. Verizon will make money instead through ads. Not all go90 video will be sponsored content, though; some does count toward a data cap.

Spokeswoman Marie McGehee confirmed a Re/code report that said Verizon will soon test a sponsored-data program similar to AT&T. It would roll out more broadly next year. She declined to comment further Friday.

The company is currently running a promotion in which Verizon customers get an extra 2 gigabytes of data for three months for downloading the go90 app and registering. But you don't have to watch any video to get the deal.

# Airlines on-time results among the best in 2 decades

WASHINGTON (AP) – The nation's leading airlines posted one of their best-ever monthly on-time performances in October, the third straight month where more than 80 percent of flights arrived punctually.

The Transportation Department said Monday that 87 percent of flights on the top 13 U.S. airlines arrived on time in October. That was up slightly from 86.5 percent in September. The two months now rank third and fourth, respectively, among the best on-time tallies in the 21 years where comparable records are available.

Delta Air Lines, Hawaiian Airlines and Alaska Air had the best ratings, while Spirit was the only airline with an on-time rating below 80 percent.

Cancellation rates remain low as well. The airlines cancelled 2,454 flights, or 0.5 percent of their schedules in October, second best all-time to the 0.4 percent rate recorded in September.

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Our Services are:  
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# Opinion

## A weekend in mountain country

I spent a day in Terlingua, the Temple of Chilidom. I got to visit with John Holroyd, the new owner of La Kiva, the well-known watering hole just above Terlingua Creek. He has made some grand improvements to the place, which once used a black pot for a urinal. John hails from Yorkshire, England originally and migrated to Oklahoma 30 or so years ago. He is retired now and has been a frequent visitor to the desert country. He was a friend of the previous owner of La Kiva, Glen Felts, who died last year. La Kiva stayed closed for 6 months and John didn't want to see it turn to dust, so he bought it. He stayed closed another year to do the refurbishing. The bar is open now and the restaurant will open soon with gourmet pizzas, brisket and other menu items. He has a barbecue cooker than can handle 1,000 pounds of meat. All the kitchen equipment is state of the art.



TUMBLEWEED  
SMITH

I also interviewed Lauren

Stedman who has Menagerie Press in Terlingua. She makes exquisite invitations, business cards and other printed items using old-fashioned letterpress equipment and high-grade papers. She is a graphic design artist and her creations go all over the country.

I also met a genuine DIVA. Diane Wysocki is a member of Women Outdoors Worldwide, a group of women who shoot guns, slingshots and bows and arrows. They also do fly-fishing. All members are called DIVAs. They promote shooting safety and have worldwide shooting competitions. The organization's headquarters is in Dallas. The next day I went to Alpine and visited with Dr. Paul Will, chair of the Meat Science department at Sul Ross who teaches a course called Sausage Manufacturing.

It's a two-week course beginning January 4. Students of all disciplines flock to the course, where they can earn 4 semester hours credit. "I give them 25 pounds of meat and some seasoning and teach them how to make sausage," he says. "Then they make their own sausage using family recipes or whatever. At the end of the course we have

a contest to see who has the best sausage according to a panel of judges."

I visited my friend Jim Glendenning who had just returned from a month long 26,000 mile trip around the world. He knows how to travel. His entire transportation bill was \$1,800. He walked to the train station in Alpine, took an overnight train to Los Angeles where he boarded a plane for London. On his circle of the globe he made five stops along the way, then took the train back to Alpine and walked home.

The new managers at the Holland Hotel are Marcus and Nicole Van Winden, who met on a Holland-America cruise ship. He was a chef; she was cruise director. He is from Holland. It was only natural that they end up managing the Holland Hotel.

I went to Marfa and visited with Mayor Dan Dunlap. He told me about the new 4-story hotel being built downtown and a new 5 million dollar art installation due next year at Chinati. Lots of stuff going on in the mountain country along the border.

*Tumbleweed Smith loves to hear stories. Contact: ts@tumbleweedsmith.com*

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## LETTER POLICY

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

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• Form letters, letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.

• Letters should be e-mailed to editor@big-springherald.com or mailed to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721.

## CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

• In person at 710 Scurry St.

• By telephone at 263-7331

• By fax at 264-7205

• By e-mail at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.

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

## DAILY PRAYER

May we remain diligent about reading Your word, Lord, for our life.

Amen

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### German Exchange Student

To the Editor:

I am a 16 year old exchange student from Germany. Could you find me a new host family? I am not happy where I am." This is the note I received from a young lady who is far from home and not very happy. If you would like to help her by "Opening your Heart and your Home", please call Ellen Austin at 432-263-0565. This is a volunteer exchange program and there is no money to be made. However the rewards are far greater and longer lasting than any amount of money.

Ellen Austin

### Northside Community Center

To the Editor:

Northside Community Center thanks the following businesses for their support with our United Way Fundraiser. Crooked Lotus Boutique, Floral Designs by Lupe, Inspirations Flowers and Gifts, Northside Community Center Board Member, and Shop N Style..

Diana R. Martinez

Executive director of Northside Community Center

## A chicken way out

At this "turkey time" of year, stories of chickens are decidedly in the background. Clucking is drowned out by gobbles. The mention of "clucking" brings to mind a vignette destined to become an urban legend, except for a sudden change of location to a pastoral setting where neighbors live acres apart.

Let the story begin.

By any measure, my friend Les Paul Vernon is a champion. A wonderful Christian and model citizen, he is an optimist by nature, almost always prevailing on projects large and small.

A former Marine fighter pilot, Vernon is the "stuff" from where confidence and competence dwell. He and wife Melissa, along with three children, are living the American dream, much of it going swimmingly as planned.

Until a while back, anyway, when Les decided his children should learn at least a sliver of the farm life he had known during his youth in a bona fide rural community called Itasca. He would do so, thought he, with a small flock of, uh, urban chickens....

He spent days--yea, weeks--with "Dr. Google," determined to provide accommodations which for chickens might be the "coop" de resistance! They would luxuriate in "cushiness" worthy of the same name chicken magnate Bo Pilgrim gave to his lovely estate—"Cluckingham Palace." (Les claims "Taj ma Coop" has a good ring, too.)

I mean Les was "drumstick deep" in research to provide the

best possible experience for his children—Samantha, 17; Reed, 14, and Jacob, 10. He dreamed of their eager engagement in chores they'd happily experience--feeding, tending, protecting and, of course, the gathering of eggs daily.

He'd pored over regulations, studied numerous breeds and had drawn detailed designs for a coop and run, the former to be 6x12 feet, so he could slide it onto a 12-foot trailer if need be. There were details about the foundation, ventilation, safety, automation, lighting and assorted other topics. Indeed, Les and Lowe's "did" the project together, to the tune of about \$3,500....

Few details were overlooked. There are hundreds of them included in my notes.

Urban folks who may be contemplating acquisition of a few chickens are welcome to them. Just send email address.

Indeed, many steps in the project are guideposts for living. It was begun, for example, on Easter Sunday.

The importance of patience came into play, too, since the eggs were not to come until the chicks became hens....

The three chickens--Pollo, Deer and Feathers--did what chickens do. They ingested bugs during their periods of "recess" in the backyard, and seemed to greatly enjoy their "preening sessions" in front of tiny mirrors placed strategically in the coop.

To say they were pampered would be a gross understatement.

There was excitement, of course, when they started laying eggs. Les says they were tasty, but wait....

As if to join in the exultation of egg production, as well as preening done exceptionally well, the three hens--Speckled

Sussex--began celebratory clucking, often as a trio. Les knew he didn't have to worry about crowing, since roosters aren't allowed in his neighborhood. Clucking, however, wasn't carefully researched.

Alas, if his research had deepened, he would have learned this breed is well known for turning out champion "cluckers"--noise well beyond the point of mere annoyance.

Early each morning, Les and Melissa--their bedroom only about 50 feet from the coop--were wakened by the clucking. Plus, the clucks--predictable at around 5:30 a.m. daily--seemed to echo.

The Vernons are sure their neighbors, with bedrooms about the same distance away from the coop as their own, were hearing the same triumphant clucks....

What to do? Remember the design that provided ease of relocation by trailer? The three hens are now interspersed with the flock at his brother's farm 40 minutes away near Grandview.

They have taken right to their new roles as "free range chickens." And, the Vernons' children visit the hens often, calling them by name. And when the kids yell and whistle to bid them come, they do so, gleefully.

It should be noted, of course, that the Vernons didn't field a single complaint from neighbors.

They sleep better, though, knowing they evacuated the three hens before they had to....

*Dr. Newbury is a speaker in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.*

*Inquiries/comments to: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Phone: 817-447-387. Web site: www.speakerdoc.com. Columns archived at venturegalleries.com, newbury blog.*



Courtesy photo

**Basin 2 Way Radio, 1808 Scurry, is a recent recipient of the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce's "We Appreciate Your Investment in our Community" banner.**

## BBB's naughty list: holiday scams

The holiday season certainly makes most of us feel merry and bright, but it can also bring out scammers looking to take advantage of you. Santa isn't the only one keeping track of who is naughty and nice: Better Business Bureau serving Central, Coastal, Southwest Texas and the Permian Basin is advising consumers to watch out for scams and frauds this holiday season.



HEATHER MASSEY

Here is a list of BBB's top five scams:

- Fake websites promising fake deals. Some scammers will send fake emails or advertisements promising unheard of deals for a product, leading you to a fake (or look-alike) website that steals your credit card information when you try to check out. Also, beware of fake shipping notifications that could have attachments of links included in the email that will download malware on your computer to steal passwords and personal information. Protect yourself by staying away from deals that are too good to be true and check the URL to make sure it's legitimate.

- Santa letter scheme. While some legitimate companies sell letters from Santa Claus, some scammers are using this idea to steal credit card and personal information from unsuspecting consumers. When looking for a customized letter, research different companies and go to their sites straight from your browser, not from emails or social media. Check with bbb.org to find out which ones are trustworthy.

- Fake gift cards. Gift cards are the most popular holiday gift, but also the most susceptible to fraud. Criminals will go to a store and record the activation code on a gift card. After checking if the gift card is still valid online, fraudsters can use the online code to cash the gift card for resalable products. Before buying, make sure the security code on the gift card is scratch-free and look for gift cards that come in an unopened, plastic container. Also, beware of pop-up ads or emails offering free gift cards.

- Fake e-cards. Like gift cards, electronic cards can be great, but be careful. Two red flags to watch out for when dealing with E-cards: the sender's name is not apparent and/or you are required to share additional information to receive the card.

- Temporary holiday jobs. Retailers and delivery services need extra help at the holidays, but beware of solicitations that require you to share personal information online or to pay a fee for a job lead or application. Apply in person or go to the retailers' main website to find out who is hiring, and if they're really hiring.

Another scam that has been trending is the "social media gift exchange" scam. The gift exchange happens on Facebook and sounds like a great deal: you buy one gift and get 36 in return. But it's really just a variation on a pyramid scheme and is illegal.

In addition to these scams, your BBB advises donors to be careful when giving during the holidays, and beware of fake charities. Scammers take advantage of those looking to donate with fake charity solicitations in email, on social media sites and even by text message. Check out charities at give.org before donating and for more "wise giving" tips.

For more consumer information, BBB Business Reviews or to file a complaint, visit your local Better Business Bureau online at [bbb.org/central-texas](http://bbb.org/central-texas).

Heather Massey is the Regional Director for the Permian Basin office of Better Business Bureau serving Central, Coastal, Southwest Texas and the Permian Basin. Heather is available for media interviews and speaking engagements. You can reach her by phone: (432) 741-2592 or email: [hmassey@permianbasin.bbb.org](mailto:hmassey@permianbasin.bbb.org).

## Permits

Advantage Inn, 804 W. I-20. Com plumb; Val: \$12,000 Fee: \$112. Com gas; Val: \$1 Fee: \$7.

Silverleaf Communities, 700 Bucknell Ave. Res elec; Val: \$5,300 Fee: \$97.10. Res plumb; Val: \$8,250 Fee: \$66.

Enrique B. Calderon, 2600 Chanute Dr. Structures; Val: \$216 Fee: \$25.

Fred D. White, 3309 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Pl. Res elec; Val: \$500 Fee: \$25.

Cheryl Carter Click, 10 Highland Heather St. Res Re-roof; Val: \$41,000 Fee: \$215.

James M. Shriver, 2505 Kelly Cir. Res gas; Val: \$1,500 Fee: \$32.

Crystal June Jowers, 3205 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Pl. Res gas; Val: \$250 Fee: \$32.

David Neal Lawrence, 2607 Larry Dr. Res plumb; Val: \$1,300 Fee: \$32.

Carolyn S. Chapman, 1508 Nolan St. Res HVAC; Val: \$1,000 Fee: \$32.

Richard Lee Knocke, 720 Colgate Ave. Structure; Val: \$100,000 Fee: \$460.

Margie Garcia, 1103 Nolan St. Res gas; Val: \$250 Fee: \$32.

Kerr Management Inc., 2618 Hunter Dr. Res gas; Val: \$1,000 Fee: \$32.

Carl Johansen, 705 Johansen Rd. Res gas; Val: \$75 Fee: \$32.

Troy Vines Inc., 1009 W. I-20 S. Service

See PERMITS, Page 5B

## Warm weather leaves stores out in the cold

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO  
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — The unseasonably warm weather has left some people feeling cold about holiday shopping.

Rosemarie Nowicki, who lives in Berkeley Heights, N.J., finally spent some of her holiday budget last weekend buying coats online for her family because she hated the thought of being stuck in a store with such mild temperatures outside.

"It's hard to get into the holiday spirit; I've been walking around in short-sleeve shirts and capri leggings," Nowicki says. "I was certainly not going to the mall."

Turns out, lots of shoppers feel the same way as temperatures in cities across the country, including New York and Philadelphia, near record levels for December. The balmy weather hasn't done

anything to entice Americans to venture out and shop, which has hurt sales at stores that depend on the holiday season for up to 40 percent of their annual revenue.

Planalytics, a weather forecasting firm for retailers, estimates so far this season mall-based clothing stores have lost \$343 million in sales compared with last year. That's the largest weather-related loss since 1998 when a devastating ice storm hit parts of the Northeast.

Sales of cold-weather items have been particularly icy. Sales of women's boots in New York, for instance, are down 24 percent for the first half of December, according to Planalytics. And First Data, which analyzes payments at stores and online, said fur sales fell 20 percent from Oct. 31 through Mon-

See STORES, Page 5B



Courtesy photo

**Sherry Wegner Agency, 1902 N. Hwy 87, is a recent recipient of the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce's "We Appreciate Your Investment in our Community" banner.**

## Public Records

### Howard County Justice of the Peace Outstanding IBC Warrants:

Marcus Joe Anderson, 2621 Chanute Dr., Big Spring  
Steve Antoine, 1425 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. #19, Big Spring  
Katie Cole L. Baker, P.O. Box 3372, Big Spring  
Josephine (Josie) Balcazar, P.O. Box 1123, Big Spring  
Wayne Richard Buyce, 4042 Morningside Way, Canyon Lake  
Vanessa Malu Calderon, 2600 Chanute Dr., Big Spring  
Amber Canales, 612 Drake Rd., Big Spring

Jason Canales, 612 Drake Rd., Big Spring  
Raymond Carroll, 712 E. 17<sup>th</sup> St., Big Spring  
Pedro Chavarria, 1404 Wood St., Big Spring  
Tonya Renea Cogburn, 1610 Johnson St., 2000 S. Main St., Big Spring  
Jennifer S. Cook, 2911 N. Hwy 80 Apt. 107, Big Spring  
Matilda Cortez, 302 N. Saint Teresa, Stanton  
Hannah Deaton, 19634 Atasca Oaks Dr., Humble  
Tina Marie Ellis, 4002 Austin Ave., Snyder  
Selena Bethani Enriquez-King, 100 E. Parker, Midland  
Brittany Vanessa Escan-

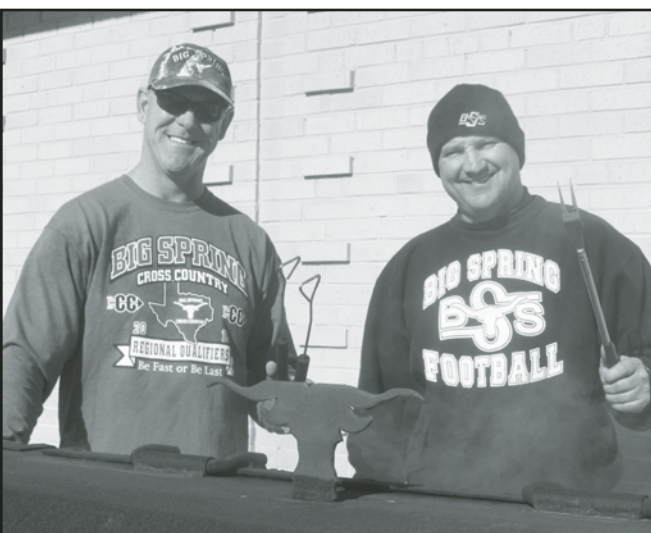
uela, 2521 Chanute Dr., Big Spring  
Jose Enrique Faz, 602 N.W. 7<sup>th</sup> St., Big Spring  
Juana Fierro, 406 N.W. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Big Spring  
Michael Dean Fleming, 5216 Tremont Ave Apt 901, Midland  
Leticia Garcia, 1404 Princeton Ave., Big Spring  
William Gene Garner, 704 Rosemont, Big Spring  
Guillermo Gomez, 2107 Morrison, Big Spring  
Kimberly Gonzalez, 1903 Peach, Colorado City  
James Michael Griffin, 303 Butler St. #502, Atlanta

Eugene Frank Gulley, 1201 Floydada, P.O. Box 551, Wellington  
Christina Nichole Gutierrez, 2809 25<sup>th</sup> St., Snyder  
Dylan Hammons, 4401 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Place, Big Spring  
Matias Hernandez Jr., 620 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St., San Angelo  
Shatiya Lasha Jenkins, 4590 N. Texas #198, Odessa  
Stephanie Ford Johnson, P.O. Box 483, Coahoma  
Aaron Christopher Mack, 2134 Bonham Ave., Odessa  
Ruann R. Martinez, 1005 N.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Big Spring  
Saprina Lea Martinez, 2521 Chanute Dr., Big

Spring  
Felicia Ornelas, 538 Westover No. 236, Big Spring  
John Troy Riddle, 3717 Old Howard Co. Airport Road, Big Spring  
George Anthony Robinson Jr., 1905 Wasson Rd. #14, Big Spring  
Linda Eva Rodriguez, 2519 Gunter Circle, Big Spring  
Juan Romero, 2504 March Circle, Big Spring  
Veronica Romero, 103 Becker Road, Big Spring  
Yuri Lozano Rubio, 421 Cedar, P.O. Box 173, Colorado City  
Erlinda Ruiz, P.O. Box 93, Coahoma

Stacie Lyanne Salas, 5102 Wasson Road, Big Spring  
Brittany Nicole Savell, 425 East Davis Rd., Big Spring  
Kendra D. Tatum, 412 S. Moss Lake Rd., Big Spring  
RickyLynnWaltenbaugh, 538 Westover Road Apt. #133, Big Spring  
Candida Lynn Whitehead, 3706 Connley, Big Spring  
Tamara Ruth Whitt, 3706 Connley, Big Spring  
Jamie Wiggins, 1905 Wasson Rd. Apt. #28, Big Spring  
See RECORDS, Page 5B

Don't forget the sauce guys!



HERALD photo/Lyndel Moody

Big Spring High School associate principal Tim Tannenhill, left, and principal Mike Ritchey along with the high school coaches grill fajita meat for the employee luncheon Friday morning. Big Spring ISD employees held an in service day Friday before the district broke for the Christmas holiday.

## HC, public schools take winter break

Howard College and area public schools will be suspending classes for the next few weeks to enjoy the Christmas holidays before heading into the spring semester.

Howard College, including the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum and Howard Cottage closed at noon Friday. There will be no classes and all offices will remain closed throughout the break. Classes and the business office will resume on Monday, Jan. 4

The college's Harold Davis Fitness Center will observe the following hours over the holiday break: Closed through the weekend; open Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; closed Thursday, Christmas Eve and Friday, Christmas Day; open Saturday, Dec. 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; closed Sunday, Dec. 27; open Monday through Wednesday, Dec. 28-30, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, 2016; open Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; closed Sunday, Jan. 3, 2016; reopens Monday, Jan. 4, 2016, for regular hours.

Both Coahoma and Forsan schools released students early Friday. Big Spring schools had already suspended classes by Friday. All three school districts will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 5, for the spring semester.

—Lyndel Moody

# Christmas open house



Photos by Lyndel Moody and Amanda Duforat  
At top, Debbye ValVerde, Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce executive director, pictured middle, speaks with Vicki Stewart during the Chamber, Big Spring Economic Development and United Way of Howard County and Big Spring's Christmas open house Wednesday afternoon. Also pictured are Rick Flores, respiratory therapy director for Scenic Mountain Medical Center (SMMC) and Amanda Duforat, SMMC public relations officer. All three entities are housed in the same office building, 215 West Third St. Above, people gather for good food and visitation during Christmas open house.

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2015 Chevrolet 1500 High Country 4WD Crew  
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MSRP



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Stk#15140T.

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**STORES**

Continued from Page 4B

day.  
 "Winter didn't happen and so the clothes, the scarves are not selling," said Ron Friedman, head of the retail and consumer products group at accounting firm Marcum LLP. As a result, he says shoppers will see discounts of 75 percent in after Christmas.

The fair-weathered shopping challenge underscores how U.S. consumers, still affected by the Great Recession, remain strategic in their buying patterns. It's a habit they picked up during the economic downturn that's remained ever since.

Many shoppers only buy what they can wear, so it stands to reason that they're not buying coats, boots and hats this year.

And since cold-weather items are also hot gifts during the holiday shopping season, many of those items are left on store shelves. C. Britt Beemer, America's Research Group, a consumer research firm, estimates that cold-weather items account for 26 percent of overall holiday clothing sales.

The National Retail Federation, nation's largest retail group, is still sticking by its prediction earlier in the season that sales in November and December will rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion. That would mark a slowdown from the 4.1 percent growth last year.

And figures from First Data show higher overall sales growth for the period from Oct. 31 through Monday compared to the year-ago period. Analysts believe that online businesses are actually benefiting from the warm weather, offsetting sluggish traffic at the stores.

"Warm weather has helped online shopping rather than hurt it," said Beemer, adding that people who don't want to be stuck at a mall are buying gift cards online.

Still, the unusually warm weather is a concern.

Marc Kaufman, CEO of the upscale furrier that operates one store in New York City but mostly sells online, says business is down 5 percent. The decline in its Northeast business has been partially offset by its online operations. But Kaufman figures if the weather was colder, sales for the holiday season would be up 30 percent.

"If it weren't for online, I would be in severe trouble," he said.

The cold reception by shoppers is forcing retailers to be creative to try to lure them into stores.

Some stores are offering bigger discounts than they ordinarily would. Macy's, for example, is advertising 70 percent off some men's sweaters and 75 percent off children's outerwear this weekend, while Kohl's is slashing prices of puffy jackets to \$39.99 from the original \$100.

Sears is relocating its grills to the front part of its outdoor living sections in the Northeast, where it's been unseasonable warm.

**PERMITS**

Continued from Page 4B

- Rd. Com elec; Val: \$2,000 Fee: \$25.  
 Stacey Best, 2709 Cindy Ln. Res gas; Val: \$1,800 Fee: \$32.
- Toni J. Mrotz, 602 Lamesa Hwy. Com elec; Val:500 Fee: \$25.
- Brandi Lynn Mayo, 1803 State St. Res elec; Val: \$500 Fee: \$25.
- R. Mize 519 Scott Dr. Res Re-roof; Val: \$5,200 Fee: \$40.
- David W. Higgins, 2409 Runnels St. Res add; Val: \$1,500 Fee: \$25. Res elec; Val: \$0 Fee: \$51.52.
- Harold and Catherine Neagle, 2511 Carleton Dr. Res gas; Val: \$500 Fee: \$32.
- Kyhooya Partnership, 113 Main St.

- Com elec; Val: \$0 Fee: \$25.  
 Mati Gonzalez, 1602 Avion St. Res add; Val: \$1,000 Fee: \$25.
- Leonard Sneed, 1102 Douglas St. Res Re-roof; Val: \$5,000 Fee: \$35.
- Linda Gonzales, 1613 Young St. Res gas; Val: \$500 Fee: \$32.
- Jason Michael Kennemur, 2101 Grace St. Structure other; Val: \$3,450 Fee: \$30.
- Spring of Siloam Christian, 1208 Frazier. Com elec; Val: \$1 Fee: \$25.
- Greg Biddison, 2502 Broadway St. Res gas; Val: \$250 Fee: \$32.
- Lupe Ornelas, 4101 Muir St. Res add.; Val: \$1,400 Fee: \$25.
- David Callaway, 1203 Douglas St. Res Re-roof; Val: \$6,000 Fee: \$40.
- The Reserves, 901 E. FM 700. Res add; Val: \$190,000 Fee: \$730.

**RECORDS**

Continued from Page 4B

**Filings**

Universal Well Service Holding Inc., Universal Oil Well Service Co. vs. Cobalt Operating, LLC.; Blue Ridge Resources, LLC.; contract – consumer/commercial/debt  
 Myra B. Robinson vs. Mike Robinson, civil case - other

**Judgments**

The State of Texas vs. Cody Witt, theft of property by check. \$100 fine, court costs, 180 days in jail and 24 months probation.

The State of Texas vs. Anthony L. Bradley, theft of property. \$500 fine, court costs, 180 days in jail and 12 months probation.

The State of Texas vs. Chad Douglas Hern, driving while intoxicated. \$1,000 fine, court costs, 180 days in jail, driving privileges suspended 90 days and 12 months probation.

The State of Texas vs. Cody Witt, theft of property by check. \$100 fine, court costs, 180 days in jail and 24 months probation.

The State of Texas vs. Adrian R. Dehoyos, theft of property. \$100 fine, court costs and 45 days in jail.

The State of Texas vs. Serena Bryana Gonzales, theft of property. \$250 fine, court costs and 12 months probation.

The State of Texas vs. John Thomas Boutin, racing on highway. \$500 fine and court costs.

The State of Texas vs. Andrew S. Robinson, revocation of probation and imposition of sentence – possession of marijuana. \$250 fine, court costs, 168 days in jail and pay remaining balance of \$649.

The State of Texas vs. Lacey J. Castillo, revocation of probation and imposition of sentence – possession of marijuana. \$500 fine, court costs, 27 days in jail and pay remaining balance of \$899.

**Marriage Licenses**

Jasper Okey Iлека, 64, and Abigail Obiageli Okwulenne, 46, both of Big Spring

Mark Edward Lee, 47, and Michelle Lyon, 48, both of Big Spring

Austin Daniel Pritchard, 29, and Heather Michelle Crème, 25, both of Big Spring  
 Charles Bundi Orwaru, 33, and Ruth Nyamete, 29, both of Big Spring

**Warranty Deeds**

Grantor: Charles R. Clanton  
 Grantee: Bryan Herr  
 Property: Lots 4-9, blok 3, Tennyson's addition  
 Date: Nov. 20, 2015

Grantor: Larry Don Shaw and Linda Johnson  
 Grantee: Robert Rivera and Rosa Rivera  
 Property: 7.328 acre tract out of the Northeast quarter of Sec. 10, block 34, T-2-N, T&P, Ry Co. Survey  
 Date: Nov. 17, 2015

Grantor: Kevin Thomas and Daphne Jones  
 Grantee: Ronald L. Howell and Patricia M. Howell  
 Property: .19 acre tract in south part of lots 7 and 8, block 36, amended Cole and Strayhorn addition.  
 Date: Oct. 1, 2015

Grantor: Kenneth Soles, Robin Joyce Dugan and Landon Soles  
 Grantee: Angela Willborn  
 Property: 1 acre tract of land in Southeast quarter of sec. 14, block 33, T-1-S, T&P, Ry Co. Survey  
 Date: Dec. 1, 2015

**Warranty Deeds with lien**

Grantor: Umar N. Bradshaw and Gladys L. Bradshaw  
 Grantee: Robert Frankling Schmidt Jr.  
 Property: Lot 8, block 14, Douglas addition #2  
 Date: Dec. 3, 2015

Grantor: Jack Capps  
 Grantee: Chisom Connolly  
 Property: 3 acre tract in Southwest quarter of sec. 29, block 33, T-3-N, T&P, R Co. Survey  
 Date: Dec. 8, 2015

Grantor: Foundation Mortgages  
 Grantee: Gracie Mojica and Robert Cortez  
 Property: Lot 5, block 2, McEwen addition  
 Date: Nov. 24, 2015

Grantor: Thomas Hugh Corwin and Moene Jobeth Corwin  
 Grantee: Amy Puga  
 Property: West 120 feet of lot 9, block 2, Stripling addition  
 Date: Oct. 6, 2015



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- 2014 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 High Country 4X4 Crew Cab**  
 Was \$40,200 +TT&L **Now Only \$38,400** +TT&L.
- 2014 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 LTZ 4WD**  
 Was \$40,495 +TT&L **Now Only \$38,855** +TT&L.
- 2013 Chevrolet 2500HD LTZ Crew Cab**  
 Was \$45,600 +TT&L **Now Only \$41,900** +TT&L.

- 2014 Ram 1500 Longhorn Limited 4X4**  
 Was \$43,000 +TT&L **Now Only \$40,500** +TT&L.
- 2012 Ford Focus SE**  
 Was \$11,425 +TT&L **Now Only \$9,995** +TT&L.
- 2013 Chevrolet Cruze LS**  
 Was \$12,825 +TT&L **Now Only \$11,200** +TT&L.
- 2014 Mitsubishi Lancer ES**  
 Was \$13,800 +TT&L **Now Only \$12,200** +TT&L.
- 2014 Honda Accord V6 Touring**  
 Was \$25,500 +TT&L **Now Only \$24,000** +TT&L.

- 2010 Ford Explorer 4WD**  
 Was \$15,500 +TT&L **Now Only \$13,600** +TT&L.
- 2008 GMC Yukon Denali black AWD**  
 Was \$22,500 +TT&L **Now Only \$19,500** +TT&L.
- 2010 Cadillac Escalade ESV Premium**  
 Was \$33,000 +TT&L **Now Only \$29,500** +TT&L.
- 2015 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon Hard Rock**  
 Was \$45,000 +TT&L **Now Only \$43,000** +TT&L.
- 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe LS**  
 Was \$39,7250 +TT&L **Now Only \$37,980** +TT&L.



**Isaac Marquez**  
 Sales Consultant



**Manny Zambrano**  
 Sales Consultant



**Kaleb Smith**  
 Sales Consultant



**Toby Shubert**  
 Sales Consultant



**Anthony Flores**  
 Sales Consultant



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# Star Wars: The Force Awakens' thrills fans, sets records

BY SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer  
LOS ANGELES (AP) — After months of secrecy and anticipation, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" is thrilling fans and theater owners alike.

The most buzzed about film of the year opened globally Thursday, setting international and pre-sale box-office records and delighting moviegoers who've had opening-night tickets in hand for months.

Kelly Andrews, who wears her love of "Star Wars" on her skin in the form of Yoda and R2-D2 tattoos, bought tickets in October for the first showing at Hollywood's classic TCL Chinese Theatre, where the original "Star Wars" premiered in 1977.

"It was outstanding," she said as she left the screening Thursday night clutching a shiny keepsake popcorn bin. "I cried happy tears. I cried sad tears. It was beautiful."

She was among thousands of devotees who praised the space saga's latest installment. The film has received overwhelmingly positive reviews from critics and fans internationally.

All over the world, "Star Wars" enthusiasts toted lightsabers and wore character costumes to packed opening-night showings of "The Force Awakens." They laughed and

cheered and gasped together, illuminating their sabers in the theater during key scenes.

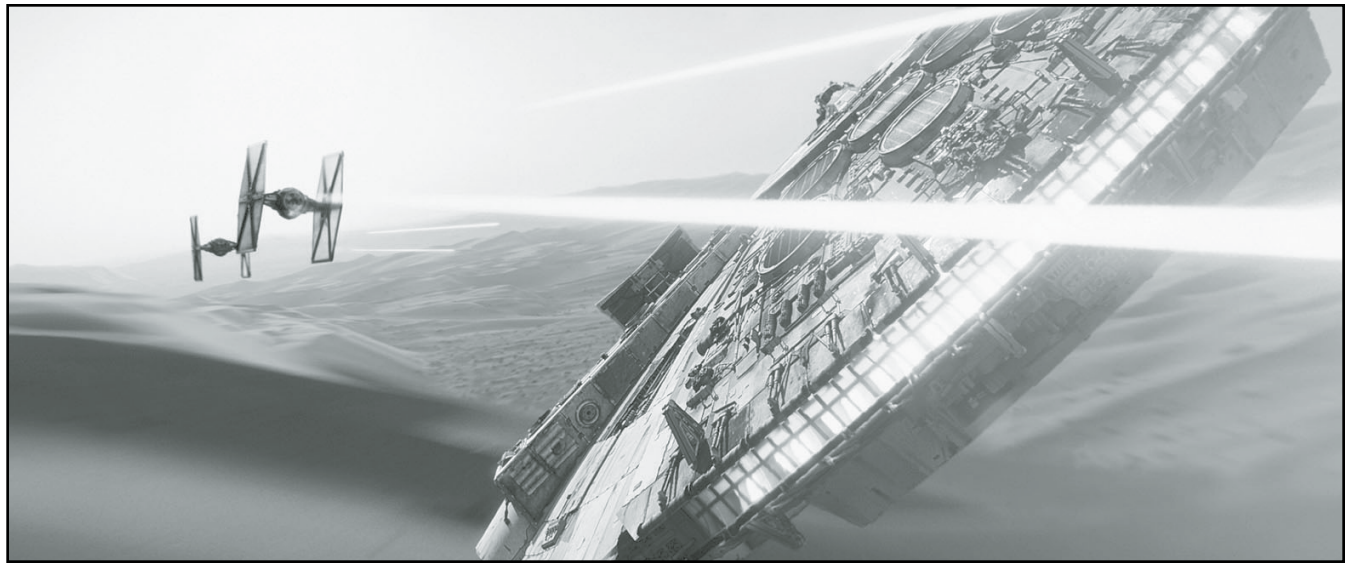
While domestic box-office returns won't be available until later Friday, the Walt Disney Co. said Thursday the film debuted with \$14.1 million from its first screenings in 12 international markets. The largest was France, where the film earned \$5.2 million. It set a one-day record in Norway and Sweden.

More than \$100 million in tickets have been presold in North America. The movie ticket service Fandango said it has already sold more tickets for "The Force Awakens" than any movie over its entire theatrical run.

Not everyone in the opening-night audience was dazzled, though. Michael Danke of Los Angeles, who said his friend waited in line for 52 hours for their tickets, was disappointed.

"I was kind of looking forward to a futuristic, bitchin' movie, but it was an old 'Star Wars' movie," he said. "They did it old style."

That nostalgia worked for Tony Brennan, who said he



"can't get off of that high that I'm on" after seeing the film with the opening-night crowd in Hollywood.

"It's definitely worth all the hype," he said. "I like how they bring back the old quotes and old scenery and old peo-

ple... It passed all of our expectations. I'm watching it five, six, seven more times."

## 'Force Awakens' pulls in record \$57M on opening night

BY JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer  
NEW YORK (AP) — "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" has set a box office record with an estimated \$57 million from Thursday night shows.

The Walt Disney Co.'s estimate on Friday easily surpassed the previous Thursday night record of \$43.5 million by 2011's "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2."

The movie's international rollout, which began Wednesday, has brought in a total of \$72.7 million.

That includes the biggest single day ever in the United Kingdom, where it made an estimated \$14.4 million.

The film cost about \$200 million to make, according to industry estimates.

The early figures suggest "The Force Awakens" is on course to exceed the record domestic opening of "Jurassic World," which debuted with \$208.8 million in June.

J.J. Abrams' seventh chapter in George Lucas's space saga arrived with the kind of hoopla and anticipation that few films have ever matched. Costumed, lightsaber-wielding fans have lined up around blocks, from Jakarta to Paris, to be among the first to see "The Force Awakens" (and hopefully avoid any spoilers from

its intensely guarded plot).

In North America, the film sold a record \$100 million worth of presale tickets before Thursday previews began at approximately 7 p.m. EST. Playing in 4,134 theaters, "The Force Awakens" is the widest December release ever attempted. 3-D and Imax screenings are helping to propel the record gross.

Disney said that 47 percent of the box office came from 3-D showings and \$5.7 million from Imax screens.

A lot is riding on the film for Disney, which paid \$4.06 billion for Lucasfilm in 2012.

Sequels and spinoffs are already in development for to come, not to mention an entire corner of Disneyland

devoted to the franchise.

Strong reviews for the film, which is set 30 years after "Return of the Jedi," have added to the fervor for "The Force Awakens." The American Film Institute listed it among its top 10 films of the year.

That strong word of mouth will help "The Force Awakens" attract the kind of repeat viewings that made James Cameron's "Avatar" and "Titanic" the highest grossing films of all time. Whether

"The Force Awakens" can come close to the global hauls of those films (\$2.8 billion for "Avatar" and \$2.2 billion for "Titanic") won't be clear for weeks.

## Philadelphia police talk tough about Star Wars spoilers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Philadelphia's police department says it would crack down on online Star Wars spoilers if it could.

A photo posted on the department's Facebook page shows two storm troopers seemingly getting arrested on South Street. The caption reads "No, posting #StarWarsForceAwakens spoilers online is not a crime. Yes, it should be." It adds that "any illegal Sith behavior will still be prosecuted to

the fullest extent of the law."

House Speaker Paul Ryan chimed in on the matter Wednesday, pinning the police department's stance to his Twitter feed with the comment "Knew we forgot to put something in the omnibus." The Wisconsin Republican was referring to a bill that requires one vote but combines several measures.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" debuted in U.S. theaters Thursday evening.

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## News in brief

### US rig count stable this week, holds at 709

HOUSTON (AP) — Oilfield services company Baker Hughes Inc. says the number of rigs exploring for oil and natural gas in the U.S. this week held steady at 709.

Houston's Baker Hughes said Friday that 541 rigs were seeking oil and 168 explored for natural gas. A year ago, with oil prices more than double current prices, 1,875 rigs were active.

Among major oil- and gas-producing states, Texas and Pennsylvania each declined by four rigs, Louisiana was down two and Wyoming off one.

West Virginia increased by three rigs and Alaska, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma were up one apiece.

Arkansas, California, Colorado, North Dakota, Ohio and Utah were all unchanged.

The U.S. rig count peaked at 4,530 in 1981 and bottomed at 488 in 1999.

### Wal-Mart looks to China for new US marketing chief

NEW YORK (AP) — Wal-Mart is turning to its marketing chief in China to shape advertising in the U.S.

The world's largest retailer named Tony Roberts as chief marketing officer for the U.S. Friday. He will report to Greg Foran, president and CEO of Wal-Mart's U.S. division starting in mid-January. Tony, a 10-year-veteran at the company, has been the head of marketing and social media in China for two years.

Roberts succeeds long-time marketing chief Stephen Quinn, who retires next month.

Wal-Mart, in a shift, is focusing on higher-income shoppers where it sees more growth. It hired former Target marketing executive Michael Francis as consultant last week.

### Congress backs bill banning microbeads in soap, body wash

WASHINGTON (AP) — Plastic microbeads used in soaps, body washes and other personal-care products will be phased out starting in 2017 under legislation approved by Congress and sent to the president.

The Senate approved the bill Friday following House approval last week. Lawmakers said the bill was needed to protect fish and wildlife that are ingesting the tiny beads after they are rinsed down the drain and discharged into lakes and rivers.

Microbeads are tiny plastic particles used as an abrasive in many personal-care and beauty products, such as facial scrubs, soaps and toothpastes. They do not dissolve and can persist in the environment for decades.

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, called microbeads devastating to wildlife and human health. Once signed

into law, the legislation phasing out microbeads should protect Lake Erie and other waterways now being polluted, Portman said.

"The Great Lakes have survived many a foe — severe pollution, oil spills, discharge from refineries, zebra mussels and attempts to steal our water, just to name a few," said Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich. "We are going to fight any activity that puts our beloved Great Lakes in jeopardy."

The federal legislation would prohibit the manufacture of products containing plastic microbeads as of July 1, 2017, and phase out sales of the product over the next two years. The federal law would take precedence over state laws that are starting to phase out microbeads over similar concerns.

### Hasbro hits back in lawsuit over The Game of Life

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Hasbro hit back Friday in a lawsuit over who owns the rights to The Game of Life, flatly denying claims by a toy inventor's widow who says her husband created the board game and that she is owed \$2 million or more in royalties.

The board game has sold more than 30 million copies and been spun off into an iPhone app, TV show, gambling and other ventures.

Lorraine Markham sued Hasbro earlier this year in federal court in Providence. She says her husband, Bill, invented the game in 1959 but that another toy inventor struck a deal with her husband and Hasbro has taken credit for it, denying her husband his legacy.

Her lawyers have said in a court filing that she plans to terminate rights to the game.

In its first response to the lawsuit, Pawtucket-based Hasbro Inc. on Friday denied that Markham created or designed the game and said his widow has no ownership interest in it. The toy maker said in court papers that it owns copyrights and other intellectual property rights to the game and its packaging, not Markham.

Hasbro also countersued, asking a federal judge to declare that it owns the rights to the game and asking for attorney's fees.

The other toy inventor, Reuben Klamer, has said he is the sole creator of the game and hired Bill Markham to make the game board. Markham made only a prototype, Klamer said. Klamer said he then made significant revisions to the board before delivering it to board game-maker Milton Bradley, which has since been absorbed by Hasbro. Klamer filed a countersuit last month.

### Shkreli resigns as Turing CEO after securities fraud arrest

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The pharmaceutical executive reviled for price-gouging resigned Friday as head of the drugmaker Turing Pharmaceuticals,

a day after being arrested on charges of securities fraud related to a company he previously ran.

Martin Shkreli, whose arrest delighted countless people appalled by his unapologetic stance after hiking the price of a life-saving drug by 5,000 percent, is being replaced on an interim basis by Ron Tilles, according to a statement issued Friday by Turing, which is privately held.

Tilles has been chairman of Turing's board of directors since the company was founded late last year. Turing said that Tilles will continue to hold the board chairman position as well. He has worked at numerous private equity and venture capital firms in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries over the last two decades.

Shkreli, a 32-year-old former hedge fund manager, has become the "most hated man in America," according to some headline writers, for jacking up the price of Daraprim, the only approved drug for a life-saving parasitic infection called toxoplasmosis, from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill. He did so shortly after Turing acquired rights to sell the pill in the U.S., paying another company \$55 million for it.

On Thursday, federal prosecutors said that between 2009 and 2014, Shkreli lost some of his hedge fund investors' money through bad trades, then looted Retrophin, a pharmaceutical company where he was CEO, for \$11 million to pay back his disgruntled clients.

### Ukraine won't repay \$3 billion Russian debt due this weekend

MOSCOW (AP) — Ukraine won't make a \$3 billion debt repayment due to Russia this weekend because Moscow refused to agree to terms already accepted by other international creditors, Ukraine's prime minister said Friday.

The "moratorium" on outstanding debt repayments to Russia announced by Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk effectively means that Ukraine is defaulting on the debt due Sunday. That move could jeopardize crucial loans that Ukraine has been receiving from a \$17.5 billion bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund.

It's the latest spat between the two neighbors following a run of gas supply disputes, Russia's 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

"After Russia refused to accept our offer, despite our attempts to reach a restructuring deal, the government is imposing a moratorium on the repayment of the \$3 billion debt to Russia," Yatsenyuk said at a televised government session. "We are ready for court proceedings with Russia."

He did not indicate when Ukraine would be ready to repay the debt. Moscow has previously said it will take Ukraine to court if it fails to pay on time.

Ukrainian Finance Minister Nataliya Yaresko said late Friday she hoped the dispute could still be resolved.

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## Steer's offense falters in Seminole, 63-42

By TAYLOR ELLIS

**Sports Editor**  
SEMINOLE — After one quarter of action it seemed as though fans would witness an offensive showcase Friday night in Seminole, Texas. Unfortunately only one of the two teams delivered.

The Big Spring boys basketball team lost 63-42 to the Indians of Seminole High School in one of their final non-conference games of the season.

The first quarter looked

like a showcase of talent as senior Israel O'guin poured in 12 points, four three-pointers. O'guin had 22 points after the first half of play including six three-pointers.

Steers who kept pace with O'guin in the first half, scoring from all parts of the court.

The Steers entered halftime down 38-31, and that's when the wheels fell off.

"We stopped executing and started doing our own thing," head coach Nicholas Tyerman

said. "We stopped trying to execute."

It seemed as though there was a lid on the basket for Big Spring. They didn't score until Lorenzo Jones made a layup just over three minutes into the quarter. The Steer defense held Seminole to a game-low 10 third quarter points, but were not able to pair their impressive defensive performance with the same offensive output as they had in the first half.

The fourth quarter was

even worse, as Big Spring did not make a bucket until their game clock read 1:39. Fittingly it was O'guin who nailed a three-pointer from well beyond the arc as he had done all night.

The Steers field goal percentage dropped to an anemic 29 percent. The Steers posted their highest free throw percentage of the year (100 percent 2 of 2). The loss drops Big Spring to 3-11 on the season. The loss is an unwanted step back from all the progress

and momentum this team has built the past two weeks.

"Other guys have to step up and make shots. It's too late in the year to be missing layups," Tyerman said.

**SCORING LEADERS**  
Israel O'guin- 25  
Kolton Knudson- 5  
Eric Ortega- 4

Contact sports editor Taylor Ellis at sports@bigspringherald.com or 432.263.7331, ext 237

## Scoreboard

<p><b>NBA</b> <b>Monday's Games</b> Indiana 106, Toronto 90 Orlando 105, Brooklyn 82 L.A. Clippers 105, Detroit 103, OT Chicago 115, Philadelphia 96 Memphis 112, Washington 95 Miami 100, Atlanta 88 San Antonio 118, Utah 81 Dallas 104, Phoenix 94 Denver 114, Houston 108 Portland 105, New Orleans 101</p> <p><b>Tuesday's Games</b> Cleveland 89, Boston 77 Denver 112, Minnesota 100 Sacramento 107, Houston 97 L.A. Lakers 117, Milwaukee 95</p> <p><b>Wednesday's Games</b> Indiana 107, Dallas 81 Orlando 113, Charlotte 98 Miami 104, Brooklyn 98 Detroit 119, Boston 116 New York 107, Minnesota 102</p> <p>Chicago 98, Memphis 85 Oklahoma City 106, Portland 90 Atlanta 127, Philadelphia 106 San Antonio 114, Washington 95 New Orleans 128, Utah 94 Golden State 128, Phoenix 103 L.A. Clippers 103, Milwaukee 90</p> <p><b>Thursday's Games</b> Charlotte 109, Toronto 99, OT Cleveland 104, Oklahoma City 100 Houston 107, L.A. Lakers 87</p> <p><b>Friday's Games</b> Indiana 104, Brooklyn 97 New York 107, Philadelphia 97 Orlando 102, Portland 94 Atlanta 109, Boston 101 Detroit 147, Chicago 144, 4OT Minnesota 99, Sacramento 95 San Antonio 115, L.A. Clippers 107 Toronto 108, Miami 94 Dallas 97, Memphis 88 Utah 97, Denver 88 Golden State 121, Milwaukee 112 Phoenix 104, New Orleans 88</p> <p><b>Saturday's Games</b> L.A. Lakers at Oklahoma City, 5 p.m. Charlotte at Washington, 7 p.m. Chicago at New York, 7:30 p.m. Indiana at Memphis, 8 p.m. L.A. Clippers at Houston, 8 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sunday's Games</b> Portland at Miami, 1 p.m. Minnesota at Brooklyn, 1 p.m. Philadelphia at Cleveland, 3:30 p.m. Milwaukee at Phoenix, 5 p.m. Sacramento at Toronto, 6 p.m. Atlanta at Orlando, 6 p.m. New Orleans at Denver, 8 p.m.</p> <p><b>NHL</b> <b>Monday's Games</b> Edmonton 3, Boston 2, OT Washington 4, Pittsburgh 1 Tampa Bay 2, Columbus 1 Ottawa 5, Los Angeles 3 Buffalo 2, Detroit 1</p> <p><b>Tuesday's Games</b> New Jersey 2, Buffalo 0 Florida 5, N.Y. Islanders 1 N.Y. Rangers 4, Edmonton 2 Philadelphia 4, Carolina 3, OT Tampa Bay 5, Toronto 4, OT San Jose 3, Montreal 1 Calgary 2, Nashville 1, OT Minnesota 6, Vancouver 2 St. Louis 4, Winnipeg 3 Colorado 3, Chicago 0</p>	<p>Dallas 5, Columbus 1 <b>Wednesday's Games</b> Washington 2, Ottawa 1 Boston 3, Pittsburgh 0</p> <p><b>Thursday's Games</b> Buffalo 3, Anaheim 0 Florida 5, New Jersey 1 Philadelphia 2, Vancouver 0</p> <p>San Jose 5, Toronto 4, OT Los Angeles 3, Montreal 0 St. Louis 2, Nashville 1 Minnesota 5, N.Y. Rangers 2</p> <p>Chicago 4, Edmonton 0 Calgary 3, Dallas 1 Colorado 2, N.Y. Islanders 1</p> <p>Columbus 7, Arizona 5 <b>Friday's Games</b> Vancouver 4, Detroit 3, SO Boston 6, Pittsburgh 2 Washington 5, Tampa Bay 3</p> <p>Florida 2, Carolina 0 Ottawa 4, San Jose 2 Winnipeg 5, N.Y. Rangers 2</p> <p><b>Saturday's Games</b> Chicago at Buffalo, 1 p.m. Calgary at St. Louis, 3 p.m. Los Angeles at Toronto, 7 p.m. Anaheim at New Jersey, 7 p.m. Carolina at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m. Philadelphia at Columbus, 7 p.m. Montreal at Dallas, 7 p.m. Minnesota at Nashville, 8 p.m. N.Y. Islanders at Arizona, 9 p.m. Edmonton at Colorado, 10 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sunday's Games</b> Vancouver at Florida, 4 p.m. New Jersey at Boston, 5 p.m. Ottawa at Tampa Bay, 5 p.m. Calgary at Detroit, 7 p.m. Washington at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m. San Jose at Chicago, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>College Football</b> <b>All Times EST</b> <b>Saturday, Dec. 19</b> Celebration Bowl Atlanta NC A&amp;T (9-2) vs. Alcorn State (9-3), Noon New Mexico Bowl Albuquerque Arizona (6-6) vs. New Mexico (7-5), 2 p.m. (ESPN) Las Vegas Bowl BYU (9-3) vs. Utah (9-3), 3:30 p.m. (ABC) Camellia Bowl Montgomery, Ala. Ohio (8-4) vs. Appalachian State (10-2), 5:30 p.m. (ESPN) Cure Bowl Orlando, Fla. San Jose State (5-7) vs. Georgia State (6-6), 7 p.m. (CBSSN) New Orleans Bowl Louisiana Tech (8-4) vs. Arkansas State (9-3), 9 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Monday, Dec. 21</b> Miami Beach Bowl South Florida (8-4) vs. Western Kentucky (11-2), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Tuesday, Dec. 22</b> Famous Idaho Potato Bowl Boise Akron (7-5) vs. Utah State (6-6), 3:30 p.m. (ESPN) Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl Temple (10-3) vs. Toledo (9-2), 7 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Wednesday, Dec. 23</b> Poinsettia Bowl San Diego Northern Illinois (8-5) vs. Boise State (8-4), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN) GoDaddy Bowl Mobile, Ala. Bowling Green (10-3) vs. Georgia Southern (8-4), 8 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Thursday, Dec. 24</b> Bahamas Bowl Nassau</p>	<p>Middle Tennessee (7-5) vs. Western Michigan (7-5), Noon (ESPN) Hawaii Bowl Honolulu Cincinnati (7-5) vs. San Diego State (10-3), 8 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Saturday, Dec. 26</b> St. Petersburg (Fla.) Bowl Marshall (9-3) vs. UConn (6-6), 11 a.m. (ESPN) Sun Bowl El Paso, Texas Miami (8-4) vs. Washington State (8-4), 2 p.m. (CBS) Heart of Dallas Bowl Washington (6-6) vs. Southern Mississippi (9-4), 3:20 p.m. (ESPN) Pinstripe Bowl Bronx, N.Y. Duke (7-5) vs. Indiana (6-6), 3:30 p.m. (ABC) Independence Bowl Shreveport, La. Virginia Tech (6-6) vs. Tulsa (6-6), 5:45 p.m. (ESPN) Foster Farms Bowl Santa Clara, Calif. Nebraska (5-7) vs. UCLA (8-4), 9:15 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Monday, Dec. 28</b> Military Bowl Annapolis, Md. Navy (10-2) vs. Pittsburgh (8-4), 2:30 p.m. (ESPN) Quick Lane Bowl Detroit Central Michigan (7-5) vs. Minnesota (5-7), 5 p.m. (ESPN2) <b>Tuesday, Dec. 29</b> Armed Forces Bowl Fort Worth, Texas Air Force (8-5) vs. California (7-5), 2 p.m. (ESPN) Russell Athletic Bowl Orlando, Fla. North Carolina (11-2) vs. Baylor (9-3), 5:30 p.m. (ESPN) Arizona Bowl Tucson Nevada (6-6) vs. Colorado State (7-5), 7:30 p.m. (ASN) Texas Bowl Houston Texas Tech (7-5) vs. LSU (8-3), 9 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Wednesday, Dec. 30</b> Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl Auburn (6-6) vs. Memphis (9-3), Noon (ESPN) Belk Bowl Charlotte, N.C. NC State (7-5) vs. Mississippi St. (8-4), 3:30 p.m. (ESPN) Music City Bowl Nashville, Tenn. Louisville (7-5) vs. Texas A&amp;M (8-4), 7 p.m. (ESPN) Holiday Bowl San Diego Wisconsin (9-3) vs. Southern Cal (8-5), 10:30 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Thursday, Dec. 31</b> Peach Bowl Atlanta Houston (12-1) vs. Florida State (10-2), Noon (ESPN) Orange Bowl (Playoff Semifinal) Miami Gardens, Fla. Clemson (13-0) vs. Oklahoma (11-1), 4 p.m. (ESPN) Cotton Bowl Classic (Playoff Semifinal) Arlington, Texas Alabama (12-1) vs. Michigan State (12-1), 8 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Friday, Jan. 1</b> Outback Bowl Tampa, Fla. Northwestern (10-2) vs. Tennessee (8-2), Noon (ESPN2) Citrus Bowl Orlando, Fla. Michigan (9-3) vs. Florida (10-3), 1 p.m. (ABC) Fiesta Bowl Glendale, Ariz. Notre Dame (10-2) vs. Ohio State (11-1), 1 p.m. (ESPN) Rose Bowl Pasadena, Calif. Iowa (12-1) vs. Stanford (11-2), 5 p.m. (ESPN) Sugar Bowl</p>	<p>New Orleans Oklahoma State (10-2) vs. Mississippi (9-3), 8:30 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Saturday, Jan. 2</b> TaxSlayer Bowl Jacksonville, Fla. Penn St. (7-5) vs. Georgia (9-3), Noon (ESPN) Liberty Bowl Memphis, Tenn. Kansas St. (6-6) vs. Arkansas (7-5), 3:20 p.m. (ESPN) Alamo Bowl San Antonio Oregon (9-3) vs. TCU (10-2), 6:45 p.m. (ESPN) Cactus Bowl Phoenix West Virginia (7-5) vs. Arizona State (6-6), 10:15 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Monday, Jan. 11</b> College Football Championship Game Glendale, Ariz. Orange Bowl winner vs. Cotton Bowl winner, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN) <b>Saturday, Jan. 23</b> East-West Shrine Classic At St. Petersburg, Fla. East vs. West, 4 p.m. (NFLN) NFLPA Collegiate Bowl At Carson, Calif. National vs. American, 6 p.m. (ESPN2) <b>Saturday, Jan. 30</b> Senior Bowl At Mobile, Ala. North vs. South, 2:30 p.m. (NFLN)</p>	<p>league contract. NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with RHP Bartolo Colon on a one-year contract. Designated C Johnny Monell for assignment. PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Traded RHP Dan Otero to Cleveland for cash. PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with RHP Ryan Vogelsong on a one-year contract. WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Agreed to terms with LHP Aaron Laffey on a minor league contract. <b>American Football League</b> MINNEAPOLIS GOLDFEYES — Traded INF James Boddicker and cash to Joplin for INF Markol Gonzalez and RHP Nestor Molina. <b>Can-Am League</b> NEW JERSEY JACKALS — Released RHP Anthony Claggett. <b>Frontier League</b> LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS — Signed SS Max Casper to a contract extension. Signed C Mike Falsetti. NORMAL CORNBELTERS — Signed RHP Kevin Jefferis to a contract extension. <b>BASKETBALL</b> <b>National Basketball Association</b> NBA — Suspended Houston G Ty Lawson two games for driving while impaired. PHILADELPHIA 76ERS — Named Mike D'Antoni associate head coach. Assigned F Christian Wood to Delaware (NBADL). <b>FOOTBALL</b> <b>National Football League</b> NFL — Fined Cincinnati LB Vontaze Burfict \$69,454, Pittsburgh S Mike Mitchell \$23,152 and Pittsburgh CBs William Gay and Brandon Boykin and WR Antonio Brown \$8,681 for their actions during last week's game. ATLANTA FALCONS — Placed C James Stone on injured reserve. Signed LB Tyler Starr from the practice squad. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed DT Kelcy Quarles to the practice squad. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Released RB Jahwan Edwards from the practice squad. Signed WR Rashad Lawrence to the practice squad. MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed RB Trey Williams and DE Julius Wamsley to the practice squad. NEW YORK JETS — Placed WR Devin Smith on injured reserve. Signed LB Taiwan Jones from the practice squad. OAKLAND RAIDERS — Signed LB Josh Shirley to the practice squad. ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Placed DE Robert Quinn on injured reserve. Signed DT Doug Worthington from the practice squad. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Signed WR B.J. Daniels and CB Stanley Jean-Baptiste to the practice squad. <b>Arena Football League</b> LA KISS — Announced WR DJ Stappens and C Matt Armstrong were assigned to the team. <b>HOCKEY</b> <b>National Hockey League</b> CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS — Recalled F Phillip Danault from Rockford (AHL). NEW YORK RANGERS — Assigned D Brady Skjei to Hartford (AHL). Recalled G Magnus Hellberg and D Chris Summers from Hartford. <b>American Hockey League</b> AHL — Suspended Utica C Wacey Hamilton one game. ALBANY DEVILS — Returned F Greg Wolfe to Adirondack (ECHL).</p>	<p>LEHIGH VALLEY PHANTOMS — Assigned D Mike Marcou to Reading (ECHL). HARTFORD WOLF PACK — Recalled G Jeff Malcom from Greenville (ECHL). Signed D Nick Petrecki to a professional trout agreement. HERSHEY BEARS — Assigned F Austin Fyten to South Carolina (ECHL). <b>ECHL</b> ADIRONDACK THUNDER — Signed F Peter MacArthur. READING ROYALS — Loaned F Cam Reid to Utica (AHL). TULSA OILERS — Released D/F Justin Mansfield. WHEELING NAILERS — Signed F Mathieu Papineau. Added G Jake Reed as emergency backup. <b>LACROSSE</b> <b>National Lacrosse League</b> BUFFALO BANDITS — Placed T Andrew Watt on injured reserve and F Steve Hinek on the holdout list. Assigned T David Brock, M Tim Edwards, D/T Craig England and D Adam Will to the practice squad. COLORADO MAMMOTH — Announced the retirement of D John Gallant. <b>SOCCER</b> <b>Major League Soccer</b> COLUMBUS CREW — Signed D Corey Ashe. TORONTO FC — Traded M Will Johnson to Portland for targeted allocation money and a conditional 2017 second-round draft pick. <b>North American Soccer League</b> JACKSONVILLE ARMADA — Signed F Danny Barrow. <b>COLLEGE</b> EMORY &amp; HENRY — Named Justin Harvey men's golf coach. HIGHLY CROSS — Named Casey Brown women's soccer coach. ILLINOIS — Named Jeff Hecklinski tight ends coach and special teams coordinator and A.J. Ricker offensive line coach. Promoted quarterbacks coach Ryan Cubitt to offensive coordinator. Announced co-defensive coordinator Tim Banks will not return next season. KENTUCKY — Fired offensive coordinator Shannon Dawson and wide receivers coach Tommy Mainord. MISSOURI — Named DeMontee Cross defensive coordinator. NOTRE DAME — Suspended WR Jalen Guyton from all football-related activities. Announced men's swimming coach Matt Tallman is taking an indefinite leave of absence. Announced women's swimming coach Mike Litzinger will assume head coaching responsibilities for the men's program and swimming operations specialist Joseph Spahn will serve as assistant coach. OHIO STATE — Announced freshman F Mickey Mitchell has been declared eligible by the NCAA. RUTGERS — Named Kenny Parker football strength and conditioning coach. SOUTHERN CAL — Named Tee Martin offensive coordinator, in addition to his duties as wide receivers coach. TEXAS TECH — Suspended WR Devin Lauderdale. Announced DL Mike Mitchell and DBs Jalen Barnes and Derrick Dixon will transfer. WINTHROP — Promoted men's associate head soccer coach Daniel Ridenhour to head coach, effective Jan. 1.</p>
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# Doctors still working in Iraq face violence, tribal justice

BAGHDAD (AP) — For nearly three months, anesthesiologist Bashar Taha lived in fear of deadly retaliation.

Taha, 38, was part of a team that performed plastic surgery on a female patient's nose in a Baghdad hospital. The woman had surgery complications afterward and was sent to intensive care, where she died. An autopsy showed bacterial poisoning from the intensive care room caused her death.

But the family blamed Taha and the surgeon, demanding their respective tribes arbitrate the case and rule on compensation. Otherwise, the doctors would face lethal consequences, the family threatened.

As Iraq struggles to combat the Islamic State group, which has captured large swaths of territory and plunged the country into the worst political and security crisis since the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2011, threats against doctors have increased. Research published in the Lancet medical journal estimates more than 2,000 doctors have been killed in Iraq since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. Over the past year, doctors and other medical workers say they are increasingly facing harassment and assaults by disgruntled relatives of patients.

The phenomenon reflects the growing power of tribal

rule in the face of Iraq's weakening central government. Doctors are either turning down cases or seeking work abroad in increasing numbers, further crippling a health care system already plagued by corruption, mismanagement and shortages.

Taha, the anesthesiologist, had approached the Iraqi Doctors Syndicate and even clerics, but with little faith in Iraq's dysfunctional justice system, they hinted he should work with tribal leaders. Eventually, he and the surgeon paid the family 50 million Iraqi dinars (about \$41,000).

"We are living in a state of lawlessness, the government is barely able to function," Taha told *The Associated Press*. "So we paid in order to save ourselves and our families, or at least to avoid being assaulted or insulted by an uneducated man in the street in front of others."

The deputy head of the Iraqi Doctors Syndicate, Dr. Mahdi Jassim, said assaults occur "on a daily basis in almost all medical centers due to the lack of security nationwide." He called for "swift action from the government to protect the doctors, otherwise we will all lose."

Since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, Iraq's professional class has been targeted by militants trying to widen chaos or by gangs extorting

the wealthy.

Since the 1990s — when the country reeled under harsh U.N. economic sanctions — about 11,000 doctors have left Iraq, the majority of them after 2003, Health Ministry spokesman Ahmed al-Rudaini said. The country's medical centers are limping along with only 25 percent of the required staffing, he said.

Specific numbers for assaults, kidnappings and killings of medical staff are not available, but al-Rudaini said the issue has become a "phenomenon recently that forces a lot of doctors not to accept major surgeries with high risk or to seek refuge abroad, making it hard for the ministry to persuade those who are abroad to return."

Jassim said every month about 70 to 80 doctors, mostly new graduates, apply to the Iraqi Doctors Syndicate for the documents that are needed to seek jobs outside Iraq.

Interior Ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Saad Maan said a special committee has been established in coordination with the Health Ministry to follow up on the assaults. "We have increased the number of guards in health institutions and attackers will face tough measures," he said.

Like many parts of the Arab world, tribal affiliations play a significant role in Iraqi

society. Their influence was more muted before 2003 but has surged in many parts of Iraq due to the chaos and successive weak governments since Saddam's toppling.

Many people now prefer to solve disputes — like theft, assaults and murder — through their tribes instead of going to authorities. Some disputes in the south this year turned into bloody clashes that lasted for days, paralyzing those areas as security forces stayed on the sidelines.

Iraqi tribal arbitration still follows centuries-old customs. The plaintiff tribe sends a mediator to invite the other tribe to meet at their diwan a place where tribesmen receive guests within a specific period of time. If the other tribe fails to show, the plaintiff tribe can take up arms to exact revenge.

It's not only ordinary citizens who rely on tribal justice. This year, at least two tribal sessions were held for lawmakers over statements they made against each other in the media.

Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, last month blamed "the weak status of the law that gives opportunity to some to use their influence or tribal arbitration as a means to assault and blackmail others."

In late September, 32-year-old Saddam al-Saiedi died a few days after having weight loss surgery in Iraq's southern city of Basra. Autopsy results have not yet

been released, but al-Saiedi's tribe blamed the surgeon, who fled the city after the words "Wanted to be punished for death" were spray-painted on his home and clinic.

"The health situation in Basra is terrible. The doctors are greedy and care only about their pockets, while authorities do not monitor their work and do not punish the wrongdoers," said al-Saiedi's brother, Mohammed. "If all these things existed in Iraq, I would never rely on the tribe."

He added: "If lawmakers are relying on their tribes to solve their issues, what should a normal citizen do?"

A Baghdad-based surgeon said his female patient died three months after weight loss surgery, prompting her tribe to demand compensation. He said they refused to wait for results of the autopsy and even threatened to kill him.

The surgeon, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is still trying to resolve the dispute, said he complained to police, who didn't treat his case seriously. Eventually, he asked his tribe to provide guards for his clinic and home.

"I'm not guilty, so I don't want to solve it through tribes," he said.

When the issue is finally resolved, the surgeon said he was planning to ask for an unpaid one-year vacation to seek other opportunities abroad. "I had ambition, but it is gone now."

## US high school graduation rate ticks up to 82 percent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. high school graduation rate inched up to 82 percent and the achievement gap narrowed, according to new federal data that raise concern among education officials and others that too many students still aren't getting a diploma.

The latest figures released Tuesday by the Education Department showed wide disparities in graduation rates according to where students live. Leading the way was Iowa, with a graduation rate of nearly 91 percent. The District of Columbia had the lowest rate, 61 percent.

For the nation, the graduation rate for the 2013-14 school year was up almost a percentage point from 81 percent the previous

year, and was the highest rate since the department started using a new, uniform measure in 2010.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan praised the new numbers as encouraging, saying the progress was real and powerful.

Duncan cited three-year graduation rate numbers that show solid improvement for black and Hispanic students and English language learners, with progress by all three groups outpacing their white counterparts.

Still, nearly 1 in 5 students are leaving high school without a diploma. "We have a good deal more to do to ensure that every child has access to a quality education," Duncan said in a phone call with reporters.

While noting progress among subgroups of students, the latest figures drew concern from groups campaigning for a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. To reach that goal, the rate needs to increase each year by at least 1.3 percent a mark the nation has met for the last three years, but missed for the 2013-14 school year.

"We've been talking about the importance of early warning systems to signal those students who need extra support, and we view this as an early warning indicator to the nation that we need a second act," said John Bridgeland, head of Civic Enterprises, a public policy group that is joined in the "90 percent" campaign.

## 18th-century marble bust returns to Poland

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — An 18th-century marble bust of the goddess Diana looted by the Nazis in 1940 has returned to Warsaw from Vienna, where it recently surfaced at an auction house.

The return of the sculpture by French master Jean-Antoine Houdon, valued at 250,000 euros, (\$270,000) is the latest development in Poland's yearslong effort to retrieve tens of thousands of works of art looted from museums and private collections in the nation's tumultuous history, most recently during World War II.

Poland has listed some 63,000 works of art as missing.

The white marble, bare-breasted bust of the hunter goddess was officially returned on Friday to

Warsaw's Lazienki Palace, following months of efforts by Poland's government and the Art Recovery Group Ltd.

"It is wonderful to have her back with us," said Culture Minister Piotr Glinski.

The sculpture was among the most precious purchases made by Poland's last king, Stanislaw August Poniatowski in late 18th century. It was first looted from the palace by Bolshevik troops during World War I, but returned when Polish troops entered Russian territory in 1920, during a war against Moscow.

It vanished again in 1940 during Nazi Germany's wartime occupation of Poland.

Last spring, a Vienna auction house contacted

Polish art expert, Ewa Ziembinska, over a bust that a private person wanted to sell through them. Based on pre-war records and photos, the sculpture was identified as Poland's property. Its return was obtained through legal and diplomatic efforts with no payment involved, officials said.

"It is a true pleasure to see Diana finally back home and we are looking forward to many more successful homecomings in the future," said Ariane Moser of the Art Recovery Group.

Seven other looted works of art were returned to Poland this year, which Glinski called a very good result. But he singled out Sweden as not being open to any talks on restitution of art looted during Sweden's invasion in the 17th-century.

## CITY OF BIG SPRING NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Pursuant to the authority granted by the City Council of the City of Big Spring, Texas, the City of Big Spring will receive sealed proposals on the following date/time for the purchase of the items/services listed below:


Date/Time: Thursday, January 14, 2016, at 2:00 p.m., for the following:

1. RFP # 16-012 Seal Coat Project
2. RFP # 16-013 Demolition of Structures

Proposals are to be opened and read aloud in the City Council Chambers at 307 East 4th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79720, with award to be made at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Big Spring City Council. Proposal information and specifications may be obtained from the Office of the Purchasing Agent, 1380 Airpark Drive East, Bldg. #19, Big Spring, Texas 79720. All proposals must be marked with the date of the proposals and a general description of the proposal item(s).


The City of Big Spring reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any or all formalities.

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December 25 & 26

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# Coahoma gets revenge against Forsan in Howard County matchup

By TAYLOR ELLIS

Sports Editor

COAHOMA — In the two school's first head to head matchup since the Howard County bowl back in late August, these two programs renewed their rivalry on the basketball court. Coahoma came out on top this time around as the battle moved from the gridiron to the basketball gym.

Coahoma defeated Forsan 51-46 behind Mason Moore's 17 points. Jon Bermea poured in 15 and Adam Clark had five.

"It was a very defensive first half followed by an offensive second half," Coahoma head coach Kim Nichols said.

Forsan battled back and took the lead at the end of the third quarter. Moore and Clark sealed a victory in the tightly contested fourth quarter with some huge free throws late.

"It was a typical Forsan versus Coahoma game with everyone playing at a very high intensity," Forsan head coach Gary Huckabee said.

Garrett Evans led Forsan in scoring with 13 points.

Josh Evans poured in nine, and Ben Mikeska had seven points.

Bermea led the Bulldogs in rebounding with six boards, three on both ends of the court. Cade Ramsey, who played well defensively, hauled in five boards. Brittain Heath also played well on the defensive end of the court.

The Bulldogs shot 40 percent from the field and from beyond the arc. They also made 9 of 16 (56 percent) from the free throw line.

The Bulldog's will enjoy the Christmas break and get back

into action Dec. 28, as they travel to the Mary Tatum Invitational in Big Lake to take on Grape Creek High School. Forsan will travel to Ackerly for a Varsity tournament from Dec. 28 to the 29.

## FORSAN SCORING LEADERS

Garrett Evans- 13  
Josh Evans- 9  
Ben Mikeska- 7  
Kobe Richardson- 4  
Ian Park- 4  
Akkey McVae- 4  
Jacob Valdez- 2  
Walker Park- 2

## COAHOMA SCORING LEADERS

Mason Moore- 20  
Jon Bermea- 15  
Adam Clark- 8  
Brittain Heath- 4  
Austin Sosa- 4  
Cade Ramsey- 3

Coahoma: 14 - 5 - 17 - 15: 51  
Forsan: 11 - 6 - 20 - 8: 45

Contact sports editor Taylor Ellis at [sports@bigspringherald.com](mailto:sports@bigspringherald.com) or 432.263.7331, ext 237

# Nowitzki scores 20, leads Mavericks past Grizzlies 97-88

DALLAS (AP) — Playing against one of the NBA's best front lines, the Dallas Mavericks' big men stepped up.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 20 points, leading the Mavericks past the Memphis Grizzlies 97-88 Friday night.

Chandler Parsons had 16 points and Zaza Pachulia got 10 points and 18 rebounds for Dallas. Of the Mavericks' six players in double figures, five were forwards or centers. That included reserve big men JaVale McGee and Charlie Villanueva, who each scored 10 points.

McGee set a season high for both points and minutes played (18), and contributed strong defense on the Grizzlies' Zach Randolph, who had just seven points.

"He was fantastic," Nowitzki said of McGee. "If you look at all the good teams, they all have athleticism from their bigs. He was definitely a game-changer for us."

McGee was playing in just his eighth game of the season as he continues to recover from a stress fracture in his left tibia, an injury that has dogged him since 2013.

"It's rewarding but it's not the end of the road," McGee said. "It's not even close to the end. Until I'm out there play-

ing 30 minutes a game, it's not the end of the road."

Mike Conley scored 20 points and Marc Gasol had 16 for Memphis, which lost for the fourth time in its last five games.

The Grizzlies' defense repeatedly left Mavericks' shooters alone for open looks. Coming out of a Memphis timeout, Villanueva spotted up for a 3-pointer to give the Mavericks their biggest lead of the night to that point, 73-58.

After the Grizzlies used a 10-2 run to cut the lead to 75-68, two more defensive breakdowns led to wide open corner 3s by Parsons and Raymond Felton for an 83-70 lead that Dallas extended to as many as 18 points.

"They did what they wanted to do as far as moving the ball without any resistance," Conley said. "They're too good to get too many easy baskets like that. We allowed them to get a good rhythm."

Memphis led for most of the first half as the Mavericks started 2 of 13 from the field. But consecutive 3-pointers by J.J. Barea, Felton and Deron Williams gave Dallas its first lead at 38-35.

Williams went on to hit three free throws

after Matt Barnes committed a costly shooting foul on his desperation 3-point shot with only 0.2 seconds left in the half. Williams' foul shots gave the Mavericks a 55-49 halftime lead.

"In one quarter we play great defense and really good offense and then, all of a sudden, we stop doing that," Gasol said. "Every time we get hit, it takes a long time for us to get up."

## A "PRIME" PERFORMANCE

Parsons is still rehabbing his right knee after offseason surgery, and Friday marked his second strong game in a week, following a 17-point performance in a win over Phoenix on Monday. Coach Rick Carlisle praised his dedication, saying: "Everybody wants a nice cooked steak, but nobody wants to see you chopping up the cows in the back. The last five or six months, Parsons has been in the back butchering the cows — that's the kind of work he's had to do."

## TROUBLE IN THE THIRD

The third quarter has been the key to the Grizzlies' success this season. In their wins, they've averaged 26 points and shot 46 percent. In losses, their numbers have been 20

points and 41 percent shooting. Friday they scored 17 on 5-for-17 shooting. "I think we have to come out with better focus in the third quarters," Conley said. "We try to force the issue, force plays, instead of just playing free and playing with confidence."

## TIP-INS

Grizzlies: Memphis was without guard Tony Allen for the fourth straight game due to a

right knee injury... The Grizzlies wore throw-back uniforms commemorating the 1974-75 Memphis Sounds of the ABA.

Mavericks: Devin Harris missed the game with a right hamstring strain suffered on Wednesday against Indiana. Coach Rick Carlisle said before the game that the injury was not serious but there was no timetable for Harris' return. With his two free throws

in the first quarter, Nowitzki passed Adrian Dantley for eighth place on the NBA's all-time free throws made list. ... Pachulia recorded his 15th double-double of the season, the same number he had all of last year.

## UP NEXT

Grizzlies: Host Indiana on Saturday.

Mavericks: Travel to Toronto on Tuesday.

Ronnie Ted Cearley passed away at his residence on Thursday, December 3, 2015 at age 68. He was a resident of Erwinville, La. He was born in Graham, Tx. December 14, 1946 to Roy Cearley and Katie Grisham Cearley. The family moved to Coahoma, TX in 1950 where Ted attended Coahoma Schools and played football for the legendary Spike Dykes.

He wanted to work for Chevron at an early age and transferred to Louisiana, and upon retirement from them, he worked at Pipe Line Inspection having worked in Pakistan and several different states.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Connie Fortie Cearley, son, Tracey Cearley and wife Jackie of Montgomery, TX., Stepson, Martin Wayne Smiley, 5 grandchildren: Chance, Zach, Sidney, Michael and Katherine, Sister Shirley ditto of Big Spring, TX, Brother Jim Cearley of Big Spring, Tx., Sister-in-Law Bonnie Cearley of San Angelo, Tx, only surviving Aunt Frances Cearley of Gruver, TX., and several special cousins, nieces and nephews and numerous friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his daughter, Kerrie Cearley and brother Kent Cearley.

He was a member of the Masonic Temple, Fordoche Lodge #292 in Maringouin, LA.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.



Ronnie Ted Cearley

## Congratulations!

# Scenic Mountain Medical Center's

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5 YEARS

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Megan Martinez  
Rebecca Connell  
Elaine Murphy  
Sally Mendez  
Roger Rodman  
Randall Webb

Cynthia Yanez  
Rick Flores  
Tanya Michelle Gilbreath  
Korina Morelion  
James Fair  
Delores Daily

### Clinical Director of the Year



Danny Whitehead

10 YEARS

Psyche Mancha  
Orlando Yabes  
Leonilo Garcia  
Daniel Whitehead

Erin Carroll  
Courtney Grissam  
Arturo Trevino  
Stephanie Breckenridge

15 YEARS

Mitzi Knight  
Kellie Tubb  
Sherri Wigington

Jennifer Hale  
Imelda Duenez

### Employee of the Year



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Isaac Low

25 YEARS

Judy Roeber, RN, DNP  
Toya Rivers  
Glenda Low

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### Public Notice

#### NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION (AVISO DE ELECCION GENERAL)

To the Registered Voters of  
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(A los votantes registrados  
del Howard County, Texas:)

### Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that  
the polling places listed  
below will be open from 7:00  
a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on January  
19, 2016, for voting in a  
general tax rate rollback  
election.  
(Notifíquese, por las  
presente, que las casillas  
electorales citados abajo se  
abrirán desde las 7:00 a.m.  
hasta las 7:00 p.m. el 19 de  
Enero de 2016 para votar en  
la eleccion de este tipo de  
gravamen general.)

LOCATION(S) OF POLLING  
PLACES  
(DIRECCION(ES) DE LAS  
CASSILLAS  
ELECTORALES)  
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ROLLBACK ELECTION -  
Howard College Dorothy  
Garrett Coliseum

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conducted each weekday at  
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de lunes a viernes en)

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Office, Courthouse, Big  
Spring/la oficina del  
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Big Spring between the hours  
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beginning on January 4, 2016  
(entre las 8:00 a.m. de las  
manana y las 5:00 de la tarde  
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January 15, 2016 (y  
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Elections Administrator  
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Big Spring, Texas 79721

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(Las solicitudes para boletos  
que se votaran en ausencia

### Public Notice

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negocio en)  
January 8, 2016/  
Enero 8, 2016

Additional early voting will be  
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(La votacion en ausencia  
ademas se llevara a cabo en  
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Issued this the 26th day of  
October, 2015  
(Emitada este dia 26th de  
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Dr. John Freeman  
Signature of  
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(Firma del Oficial que  
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#8914 December 20, 2015

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# Spurs hold off Clippers, improve to 15-0 at home

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The San Antonio Spurs were upset with non-calls, became anxious as they struggled to overcome a rare deficit and grew tense as they fought to maintain a late lead against the Los Angeles Clippers.

And the Spurs enjoyed it all.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 26 points and 13 rebounds, Tony Parker scored 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, and San Antonio held on for a 115-107 victory on Friday night to remain undefeated at home.

After winning their previous four games by an average of 26 points, the Spurs embraced the challenge of capturing and maintaining a lead in the final minutes.

"Clips are a hell of a team," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "Very experienced, obviously well-coached, they're disciplined (and) they're used to winning. So, when you can win a game like that, it gives you a good measuring stick."

Kawhi Leonard had 19 points and Tim Duncan added 14 for the Spurs, who are 15-0 at home this season.

Chris Paul had 27 points and 10 assists for the Clippers, who entered the game having won nine of 11. Blake Griffin added 25 points and DeAndre Jordan had 16 points and 17 rebounds.



Kawhi Leonard (left) pivots around Los Angeles Clipper Blake Griffin (right) to pass the ball to a teammate Friday night at home.

AP photo

The Spurs leads the league in several defensive categories, but offense dominated the first matchup between the teams since the Clippers eliminated the then-defending champions in the first round of last season's playoffs.

"It's just two very offensively powered teams," Paul said. "We are usually right up there at the top in the league in offense and they are usually right up there, too. Tonight both teams just made shots and it came down to whoever made the most stops."

San Antonio opened the final quarter on an 11-0 run, beginning with Patty Mills' layup on the fifth pass of the possession after the Spurs passed up three 3-pointers. Parker's 3-pointer closed the run and gave San Antonio a 96-88 lead with 9:17 remaining.

"I thought we still played all right (during the Spurs' run)," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "I just didn't think we executed well offensively and I thought it bled over to our defense. I thought we were frustrated from the offensive end in that stretch

and then they scored every time."

The Spurs then resumed intentionally fouling Jordan, and it disrupted their offense as much as it limited the Clippers.

San Antonio would not score until Parker hit another 3-pointer with 6:08 remaining, but the Spurs were able to maintain a 99-93 advantage. Parker also drained a 15-footer with 1:19 remaining and ran down a long rebound off Manu Ginobili's miss with 53 seconds.

San Antonio entered the game holding oppo-

nents to 88.2 points, but the Clippers matched that in taking an 88-85 lead entering the fourth.

"This is good for us," Aldridge said. "It makes us focus at the end of the game; not be

so easy. I thought our guys played well down the stretch."

Aldridge shot 11 for 18 and grabbed 11 defensive rebounds in matching his season high for points.

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Mercury and Uranus Feud

There are people in your inner circle who could

share with you an amazingly on-point and actionable solution to your problem, yet most people would rather listen to a stranger. That's human nature, agitated in the final hours of the Sagittarius sun and the square of Mercury and Uranus. One proverb suggests, "No man is a prophet in his own land."

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). Part of being a good friend is recognizing when the other person wants to talk. Your powers of empathy are turned up and your gesture of compassion will facilitate a heart-to-heart connection.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). Your quest is for optimum health. The problem is that the healthiest choice is not always readily available. You can change this by

becoming pro-active. Plan ahead. Bring your own "healthy choice."

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Today will bring many good offerings and if you only take advantage of one, your life will be better than if you said yes to more than that. This day is made great by focused joy.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). Caution: The relationship that feels like it's dragging you down with a drama-anchor may falsely profess to be love, but that's not love. If hope floats, love is equally buoyant.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). Take emotional risks. You can afford it. You're rich in confidence these days, and stretching outside of your comfort zone will give you even more certainty in your abilities.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Though you may inwardly grumble over minor irritations, you've the maturity and class to be outwardly silent about it. Anyway, when you dwell on

what you're thankful for, annoyances will diminish.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be exceptionally sharp, and if you combine that with an ultra-organized approach this could be one of the most productive days of the season. A list and a plan will help you stay on track.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Give all, but not all at once. You're a beautiful mystery, a story that's unfolding, a promise. Hopefully you'll enjoy being the subject of someone's amorous intrigue!

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your favorite treats are the ones you feel like you worked for, the harder the work the better. You will savor a well-earned prize in the very near future.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll be around plenty of the kind of delectable pleasures that elevate the spirit, but only temporarily. Also you'll invest your attention in something that's sure to

last the ages.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll probably be feeling uncharacteristically shy under these stars. You've a wealth of fascinations to share, but you're not likely to do so unless encouraged by the right audience.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). Ideas have the power to motivate or thwart. That's why your thinking time is so precious. An hour to yourself with nothing but your thoughts (and a way of recording them) will be overwhelmingly positive.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (Dec. 20). You own this day, and the next and the next. Claiming possession of your hours will make you rich. Someone you knew when you were younger will play an important role. Burdens turn to privileges -- an oppressive circumstance lifts in February when you'll revel in freedom. Relationship excitement begins in March. Cancer and Leo adore you. Your

lucky numbers are: 5, 30, 41, 27 and 16.

**FORECAST FOR THE WEEK AHEAD:** Mercury and Uranus start the week off with a feud that promises a few zingy, stingy exchanges. People have a tendency not to taste their words before they spit them out. It's no matter -- everyone tastes things differently, anyway. (If the judges of high-profile cooking shows can't agree, you can bet that when it comes to the way things taste, public opinion will vary wildly.) Since what's mild to one person may seem spicy to the next, this is a week for sticking with the tried and true favorites. What's the verbal equivalent to macaroni and cheese or the conversational version of a chocolate brownie? Figure that out and your sweet words will set you up for a happy holiday season.

This week brings the momentous winter solstice. In the northern hemisphere it's the longest night of the year. South of the Antarctic Circle

the sun will shine at midnight. Physically the balance of light and dark changes everything -- the way things grow, the feel of a place, people's moods and habits and more. Spiritually, what does it mean to you? When you come out of your own long night of the soul what bright hope will you wake up to?

**CELEBRITY PROFILES:** Among other high-profile projects, Sagittarius superstar Jonah Hill stars in the new musical by the Coen brothers, "Hail, Caesar!" With four major luminaries in Sagittarius, Hill excels in roles that bring him to completely alien worlds, a talent he's tapped into in most of the roles he takes on these days. The versatile star was born when the moon was in ever-changing Cancer.

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# MAKE TIME FOR FAMILY READING

## Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

### Luck Is the Name of the Game

South dealer.  
Both sides vulnerable.  
**NORTH**  
♠ A J 5  
♥ A 6 2  
♦ 7  
♣ Q 9 8 7 4 3

**WEST**  
♠ K 9 6 3  
♥ J 9 4 3  
♦ K J 8 6 2  
♣ —

**EAST**  
♠ 10 8 7 2  
♥ 10 7 5  
♦ A 10 9 5 3  
♣ 6

**SOUTH**  
♠ Q 4  
♥ K Q 8  
♦ Q 4  
♣ A K J 10 5 2

The bidding:  
**South** 1 NT  
6 ♦  
**West** Pass  
Pass  
**North** 6 ♣  
6 NT  
**East** Pass  
Pass

Opening lead — three of spades.

Hands that have been misbid can sometimes produce sensational results. For example, consider this deal from a team-of-four match.

South's opening notrump bid at the first table was certainly off the beaten track, since he had two doubletons, a six-card suit and no true stoppers in spades or diamonds.

North's six-club response was optimistic in the extreme, but in the

actual case the club slam would have succeeded with the aid of a spade finesse had South seen fit to pass that response.

But South misinterpreted the six-club bid — given his club holding, it seemed unlikely to him that his partner could have a genuine club suit. Since he and his partner had agreed to play transfer bids, he mistakenly decided that North was asking him to bid the next higher-ranking suit, so he bid six diamonds.

Realizing that South had misunderstood the six-club bid, North retreated to six notrump. West led a spade, and declarer had no option but to play low from dummy. After winning with the queen and cashing his clubs and hearts, declarer took a second spade finesse to bring the slam home for a score of 1,440 points.

At the second table, South became declarer at three notrump, rather than six, and West had no trouble finding the normal lead of his fourth-best diamond. East-West quickly collected five diamond tricks, so South went down one for a loss of 100 points.

We're not sure if there's a moral here, so we'll just say that sometimes the scales of justice seem to be tipped the wrong way.

Tomorrow: Famous Hand.  
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## sudoku

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

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

[www.sudoku-puzzles.net](http://www.sudoku-puzzles.net)

# Parents grapple with talking to scared kids after threat

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After receiving word that all Los Angeles schools would shut down Tuesday because of a threat of possible attack, many parents' first thoughts were about how to discuss the scary situation with their kids.

Lupita Vela's 8-year-old daughter enjoys attending Eagle Rock Elementary on the city's northeast side, and Vela was worried about her daughter feeling unsafe in class.

"I don't want this to be in the back of her head," she said. "Who knows what it does psychologically to kids? Is this going to cause her some kind of trauma so that she's not going to feel safe at school?"

The shutdown at the nation's second-largest district abruptly closed more than 900 public schools and 187 charter schools attended by 640,000 students across the Los Angeles area.

New York City officials said they got the same threat but quickly determined it was not credible. Hours later, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee said it was believed to be a hoax.

Los Angeles police say the emailed threat was specific to all the campuses in the vast district and included implied threats about explosive devices, assault rifles and machine pistols.

Parents should first reassure themselves by getting as much information as possible about potential risks, according to Dr. Jason Hershberger,

chair of psychiatry at Brookdale University Hospital in New York. Then sit down with the child and find out his or her specific fears, he said.

"Each kid has a different relationship with school, with teachers, with other kids in class. So their fears can be very unique," Hershberger said. "Ask them, 'What is the thing you're most afraid of?'"

It's important to emphasize to children that while there are dangers in the world, there are also plenty of ways to deal with them and stay safe.

"There are police, there are teachers, there are parents. When bad things happen, good people get together and figure out how to face it," Hershberger suggested telling frightened children.

The decision to close the Los Angeles district disrupted the morning routines of many families who found themselves suddenly facing discussions about fears rather than what cereal to eat.

Bobby Kim, co-founder of LA streetwear brand "The Hundreds," was making breakfast for his children when they learned of the closure.

"It's a strange thing to have to explain to your kids, but I guess that's the world we live in," Kim said.

Vela, who also has a son who is a high school senior, called the threat "absolutely terrifying" in

light of the San Bernardino attack, which killed 14 people earlier this month. She got an automated phone call informing her of the closure.

"I know the kids are anxious," she said. "Of course they're texting all their friends. Their phones are blowing up."

Communication between kids and their friends is important, and parents should resist the urge to shield young people from scary news, said Dr. Karen Rogers, a child psychologist at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

She suggested comparing the shutdown to preparations for earthquakes — a practice familiar to every California schoolchild.

"Earthquakes are a risk, but they don't happen very often," Rogers said. "A threat like this is no different. It's about being prepared, taking precautions."

Many parents were supportive of school officials' better-safe-than-sorry approach.

Kim said he was "appreciative for the prompt response and closures" but he hoped the "heightened terrorism climate" wouldn't become a major worry for his kids.

Lucrecia Santibanez, whose son attends a Los Angeles school, agreed.

"The one thing I'm afraid of is now anyone can call in with a hoax and send everyone scrambling for options for their children," she said.

# Despite lack of eggs, Just Mayo says it's keeping its name

NEW YORK (AP) — Just Mayo says it will get to keep its name, a decision that caps a rollercoaster year for the vegan spread that has rattled the egg industry.

After months of discussions, Just Mayo's maker Hampton Creek says it worked out an agreement with the Food and Drug Administration that lets the eggless spread keep its name, as long as a few changes are made to its label. The resolution comes after the FDA sent a warning letter to Hampton Creek in August saying Just Mayo was misbranded because mayonnaise is defined as having eggs.

Without providing details, the FDA said in statement it worked with Hampton Creek to address the issues cited in its letter, and that it considers the matter to be resolved.

As part of the deal, Hampton Creek says Just Mayo's label will make it clear that the product does not con-

tain eggs. The changes include making the words "egg-free" larger and adding "Spread & Dressing." An image of an egg with a pea shoot inside will also be smaller.

A definition of "just" as being "guided by reason, justice and fairness" will be put on the new label as well.

The agreement would bring closure to one of the challenges in the past year faced by Hampton Creek, a San Francisco startup that has made headlines with its \$120 million in funding and a mission of improving the food system with options that are healthier, more affordable and better for the environment. The attention has been enough that The New York Times declared "mayo" to be one of the "top new food words" of 2015 earlier this week.

The spotlight has also made Hampton Creek a target.

Last year, Hellmann's mayonnaise maker Unilever filed a lawsuit saying

Just Mayo's name was misleading. After facing backlash from Hampton Creek supporters, Unilever dropped the suit.

Behind the scenes, Hampton Creek also raised concerns at the American Egg Board, which promotes the egg industry and is responsible for the "Incredible, Edible Egg" slogan. The group's CEO, Joanne Ivy, tried to stop the sale of Just Mayo at Whole Foods, according to emails obtained through a public records request by Ryan Shapiro and Jeffrey Light, Freedom of Information Act experts.

The attempt to stop Just Mayo's sale raises regulatory issues because the board is overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, making it a quasi-governmental body. After The Associated Press reported on the emails Sept. 2, Ivy retired earlier than planned and the USDA began an investigation into the egg board.

Josh Tetrack, CEO of Hampton

Creek, said the company was able to find common ground with the FDA over its label. He said it wasn't about one side winning or losing, but working together to create a "just food system."

Hampton Creek enlisted the help of Stuart Pape, a former attorney with the FDA based in Washington, D.C. who specializes in labeling and regulatory issues at the law firm Polsinelli.

The letter from the FDA had also noted that Just Mayo contains ingredients that are not permitted by the standard of identity for mayonnaise. It also said that the product is not qualified to make implied health claims that it can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Pape said that the formula for Just Mayo is not changing, and that the other labeling issues have been resolved.

# Christmas Coloring Contest

## Winners

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\$24,998



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\$15,998



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\$27,598



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\$36,998



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14,222 MILES.  
\$23,798



2012 NISSAN MURANO  
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2013 CHRYSLER 300  
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\$44,598



2012 FORD RAPTOR  
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\$42,998



2011 FORD F350  
SINGLE WHEEL. 96K.  
\$34,998

# Malls lose luster as online sales increase

NEW YORK (AP) — More often shoppers are making the decision to sit on their couches rather than head to stores this holiday season.

Online sales growth so far this holiday season is surpassing growth in sales at physical stores, according to First Data, which analyzed online and in-store payments from Oct. 31 through Monday.

Sales growth for stores is up 2 percent, while online sales rose 4.6 percent, according to First Data, which declined to give dollar figures, citing proprietary reasons.

Total spending, including sales in both physical stores and online, climbed 2.4 percent, stronger than the 1.8 percent growth during the same period last year.

While physical stores still account for the majority of spending, the uneven growth between buying at locations and on websites signals the continuation of a big shift in how U.S. consumers are shopping.

This season, Mother Nature appeared to provide an extra lift to online sales, analysts said. While unseasonably warm weather has hurt overall sales of cold-weather items, it appears to be driving more shopping to buy on their PCs or mobile phones since they don't want to waste a pleasant day inside a mall.

"Store traffic is down everywhere, and it's compounded by the weather," said Steven Barr, U.S. retail and consumer sector leader for PwC. "We do believe that warm weather is driving consumers online."

The big question, he asks, is whether warm

*This season, Mother Nature appeared to provide an extra lift to online sales, analysts said. While unseasonably warm weather has hurt overall sales of cold-weather items, it appears to be driving more shopping to buy on their PCs or mobile phones since they don't want to waste a pleasant day inside a mall.*

weather is the number one reason or a secondary reason shoppers are heading online this season.

The overall shift to online spending is largely due to more retailers working to improve their websites and offer speedier delivery on orders placed online. As a result, shoppers, who increasingly are looking for convenience, are spending more of their holiday budgets online.

That's led to a big gap in some product categories between online and physical stores. According to First Data, clothing and accessories stores had a 2.9 percent sales decline so far this season, compared with a 3.7 percent increase online. Furniture and home furnishings store sales slipped 0.5 percent,

while online increased 8.1 percent.

And while the average order for key product areas remained largely the same as last year, clothing and accessories got hit hard because of deep discounting. Stores have needed to ramp up price cuts to get rid of excess goods amid the mild temperatures that have extended into December. As a result, the average ticket size for those products went to \$88.30 from last year's \$83.43.

Amy Kemper said she's been shopping more online because of the convenience of doing so. Her family travels for the holidays, and it's easier to buy online and then have things shipped to where they are going.

"I do come to the mall to look around and see what's out there and then go back online," said Kemper, who lives in Indianapolis.

First Data doesn't make predictions for holiday sales. But the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, expects sales for November and December to rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion. There's still plenty of time for that estimate to come true: Christmas is a week away, and there are some of the biggest shopping days left.

And as cutoffs to order online to get gifts shipped to stores approaches, retailers are relying on die-hard traditionalists like Ann Rabbit during the final stretch.

Rabbit picked up a sweater for herself for 40 percent off at Old Navy in East Harlem in New York on a recent weekend.

"I don't do online. I like to touch things," she said.

# 'Force Awakens' on track for record \$215M opening weekend

NEW YORK (AP) — "Star Wars" fever has spread through movie theaters around the globe, even reaching the White House, as the franchise yet again began toppling box-office records with waves of lightsaber-wielding fans.

Following a record \$57 million from Thursday night showings in North America, and packed matinees on Friday, the Walt Disney Co. projected that "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" will surpass \$215 million on the weekend, besting the record domestic opening of "Jurassic World," which debuted with \$208.8 million in June.

Such an outcome would surprise few analysts, but the numbers were nevertheless eye-popping. "The Force Awakens" was heading toward a Thursday night-Friday total of more than \$120 million domestically, said Dave Hollis, head of distribution for Disney. The previous one-day high was \$91.1 million set by "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2" in 2011.

In such rarified territory, Disney has been cautious about overestimating the box-office force of J.J. Abrams' seventh chapter in George Lucas' space saga. Based on the early response, many analysts have the film pegged for a weekend total closer to \$250 million — far above "Jurassic World."

Disney's biggest worry has been that moviegoers will be too daunted by sold-out shows and long lines. More than \$100 million advance tickets (also a record) were sold ahead of

the opening of "The Force Awakens," much of those going toward Thursday and Friday shows. Saturday and Sunday will depend more on traditional walk-up business. Hollis said exhibitors are continually adding more screenings to satisfy demand.

The international rollout for the film, made for about \$200 million, has already brought in an estimated total of \$72.7 million since opening in a handful of countries Wednesday. "The Force Awakens" is simultaneously opening around the world just about everywhere but China, where it debuts in January.

It's setting records overseas, too, including the biggest single day ever in the United Kingdom with an estimated \$14.4 million on Thursday.

While "Star Wars" helped create the summer blockbuster, "The Force Awakens" is debuting in the holiday season of December, where the previous top opening was the \$84.6 million debut of 2012's "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey." By Disney's estimates, "The Force Awakens" — the widest December opening ever with 4,134 theaters — blew past that number by Friday afternoon.

Imax and 3-D screenings are helping to propel the record gross. Disney said that 47 percent of the Thursday box office came from 3-D showings and \$5.7 million from Imax screens.

A lot is riding on the film for Disney, which paid \$4.06 billion for Lucasfilm in 2012. Sequels and spinoffs are already in development for years to come, not to mention an entire cor-

ner of Disneyland devoted to the franchise.

Strong reviews for the film, which is set 30 years after "Return of the Jedi," have added to the fervor for "The Force Awakens." Critics have hailed it as a fan-friendly return to form for the franchise; the American Film Institute listed it among its top 10 films of the year.

Such a positive reaction for "The Force Awakens" may attract the kind of repeat viewings that made James Cameron's "Avatar" and "Titanic" the highest grossing films of all time. Whether "The Force Awakens" can come close to the global hauls of those

films (\$2.8 billion for "Avatar" and \$2.2 billion for "Titanic") won't be clear for weeks.

But so far, "The Force Awakens" is attracting the interest of seemingly everyone. President Barack Obama began a year-end news conference Friday noting, "Clearly, this is not the most important event that's taking place in the White House today." Soon to begin was a screening of the film for families who have lost a relative to combat or service-related injuries.

After fielding questions, Obama concluded the press conference: "OK everybody, I got to get to 'Star Wars.'"

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