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WT-Int. Crude - $30.56
WTIC Posted - $27.25
Natural Gas - $4.995

THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

FRIDAY
Dec. 20, 2002
Vol. 54 No. 201
12 Pages 50¢
Home of Leah Phillips

DEC 20 2002

THE SDN COLUMN — MY TURN

by Wade Warren

We didn't buy tickets to Tech's bowl game for a couple of reasons.

First, it's a long, expensive way to Orlando. The second reason is an experience we had many years ago as Tech was playing in the Southwest Conference and a trip to the Cotton Bowl was a big deal.

If we remember right, Tech beat Texas, and perhaps A&M to be in line for a trip to Dallas on New Year's.

As it turned out, the Raiders lost their last game or two and the Aggies ended up playing Alabama in the classic tilt.

We had ordered our Cotton Bowl tickets early, so we decided to go on and root for the Aggies.

Leaving Lamesa, it began to snow just outside Big Spring but not enough to keep us off the roadway. We were on the fast track to Big D and nothing was going to stop us.

Or, at least that is what we thought.

We stopped in either Eastland or Cisco for a hamburger and as we got ready to leave, the battery was dead.

A fellow gave us a boost right away and we were off again, but not for long.

Somewhere in a two-lane construction zone of I-20, we noticed our lights were not as bright as they should have been.

Then the radio started making a funny noise and then there was not noise at all.

Nothing.

We managed to coast off the roadway. Stranded as vehicles whizzed by, it started to snow and sleet.

Finally a couple pulling a U-Haul trailer moving from Hobbs, N.M. to Dallas stopped and offered a ride into Weatherford.

We found a police officer about midnight and he called a wrecker service to tow us in the 20 or so miles.

It didn't take long to calculate how much that was going to cost and we just hoped we had enough money to get back home. The Cotton Bowl seemed out the window as we figured we would have to use the two tickets as part of the payment.

After waiting at an all-night service station for what seemed like an eternity, a wrecker displaying the sign of Ned's Wrecker showed up.

Ned, the owner, also was the driver and we figured he was not real happy about getting called out at 1 a.m.

But he was happy so about then, I figured I would have to throw a new coat in to cover the bill along with the Cotton Bowl tickets.

There we went. Ned, Carolyn and I riding in the wrecker going after our broken down car.

After getting back to Weatherford, Ned discovered that the alternator belt had broken.

"Just leave us enough gas money to get back home and we'll send you what we owe you after taking what little cash we have, our Cotton Bowl tickets and a new coat," we both thought as Ned approached us with his bill.

Just before giving us the bill, he mumbled something about having to figure it again and crumpled the bill and tossed it.

Tickets, cash, coat and now what?

"Hey Ned, how do you like these nifty wheel covers?"

"I hope this doesn't ruin your trip," Ned said as he handed over the bill.

Ol' Ned only charged us $15 for the whole deal. Over 40 miles of wrecker service, an alternator or maybe it was a generator belt, plus about an hour's worth of mechanic's work for 15 bucks!

"Just after my wife and I married, we broke down and a guy helped us," said Ned. "He gave us a break and tonight was your turn."

We thanked Ned numerous times and promised if we ever broke down again anywhere in Texas, we would give him a call.

We went on to Dallas and on the day of the game, we decided to park away from the Cotton Bowl and catch a bus.

That didn't go as planned either.

We drove to where we thought the park-and-ride location was, but got lost.

Somehow, we ended up in a procession of buses that had an escort by a contingent of troopers from…Alabama.

We had gotten in the middle of the team buses escorting the Alabama team to the Cotton Bowl!

There we were, fresh from Weatherford with a new alternator belt and getting to run red lights in Dallas escorted by Alabama state troopers.

We got a few stares from parking officials as we pulled into the bus parking area, but we had a PRESS sticker on our windshield so we must have looked semi-official we were directed to a parking space not five minutes from our seats.

Dallas was the coldest place in the world the day the Aggies beat Alabama in a game that produced the famous picture of Bear Bryant hoisting Gene Stallings after the game.

Seeing that scene in mid-field was well worth the trouble and the frozen feet.

We did see Tech in a bowl game once as they played in the Sun Bowl in Juarez, excuse me, El Paso. But as they say, that's a whole different story.

And Ned, if you're still around, Merry Christmas.

EARLY MORNING ACCIDENT — DPS troopers Carlos Diaz of Mitchell County and Allen Arwine of Sweetwater, survey an accident scene three miles north of Snyder on Hwy. 208 this morning with Teppco Crude Oil representative Dwain Collier. The truck driver, Gerald Claxton, 44, of Snyder was transported by Snyder EMS to Cogdell Memorial Hospital where he was listed in stable condition before being transferred to a Lubbock hospital. Trooper Diaz said the accident remains under investigation. Claxton was traveling north with a load of crude oil from Sweetwater. (SDN Staff Photo)

Pressure forces Lott to resign as Senate Republican leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bowing to pressure from fellow senators and the Bush White House, Trent Lott resigned as Senate Republican leader today after colleagues, worried about the repercussions of his racially insensitive remarks, openly lined up behind Sen. Bill Frist.

"In the interest of pursuing the best possible agenda for the future of our country, I will not seek to remain as majority leader of the United States Senate for the 108th Congress, effective Jan. 6, 2003," said Lott, whose fall was historically unprecedented on Capitol Hill.

With Lott's departure, the only declared candidate for his post so far has been Frist, a close ally of President Bush. Frist, who made his candidacy known Thursday evening, had garnered public support from several senators before Lott announced his decision.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., a Lott supporter who colleagues said was interested in the No. 1 job if Lott stepped aside, issued a statement saying he would not seek the job. He endorsed Frist instead.

"Now is the time to move forward. It is my belief that Sen. Bill Frist is the right man at the right time to help our party do so and I will support him for majority leader," he said.

GOP aides also said a challenge seemed to be brewing from Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, who also had been supporting Lott.

"He's testing the waters right now. He is speaking to his colleagues right now, and it looks like he might run," said one Republican familiar with Santorum's thinking.

The 51 GOP senators who will serve in the next Congress plan to meet Jan. 6 to decide who their next leader will be.

Lott became the first Senate leader ever to step down because of controversy, said Senate Historian Don Ritchie said. "We've never had a Senate Republican leader or Senate Democratic leader step down like this before," he said.

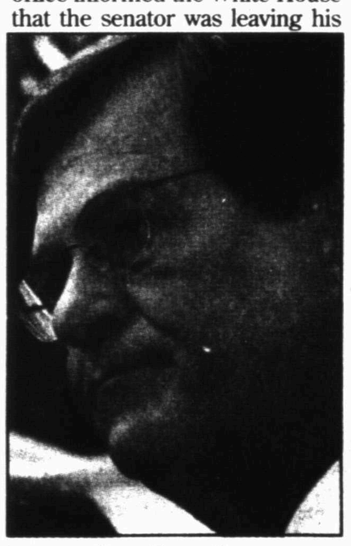
Lott's methodical resignation culminated a weeks-long controversy over Lott's racially insensitive comments.

His decision amounted to a 180-degree about-face.

Earlier this week, Lott had vowed to stay and fight to keep the top leadership job. His fall followed a tribute that Lott gave earlier this month at Sen. Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party.

The Mississippian at the time hailed the venerable South Carolinian and said he thought the nation would have been better off if Thurmond had won his campaign for the presidency in 1948. Thurmond ran as a Dixiecrat at the time, on a mostly segregationist platform.

Senior Republicans said Lott's decision caught many senior White House officials by surprise, including top political adviser Karl Rove and political director Ken Mehlman, who were not given advance notice by Lott's office. As Lott's decision leaked to news organizations, his office informed the White House that the senator was leaving his leadership post but not the Senate.



Sen. Trent Lott

Despite speculation that Lott would demand a committee chairmanship or some other consolation prize, he stepped down with no strings attached, one official said the White House was told.

Lott, 61, has been the Senate GOP leader since 1996, when Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., left the Senate to devote full time to his unsuccessful presidential bid.

At the Thurmond birthday party, Lott said: "I want to say this about my state. When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years either."

The remarks drew immediate criticism from black leaders and Democrats. They were quickly joined by conservatives worried that the comments would create a distracting firestorm that would harm the White House's and GOP's efforts to advance their legislative agenda.

Incoming House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California said that Lott's stepping down was an "important step" but that Republicans still needed to do more to address the issue of race.

While Lott initially attempted to stomp out the controversy with a terse press release and telephone interviews on radio and television, it began to spin out of control after Bush issued a forceful denunciation of his remarks last week.

Hours before Lott's announcement, veteran Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., reversed field and endorsed Frist after initially saying he would stand behind Lott.

Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., said he had told Lott in a telephone conversation Thursday that he thought a change was necessary.

"I concluded that the current controversy has completely overshadowed our efforts to expand the American dream to all Americans. This is unacceptable," Bond said.

One senator who has spoken to Frist cautioned that Frist's candidacy could be hurt by a perception that he may be too close to the White House.

Woman pleads guilty to theft of $121,000

A 37-year-old Snyder woman pleaded guilty this morning to forging more than $121,000 in checks on the account of her former employer.

Tina Marie Ellis of 3605 Jacksboro entered the guilty plea on two counts this morning in 132nd District Court.

District Judge Ernie Armstrong sentenced Ellis to serve two years in a state jail facility, probated for five years on each count. Ellis also must make $121,308 in restitution to her former employer, Clara Buffington.

Ellis was indicted after forging numerous checks on the personal checking account over a period of months.

Schools are dismissed for holidays

Local schools dismissed today for the lengthy Christmas holiday.

Ira schools called it a day at noon, while Hermleigh dismissed at 1:30 p.m., followed by Snyder ISD at 2 o'clock.

Ira will be back in class Jan. 2, while Hermleigh will start Jan. 6 and Snyder on Jan. 7.

Until spring...

Ira trustees pull the plug on diamond

Ira ISD board of trustees pulled the plug to the lights at the Bulldog's baseball field Thursday night and they will remain unplugged until baseball play gets underway in the spring.

"There was a demand charge on the lights and we were being charged almost $200 per month when they were not even being used," said interim Supt. James Bible.

In other action items Thursday, the Ira trustees approved the contract between the school and JR3 company to be the third-party payee for incoming superintendent, Dr. Larry Devitt, and tabled action on accepting increased rates for the Hobbs Alternative School.

Due to financial difficulties, the school has increased its membership rate to Ira from $1,000 to $8,000 yearly.

ASK US

Q—How many school days are there in a year in Texas, and how many days can a student miss?

A—There are 180 days of instruction, and a student can miss 10 percent.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Ben Rodriquez...

...has been a Snyder resident for nearly 30 years, and has spent the last 20 working for Colonial Baptist Church as a custodian. Ben has a daughter, Becky, and a son-in-law, Matt Cross, who live in Snyder. In his spare time, Ben enjoys fishing, hunting and working on cars.

TODAY'S THOUGHT

Be sure you're right, then go ahead.

—Davy Crockett

events

WHAT'S UP?

ONGOINGS

Christmas Eve candlelight service

The First United Methodist Church will have a candle light service on Christmas Eve beginning at 7 p.m.

Community Services raffle

Scurry County Community Services is holding a drawing for a $75 gift certificate to United and $75 to Wal-Mart. Tickets are $1 and all proceeds will be used to buy Christmas gifts for children.

Christmas Cantata

Northside Baptist Church's Christmas Cantata will be presented at 11 a.m. Sunday. The church is located at 1909 16th St. For transportation, call 573-7105.

Candlelight service

A candlelight service and Lord's supper will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday at Colonial Hill Baptist Church.

Support groups

Adult family violence support group and children's family violence support group meets at 6:30 p.m. every Monday at Gateway Family Service. For information call 573-1822.

Hermleigh Masonic Lodge

The Hermleigh Masonic Lodge will not have its monthly stated meeting Monday due to the holidays. The next stated meeting will be held Jan. 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Bible study tapes

Bible videos air each week on Channel 2. To be shown at 7 p.m. Monday is "Esther, a Woman of Destiny," followed by "What On Earth Am I Doing Here?"

Candlelight Christmas Eve service

Trinity United Methodist Church will have a candlelight Christmas Eve service at 6 p.m. Tuesday.

Christmas Eve service

A Christmas Eve candlelight service will be held at 11 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church, 2712 Ave. R. The public is invited.

Windbreak trees

Orders for windbreak trees and drip irrigation are being taken at the Upper Colorado Soil and Water Conservation office through Jan. 31. The office is located in the Scurry County USDA office complex at 5309 Big Spring Highway. Call 573-6317, ext. 2.

SHS booster club fund raiser

The SHS drama booster club is collecting old cell phones and used printer cartridges for recycling. Drop off at the sheriff's office. For more information, call Jan Scott at 573-8027.

Choir trip planned

SHS choirs are also planning a trip to Boston on Easter weekend, April 17-21. There are six available positions for anyone who wants to make the trip. For more information, call Ronda Haire, choir director, at 573-6301.

White Buffalo Festival T-shirts

White Buffalo T-shirts featuring a train are on sale at the Whistle Stop or the coliseum office for $7 each.

Trinity Bible study

A 10-week study, "Bad Girls of the Bible," begins Wednesday, Jan. 8, at Trinity United Methodist Church. Melissa Petty will lead the study and all women are invited to attend. To order a book or for more information call 573-3988.

WTC testing dates

Western Texas College's testing dates for LVN ASSET COMPASS QUICKTASP include Jan. 4, 12:30 p.m.; Jan. 7, 9 a.m.,1:30 p.m. and 6 p.m.; Jan. 21, 1:30 p.m.; and Jan. 28, 1:30 p.m. For more information, contact the counseling office at 573-8511 ext. 313.

Tigers Lair yearbook

Orders for 2002 Tigers Lair yearbooks are still being taken. The cost is $50 with additional options available. Call 574-6138 for information.

Cancer treatment transportation

Transportation for cancer patients to Lubbock, Abilene or Midland is available free of charge. Call Sammie Jarrell at 573-5993 or Blakey Fargason at 574-8041. If not home, leave message on answering machine.

FBC support groups

Support groups dealing with divorce, death, cancer or caring for elderly parents meet at 6:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at the First Baptist Church educational building. A special group for students facing these problems is held at the same time.

Officers injured in chase

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A man who led police on a rolling gun battle through the streets of Los Angeles was shot to death, and two officers and three others were injured.

"Only through a miracle were these officers not killed," said Police Chief William Bratton, who characterized the shootout as gang violence.

Thursday's chase began when two police officers attempted to stop four men who sped past a stop sign.

Bratton defended the pursuing officers' actions, although he acknowledged the pursuit likely would not be allowed under a new policy he proposed that would prohibit officers from pursuing suspects for minor traffic offenses.

During the pursuit, police said, the fleeing vehicle stopped at one point and the passengers jumped out and opened fire on a pursuing patrol car.

The officers inside suffered minor cuts when a bullet blew out one of their windows. They returned fire and continued the chase until their shot-up vehicle broke down.

More than a dozen other officers joined the chase, following the suspects into a parking garage.

When the suspects raced out of the garage a few moments later, police said, they opened fire on officers again and tried to run over two who were on foot.

The chase ended when the mens' vehicle collided with a big-rig truck, rolled over several times and slammed into a tree. Two of the men fled but were arrested after a brief foot chase.

All four were taken to a hospital, where one died of gunshot wounds, Bratton said. Another was listed in critical condition with a head injury, and conditions on the other two were not available Thursday night.

THE SUBWAY
A SANDWICH SHOULD BE.
Holiday Gift Certificates
Call
573-9782

Duncan's Christmas

Cleanup begins in Mississippi town after tornado injures 50

NEWTON, Miss. (AP) — Chain saws buzzed and generators hummed as emergency crews worked into the night to clean up the damage left by a tornado that injured about 50 people as it tore through this town filled with holiday shoppers.

Newton, an eastern Mississippi community of about 3,700 people, was put under a 5:00 p.m. curfew Thursday. Most of the area, remained without electricity through the night.

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, who went to Newton after the storm hit Thursday, declared a state of emergency and directed the Mississippi National Guard to assist local authorities. Emergency personnel from nearby counties were sent in to help Newton County crews.

"We've got major damage here. It's a mess," said Mayor Hamp Beatty. "The tornado destroyed several buildings in the west part of downtown and a lot of people are without power."

About half of the 50 people sent to Newton Regional Hospital suffered relatively minor injuries, said administrator Tim Thomas. Other injuries included fractures and cuts, he said.

High wind peeled back the metal walls of Newton's Wal-Mart, tore letters off the building's sign and crushed a nearby Subway sandwich shop. The windows were blown out of the Wal-Mart storefront and nearly every car in the parking lot.

Mike Brown, a supervisor at Garvin's Food Center near the Wal-Mart said he was standing beside the store's glass doors when the tornado arrived.

"The lights started blinking on and off several times. The wind pulled the doors out of my hands. It blew the store manager into the store," said Brown, 38. "We turned and got the customers to the back of the store."

Some vehicles were overturned or smashed against utility poles, and torn-away roofs, Christmas tree decorations and tree branches were scattered along the roads approaching downtown.

"It looked like it was going to take the house away," said Alice Johnson, who was visiting her daughter when the storm hit. The tornado toppled trees in the yard but spared the house.

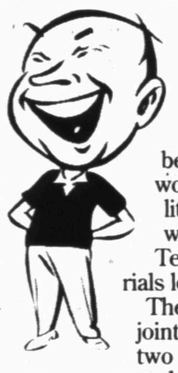
"I saw nothing but white clouds and it sounded like a train," said Quincy Green, who watched the storm from his window.

Beatty said there also was damage to the town's La-Z-Boy furniture plant, a fire station and other businesses. The town is about 60 miles east of Jackson.

Congregate House, a home for 55 elderly residents between the ages of 62 and 90, was evacuated after the storm tore away parts of the roof and blew out windows. No residents were injured.

Today's chuckle

Mother, daughter to graduate



EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (AP) — Mary Berg plans to attend her daughter's graduation ceremony this weekend at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. She's going not as a spectator, but as a participant.

Both women have earned bachelor's degrees in business administration with a major in management-human resources.

They took far different paths to graduation.

Mary Berg, 47, took one class a semester for more than 13 years. She had expected to complete her degree before her daughter, Amanda, finished high school, but that didn't happen.

Her daughter, now 22, went full-time for four years.

"I always worried about when we would be graduating, and that it would steal her thunder a little bit," said Mary, who works at Hutchinson Technology Inc. as a materials lead worker.

The family plans to hold a joint graduation party for the two in mid-January, with more than 100 friends and relatives.

Monday just 'fore Christmas

All through West Texas State Bank
We'll be serving up some special treats,
To show to you our thanks.

It's the Wassail time of year
And time for Cookies too.
We've cooked up some special recipes.
We're serving them just for you.

So finish up the shopping,
And tying up those loose ends.
And be sure to drop by the Bank Monday,
As we say Merry Christmas to all our friends.

Noel

OPEN HOUSE
Monday, December 23
Wassail and Cookies 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

WEST TEXAS STATE BANK
FDIC

Date Book

Friday, Dec. 20, 2002

Today is the 354th day of 2002 and the 90th day of fall.

TODAY'S HISTORY: On this day in 1790, in Pawtucket, R.I., Samuel Slater began to operate the first successful cotton mill in the United States.

On this day in 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union.

On this day in 1989, American troops invaded Panama in order to overthrow the regime of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: Harvey S. Firestone (1868-1938), industrialist; George Roy Hill (1922-), director, is 80; Anita Baker (1957-), singer, is 45; Tracey Ullman (1959-), actress, is 43.

TODAY'S SPORTS: On this day in 1946, Sugar Ray Robinson won the world welterweight championship by defeating Tommy Bell in a 15-round decision.

TODAY'S QUOTE: "It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed." — Harvey S. Firestone

TODAY'S MOON: Between full moon (Dec. 19) and last quarter (Dec. 26).

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Dresden exhibit opens

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder opened an exhibit of 140 paintings from Dresden's Old Masters gallery that will help finance the rebuilding of the city's museums from flood damage suffered last summer.

The show, which opened Wednesday at Berlin's Old Museum, focuses on the international role Dresden played in the world of culture in the 18th century, featuring paintings by Italian, Spanish, Flemish and Dutch masters.

The famed Old Masters gallery, like its neighbor the Semper Opera, was severely damaged in August when flooding by the Elbe River and its tributaries swamped the city.

events

LOTTO TEXAS
TEXAS LOTTERY
RESULTS

Thursday's Lottery Numbers
Pick 3
(Day) 2-9-5
(Night) 8-6-3
Cash Five
5-6-8-19-37

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Bureau board chief asked to resign

DALLAS (AP) — The mayor of Dallas says the chairman of the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau has not been moving fast enough to reform the bureau's questionable spending practices and has asked him to resign.

Mayor Laura Miller appointed Chris Luna in July. He did not agree to immediately leave the unpaid position he has held since October.

Luna issued a statement saying he would meet with board members in January and decide what to do.

"In the end, I am confident that this issue will be resolved to the satisfaction of Mayor Miller and the DCVB board," Luna's statement said.

Miller does not have the power to remove Luna, according to the bureau's bylaws. A majority of the bureau's 36 members must vote to remove a board member.

It was not clear Thursday whether all bureau members would obey the mayor's wish if Luna did not resign.

"Although I don't think Mr. Luna is directly to blame, she (Miller) ... has made that decision," said City Council member Veletta Forsythe Lill, who serves on the board. "We will respect her decision."

Miller told The Dallas Morning News that she spoke with key board members before announcing her decision.

The bureau is a nonprofit organization that lines up clients for the Dallas Convention Center.

Bridge

By Phillip Alder

North 12-20-02
♠ A 6 5 4 3
♥ —
♦ J 9 4 3
♣ 9 8 7 2

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

East
♠ 2
♥ A Q 10 6 5
♦ A Q 8 7 5
♣ J 6

South
♠ K Q J 10 9 8
♥ 9 4 2
♦ K
♣ A 4 3

Dealer: West
Vulnerable: North-South

South	West	North	East
	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
1 ♠	4 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♦
Pass	5 ♥	5 ♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl.	All pass	

Opening lead: ♥ 7

Friday, Dec. 20, 2002

The "insignificant" cards can be significant

By Phillip Alder

It is strange how playing the right spot-card at the appropriate moment can be so important — as in this deal from the 2001 world championships.

In the auction, notice East's careful five-diamond bid, making it easier for West to judge what to do when the opponents advanced to five spades.

In the Venice Cup women's competition, Nicola Smith from England ruffed the heart lead in the dummy and played a diamond. East went in with the ace and shifted to the club jack. Declarer won with her ace, drew trumps, ruffed a heart in the dummy, and ruffed a diamond in hand, West contributing the six. Smith trumped her last heart in the dummy and called for the diamond jack, which drove out East's queen and pinned West's 10. After a spade to dummy's ace, Smith discarded a club loser on the high diamond nine: plus 850.

In the Bermuda Bowl open event, the play started identically, but when declarer ruffed the diamond four in hand at trick six, Paul Soloway (West) dropped the diamond 10, not the six. Now look at matters from South's point of view. West was highly likely to have at least three diamonds. And if the 10 was not a falsecard, that meant West had started with the Q-10-2. So, when declarer trumped his last heart to get into the dummy, he called for the diamond nine and ruffed, confidently expecting to see Soloway drop the queen. However, South saw the sneaky six, and suddenly the contract could no longer be made: plus 200 to East-West.

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The basic monetary unit of Saudi Arabia is the riyal, and its chief fractional unit is the halala.

—

The state bird of Kansas is the Western meadowlark.

THE SUBWAY A SANDWICH SHOULD BE.
Holiday Party Platters
Call 573-9782

EAST CAROLERS — These East fourth grade students recently sang Christmas carols at the Senior Citizens Center. Top row from left, Priscilla Molinar, Brandon Elam, Kaitlin Bass, Brianne Perry, Garrett Snyder, Sam Blythe, Brandon Medrano and Skylar Jones; third row from left, Tiffany Stack, Mary Quintano, Kaitlin Horton, Krysha Burleson, Angel Guerro, Blaire Toombs, Shawn Burns and Scott Smith; second row from left, April Arispe, Ashley Kenner, Kaylee Lord, Audriana Rascon, Anthony Thurmond, Taylor Reed, Ashton Burton, Logan Tabor and Xalee Northcott. Soloists and dancers were front row from left, Sydney Glass and William Davis. Another group sang carols at Cogdell Memorial Hospital. In all, 74 students used some of their Accelerated Reader points so they could sing carols. Sharlot Sparlin is the music teacher. (Staff Photo by Shirley A. Gorman)

Wal-Mart workers win lawsuit

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — When Carolyn Thiebes put on a smile for Wal-Mart customers, she was trying hard to hide her frustration with managers who forced employees to work unpaid overtime or risk demotion or even firing, her attorneys say.

On Thursday, she won a court victory against the giant retailer in the first of dozens of such lawsuits across the country to come to trial, accusing Wal-Mart of violating federal and state wage laws.

"The people at Wal-Mart just wanted to be heard — they wanted to know that somebody was listening," said James Piotrowski, one of the attorneys who represented Thiebes and more than 400 other former and current Wal-Mart workers in Oregon who sued the retail giant.

The jury did not rule on monetary damages, which will be decided by a different jury in a separate trial.

Wal-Mart spokesman Bill Wertz said the company "has a strong policy of paying its associates for all the time they work" and was considering whether to appeal.

"We would emphasize that this ruling affects only approximately 350 workers out of 15,000 in Oregon."

The lawsuit was filed by Thiebes and Betty Alderson, who worked in managerial positions at Wal-Mart stores in the Salem area.

The lawsuit claimed managers got employees to work off the clock by asking them to clean up the store after they had clocked out and by deleting hours from time records.

It also said Wal-Mart reprimanded employees who claimed overtime. Workers felt forced to work after clocking out because managers assigned them more work than they could complete in a regular shift, the plaintiffs said.

Wal-Mart conceded during opening arguments Tuesday that some off-the-clock work occurred but said company policy expressly prohibited it.

Wal-Mart, a $218 billion company, employs 1 million workers in 3,250 stores in the United States.

Thirty-nine other class-action lawsuits are pending against the company in 30 states. Those suits, from California to New York, involve hundreds of thousands of workers seeking tens of millions in back pay.

Previously, Wal-Mart settled two similar overtime cases in Colorado and New Mexico.

The company reportedly paid $50 million two years ago to settle an off-the-clock lawsuit covering 69,000 workers in Colorado, and it recently settled for $500,000 a case involving 120 workers in Gallup, N.M., said one of the plaintiffs' attorneys.

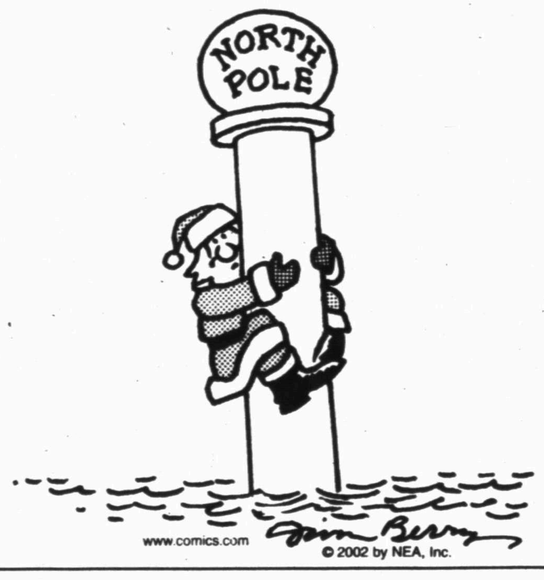
Car restoration taught

McPHERSON, Kan. (AP) — Jay Leno fans who visit a replica set of "The Tonight Show" that's part of a new tourist attraction in New York City will be helping to support a car restoration program at McPherson College.

The school in this central Kansas community has gained national attention for teaching students how to restore antique and classic automobiles.

For several years, Leno, an avid classic-car collector, has helped fund scholarships for McPherson students enrolled in the automotive restoration technology program, touted as the only program of its kind offered at a four-year college.

Berry's World



Dear Abby

By Abigail Van Buren

Woman not in giving mood for the office gift exchange

DEAR ABBY: I work for a small company with 25 employees. Four of us are in the office all day — all women. To put it mildly, I have never felt accepted by these "ladies." During this past year, they've been especially hateful to me. Other employees tell me it's pure jealousy.

My problem: The holidays are now here. What should I do about participating in the traditional gift exchange at the office? Should I buy each gal a gift out of the spirit of giving, even though I have no desire to do so? Or should I make it clear that I do not wish to exchange presents, which could make matters worse? I feel stuck, Abby. Please help me out. — **TO GIVE OR NOT TO GIVE IN WASHINGTON STATE**

DEAR TO GIVE OR NOT TO GIVE: Buy a lovely pastry or some other treat that everyone in the office can enjoy. Include a card with it that reads: "My budget this year does not allow me to give individual gifts to each of you. — Enjoy! Merry Christmas." That way, you'll have participated "in the spirit of giving" without feeling hypocritical.

**

DEAR ABBY: I am a 28-year-old single mother of five. I have been married and divorced three times. Right now that's the least of my problems. I've been dating "Gordy" for two years, and the idea of marriage has crossed my mind more than once.

Gordy loves my kids and they love him, but he says he's not ready to make the kind of commitment that comes with marriage. The kids are not the problem; I don't have custody. I get them only every other weekend and holidays, so it's not the responsibility of taking care of a big family that's holding Gordy back. He says he'd be OK with all that. I'm afraid my past three failed marriages bother him. All he's willing to admit is that he's "not ready."

Abby, I feel that I am ready. Should I sit back and give Gordy more time, or confront him and give an ultimatum? Please help. — **CONFUSED AND TIRED OF WAITING**

DEAR CONFUSED: Let me get this straight. You've had three failed marriages and five children by age 26 — and now, at 28, you're tired of waiting for yet another man to propose?

I should think you'd be grateful for the respite. Please take more time to get to know yourself better and get counseling to understand why your last three marriages failed before you embark on a fourth trip to the altar.

A final thought: Never issue an ultimatum unless you're prepared to lose.

**

DEAR ABBY: I am not an astronomer or a religious person. I just like to have a heart-to-heart talk with God whenever I am outdoors under the stars and moonlight sky. I think they make a great pair. Is there a religion that encourages this? Thank you. — **J.B. IN WATERLOO, N.Y.**

DEAR J.B.: All religions encourage meditation — which is what you are describing. You don't even have to do it under the moon and the stars. Talking to the God that dwells in your heart is enough, because God is everywhere.

**

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Formerly conjoined twins to return home

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Twin sisters born joined at the head and separated in a marathon surgery have been cleared by doctors to return to Guatemala.

Dr. Jorge Lazareff said he expects the 17-month-old girls to return home the first or second week of January. They will likely stay in a hospital there for a few weeks before the family moves into an apartment.

Maria de Jesus and Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez have had their return date pushed back several times since the 23-hour operation in August at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital to separate them.

Doctors said Maria Teresa, who has struggled the most since the surgery and was recently fitted with a hearing aid, now turns her head, follows people with her eyes and cries.

"There's a lot more emotion," said Dr. Henry Kawamoto Jr., the lead plastic surgeon for the medical team.

The girls were born in rural Guatemala but initially will live in Guatemala City.

CINEMA I & II
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MAID IN MANHATTAN PG13
Fri 7:15 & 9:20, Sat. 2:15, 7:15 & 9:20
Sun. 2:15 & 7:15, Wed 7:15 & 9:20
Thurs. 2:15, 7:15, 9:20
Closed Monday & Christmas Eve
8 MILE R
Friday 9:30, Saturday 9:30, Sunday 7:00
Closed Monday & Christmas Eve
DIE ANOTHER DAY PG13
Friday 7,Saturday 2, & 7,Sunday 2
Closed Monday & Christmas Eve
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
starts Christmas Day

MOVIES

MAID IN MANHATTEN PG13

Jennifer Lopez a street savvy, independent single mother and works as a maid in a first class Manhattan hotel. Enter Christopher Hall, a handsome, debonair heir to an American political dynasty. Chris is in New York for a week of glad-handing with party big shots and is staying in the hotel where Marisa works. By a twist of fate and mistaken identity, the two meet. Marisa soon finds herself gaining insight into the life of a man she might otherwise have judged from a distance. When her true identity is revealed, however, the truth sets in as to the disparity in their lives.

8 MILE
R—**Starring: Eminem, Kim Basinger, Brittany Murphy, Mekhi Phifer, Eugene Byrd**

DIE ANOTHER DAY
PG13—**Starring: Pierce Brosnan, Halle Berry, Judi Dench, John Cleeseand Rosamund Pike**

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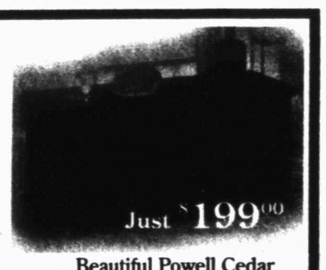

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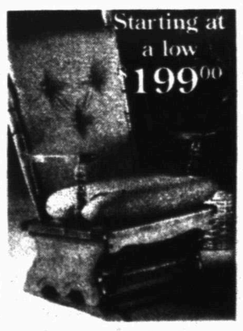

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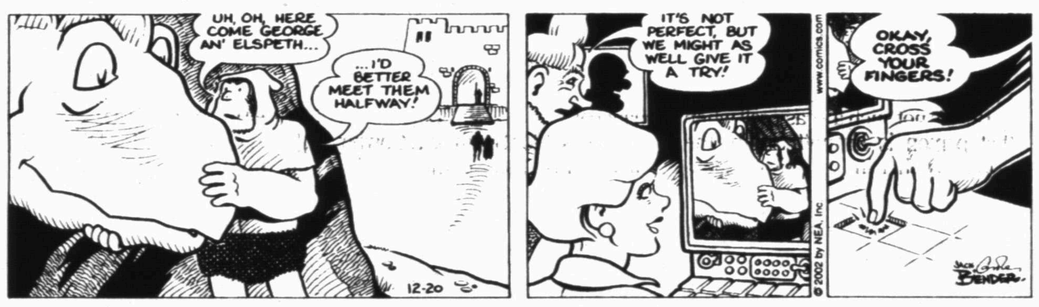

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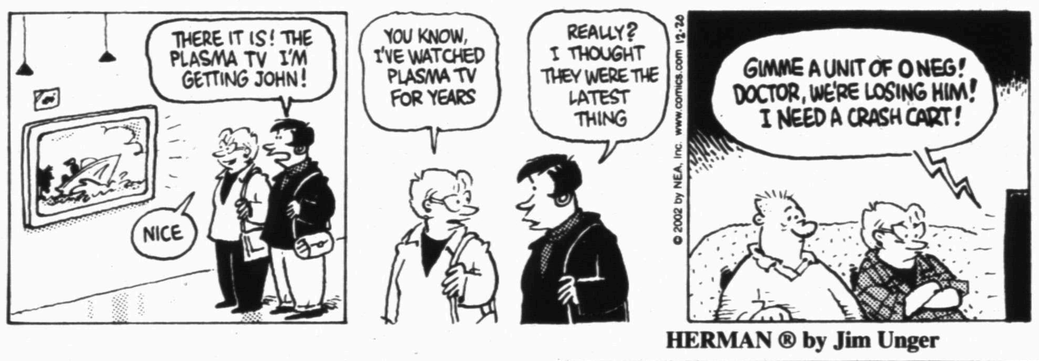

HERMAN ® by Jim Unger

NEA Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1 Gigantic
5 Jellyfish habitat
8 Race off
12 Like — — of bricks
13 Flutter
14 Earthen jar
15 Many August people
16 Nest-egg letters
17 Tax pros
18 Potatoes
20 Common phrase
22 Aurora, to Socrates
23 Goose egg
24 Cowboys' charges
27 Appearance
30 — Marie Saint
31 Geol. formations
32 Thing, in law
34 — and yang
35 Kyoto sash
37 Clumsy boat
38 Responsible
40 Pharaoh, now
42 Animal park
43 Meditation practice
44 Exits
46 Large antelope
49 Ivy League member
50 Weep
52 Red meat
54 "Beowulf," e.g.
55 Bobby — of the NHL
56 Mantra chanter
57 Seines
58 Flightless bird
59 Collar style

DOWN

1 "2001" computer
2 Rocky Mountain people
3 Sticky stuff
4 Came later
5 Type of cheese
6 Hearing aid?
7 Opposed
8 Tame
9 Puppy-chow brand
10 Loud noise
11 Acquired
19 — and don'ts
21 Chip companions
24 "Yo!"
25 More than bad
26 Rajah's consort
27 Pierre's girl
28 Study hard
29 Contract proviso
33 Blue shade
35 Wind instrument
36 Rose or peony
39 Montezuma's subjects
40 Singer — Torme
41 Helpless
43 Striped animal
44 Wide yawn
45 Touched down
47 Orderly
48 Deejay's disk
49 Urge
51 Conquistador's quest
53 Sports enthusiast

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

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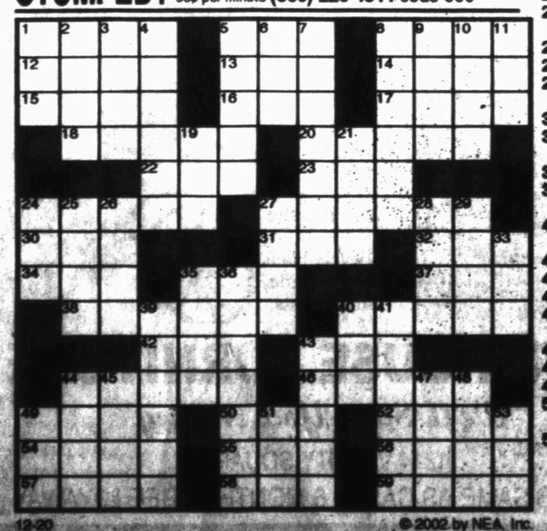

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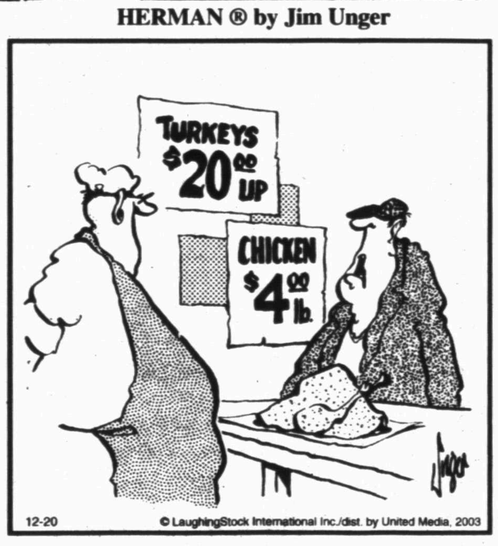
Snyder Daily News Comics

DENNIS THE MENACE ® by Hank Ketcham



"Have you got a medium-sized hummingbird?"

KIT 'N' CARLYLE ® by Larry Wright

SPORTS

Emmitt's future as a Cowboy unclear

IRVING (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys are encouraging fans to wear No. 22 jerseys to the home finale Saturday night against the Philadelphia Eagles, a gesture meant to salute Emmitt Smith.

But with questions looming about whether Smith will return next season, it could be a way of saying goodbye.

Smith is owed $7 million next season, virtually guaranteeing his contract will be torn up. Team owner Jerry Jones has been tightlipped about whether he'll release the leading rusher in NFL history or try signing him to a new deal, possibly for as little as the veteran minimum.

With nothing needing to be resolved for months, an aura of uncertainty shrouds the upcoming game: Will this be the last time Smith wears a Cowboys uniform in Texas Stadium?

"Could be, could be," Smith said. "But you never know."

Smith has made it clear he prefers to stay. After 13 seasons and two prolonged contract battles with Jones, keeping a star on the helmet is more important than cashing another big check.

"I can only think positively," Smith said. "It's just a matter of communicating, talking about what needs to be done, how it needs to be done, how I can restructure and so forth."

It might not be that easy.

With the Cowboys (5-9) headed to a fourth straight non-winning season, Jones is considering big changes. Coach Dave Campo's job is clearly in jeopardy and the top priority for whoever guides the team next season will be juicing up the league's lowest-scoring offense.

Doing so with a running back who will be 34 in May might not make sense.

But it's not such an easy call when that person is Emmitt Smith, the leading rusher in NFL history — a four-time rushing champion, three-time Super Bowl winner and former MVP of the regular season and Super Bowl.

Although no longer dominant, he's still been effective this season. He needs 68 yards in the final two games to reach 1,000 for a 12th straight season, extending a record he set last year.

The Cowboys also have used him as their main marketing tool. Season ticket sales were based around his pursuit of Walter Payton's career rushing record and they're still working that angle. A team-sponsored ad in The Dallas Morning News Thursday showed a picture of Smith with the words: "A holiday rush you'll actually enjoy! Cheer on the NFL's all-time leading rusher from the comfort of your own private suite."

What to do with Smith is a tougher decision for Jones than the one he faced two seasons ago with Troy Aikman. Jones did not immediately respond to an interview request.

Aikman's frequent concussions made him a health risk, plus he was due a huge bonus. While cutting him meant a big salary-cap hit in 2001, it was a blow that was going to happen eventually.

Smith, though, is in good health and willing to help the cap. And, unlike Aikman, Smith won't even consider retiring. He's talked about wanting to stretch his career rushing total of 17,119 to 20,000 and it's likely some team will give him that chance if Dallas won't.

Could Smith really see himself wearing another uniform?

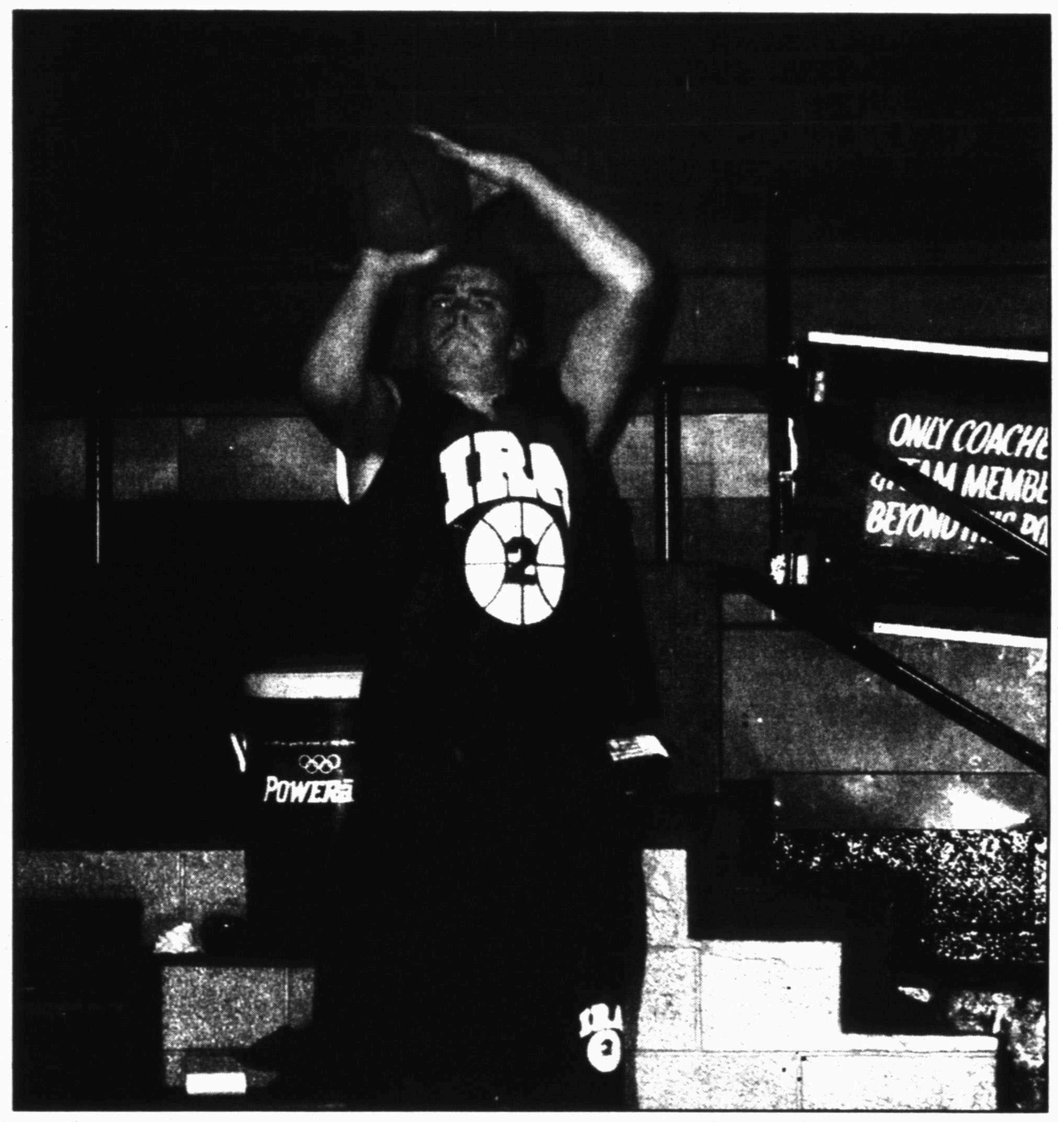
"I have uniforms at the house of all 32 teams and I've tried them all on," Smith said, smiling. "You know I'm lying. Obviously I can't see myself doing a whole lot of things.

"Right now, it's not in the forefront. I have a big game to play Saturday, so that's my focus — not this extracurricular stuff that has to take place six, seven, 12 weeks from now. That's my mindset. I'm not going to let anyone change it."

If this is it for Smith as a Cowboy, playing his final games against Philadelphia and the New York Giants provides a nostalgic farewell.

Smith has more yards rushing against the Eagles (2,436) than any other team, including a career-best 237-yard game. With 49 yards Saturday he'll have the most one player has ever gained against one team.

Closing at the Meadowlands is significant because it was there in the 1993 finale that Smith had his defining performance, leading Dallas to an overtime victory that clinched home-field advantage in the playoffs after separating his right shoulder before halftime.



SHOOT AROUND — Ira post player Jeff Fine works on his jump shot Thursday at the beginning of practice. The Bulldogs travel to Klondike today to take on Rankin at 6:30 p.m. in their final game before the Christmas break. (SDN Staff Photo)

Sideline Views

by Bobby Allen

We were skeptical about basketball games being played in Scurry County Coliseum.

Not any longer.

After seeing both the boys and girls varsity teams play there Monday, we must say the site has much to offer players, fans and media.

For selfish reasons, we enjoyed the spacious accommodations at the scorers' table, and the ease with which we were able to navigate around the beautiful floor for photos.

We also liked the game clock on each backboard, allowing us to keep our eyes on the action and the clock simultaneously.

The Scurry County parks department sponsored the event, and director Scott Crenwelge said he would like to see the arena host all the games after the Christmas break, but said he isn't sure if it is feasible this season.

"I would love to have the games here after the first of the year," he said. "But realistically, my goal is to have them out here next season."

He said he remembers the coliseum being full for games when he was in high school, and feels that could happen again given the interest in the area in varsity sports.

Crenwelge met with representatives of Coca-Cola Thursday, and negotiations with the company for sponsorship are still ongoing.

He said the two sides are close to an agreement, but the issue must be presented to both the company's regional headquarters and to the commissioners' court for approval.

After polling some spectators about whether they would prefer watching the games at the coliseum or at the high school gym, the answer from the stands was nearly unanimous in favor of the arena.

Vanessa Taylor said she grew up watching games at the coliseum, which stopped hosting basketball in 1991.

"I love it here," she said. "It's a great place for them to play."

Matt Ornelas liked the atmosphere.

"It's more relaxing," he said.

Some of the players said it was a little more difficult to gauge their shots, but boys head coach Bud Birks said playing experience in the arena would alleviate any problems players would have with depth perception.

As fan John Short said, "This is the only place. Why have a place like this and not use it?"

Rodriguez may be heading to Japan; Yanks sign 'Godzilla'

NEW YORK (AP) — On a day of crossroads, Hideki Matsui decided to leave Japan for the major leagues and Ivan Rodriguez's agent said the 10-time All-Star catcher might be headed for Asia.

Greg Maddux, meanwhile, decided to stay in Atlanta, accepting the Braves' offer of salary arbitration.

Matsui agreed Thursday to a $21 million, three-year contract with the New York Yankees. Nicknamed Godzilla, he was intent on wearing the famous Yankees' pinstripes and became the biggest Japanese baseball star yet to join the major leagues.

The Yomiuri Giants, who drafted Matsui in 1993, were said to have offered a $33 million, four-year deal to keep him.

Matsui had a .304 career average in Japan with 332 homers and 889 RBIs in 1,268 games, and led the Central League last season with 50 homers and 107 RBIs. He had the league's second-highest average at .334.

Rodriguez, a 10-time Gold Glove winner and former AL MVP, is exploring a move to Japan after failing to get offers he liked from the Chicago Cubs and Baltimore Orioles.

"I think at this point our focus is slowly but surely turning to Japan," Rodriguez's agent, Jeff Moorad, said Thursday.

Texas did not offer Rodriguez salary arbitration earlier this month, making him ineligible to re-sign with the Rangers until at least May 1. Rodriguez just finished a $50 million, five-year contract with the Rangers and Moorad is believed to be seeking a multiyear deal averaging at least $10 million annually.

"Until and unless the market shifts, Pudge is now considering alternatives," Moorad said. "At this point, we're exploring. "

Dismissed QB focus of FSU probe

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A gambling investigation at Florida State centers on former Seminoles quarterback Adrian McPherson, who was kicked off the team last month after he was accused of stealing a check.

University vice president John Carnaghi said Thursday that police "are investigating rumors and hearsay regarding a single, former football player, Adrian McPherson."

"The investigation does not currently extend to any other student athletes at FSU," he said.

McPherson's lawyer, Grady Irvin Jr., said his client has never bet on a sporting event. McPherson started four games this season, going 3-1.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	17	9	.654	—
Philadelphia	17	9	.654	—
Boston	16	9	.640	½
Orlando	14	13	.519	3½
Washington	12	13	.480	4½
New York	8	14	.364	7
Miami	7	18	.280	9½
Central Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	18	7	.720	—
Detroit	17	7	.708	½
New Orleans	17	10	.630	2
Atlanta	10	14	.417	7½
Milwaukee	10	14	.417	7½
Chicago	9	16	.360	9
Toronto	8	17	.320	10
Cleveland	5	22	.185	14
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Midwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	22	3	.880	—
San Antonio	16	10	.615	6½
Houston	14	10	.583	7½
Minnesota	14	12	.538	8½
Utah	12	12	.500	9½
Memphis	7	20	.259	16
Denver	6	20	.231	16½
Pacific Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	21	7	.750	—
Phoenix	14	11	.560	5½
Portland	13	11	.542	6
Seattle	14	12	.538	6
L.A. Clippers	11	15	.423	9
L.A. Lakers	10	17	.370	10½
Golden State	9	16	.360	10½

Thursday's Games

New Jersey 98, L.A. Lakers 71

San Antonio 83, Sacramento 81

Friday's Games

Miami at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Cleveland at Detroit, 8 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Philadelphia, 8 p.m.
Atlanta at Houston, 8:30 p.m.
Utah at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Orlando at Denver, 9 p.m.
New Orleans at Seattle, 10 p.m.
Phoenix at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
Portland at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Philadelphia at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Boston at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
Houston at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Detroit at New Jersey, 8 p.m.
Indiana at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
New York at Milwaukee, 8:30 p.m.
Washington at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Sacramento at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Seattle at Portland, 10 p.m.
Denver at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

Spurs upend Kings, 83-81

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Tim Duncan had 23 points and 14 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs spoiled Sacramento's perfect home record and ruined Mike Bibby's season debut, beating the Kings 83-81 Thursday night.

Stephen Jackson scored 18 points as the Spurs followed a victory in Seattle by winning in the NBA's toughest road arena one night later. The Spurs have struggled with inconsistency all season, but they silenced the Arco Arena crowd in a game Bibby's teammates desperately wanted to win for him.

"We're still trying to find our personality, but this was a good start," Duncan said.

The Kings had won their first 13 games at Arco, where they're 80-14 over the past three seasons, but they gave one of their most lifeless performances in years on the same night their injury-plagued roster became nearly whole.

Sacramento shot less than 35 percent and never found a rhythm. Sure, the Kings surged ahead on a 3-pointer by Bibby with 6:22 left, but they immediately gave up several baskets in a row and never got back in it.

Sports Calendar

TODAY

Basketball: Snyder varsity boys at Abilene Wylie, 7:30 p.m..
Basketball: Snyder varsity girls vs. Wylie, 6:30 p.m.
Basketball: Snyder JV boys at Abilene Wylie, 6 p.m.
Basketball: Snyder JV girls vs. Wylie, 5 p.m.
Basketball: Ira varsity boys vs. Rankin at Klondike, 6:30 p.m.
Basketball: Ira varsity girls vs. Rankin at Klondike, 5 p.m.
Basketball: Hermleigh varsity boys and girls vs. Loraine, district opener, 6:30 p.m.

State Championship Pairings

CLASS 5A

DIVISION II
Finals
Southlake Carroll (15-0) vs. Smithson Valley (14-1), Noon Saturday, Alamodome, San Antonio.

CLASS 4A

DIVISION II
Finals
Denton Ryan (14-1) vs. Brenham (14-1), 4 p.m. Saturday, Alamodome, San Antonio.

CLASS 3A

DIVISION II
Finals
Midland Greenwood (15-0) vs. Bandera (12-3), 1 p.m. Saturday, Waco ISD Stadium.

CLASS 2A

DIVISION II
Finals
Cisco (15-0) vs. Rosebud-Lott (14-1), 7 p.m. Saturday, Waco ISD Stadium.

CLASS 1A

Finals
Petrolia (14-2) vs. Celeste (13-2), 6 p.m. Saturday, Coppell.

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Ask Hollywood by Holly Wood

Never the Twains shall meet?

Q: I was hoping Shania Twain was going to be a role model for other performers by staying out of the spotlight and giving more time to her child than to her career. Low-income moms would kill to have her money so they could stay home with their children. Why does she want to give up such a blessing? Will she (hopefully) go back out of the public eye after this "comeback" album? Or is she here to stay — screwed up child or no screwed up child? — **B.L., Washington, D.C.**

A: In early 2003 she'll start preproduction for a new tour, so she's not going to be dropping out of the public eye anytime soon. You touch upon a sensitive subject. I'm not a child-rearing expert, so I can't say whether Twain's career will lead to her child being "screwed up," but there are millions of working mothers raising well-adjusted children. Perhaps Twain will be a role model for women who have put a great deal of effort into their careers and want to enjoy the best of both worlds.

Q: A few years ago, I heard part of a song on the radio, but I have no idea who sang it or even the name of the song. I remember the lyrics containing the words "sweet Melissa." I think those words were part of the chorus, because they were repeated throughout the song. I really hope you can help, as I'm anxious to find a copy of this song. — A.P., Clintwood, Va.

A: The Allman Brothers recorded a song called "Melissa" on their album "Eat a Peach," and the words "sweet Melissa" are repeated several times throughout the song. You can request it through any large music store. Some will let you listen to the song before you buy to make sure it's the one you're looking for. If you have Internet access, you can find the album for $13.99 at Amazon.com (www.amazon.com). On the Web site, you can play a snippet of the song, which should jog your memory.

Q: I think there was a TV film about a sniper in a crowded football stadium. Didn't Pamela Sue Martin and Pamela Bellwood star in it (before "Dynasty")? And I believe Jack Klugman played a cop trying to find the killer. What was the name of it, and when did it come out? — **M.C., Terra Bella, Calif.**

A: The name of the movie is "Two Minute Warning," and it was released in theaters (not on television) in 1976. Klugman has a supporting role as a gambler in the crowd, and Martin is not in it, but your other info is correct.

Q: One of my favorite TV shows is "7th Heaven," with Stephen Collins and Catherine Hicks. Most of the shows are reruns. Will there be any more current shows? — K.G., Hot Springs Village, Ark.

A: Yes. New episodes of "7th Heaven" will air all season, but they often air sporadically around the holiday season, so be patient.

TRIVIA: Catherine Hicks was a cheerleader at Gerard High School in Phoenix, Ariz.

(Send your questions to Ask Holly Wood, c/o Newspaper Enterprise Association, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016, or write to HollyWood85@hotmail.com. Because of the volume of mail, personal replies cannot be provided.)

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Rock stars write song as tribute to Mandela

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Veteran rock stars Bono, Dave Stewart and Joe Strummer have written a song in tribute to former South African President Nelson Mandela.

"48864" is the number Mandela wore as a prisoner of the apartheid regime. The song will be played by the three entertainers at a Feb. 2 AIDS benefit concert on Robben Island, where Mandela was held prisoner.

Mandela, 84, emerged from prison to become South Africa's first democratic president in 1994. He stepped down in 1999 and has since become a vocal activist in the fight against AIDS.

The song, which focuses on Mandela's courage in speaking out against apartheid, ends with the musicians defiantly chanting "48864," Stewart said Thursday.

Many artists "have responded to Mr. Mandela's call to arms on the issue of HIV-AIDS," said Stewart, who is the concert's musical director.

Performers at the daylong concert will include Queen, Macy Gray, Nelly Furtado, Shaggy, Jimmy Cliff, Johnny Clegg and Youssou N'Dour.

Markets

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NEW YORK (AP)

	High	Low	Last	
AMR Corp	6.50	6.35	6.43	+ .12
AOL TimeWrn	13.44	13.26	13.29	—.02
AT&T Corp rs	26.11	25.36	25.80	+ .69
Albertsons	21.42	21.19	21.29	+ .09
Alltel	52.24	51.60	52.14	+ .83
AmEl Pw	27.80	27.48	27.66	+ .39
AndarkPtr	48.70	48.20	48.52	+ .29
ATMOS Egy	23.75	23.48	23.48	—.02
Aviall	8.10	7.91	7.95	—.15
BP PLC	40.01	39.62	39.96	+ .06
BakerHughes	32.80	32.03	32.75	+ .74
Bank of Amer	69.94	69.17	69.87	+ 1.37
BellSouth	26.75	26.40	26.50	+ .24
BurlNoSFe	26.24	25.65	26.10	+ .11
Caterpillar	46.10	45.53	45.90	+ .67
CenterPoint	8.38	8.00	8.28	+ .28
ChevronTex	67.10	66.25	66.78	+ .53
Citigroup	37.89	37.10	37.61	+ .61
CocaCola	44.34	43.90	43.90	—.22
ColgatePal	52.49	52.00	52.40	+ .50
CmclMetals s	16.35	16.15	16.34	+ .09
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EastmanChem	36.89	36.66	36.70	+ .20
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EDS Corp	18.44	18.00	18.32	+ .37
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GenDynam	81.15	78.86	79.02	—.83
GenElec	26.82	25.55	25.69	+ .29
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GenMotors	39.16	35.95	36.79	+ .68
GaPacific	16.44	16.17	16.33	+ .37
Goodrich	18.06	17.91	17.96	+ .21
Goodyear	6.99	6.70	6.74	+ .10
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MarathonOil	21.44	21.17	21.42	+ .28
MayDeptStr	23.19	22.97	23.08	+ .13
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TempleInland	44.65	44.10	44.44	+ .57
TexInd	24.60	24.23	24.40	+ .05
TexasInst	16.10	15.56	15.58	—.10
Textron	42.49	42.00	42.35	+ .14
TrinityInds	19.60	19.50	19.60	+ .42
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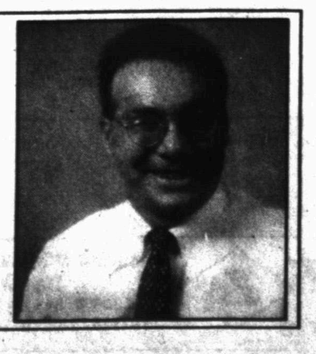

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Snyder Devotional Page

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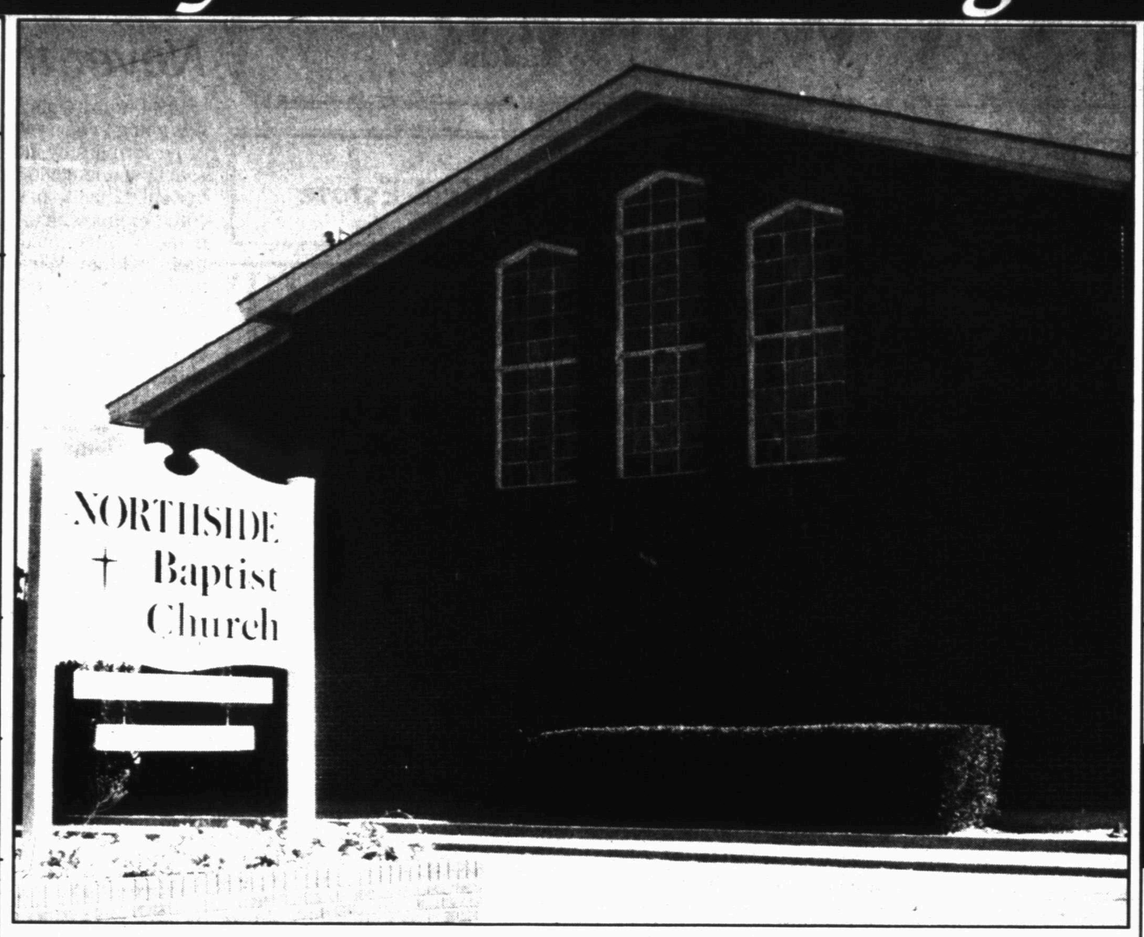

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Illinois' Gov. Ryan pardons three men wrongfully convicted

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (AP) — Gov. George Ryan, whose moratorium on executions spurred a national debate about the death penalty, has pardoned three men convicted of murders they did not commit.

Before leaving office next month, Ryan will decide whether to commute the death sentences of about 140 death-row inmates. Two of the men he pardoned Thursday, Rolando Cruz and Gary Gauger, had been on death row.

Ryan said the three men, who had already been released, are working to rebuild their lives despite the stain of the reversed convictions.

"I wish them well; they've been through hell," Ryan said in announcing the pardons Thursday at the University of Illinois College of Law to a lengthy ovation.

Cruz, whose case has served as a symbol of flaws in the death penalty system, called Ryan a hero and said his involvement in death penalty reforms sets "an example for future and current governors and presidents."

The pardons, which had been widely expected, came a day after federal prosecutors released papers alleging that Ryan knew of wrongdoing by aides in the secretary of state's office he ran before being elected governor in 1998. The governor issued a statement on the federal investigation saying he had a "clear conscience."

The pardons clear the men's names and allow them to seek compensation for their wrongful convictions.

Larry Marshall of the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University, which was involved in all three cases, said he spoke to Gauger's wife after Ryan's surprise announcement. "Her reaction was, in some ways, even more dramatic than when he had been freed," Marshall said.

Ryan's latest actions follow months of emotional pleas from death penalty opponents and counter-pleas from victims' families on the clemency requests. He said he has reviewed 80 percent of the 140 clemency cases, and will rule before leaving office Jan. 13.

Ryan halted executions nearly three years ago after courts found that 13 death row inmates in Illinois had been wrongly convicted since the state resumed capital punishment in 1977. The General Assembly has so far rejected his push for sweeping reforms.

Cruz served 11 years in prison, including seven on death row, for the murder and rape of 10-year-old Jeanine Nicarico. He was acquitted at his third trial after a police officer changed his story about an incriminating statement Cruz supposedly made. DNA evidence later pointed to someone else.

"The door's virtually slammed shut on it," Cruz said of his case. "The record's clean now."

But DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett issued an angry response to news of the pardon.

"At best, Rolando Cruz is a man who committed multiple acts of perjury before a grand jury and intentionally obstructed the investigation of the abduction, rape and murder of a 10-year-old child," Birkett said. "If you believe Cruz now, he intentionally pointed the finger of blame at people he now claims were innocent."

Gauger was on death row after being convicted of killing his parents. Prosecutors opposed his pardon, though they did not dispute that Morris and Ruth Gauger were killed by members of the Outlaws motorcycle gang.

The third pardon went to Steven Linscott, who was convicted of murdering a young woman in suburban Chicago. He told police about a dream he had that in some ways was similar to the murder, and police considered it a confession.

Linscott was in prison for more than three years before his conviction and 40-year sentence were overturned by an appellate court. Subsequent DNA testing exonerated him.

State human rights agency faces lawsuit

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The state agency that investigates housing and job discrimination is the target of a lawsuit filed by eight current and former employees, charging racial discrimination in pay and hiring decisions.

The lawsuit was filed Thursday in state district court. It seeks back pay and compensatory and punitive damages.

Five current employees and three former workers at Texas Commission on Human Rights are joined in the lawsuit by two non-employees who failed to get commission jobs for which they applied.

The lawsuit accuses the commission of fostering "a hostile environment against the minorities who have complained about discrimination, illegal practices or other matters of public concern."

The lawsuit states, "Instead of being able to effectively enforce civil rights laws as contemplated by the Texas Legislature, the investigators are now under undue pressure to close cases with inadequate investigations" because the agency is inadequately funded.

Agency officials couldn't be reached for comment late Thursday.

The agency's general counsel had not seen the lawsuit and declined comment.

The plaintiffs blame the problems on executive director David Powell, who was appointed in 2001. The lawsuit says the agency has had an "abysmal" record in civil rights enforcement since Powell's arrival.

Two former and four current employees had submitted nine complaints to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging racial, age and sex discrimination in how the agency filled jobs, gave raises and treated employees under Powell.

FUNDRAISER — Taco John's will continue a fundraiser to benefit the Boys and Girls Club through Dec. 30. A portion of proceeds from every Nachos Navidad purchase will be donated to the club. Taco John's will also sell peppers for a $1 cash contribution. Several businesses will match Taco John's donation including Patterson Drilling, Matthies Construction, State Farm Insurance, C&S Spraying, Kwik Kar Oil and Lube. Seated in the booth from front to back, starting at left, are Kristopher Alarcon and Hector Soberon and Donald Jeffery and Terrence Wells. Those standing include from front to back Tessa Welsh, Kendall Alarcon, Kriston Alarcon, Lisa Jeffery, Boys and Girls Club program director, and Eleanor Ibarra, Taco John's manager. (Staff Photo by Shirley A. Gorman)

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Astro-graph

By Bernice Bede Osol

Your Birthday

Saturday, Dec. 21, 2002

Look to the experience and knowledge you've acquired over time to bring about your dreams in the year ahead. What you have in your head can prove to be quite fortuitous both in making contacts and financial gains.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) — There won't be too much you'll overlook when it comes to utilizing all of the resources at your disposal today. You will make the most out of what you have to work with and do a good job.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — When you want to, you have the ability to use diplomacy and tact with such aplomb that you can charm the birds out of the trees. Use this gift wisely today on complicated relationships.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) — This can be a very productive and rewarding day for you, if you settle down to business and do not allow frivolous pursuits to sidetrack you. The jobs you accomplish today will give you rest tomorrow.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) — The quality of your companions will be of greater importance to you than the quantity today. You simply won't need a lot of people or activities to make you happy.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Clear up anything left on the table that you didn't finish this past week and get a fresh start on Monday. Once you get started, you'll gain momentum and complete all the jobs.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Try to keep your schedule flexible and fluid today, because there's a good chance you'll be a bit restless and will want to hop about until you find an activity that satisfies you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — Your strong suit today is doing things that can contribute to your financial security. Focus your efforts and attention on matters that have potential for growth and well-being.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — Again, today you have a gift for taking sticky situations and getting them back on track in ways that satisfy everybody. Associates will turn to you to draw upon this skill.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Give credence to your hunches today, because your intuition could reveal things that your logic won't. It could be a deciding factor.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Don't let up on the efforts you usually put into your projects. Strive to maintain high expectations in the success of your labors, even those that are mundane. The results will please you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — There will be an aura of credibility and prestige about you today and others may look to you for direction. They want you to take the lead; it won't be considered bossy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) — You won't be contemptuous of other people's shortcomings nor will you be overawed by their attributes. Your nonjudgmental attitude will make all your involvements with others successful today.

Trying to patch up a broken romance? The Astro-Graph Matchmaker can help you understand what to do to make the relationship work. Mail $2.75 to Matchmaker, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 167, Wickliffe, OH 44092.

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"The Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem of the United States in 1931.

—

Because two of Mary Todd Lincoln's brothers were Confederate soldiers, she was accused by some of being a spy for the South during the Civil War.

DEC 20 2002

2nd Front Page

THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

Two military training jets collide

DUNCAN, Okla. (AP) — Two Air Force training jets from Sheppard Air Force Base collided today in a remote area of southern Oklahoma, but those aboard survived, military officials said.

The Air Force base in Wichita Falls issued a statement saying one of the two T-37 jets involved in the accident flew back to the base and landed safely. The two people aboard the other jet ejected before it crashed in a field northeast of Lake Waurika, south of Duncan.

They were taken to the base hospital for examination.

Oklahoma City television station KWTV aired video taken from a helicopter showing the wrecked, burned airplane in a vacant field.

The crash occurred about a half-mile from Grandview Elementary School.

"We didn't hear nothing. We just saw smoke," said Sophia Bloomer, a secretary at the school.

"We didn't even know it was a plane crash until I drove down and talked to the Highway Patrol and he said it was a military plane crash and that's all we know."

The Air Force base did not describe the extent of the damage on the airplane that landed there after the collision, other than to say the pilot was not able to extend the craft's landing gear.

The T-37, a twin-engine jet built by the Cessna Aircraft Co., has dual controls, ejection seats and a clamshell-type canopy that can be jettisoned. The student and instructor sit side-by-side in the cockpit of the two-seat jet.

The Air Force trains American and NATO pilots on T-37s at Sheppard.

The aging T-37s, which first entered service in 1956, have been upgraded and rehabilitated several times over the decades. Each one costs about $167,000. The Air Force had 419 T-37s before the crash.

The Air Force base said a board of military officers would investigate the crash.

Speaker-apparent wants to cut back House senority rights

AUSTIN (AP) — Senior House members would not be able to claim a seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee under rule changes proposed by Speaker-apparent Tom Craddick.

The proposal, one of a stack of changes to House rules submitted by Craddick, would give him the power to make all appointments to the budget-writing panel.

Because the House will be a Republican majority for the first time in 130 years, some veteran Democrats fear they'll be cut out of preparing the two-year state budget, one of the legislative session's top priorities.

The proposed amendments were discussed Thursday at a meeting of about 30 legislators, the Austin American-Statesman reported in today's editions.

Craddick's office tried to minimize the proposal, but some legislators saw it as an attempt by the Midland Republican to increase his power.

"I think it's an obvious attempt to minimize Democratic involvement in the budget," said Rep. Jim Dunnam, D-Waco. "It sure seems to be contrary to the tradition of bipartisanship that has been espoused by the incoming leadership."

Under current rules, the speaker names the chairmen and vice chairmen of all committees and half of the committee membership.

The remaining seats can be claimed by members based on seniority. The rule allows longtime members who are not allies of the speaker to assume important roles in legislation.

Rep. Patricia Gray of Galveston, a retiring legislator and outgoing chair of the House Democratic Caucus, said losing senior members on appropriations does not bode well for her party.

"Everything comes down to the budget," she said. "It doesn't matter what your bill is. If it's not funded, it's just a piece of paper."

The rule changes were distributed by Steve Collins, executive director of the Texas Legislative Council, to a small group of lawmakers, who discussed them but took no action.

After the session starts Jan. 14 and Craddick is elected speaker, the entire House will vote on the rules.

Craddick did not attend the meeting, but Bill Ceverha, a former Dallas legislator and member of Craddick's transition team, was there.

Craddick, through his spokesmen, did not claim to write the proposal to eliminate seniority for appropriations members.

The spokesmen, who were not identified by the newspaper, said the proposed rule changes were sent by members to Craddick. They declined to identify who wanted the changes, saying it would insert politics into the debate over rules.

Democrats' plan would extend benefits for unemployed people

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats today pressed for immediate congressional action to ensure that hundreds of thousands of laid-off workers don't lose their unemployment benefits just days after Christmas.

Incoming House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi said extension of those benefits could be approved in minutes if Republican leaders called the House, which adjourned a month ago, back into session.

Congress' failure to reach agreement on extending unemployment benefits will strand some 820,000 people who stand to lose their benefits when the current program expires on Dec. 28.

"It's just unconscionable," said Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Calif.

Republicans are preparing their own plan, and there's little chance of any action before the new Congress convenes on Jan. 7. President Bush, in urging Congress to extend benefits, said they should be awarded retroactively for those who have exhausted their financial aid.

"That doesn't solve the problem if you don't have a paycheck coming in," said Pelosi. "This is a crisis."

Bush, after weeks of criticism from Democrats, ended his silence on the issue in his radio address last Saturday and said extending benefits for the unemployed should be the "first order of business" for the new Congress.

"These Americans rely on their unemployment benefits to pay for the mortgage or rent, food and other critical bills," Bush said without detailing the kind of package he would support.

Pelosi and other Democrats outlined a plan that would extend the compensation program through next June and guarantee all jobless workers an additional 26 weeks of extended financial aid.

Workers in states with high unemployment would be eligible for an additional seven weeks of benefits.

Snyder police recover stolen bike

•Thefts

David Nizer reported at 8 p.m. Thursday that several juveniles stole his bicycle from his front yard in the 2800 block of Ave. U.

A Snyder officer responded and contacted several juveniles. The bike was recovered and returned to Nizer and one of the juveniles was taken into custody.

•Forgery

At 12:32 p.m. Thursday, a Wolfforth woman reported her sister possibly forged a check on her account and she advised she would file charges next time she is in Snyder.

•Fire report

A man called dispatchers at 3:10 p.m. Thursday to report a pickup pulling a trailer with its back wheels on fire. Two deputies responded and advised the trailer had a blowout and everything was in order.

•Vanadalism

Mike Carter requested an officer at Snyder High School at 6:42 p.m. Thursday to report vandalism and an offense report was filed.

•Close patrol

A woman in the 1300 block of 25th Street reported her ex-husband repeatedly tampering with her mailbox. She requested a close patrol of her residence.

Births

Mason Weaver announces the birth of his brother, Mitchell James Weaver. Mitchell was born on Dec. 19 in Plano weighing eight pounds, eight ounces and was 20¾ inches long. Parents are Todd and Resa Weaver of Carrollton.

Paternal grandparents are Bill and Chris Weaver of Del Rio and great-grandmother is Margaret Weaver of Snyder.

Obituaries

Dorothy Simpson

1928-2002

Dorothy Simpson, 74, died this morning in Cogdell Memorial Hospital.

Services are pending at Wright Colonial Funeral Home.

Born Nov. 1, 1928, Mrs. Simpson was a homemaker and a member of Snyder's First Baptist Church.

Eva Moore

1915-2002

Eva Belle Moore, a longtime Scurry County resident, died Tuesday, Dec. 17, in Cogdell Memorial Hospital after a lengthy illness.

Eva Moore

Funeral service for Mrs. Moore, 87, is set for 10 a.m. Saturday in the First Baptist Church Chapel with the Rev. Mike Henson, pastor, officiating. Burial will follow in Hillside Memorial Gardens under the direction of Bell-Cypert-Seale Funeral Home.

Born April 27, 1915 in Tahoka, she married Dewey Moore on Oct. 20, 1929 in Scurry County. He died March 16, 1991. She also was preceded in death by daughter, Dorothy Price; a brother, Lynn Fenton; two sisters, Verma Parks and Odell Harrell; and a son-in-law, Miller Price.

Survivors include a daughter, Janelle Pollard of Snyder; a brother, Myron Fenton of Snyder; five grandchildren, Renee Abraham of Lubbock, Debbie Wooten of Midland, Connie Huddleston and Todd Pollard, both of Snyder, and Alan Pollard of Cedar Park; 10 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

Family visitation will be from 6 to 8 this evening at the funeral home.

John Tate

1924-2002

John D. Tate, a resident of Snyder the past 60 years, died Thursday, Dec. 19, at his home in Snyder.

Graveside service for Mr. Tate, 78, is set for 10 a.m. Saturday in the Snyder Cemetery. Tom Holcomb, minister of East Side Church of Christ, will officiate. Arrangements are under the direction of Wright Colonial Funeral Home.

Born Dec. 4, 1924 in Joppa, Ala., he married Jimmie Nann Gill on Jan. 12, 1950 in Hobbs, N.M. Mr. Tate was a farmer.

Survivors include his wife, Jimmie Nan Tate of Snyder; two daughters and sons-in-law, Kathie and Jon Holdren of Abilene and Teresa and Randy Wolf of Sanford, N.C.; five sons and four daughters-in-law, Jerry and Sandy Tate of Tyler, Rick and Jane Tate of San Antonio, Randy and Patti Tate of Liberty, David and Lisa Tate of Snyder and Bill Tate of Santa Fe, N.M.; two brothers, Wayne Tate of Snyder and Guin A. Tate of Corsicana; a sister, Pauline Tate of Honolulu, Hawaii; 14 grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and several nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held from 6 to 7 this evening at Wright Colonial Funeral Home.

Burt Rhodes

1947-2002

COLORADO CITY — Willard B. "Burt" Rhodes, the father of Tami Castillo of Snyder, died Wednesday, Dec. 18, in an Amarillo care center.

Graveside service for Mr. Rhodes, 55, is set for 1 p.m. Saturday in the Colorado City Cemetery with Dr. Ted Spear officiating. Arrangements are under the direction of Kiker-Seale Funeral Home.

Born May 7, 1947 in El Paso, he was reared in Colorado City and graduated from school in Ravenna, Ohio in 1956. A truck driver and Baptist, he married Teri Smith last May in Amarillo.

Survivors include his wife, Teri Rhodes of Albuquerque, N.M.; a son, Shawn Rhodes of Longview; another daughter, Laura Menges of San Angelo; a brother, Roy P. Rhodes of Argyle; a sister, Rheta Autry of Amarillo; nine grandchildren, Lico and Autumn Castillo, John, Clayton, Jacob and Tori Menges, and Jordan, Kallee and Landry Rhodes.

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Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast

Sat 12/21	Sun 12/22	Mon 12/23
59/29	58/31	43/25
Mostly sunny skies. High 59F. Winds W at 15 to 25 mph.	Considerable cloudiness. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the low 30s.	Showers possible. Highs in the low 40s and lows in the mid 20s.
Sunrise 7:42 AM, Sunset 5:42 PM	Sunrise 7:42 AM, Sunset 5:42 PM	Sunrise 7:43 AM, Sunset 5:43 PM

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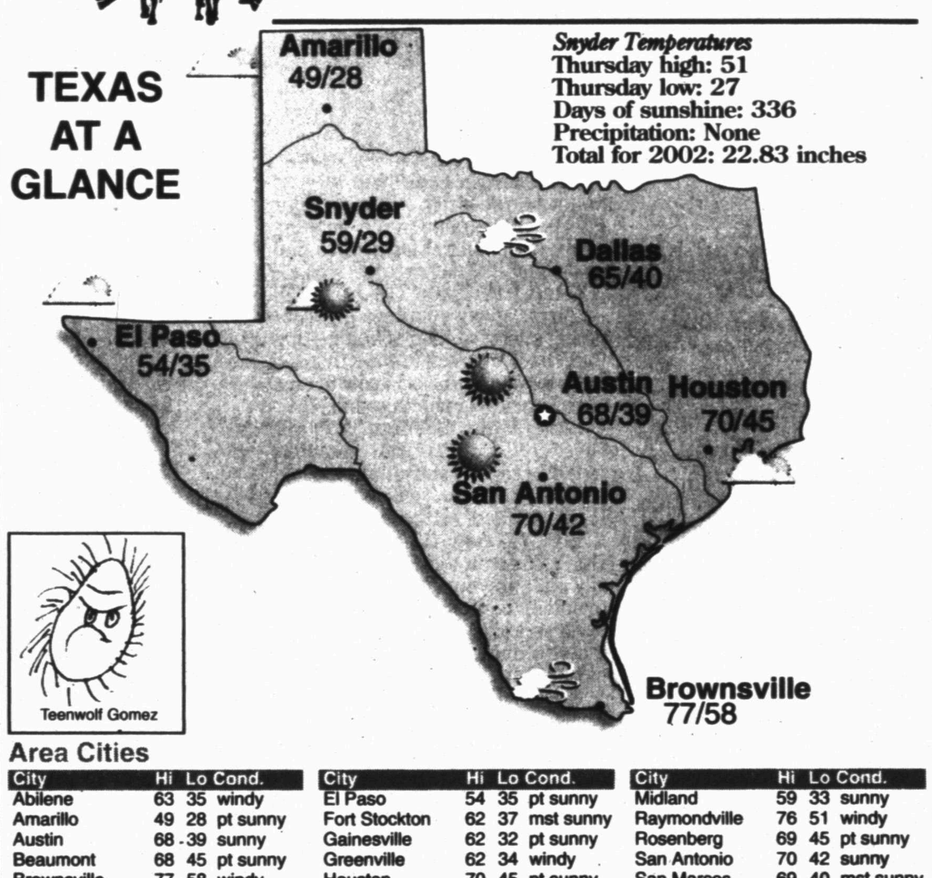

Snyder Temperatures
Thursday high: 51
Thursday low: 27
Days of sunshine: 336
Precipitation: None
Total for 2002: 22.83 inches

Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	63	35	windy	El Paso	54	35	pt sunny	Midland	59	33	sunny
Amarillo	49	28	pt sunny	Fort Stockton	62	37	mst sunny	Raymondville	76	51	windy
Austin	68	39	sunny	Gainesville	62	32	pt sunny	Rosenberg	69	45	pt sunny
Beaumont	68	45	pt sunny	Greenville	62	34	windy	San Antonio	70	42	sunny
Brownsville	77	58	windy	Houston	70	45	pt sunny	San Marcos	69	40	mst sunny
Brownwood	67	35	sunny	Kingsville	74	48	mst sunny	Sulphur Springs	63	35	windy
Corpus Christi	72	49	mst sunny	Livingston	67	39	pt sunny	Sweetwater	63	32	mst sunny
Corsicana	66	38	windy	Longview	65	38	windy	Tyler	65	42	windy
Dallas	65	40	windy	Lubbock	56	29	windy	Weatherford	64	33	windy
Del Rio	70	43	sunny	Lufkin	67	42	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	61	33	windy

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	56	37	mst sunny	Houston	70	45	pt sunny	Phoenix	58	44	cloudy
Boston	44	36	windy	Los Angeles	58	50	rain	San Francisco	53	46	rain
Chicago	38	26	cloudy	Miami	74	64	mst sunny	Seattle	46	34	cloudy
Dallas	65	40	windy	Minneapolis	31	19	pt sunny	St. Louis	47	30	cloudy
Denver	40	18	pt sunny	New York	44	34	windy	Washington, DC	50	37	pt sunny

Moon Phases

Full	Last	New	First
Dec 19	Dec 27	Jan 2	Jan 10

UV Index

Sat 12/21	Sun 12/22	Mon 12/23
Low	Low	Minimal

The UV Index is measured on a 0-11 number scale, with a higher UV Index showing the need for greater skin protection. 0 — 11

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30 VEHICLES MUST BE SOLD IN 3 DAYS

IMMEDIATE DISPOSAL SALE

30 VEHICLES MUST BE SOLD IN 3 DAYS

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01 OLDSMOBILE ALERO	$9,900
02 BUICK CENTURY	$12,000
02 OLDSMOBILE ALERO	$13,500
01 CHEVY MALIBU	$9,900
01 CHEVY MONTE CARLO	$11,900
01 CHEVY MALIBU	$9,900
02 CADILLAC DeVILLE	$24,000
01 BUICK REGAL	$13,500
02 BUICK LeSABRE	$16,000
01 CHEVY LUMINA	$9,900
01 CHEVY SUBURBAN	$24,500
02 CHEVY AVALANCHE	$24,500
00 CHEVY S-10 REG CAB	$10,800
01 CHEVY 4X4 CREWCAB	$26,000

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01 FORD FOCUS	$11,500
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01 SUZUKI ESTEEM	$8,500
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01 GMC 2500 4X4 REG CAB	$19,000
95 CHEVY 2500 4X4 REG CAB	$4,500
94 CHEVY 1500 EXT CAB	$8,800
96 CHEVY SUBURBAN	$7,500
00 CHEVY 4X4 1500 REG CAB	$15,500
96 GMC Z71 EXT CAB	$8,500
01 CHEVY 1500 EXT CAB	$16,500
97 CHEVY 2500 REG CAB	$6,500
00 CHEVY SURBURBAN	$22,000
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NOON ON GMD

It's too early to judge economic recovery

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said the Fed's aggressive lowering of interest rates helped cushion shocks to the economy from falling stock prices, but added it's too early to tell whether that was enough to produce a sustainable recovery.

Recovery ran into further resistance in the summer with a wave of accounting scandals and concerns about a possible war with Iraq, Greenspan said.

The Federal Open Market Committee, the Fed's chief policy-making group, cut interest rates 12 times starting in January 2001, with the last interest rate reduction of a bold half-point coming last month.

Greenspan didn't specifically discuss in his speech or in the question-and-answer session what the Fed might do on interest rates at its next meeting in late January. At the Fed's last meeting on Dec. 10, it decided to hold a key interest rate steady at a 41-year low of 1.25 percent.

Economists believe Greenspan's remarks reinforce their notion that the Fed is likely to keep rates at that low level at its next meeting.

In his remarks Thursday to the Economic Club of New York, Greenspan said prolonged falling prices would pose a greater threat to U.S. economic growth than inflation, though he added that the United States faces no immediate threat of deflation.

"Although the U.S. economy has largely escaped any deflation since World War II, there are some well-founded reasons to presume that deflation is more of a threat to economic growth than is inflation," Greenspan said, citing the Fed's inability to cut rates below zero and companies' inability to lower labor wages.

But the Fed would be prepared to use a variety of tools to boost the money supply beyond its normal approach of targeting the federal funds rate, he said.

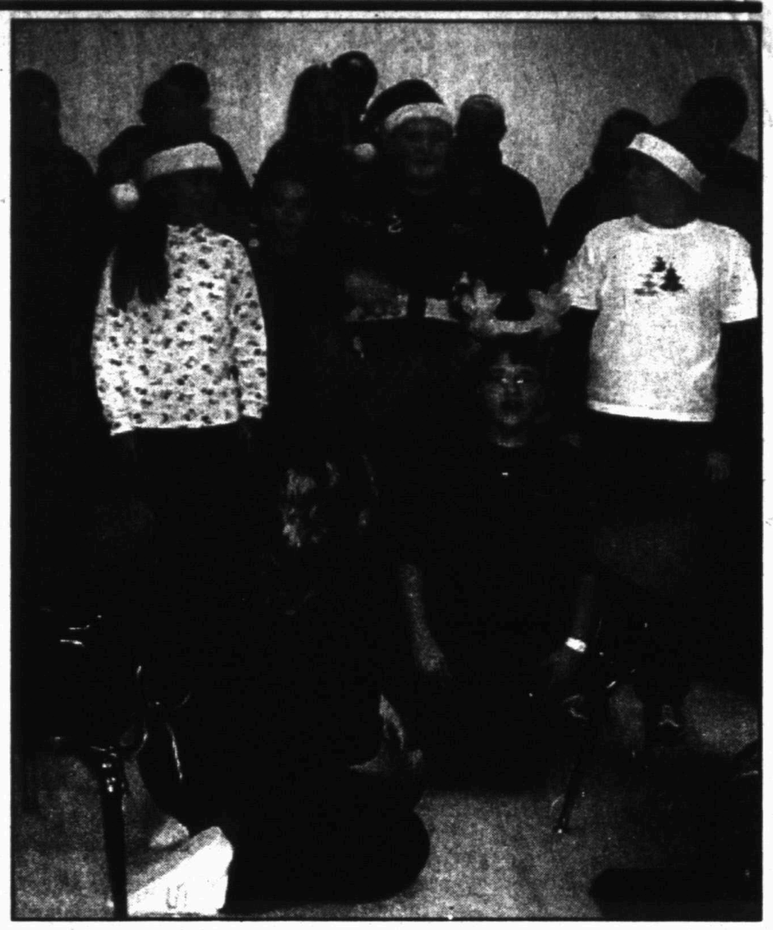
Greenspan said that since the Fed's last rate cut on Nov. 6, there is limited evidence that the "U.S. economy has been working its way through a soft patch," Greenspan said. "And that patch has certainly been soft."

The labor market has been sluggish as companies, wary about economic uncertainties, have been reluctant to make big investments in hiring and in capital spending, two forces restraining the economy's recovery.

"There is evidence that some corporate managers are beginning to tentatively venture out on the risk scale," Greenspan said. "New orders for capital goods equipment and software, after falling sharply over the preceding two years, have stabilized.... an improvement, to be sure, but not necessarily the beginnings of a vigorous recovery."

After the speech, Greenspan addressed the issue of economic bubbles, saying there is little policy-makers can do to control them.

"I do not believe that public officials can talk down growth," Greenspan said.



MERRY CHRISTMAS — West Elementary's honor choir sang Christmas carols at the Senior Citizens Center. Pictured back row from left are Erma Rodriguerz, Britney Webb and Jessica Bilderback; front from left are Katy Spradlin and Elizabeth Davis. (Staff Photo by Shirley A. Gorman)

Dr. Gott By Peter Gott, M.D.

Breast cancer not related to lifestyle

DEAR DR. GOTT: I don't smoke, drink or do drugs. I am slim and physically active. I eat prudently. I've just been diagnosed with breast cancer. There is no family history, but my father died of prostate cancer at 71. What improvements can I make in my life to mitigate the condition?

DEAR READER: Regrettably, bad things happen. Ill health can befall even the most prudent person. A corollary: Behaving yourself does not insulate you from diseases most of which appear to be carried in the genes. Nonetheless, folks who don't take care of themselves get sicker sooner and die earlier as a consequence of unhealthful lifestyles. And that's just the point.

You have evidently not abused your health in the past. As a result, you're probably in exceptionally good shape, a characteristic that could have an enormous impact on overcoming your genetically-defined breast cancer. For instance, were you an obese smoker and heavy drinker, you probably wouldn't respond as well to therapy for your breast cancer, which may include surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation.

Thus, your many years of sensible living may now pay off dividends. You can approach your unanticipated breast problem with a healthy body and mind. Follow your physician's specific advice about what actions you can take to beat your breast cancer. At the same time, languish in the knowledge that by showing wisdom in your lifestyle, you may have made possible the likelihood of cure.

To give you related information, I am sending you a copy of my Health Report "Insuring Your Good Health." Other readers who would like a copy should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and $2 to Newsletter, P.O. Box 167, Wickliffe, OH 44092. Be sure to mention the title.

DEAR DR. GOTT: I am 53 and have had both knees replaced because of osteoarthritis. However, my primary problem is not my joints. Every muscle in my body is sore, despite therapy with ibuprofen. Does this soreness go along with the arthritis, or do I have another problem?

DEAR READER: I suspect that you have another problem — for example rheumatic disease, such as polymyalgia or fibromyalgia. Maybe someone missed a diagnosis somewhere along the way. In my opinion, you need extensive blood tests to pin down a diagnosis.

Return to your family physician. If he or she remains puzzled, ask for a referral to an internist or rheumatologist. You're quite young to have required joint replacement for osteoarthritis; also, this common, age-related disorder does not ordinarily affect the muscles directly. I think in your case, something else is going on.

DEAR DR. GOTT: How long does swallowed liquid take to reach the kidneys?

DEAR READER: In a well-nourished, healthy, well-hydrated person without circulatory problems, swallowed fluid should reach the kidneys in less than five minutes.

The major delay is the time it takes for fluids to be absorbed through the intestinal wall. So, if this process were encumbered for some reason, such as the presence of food in the stomach, the absorption of liquid might be prolonged.

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Celebration planned for Wright's first flight

MILLVILLE, Ind. (AP) — Preservationists at the birthplace of Wilbur Wright are planning a monument and other events to commemorate next year's 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight.

Wilbur Wright, who developed an early airplane with younger brother Orville, was born April 16, 1867, at the site in Millville, about 50 miles east of Indianapolis.

Preservationists are planning to dedicate the monument at a Centennial of Flight festival in June.

The monument, which will include Wilbur Wright's picture and a quote written by his father, is being made from a slab of limestone set into place at the site in 1953 on the 50th anniversary of the first flight.

Two dead, six injured in accident

YONKERS, N.Y. (AP) — A sport utility vehicle rammed into a state trooper's cruiser on the side of the road and burst into flames, killing the trooper and driver and injuring six others, at least five seriously.

Thursday's accident began when the Jeep Cherokee crashed into another car while trying to change lanes, said State Trooper Jesse Temple, a police spokesman. The Jeep careened off the car and plowed into the back of the cruiser.

The impact triggered a chain reaction and the two vehicles exploded in flames, killing the trooper and driver of the Jeep. Three passengers in the Jeep and the two other drivers were in serious condition, Temple said.

A sixth person was also injured, although police did not know the victim's condition.

The police cruiser was a Ford Crown Victoria — a car that police departments have alleged are prone to catch fire when struck from the rear at high speed. At least a dozen officers across the country have been killed in fiery crashes in Crown Victorias since 1983.

In September, Ford agreed to pay for the installation of shields around the gas tanks on police-issued Crown Victorias. Some 350,000 police cruisers across the country were to be retrofitted — about 80 percent of police cars on the road.

State Trooper Temple said he did know whether the cruiser belonging to the officer had been retrofitted.

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• Light Sets
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No Limit. Not valid with any other Eckerd coupon. Coupon must accompany purchase.
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