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For weather details see
Page 2

Authorities search for missing helicopter

GRUVER, Texas (AP) — A helicopter that took off from this small Panhandle town Thursday night never arrived at its destination in Amarillo. Authorities throughout the Panhandle and the Federal Aviation Administration are searching for the aircraft. "There are low stratus clouds and fog in the area," FAA spokesman Roland Herwig said. "There is a company helicopter looking for the other helicopter. They won't be able to do much from the air until things clear up a little bit." Herwig said it is not known at this time who owns the helicopter or if it landed somewhere other than its scheduled destination at Buffalo Airport, west of Amarillo.

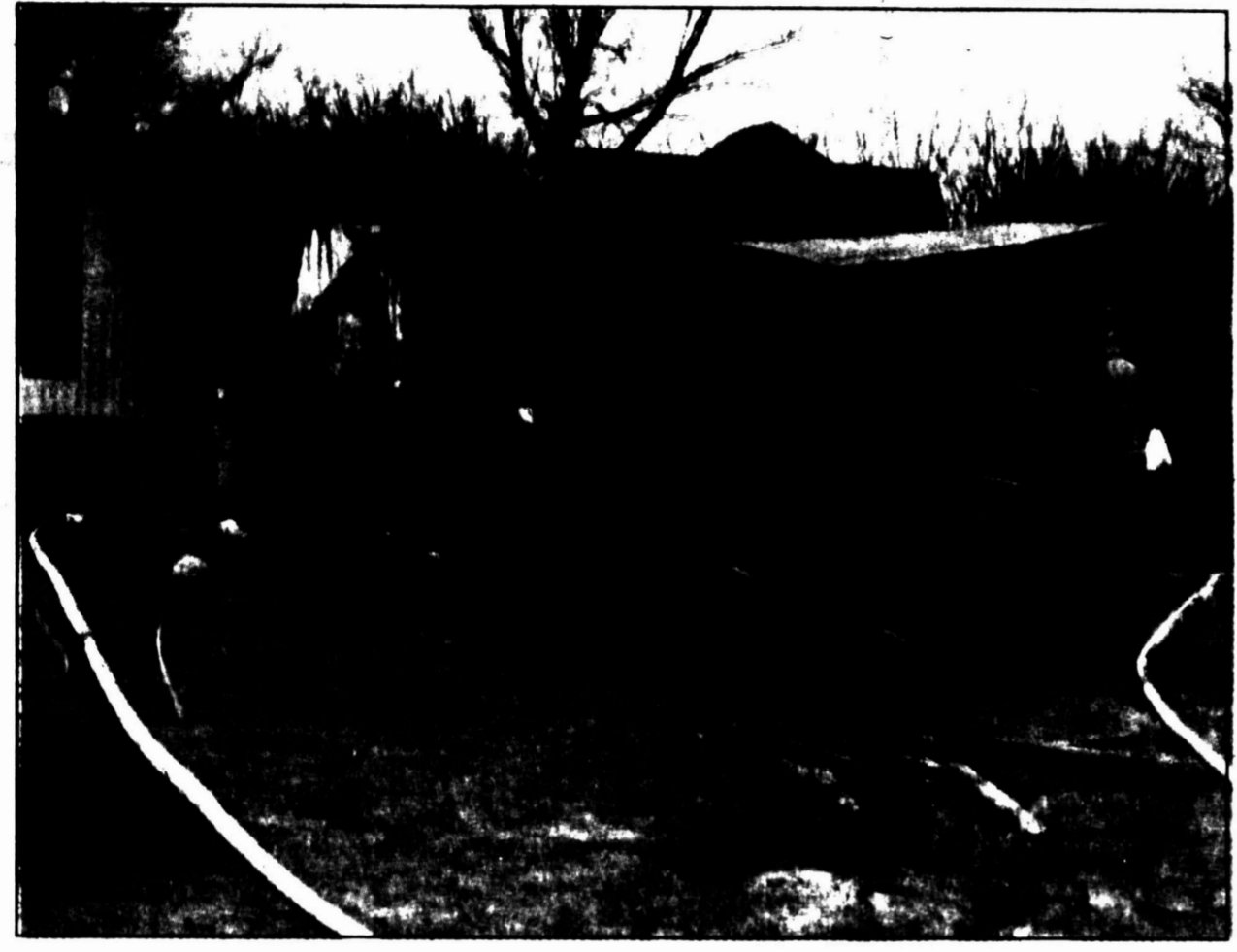
Slight drop in inmate count

AUSTIN (AP) — More parolee releases in Texas and fewer incarcerations of parole violators have freed up 1,000 beds in the nation's largest prison system, state criminal justice officials say. The three-month decrease in population, while small by comparison in a system with more than 150,000 beds, comes as Gov. Rick Perry is urging issuance of bonds for construction of more prisons.

• **Viola Mae Crosier, 91**, former ranch, grocery store employee.

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PAMPA'S CINEMA 4
MOVIE HOTLINE
665-7141



(Pampa News photo by David Bower)

Firefighters from the Lefors Volunteer Fire Department brought four trucks to the scene of this morning's fatal fire but the blaze was too far gone for them to make a difference. The cause of the fire is being blamed on a space heater, said Chief Sheriff's Deputy David Russell.

Freedom Museum goes after funds for facility to house B-25

By KATE B. DICKSON
Associate Publisher

If the Freedom Museum's plan is selected, it could receive \$800,000 or more in federal funds to help build a partially glass-enclosed facility at the present site which would house the museum's B-25.

The money is being sought from the Texas Department of Transportation which will administer about \$130 million in federal funds to create tourist enhancements, museum spokesman John Tripplehorn told city commissioners Tuesday. He displayed an architect's drawing depicting the bomber surrounded by glass. Tripplehorn said a huge American flag would go behind the plane and all would be flooded with light at night.

To make the plan fit better with tourist aims and possibly increase the chance of funding, a rest stop will be built in conjunction with the bomber house if the museum is chosen. Signs touting the museum would be erected on Interstate 40. While technically not a grant, the funds will be administered similarly with 80 percent of the costs paid for with federal funds and 20 percent paid for with donations, Tripplehorn said. The facility plan

calls for a project that has "gone over the \$1 million mark," he added, and there is not a limit on the money available. A TxDOT spokesman, Cheryl Grimes Luther, attended the meeting, and said assistance will be given in preparing the application for the money. The cutoff date for submittal is June 18 and she expects the funds, if approved, will be available in 2002 or 2003.

Statewide, Luther said there is \$130 million available for federal highway enhancement projects. Nationwide, the funds total 10 percent of those appropriated in a federal highway bill passed in 1991. She said this round of funding is the second phase of projects. Tripplehorn said a basement is being included in the plans for the new addition because the museum needs more room for display and storage. Also, he said the group would like to buy the small church across the street from the museum because it once was the Pampa Air Field's chapel. If successful, the plan would be to restore it to World War II condition. The commissioners agreed the city can act as the sponsoring agent for the project in order to handle the money if the project gets funded.

Texas state officials embracing Spanish

Hope to gain edge with Hispanics

AUSTIN (AP) — There's a new lilt to the flat Texas twang that saturates political lingo these days. In speeches, meetings and radio shows, many state officials are trading their Southern drawls for the rolling R's of Spanish. As governor, George W. Bush whetted the state's appetite for Spanish by sprinkling some in speeches and later in his television ads for president. Gov. Rick Perry began tossing around Spanish with increasing skill after succeeding Bush in December. The first Spanish words tumbled out during his swearing-in speech, to rousing applause. "Estamos unidos hacia un destino comun!" he said, meaning, "We are united toward a common goal!" State Sen. David Sibley, a Republican, helped push the Spanish-speaking movement to the forefront recently when he conducted a public meeting at the Texas Capitol in Spanish. Television screens displayed English translations during the 15-minute Senate Business and Commerce Committee meeting, which mostly dealt with committee housekeeping issues. Only a few people in the room understood the speech without the translation. Sibley orchestrated the event — the first Capitol speech in Spanish that lawmakers could recall — to spotlight the growing importance of bilingualism as Texas-Mexico relations increase. "I'm not trying to change the language of Texas," Sibley said. "All I'm saying is you ought to be bilingual." Not everyone agrees. "We're inviting problems that we don't need," said K.C. McAlpin, executive director of ProEnglish, a 50,000-member national organization that supports making English the nation's official language for government business. "It's very important that we have one language for government" (See SPANISH, Page 2)



(Pampa News photo by David Bower)

Col. Joe Harrison, 82nd Training Wing vice commander, left, presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to World War II Air Force veteran and Pampa resident Myron "Mike" Porter, right, as Congressman Mack Thornberry looks on. Porter, a retired Air Force Reserve lieutenant colonel, received the medal at Shepard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, this week for heroic actions after being seriously wounded during a bombing mission over Fredrichshafen, Germany, in 1944.

Lefors man dies in early morning fire

LEFORS — A space heater is being blamed for the fire in which Lefors resident Gary Timmons died early this morning in this Gray County community, said Chief Sheriff's Deputy David Russell. Gray County Justice of the Peace Kurt Curfman ordered an autopsy and authorities were searching for dental records in connection with the case. Russell said he had not yet received the information as to the particulars regarding the heater but said he had been told it was the source that sparked the fire. More than a dozen firefighters and four fire trucks from the Lefors Volunteer Fire Department braved bitterly cold temperatures to battle the blaze when the fire was first reported about 3:30 a.m. today. Timmons' body was found amid the smoldering rubble of the mobile home after the flames were extinguished. A representative of the State Fire Marshal's office arrived about 8:30 a.m. today to begin his investigation into the cause of the fire. Lefors firefighters remained on the scene until well after dawn. The center portion of the mobile home, at 611 N. Magnolia, was burned in two. Deputy Randy Langwell is the investigating officer for the sheriff's department, said Russell who was also on the scene along with Sheriff Don Copeland.

County accepts bid for two sheriff's cars

By NANCY YOUNG
Managing Editor

The Gray County Sheriff's Department will be getting two new Crown Victoria Fords soon. A bid of \$38,128.10 was received for the two cars which were included in the 2001 budget as part of the sheriff's vehicle replacement program. In opening the bid in the Gray County Commission meeting, Sheriff Don Copeland said the bid includes a \$7,000 trade-in and includes three vehicles: one 1995 model and two 1997 models. He said the county could not get a warranty without the trade-in. The lone bid was made by West Texas Ford in Pampa. (See CARS, Page 2)

Debris funding deadline gets extension to July 9

Gray County and 45 others eligible for disaster relief due to winter storms now have a four-month extension to get debris removal requests filed. The new deadline is July 9. Under the program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), funding will be at 90 percent of the eligible costs, according to a news release from FEMA. Also, the project completion date for debris removal corresponds to the July 9 extension date for 90 percent federal funding, the news release said. Funding at the usual 75 percent federal share is applied to other forms of public assistance for this disaster including reimbursement for emergency actions and repair or restoration of permanent facilities (roads, bridges, public buildings) damaged during the incident period.

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RELIGION

Minister's musing ...

The following words are especially relevant in our day: "...run with perseverance ... looking to Jesus..." (Hebrews 12:2).

It is hard to keep our eyes on Jesus! There are many distractions. We have to work hard to get ahead. It's tough just to stay even. Huge chunks of time are required of professional people just to keep up with the new developments in their fields. Work demands more and more time and effort just to maintain what we have. Somewhere there needs to be time for recreation and leisure. Family must be worked into the schedule of life somewhere.

We're bombarded by advertisements touting the pleasures we can't do without. Resistance weakens when the pros throw their most tantalizing appeals at us. Even worthy causes claim large slices of our time. Involvement in worthwhile community projects are time consuming. School activities are demanding.



By Rev. Derrell Monday

Central Baptist Church

The first verse of Hebrews 12 encourages us to get rid of the weights and run the race. Verse two is not an insignificant "second thought". "Looking unto Jesus" is imperative if we are to win. Unless we keep our eyes on Him, we will run toward the wrong goal. Devil-placed detours will send us off in the wrong direction.

Distractions will slow us down. Some pleasures, some demands, even some good things, will divert us from the primary goal.

Looking unto Jesus demands self-disciplined concentration. Unless we program ourselves to look to Him each day, letting nothing interfere with our private time with Him, we will not win the big race. We have to do it on purpose, otherwise we'll not do it at all.

Occasional worship service will not answer the demands of this verse. It requires a determined day-by-day view of our example and God.

Most of us are extremely busy and find ourselves too weary for the things of God. We reach levels of burn-out and fatigue. Unfortunately we tend to lay aside the things of God rather than the world. We may convince ourselves we are more rested, but we cannot deny the emptiness that pursues. Far too many have laid aside their faith and faithfulness.

May we realize that the fullness of life can only be experienced as we "Look unto Jesus".



(Special photo)

Jerry Smith will present The Kingsmen in concert at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 22 in Borger High School Auditorium at Borger. The gospel group has performed at the White House for President Jimmy Carter as well as the Grand Ole Opry. In addition, the band has received numerous Singing News Fan Awards and a number of Dove Awards. Some of their best-known recordings include: "It Made News in Heaven," "Excuses," "The Old Ship of Zion," "Stand Up" and "Wish Your Were Here." The concert is open and free to the public.

Lone Star living ... Sunday rituals: Finding the joys of church

By JOYCE SAENZ HARRIS
The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS — Growing up in the red-dirt piney woods of the Florida Panhandle, I found there were just three certainties in life: death, taxes, and church on Sunday.

We didn't have Junior League or Rotary Club or a country club; we had church. It gave us our social life right along with our spiritual life, covering all the bases for this world and the next. There was no question of attendance, for I never thought of not going to church. You didn't miss it unless you'd been the guest of honor at Saturday's funeral.

When I was small, church mostly meant Sunday school and wearing my prettiest pastel dresses, the ones that my mother slaved over her Singer sewing machine to produce, complete with full skirts, sashes, lace trims and hand-tucked bodices. Everybody dressed up for church, because we all believed that God expected it. We didn't want to disappoint him, and besides, we really liked looking nice.

In the summer, there was Vacation Bible School, which meant drinking Kool-Aid, building Scripture dioramas and making log cabins out of Popsicle sticks. I will say that VBS became vastly more enjoyable after the good folks on our Administrative Board sprang for air conditioning.

I still have the Bible I was given by the church at my confirmation, for which I was pre-

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pared by a series of group classes with our pastor. I distinguished myself during one session by asking, right in front of everybody, what the Bible meant when it talked about being circumcised. (My pastor said I should ask my daddy but, belatedly sensing his acute embarrassment, I never did.)

When I got older, church meant Methodist Youth Fellowship, weekly choir practice, church summer camp and, of course, boys. During this period, I spent an average of six hours in church every Sunday, most of it secretly worrying about whether wearing glasses and braces would irreparably damage my chances with the cute guys who never seemed to notice me.

Somehow, despite this incredibly shallow-minded approach to spiritual betterment, I managed to absorb a staggering amount of religious knowledge. I actually read Hurlbut's Story of the Bible for fun and memorized innumerable Bible verses (King James Version). I learned dozens of hymns by heart, including the Latin verses of "O Come, All Ye Faithful." I especially loved the Methodists' old, now seldom-used Communion

service, adapted from the Book of Common Prayer, for its majestic, soaring language.

And thanks to my parents, whose Christian beliefs were solid and unassailable, I knew that the Golden Rule really is the universal spiritual law, and that God in all his incarnations truly loves us far more than we can possibly deserve.

Like many young people, however, I drifted away from church in my 20s, attending only sporadically. Though I had moved out of Florida in 1975, my inactive membership stayed at my home church for years. In 1983, I married a wonderful man who had sound morals but no formal religious training. It took some time for me to realize how much I missed going to church, and more time for my husband to realize that he might enjoy going with me.

Then, for years, there was the problem of where to go. One small United Methodist church was convenient close enough to walk to but deadly dull. We joined another smallish congregation nearby but never really felt at ease there. We then transferred to a huge church whose warmhearted pastor gave amazing sermons. But when he

retired, we felt orphaned, lost in the congregation's vast, wealthy membership.

We agreed that there had to be something else out there for us. But what, and where?

We found our church home, finally, through a colleague's recommendation. One visit to Greenland Hills UMC, and we knew we would be back again and again. Eventually, we transferred our membership there, and over the past 18 months we have slowly increased our involvement and become more and more regular in our attendance.

Now I understand why this oldest of all Sunday rituals persists, no matter which faith's Sabbath one might observe on whatever day of the week.

There is the desire to find sanctuary in God, along with the very human quest to find a quiet place for meditation within oneself. In gathering for celebration with others, we discover an enlarged sense of family in an increasingly fractured and fractious world. And not least, there is the opportunity to help those in need, while also healing oneself.

Some people say they find secular ways of doing all these things, ways that don't involve having to join or attend a church. And I suppose that works fine for them.

All I know is, this is what works best for me.

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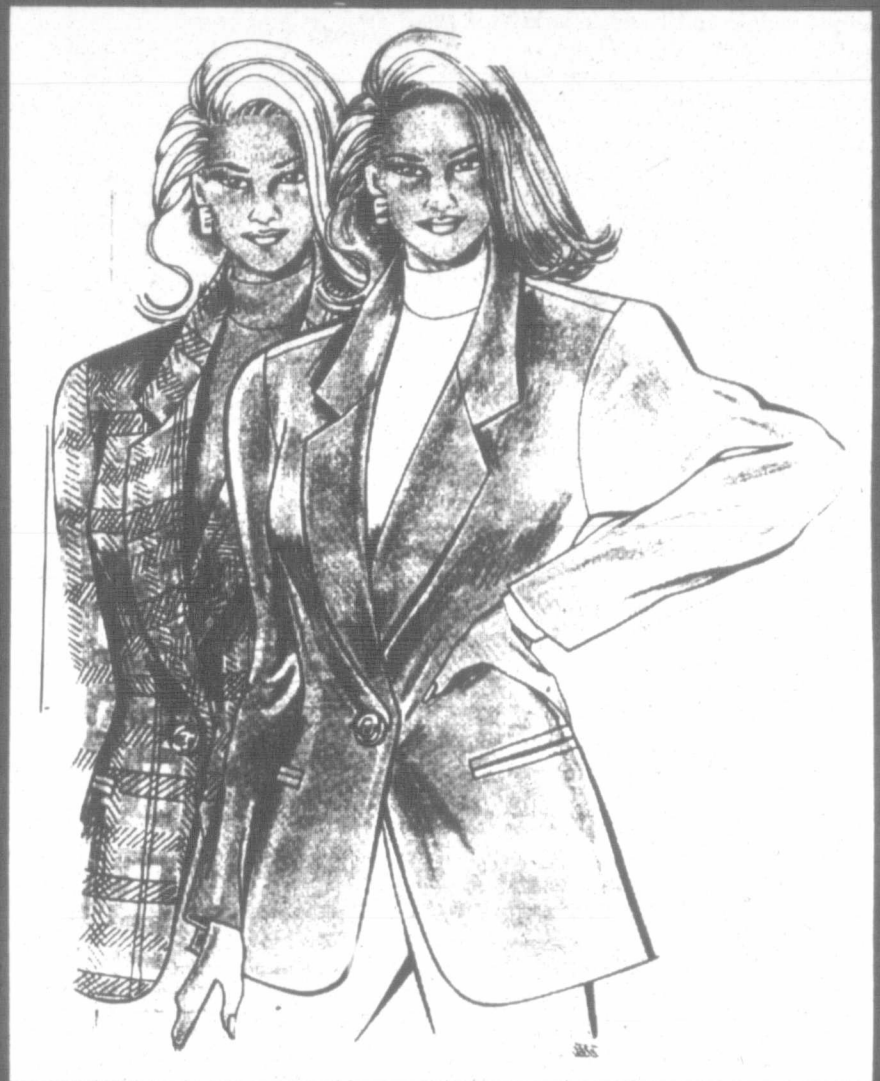
19⁹⁹ Reg. 38.00 to 58.00



Peachskin Silknole

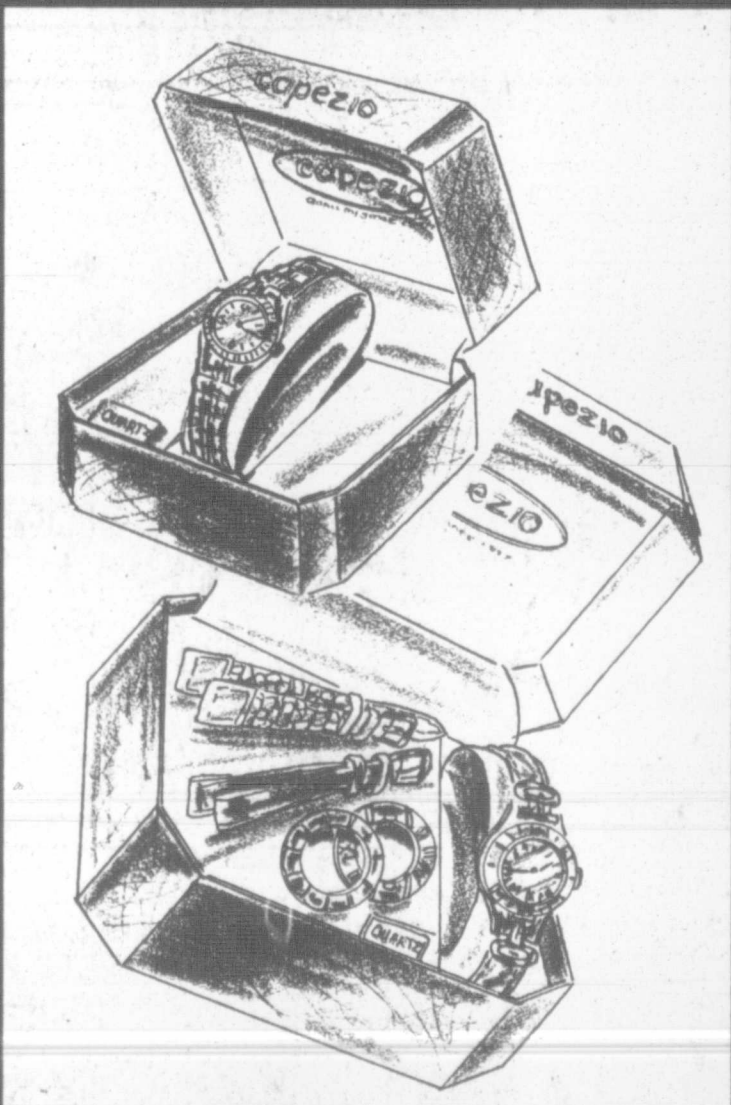
ASSORTED WINTER BLAZERS

9⁹⁹ Reg. 24.00 - 40.00



ASSORTED WATCHES
for Men & Women

19⁹⁹



ASSORTED NOVELTY JACKETS

19⁹⁹ by Allure
Reg. 54.00



LARGE SELECTION WINTER BLANKETS

9⁹⁹

ASSORTED MISSES COTTON SWEATERS

12⁹⁹ Reg. 28.00

ASSORTED WOMENS PAJAMAS

9⁹⁹

Reg. 18.00 - 38.00
*Flannels, Satins, Cottons



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Son Who Moves in With Dad Insists Mom Save His Place

DEAR ABBY: My 15-year-old son, "Mike," chose to move in with his father four months ago. He made this decision on his own. My lawyer advised me that he was old enough to make the decision, and that any judge would allow it, so I let him go. His father and I have been divorced for seven years. I am remarried, and besides Mike's 14-year-old sister, have a 5-year-old daughter with my new husband. Mike is extremely jealous of the 5-year-old.



Abigail Van Buren

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

want anyone going into it when he's not there.

We are severely cramped for space in our home and our 5-year-old's bedroom is ridiculously small — in fact, we call it a "glorified hallway." Now Mike's room is sitting empty except for every other weekend when he visits. We would like to move our 5-year-old into Mike's vacant room; however, Mike is absolutely livid about it. He says it is "still his room," and he doesn't

he comes for the weekend, as we have a sofa bed. Should I go ahead and move my daughter into the empty room, or let Mike keep his "security blanket"? I feel that it is my home, and I should do as I please. However, he is my son, and I love him and don't want to put any more distance between us.

NO VACANCY IN INDIANA
DEAR NO VACANCY: If you give Mike's room to his sister, he truly will have no place to go if things don't work out at his father's. He will feel that you have slammed the door behind him, and it may affect the way he feels about you for years to come.

Your little girl is small, and she is used to the room in which she is now sleeping.

If we move our daughter into the empty room, we will still have somewhere for Mike to sleep when

Horoscope

SUNDAY, FEB. 18, 2001

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
**** Take your time during the next few weeks if you feel like soul-searching and reviewing your year. Use your high energy constructively. Consider a new diet or exercise program. Make plans to contact an older relative. Tonight: Bring the family together.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
***** Pack up the family and take off for the day, or ask friends to join you in a mini-adventure. Stay goal-oriented, if possible, during the next few weeks. Optimism about money soars, but don't go on a spending spree. Tonight: Relax that overactive mind.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
**** You might be far more active and vigorous than you realize. Others might be challenged by your actions and words. Attempt to walk in another's shoes. Sensitive discussions lead to more friendship and caring. Tonight: Spend quality time with a loved one.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
**** Express your feelings in a way that another understands. Start a project or get into a favorite sport. You can accomplish a lot with your high energy. Call a friend or relative who's far away and plan to visit each other soon. Tonight: Accept another's invitation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
**** You might be far more active and vigorous than you realize. Others might be challenged by your actions and words. Attempt to walk in another's shoes. Sensitive discussions lead to more friendship and caring. Tonight: Spend quality time with a loved one.

**** Keep conversations with a partner going, and you will find a common point of agreement. Forge into new territory. Indulging a child or loved one fits right into your plans. Don't let another's jealousy stop you from doing what you want. Tonight: Share a favorite game or hobby.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
**** Your imagination knows no limits. Be playful with an overly serious adult or elder. Dote on a family member and allow your inner child out more often. Express your caring so that another understands your warmth. Avoid an argument. Tonight: Play like a kid.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
**** Somehow, you might not understand what is happening with those around you. Unintentionally, you could be distancing people more than you know. Work on empathy. Tonight: Happy at home.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
***** Someone really does allow you to get away with much more than you usually do. This person not only gives you emotional support, but financial support as well, so share your appreciation. Tonight: Out and about.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
**** Expenses could swing, but look at the real culprit here — you! You can say yes or no if you choose. A partner's extravagance could be an issue, but you can also find ways to handle the problem well. A family member puts you on a pedestal. Tonight: Make a favorite meal.

BORN TODAY
Artist Yoko Ono (1933), actor John Travolta (1954), TV personality Vanna White (1957)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
**** You are personality plus. Others adore you. Look at all the invitations that surround you in the near future, if not today. Curb anger or, better yet, express your feelings so another can hear. Visit with friends. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
**** Step back and think about what you are doing. You might evoke a strong reaction from a friend or loved one. Your thoughts carry more weight than you realize. Treat someone to movies and munchies. Relax with a dear friend. Tonight: Make sure you get enough sleep.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
**** Aim for what you want, but work at not antagonizing another. Use special caution with a loved one, who might seem OK but on a deeper level has a lot of problems. Bring loved ones and family together. Tonight: Surround yourself with special people.

BORN TODAY
Artist Yoko Ono (1933), actor John Travolta (1954), TV personality Vanna White (1957)



Crossword Puzzle

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 40 Ala.
 - 1 City of neighbor
 - England
 - 41 Headliner
 - 5 Congress output
 - 9 Theater worker
 - 11 Massage targets
 - 13 Play part
 - 14 Bit of land
 - 15 Pull along
 - 16 Light solo
 - 18 Sub
 - 20 Str-frying need
 - 21 Horse
 - 22 Tiny hole
 - 23 Corn unit
 - 24 Bottom-line figure
 - 25 Contented sound
 - 27 Titled women
 - 29 Linking word
 - 30 Best Picture of 1997
 - 32 More audacious
 - 34 Minuscule
 - 35 Slowly, in scores
 - 36 Stockpile
 - 38 Boxer De La Hoya
 - 39 Ship of 1492
- DOWN**
- 1 Police raids
 - 2 Fancy ties
 - 3 Helen Hunt film
 - 4 Farm female
 - 5 Mass language
 - 6 Plot unit
 - 7 Helen Hunt film
 - 8 District
 - 10 Basic book
 - 12 Prop for Buffy
 - 17 Disen-cumber
 - 19 Approach
 - 22 Western cat
 - 24 Persian ruler
 - 25 Poet
 - 26 Turmoil
 - 27 Game piece
 - 28 Afternoon break
 - 30 Rose feature
 - 31 French film award
 - 33 Ollie's buddy
 - 37 Diva's practice notes

FLAG CARON
LAPAZ ALONE
ABASH METES
PEG INEXACT
SLEEVE TEE
OATS END
TING TEST
MON ORAL
ILK ERSATZ
SUBTEXT NEE
HELIX URGES
ANODE PAINT
PETES MESS

Yesterday's answer

Marmaduke



"Does he know any tricks besides card tricks?"

The Family Circus



"Dr. James, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Peay ... why do all doctors have the same first name?"

STUMPED?
For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-454-7377! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18-only.) A King Features service, NYC.

No BASKE

WHITE Deer' St. Petty are were nar 1A Divi Girls Bas Wheel Finsterw to the all Most y ors we Vanita W

SOCCE

PAMPA the Sprin Pampa 3 will be h This re players w last Augu son. New p at T-Shir Kingsmil Pampa be 10 a.m. ar Team p March 5 being hel Additio Level" C March 3 p.m. at p mired. For add call 665-3

GOLF

BIG 5 Pampa g peted in Invitation and place Annie with two- Other Pa Cortney Michelle Shannon Holman 2

AUTO F

DAYTO (AP) — euphoria Winston C Elliott's fai it was. The p Daytona 5 Sterling M race Thurs But Ellic the real r why sho nothing l hand?

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"I don't or worse i Elliott, wh laps of his faded to 26. "We'll and get re

The in from his wheel tw week ago pect. Befc pole last S 183.565 m Everham driver me make the chart.

But that a lot like was more the quality "I wish been up i Everham Dodge's Cup after Then I strength o "Those ty fast tod "A couple by us."

One thra by three- 500 chan whose tea relief from After sv spots in t the Fords 2000, and that the aerodyn cost the against t and Ponti

Wal-Mart donation



(Pampa News photo by Dee Dee Laramore)

Pampa Wal-Mart Store Manager Joe Cumby, left, presents a \$700 check from the Wal-Mart Foundation to Wes Hukill, treasurer of the Top O' Texas Stock Show, and Blake Laramore, organizer for the annual Stock Show barbecue. The Top O' Texas Stock Show each year gives 4-H students the opportunity to showcase the pigs, lambs, and steers they've raised.

Florida schools improved as much as other schools

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Failing schools faced with the threat that their students would receive vouchers to go elsewhere showed the most improvement when they were tested a year later, a new study suggests.

Florida schools that received F's in 1999 improved the next year more than twice as much as other schools, according to the study, led by Jay P. Greene, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. If the schools would have failed again in 2000, they would

have become eligible for vouchers under a 1999 law that is the hallmark of Gov. Jeb Bush's education plan.

Vouchers allow parents to take their children out of public schools and use tax dollars to send them to private schools. President Bush, the governor's brother, is proposing vouchers for the nation.

The study, funded by the state Department of Education, found that all schools did better on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test from 1999 to 2000, regardless of their grades

the first year.

"But we saw this phenomenon where the lower the prior score was, the bigger the improvement," Greene said Thursday. "Simply being monitored, that is inspirational to do better."

The failing schools gained about 18 points on the test's reading scores and 26 points in math. In contrast, schools that got C's in 1999 improved about 4.5 points on average in reading, and about 12 points in math.

The president of Florida's teachers' union, which has opposed Bush's testing and voucher plan, said the study failed to take into account the extra money and attention given to failing schools, something teachers have pushed for all along.

"We've paid attention to these schools and we've infused money into the situation," said Maureen Dinnen, president of the Florida Education Association. "It isn't that teachers were being lazy and shiftless before. The other ingredient was, 'What do you need?' The money."

Bush said the study lends weight to the effectiveness of the new law.

"It is clear that the state's unprecedented attention to children in low performing schools is producing remarkable results," he said.

Opponents also have said that instructors can teach to the test, and that it changes too frequently to adequately measure achievement.

But the study released Thursday concluded the scores compared favorably with scores on another test for which there weren't such high stakes.

Couple survives ordeal trapped in snow drifts

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Bear and Eve Feight's wrong turn led them into a weeklong battle for survival, living off a few candy bars and cookies and snow they collected from the frigid drifts outside their half-buried vehicle.

"We prayed constantly for a miracle because I knew that was what it was going to take to get us out of here," Eve Feight, 65, said Thursday, two days after she and her 67-year-old husband were rescued from the Gila National Forest.

The Belen, N.M.-area couple set out Feb. 6 on a visit to their foster daughter's home in Tucson, Ariz., a daylong trip from their home south of Albuquerque.

"We were going to help her settle into her new house," Mrs. Feight said in a telephone interview from her home.

They packed blankets and rugs that they'd need to move furniture, along with four candy bars and six coconut macaroons. They also brought their dog Riley, and some dog food.

En route to Tucson, they decided to visit the ranch where Mrs. Feight's mother grew up in Cliff, in southwestern New Mexico. Mrs. Feight said they tried to notify their daughter about the change of plans, but the line was busy.

The Feights took a wrong turn and headed into the snowy Gila. The snowpack became thicker, and after a few more turns, they were stuck.

They put the rugs under the tires to gain traction, but snow piled up under the sport utility vehicle, leaving its wheels spinning.

When they first got stuck, they measured 32 inches of snow next to the SUV. Another 10 inches fell the next day.

"About the fourth day, my husband said, 'This is God's way to lose my beer belly, and all I've lost is my butt,'" Mrs. Feight said.

The Feights' children contacted authorities. But because of the last-minute change in plans, police didn't know where to start searching.

New Mexico State Police sent out a nationwide message seeking information on the couple's whereabouts.

"The family was worried about their welfare because they had not heard from them. But their route of travel was unknown," Sgt. Royleen Ross-Weaver said.

The Feights, who had thermometers with them, faced nighttime temperatures that Mrs. Feight said dipped to 6 degrees below zero outside and about 29 degrees in the SUV.

The couple are in the insulation business so they put their professional knowledge to use. They wore several layers of clothing, wrapped themselves in blankets and a tarp, and taped plastic bags and sheets over the SUV's windows.

They placed red clothing — a dress, a sweater and a blouse — on the hood to attract the attention of any searchers. They rationed out the cookies and candy.

"We are the biggest chow hounds you'd ever want to meet," Mrs. Feight said. "That's our hobby — eating."

Their hobby turned serious. They ate only two macaroons and a little more than two candy bars during the ordeal.

"I'd say we'd chew each bite 21 times," Mrs. Feight said.

Eventually, they ventured out to seek help. When they thought they couldn't go any farther,

Riley took off barking.

"I looked up and here comes a white Ford pickup," Mrs. Feight said.

"My husband turned around at the same time. He said, 'I saw this snowdrift moving toward me.' He said he thought he was hallucinating. But it had chrome wheels, and I said, 'Hallucinations would not have chrome wheels.'"

In the pickup were three security officers from Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque. They were on a camping trip.

"I'll tell you what I told them: 'I fell in love with all three of you in three minutes,'" Mrs. Feight said.

The campers took the couple to a nearby town. After a medical check and a call to their foster daughter, the Feights went to a motel room to relax.

"Our hands were dehydrated and our wedding rings had fallen off," Mrs. Feight said. "I found our rings and ... said, 'Will you marry me?' He said, 'Sure,' and we exchanged marriage vows again after 30 years."



Valerie Ryals

Ryals, O'Brien return to Canadian in Prairie Rivers Musical

Jay Godwin, with Prairie Rivers Musical and Sing-Along in Canadian, announced this week that Valerie Ryals, widely considered the top female Texas-style fiddler in the state, will be a featured performer at the February 17th show. Also featured will be nationally known guitarist, Rich O'Brien.

Ryals and O'Brien are making a return visit to Canadian, after their week-long stay a year ago as part of the Texas Folklife Resources Artists-in-Residency Program. Their performances were popular and well remembered by audience members and local/area musicians who had the pleasure of performing on stage with them.

Ryals was born into a family of string players, learning her first fiddle tunes from her grandfather when she was 11 years old.

In a genre normally dominated by men, she has proven herself as a champion fiddler.

Texas-style fiddling is distinguished by a smooth melodic phrasing produced by complex fingering and low bow strokes. "The bow is the key," said Ryals. "You can take the fiddle and make it sound so many different ways, but the bowing, mainly. Almost anybody can learn the fingering, but using the bow for different styles is tough. A good stick is the most valuable tool you have."

Ryals teaches Texas-style fiddle to literally hundreds of students through her Burleson studio. She has also participated in past fiddling contests at Shamrock's St. Patrick's Day celebration. Ryals will conduct reasonably paced workshops as a part of her stay in Canadian on February 16th and 17th (call Godwin at (806) 323-6213).

O'Brien is an amazing guitarist according to Jay Godwin. "He looks so relaxed but we all watched him in awe while playing at our musical last year. We encourage everyone who likes great guitar picking to come and watch Rich play."

Red Steagall has said, "Rich O'Brien is one of the great guitarists of our time. When history looks back on the great instrumentalists of our time, Rich O'Brien will be at the top of the list."

Prairie Rivers Musical and Sing-Along is a free family oriented musical show organized in Canadian in the fall of 1999. Area musicians from Wellington, Wheeler, Canadian, Higgins, Lipscomb, and Leedy, Oklahoma have been featured. Well-known Texas-style fiddler Frankie McWhorter is now contributing his great talents to the delight of the audiences.

The shows are at the Canadian Middle School Auditorium where comfortable theater type seating is available for everyone. "The show is free, uses a lot of older country, gospel, and rock-a-billy music, with no alcohol or dancing, and lasts about 2 1/2 hours," said Godwin. "See you on Saturday night, February 17th, at 7:30."

Public Radio: A time for fun and funding

Public Radio — that not-for-profit, listener-supported, non-commercial effort that doesn't exist in the Texas Panhandle (except in a small circle around Amarillo, and that's just since 1999) — will get a boost on March 9 when a special live "radio program," "Prairie Home Canadian" will come to the Palace Theater in Canadian.

This will be a take-off on the popular variety show "Prairie Home Companion," produced since the early 1980s by Public Radio International with Garrison Keillor as host.

Local performers, musicians and humorists will be doing Texas Panhandle versions of some of the favorite skits such as "Powdermilk Biscuits" and the "Chatterbox Cafe," and might even talk something about, not the Norwegian bachelor farmers whose plight is often discussed (the "Prairie Home Companion" is broadcast from Minnesota), but maybe the Lone Star lonesome cowboy without a horse to come home to.

Watch for information about time, but mark your calendar now for March 9.

Help bring High Plains Public Radio (HPPR) to our part of the plains by talking about public radio, listening to it when you're going to Amarillo (91.3 FM, then 94.9 FM), and becoming an investor in underwriting the cost.

For those interested in obtaining more information about HPPR, a nine-minute "High Plains Sampler" is available on CD or audiotape for check-out at the public library. The sampler contains excerpts from public radio broadcasts.

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