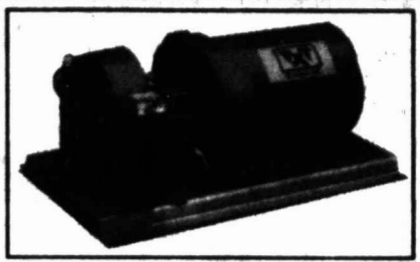


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THE Pampa News

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2003

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LOCAL

DPS traffic stop nets 337 pounds of pot

AMARILLO. — Texas Department of Public Safety troopers Tuesday arrested a New Orleans man after they found 337 pounds of marijuana in his vehicle after it was stopped on I-40.

John Scot Broadus, 45, of New Orleans, La., was eastbound on I-40 west of Amarillo in a 1995 Lincoln when troopers stopped him for a traffic violation. After consent to search was given, 337 pounds of marijuana was found in the trunk in five large duffel-style bags. Broadus was booked into Potter County jail on possession charges.

DEATHS

A.J. Ledford, 72, concrete company field supervisor.
Leora Eunice Parsons, 94, educator, designer.

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Vulnerable?

Intelligence says terrorists may target weaknesses of air cargo transports

By BRAD FOSS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is increasingly focused on the vulnerability of cargo planes as it responds to intelligence indicating al-Qaida might use aircraft to strike targets far from major cities, including power plants, dams and oil facilities.

On Tuesday, the Pentagon said it had broadened air patrols throughout the country, while the Transportation Security Administration said it had increased inspections of cargo companies to ensure compliance with tighter rules enacted last month.

A TSA spokesman said extra law enforcement added to the perimeters of airports in the past three days was specifically put in place to fortify air cargo facilities.

In addition, the military deployed surface-to-air missile systems in the Washington area and was considering locating more anti-aircraft systems in the New York City region, a defense official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The warning from the Homeland Security Department on Sunday about a possible al-Qaida attack this holiday season was focused mainly on the threat from foreign commercial airliners, according to U.S. officials. But cargo planes also were cited as a special concern and security experts have serious concerns about the air freight industry's readiness.

Security experts and cargo pilots said the industry's surveillance of airports, planes and freight — and of warehouse employees who pack boxes — remains dangerously inadequate, particularly among small- and mid-sized companies.

They also noted that the U.S. government has even less control over cargo and passenger planes originating in other countries.

Several experts said cargo planes are needlessly vulnerable to takeover by someone who sneaks aboard because few are equipped with reinforced cockpit doors. Likewise, there are no flight attendants or passengers who might help defend against an attack.

"An air cargo aircraft remains just as good a weapon — no, even better — than a passenger aircraft," said Rafi Ron, president of New Age Security Solutions and the former security director for the Israeli Airport Authority.

Congress recently passed a bill allowing cargo pilots to carry guns, but that has not alleviated pilots' concerns.

James Shilling, a full-time pilot for a major cargo carrier and consultant to the Coalition of Airline Pilots Association, said he would like to see the TSA screen and conduct background checks on every person with direct access to cargo planes.

He also advocates screening all cargo — with the caveat that technology must first be developed to make it affordable and efficient.

It's Christmas, Charlie Brown!



(Pampa News photo by Marilyn Powers)

Melissa Parker of 1105 Terry Road checks on the holiday yard decorations she made shortly after Charles Schulz' death a few years ago. Parker designed four yard decorations based on the *Peanuts* comic strip by Schulz. She also found inspiration for the decorations in the Christmas television special featuring the *Peanuts* characters.



(Pampa News photo by Marilyn Powers)

Snoopy, dressed as Santa, admires the Christmas decorations that won first place for his dog house in a decorating contest.

Despite breakthroughs, danger still lurks

By GEORGE GEDDA
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON TODAY

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was, arguably, the best foreign policy week of the Bush presidency, starting with the capture of Saddam Hussein and ending with Libya's commitment to dismantle its doomsday weapons programs.

In between, Iran formally agreed to allow unrestricted access to its nuclear facilities, and former Secretary of State James A. Baker came back from Europe with promises from Iraq war opponents France, Germany and Russia to help ease Iraq's \$120 billion debt burden.

There was more good news: The casualty rate for American soldiers in Iraq this month is less than half of what it was during November.

Encouraging developments indeed, but no one in the administration is claiming victory. There is no assurance

that Saddam's arrest foreshadows a permanent decline in anti-American violence in Iraq or that a democratic Iraq is a shoo-in.

As for Iran, the administration says the country's acquiescence on international inspections is merely a good first step. U.S. mistrust for Tehran's mullahs, built up over 25 years, does not subside easily.

In contrast to Iran, the administration seems far more impressed about disarmament gestures by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, who has bedeviled U.S. administrations since he took control of his North African country in 1969. President Bush said Gadhafi's promise was of great importance, but some in the administration remain unsure that Gadhafi has changed his stripes.

For all the seeming good news, the administration is aware that any display of triumphalism would be premature, especially with intelligence reports suggesting that al-Qaida may be planning catastrophic terror attacks against the United States in the near future.

Under normal circumstances, Secretary of State Colin Powell would be seen before the cameras, broadcasting the progress of the past 10 days. But except for a telephone interview this week with *The New York Times*, he has kept a very low profile since Dec. 9. Powell underwent surgery for prostate cancer on Dec. 15; he is said to be recovering nicely and expects to be back to work full time in January.

Powell has been heard from, however, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* mag-

azine that was written before Saddam's arrest.

In it, Powell discussed Bush's policy of dealing with potential security threats through pre-emptive military force. The policy was designed, in part, to serve notice on leaders of rival countries that the cost of supporting terrorism or developing weapons of mass destruction has "gone way up," he wrote.

The pre-emption policy certainly appears to have caught Gadhafi's attention. Apparently worried that Libya might become a target, Gadhafi opened talks with the United States and Britain on what amounts to unilateral disarmament. The process began in March, just before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, and reached fruition with last Friday's announcements from Washington, London and Tripoli. Understandably, the Bush administration was delighted.

With Libya, Iran and Iraq all look-

(See DANGER, Page 4)

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OBITUARIES

SERVICES TOMORROW

Services Friday ...

LEDFORD, A.J. — Graveside services, 10 a.m., Memory Gardens Cemetery, Pampa.
PARSONS, Leora Eunice — 2 p.m., Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors Colonial Chapel, Pampa.

LEORA EUNICE PARSONS 1909-2003

Leora Eunice Parsons, 94, of Pampa, died Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2003. Services will be at 2 p.m. Friday in Carmichael-Whitley Colonial Chapel with the Rev. Carl Novian, associate pastor of First Baptist Church, officiating. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Saturday in Holdenville Cemetery at Holdenville, Okla., under the direction of Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors of Pampa.

Born Feb. 14, 1909, at Pear Valley, Mrs. Parsons grew up in Calvin, Okla. She was a graduate of East Central University of Ada, Okla. She moved to Pampa in 1993 and was a member of First Baptist Church.

She married Roy L. Parsons on July 8, 1930, at Holdenville; he died in 1958.

Mrs. Parsons was a longtime educator and

worked as a designer for Edna Looney Products for 16 years.

She was preceded in death by two brothers, Lloyd Atkinson and Clifton Atkinson; and by a sister, Jimmie Marie Atkinson.

The family requests memorials be to First Baptist Church, 203 N. West, Pampa, TX 79065.

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



A.J. LEDFORD 1930-2003

A.J. Ledford, 72, of Pampa, Texas, died Monday, Dec. 22, 2003, at Pampa. Graveside services will be at 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 26, 2003, at Memory Gardens Cemetery with the Rev. Barry Owens, associate pastor of the First Baptist Church, officiating. Arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors.

Mr. Ledford was born Dec. 25, 1930, in Seminole County, Okla. He had been a resident of the Pampa area since 1942. He retired from Pampa Concrete as a field supervisor in 1991.

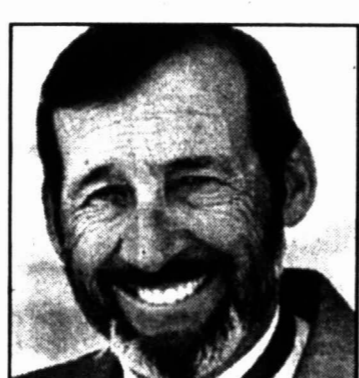
He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving during the Korean Conflict.

He was a devoted and loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Survivors include four daughters, Karen Williams and husband Walt and Brenda Madden and husband Bruce, all of Pampa,

Patty Smith and husband Geary of White Deer and Marcy Ruth and husband Randy of Skellytown; two sons, Michael Ledford and wife Chris of Skellytown and Wendell Ledford and wife Nellie of Jonesboro, Ark.; two brothers, Franklin Ledford of Jasper and Wayne Ledford and wife Betty of Pampa; 15 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

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



ON RECORD

POLICE

Pampa Police Department today reported the following arrests.

Tuesday, Dec. 23

Angela D. Fitzer, 32, 1012 Terry Rd., was arrested for criminal trespass of a habitation.

Carter Richard Young, 49, 118 W. Albert, was arrested for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon against a family member.

Johnny Meek, 40, Amarillo, was arrested for disorderly conduct/Peeping Tom.

FIRE

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

Tuesday, Dec. 23

10:24 a.m. — One unit and three firefighters responded to a lifting/medical assist in the 2600 block of Dogwood.

3:11 p.m. — One unit and four firefighters responded to a medical assist in the 700 block of Murphy.

3:43 p.m. — One unit and three firefighters responded to a medical assist in the 400 block of Yeager.

SHERIFF

Gray County Sheriff's Department today reported the following arrests.

Tuesday, Dec. 23

Andre Kadain Drummond, 19, East Hartford, Conn., was arrested by Texas Department of Public Safety for conspiracy to possess/possession of marijuana over 5 pounds and under 50 pounds.

Shawn Well Findlay, 25, Hartford, Conn., was arrested by the DPS for conspiracy to possess/possession of marijuana over 5 pounds and under 50 pounds.

Sandra Drummond, 19, East Hartford, Conn., was arrested by the DPS for possession of mari-

juana over 5 pounds and under 50 pounds.

Earl V. Thompson, 26, New Britain, Conn., was arrested by the DPS for conspiracy to possess/possession of marijuana over 5 pounds and under 50 pounds.

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Gamara Lopez, 22, San Angelo, was arrested for open container, failure to appear, and possession of marijuana.

Dustin Blake Tollison, 21, Wheeler, was arrested for defective tail light and possession of marijuana.

Rodolfo Rivera, 29, Wheeler, was arrested for possession of marijuana.

WEATHER FOCUS

PAMPA

Today's forecast is calling for partly cloudy skies, highs in the lower 60s and south winds 5 to 15 mph. Tonight should fall on partly cloudy skies with lows in the lower 30s and south winds 10 to 15 mph. Christmas Day should see partly cloudy skies. Highs in the lower 60s. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. Thursday night, partly cloudy. Lows in the mid 30s. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. Friday, partly cloudy. Windy. Highs in the upper 60s.

Southwest winds 20 to 30 mph. Friday night, partly cloudy. Breezy. Lows in the mid 30s. Saturday, partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the mid 50s. Saturday night, partly cloudy. Lows in the upper 20s. Sunday, partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 40s. Sunday night, partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 20s. Monday, partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s. Monday night, partly cloudy. Breezy. Lows in the mid 20s. Tuesday, partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the upper 40s.

Searchers discover woman's body buried in back yard

TYLER, Texas (AP) — A body believed to be that of an elderly East Texas woman missing since November was unearthed behind her mobile home, a sheriff said.

The body was discovered buried in the back yard of Carolyn Ruth Click's home following a search by cadaver dogs Tuesday evening. Smith County investigators were following up on a tip

from a man being held in jail.

Sheriff J.B. Smith said the inmate told fellow prisoners and investigators he killed the 62-year-old woman and buried her body behind the pale yellow

mobile home along County Road 2323.

Smith said the inmate will be charged with murder and an arrest warrant issued for his arrest from the Henderson County Jail, where he remains

in custody in connection with other charges.

The inmate, who had been released from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice only three months ago, had been living in the area, said Smith.

"The dogs hit on the same area he told us. Now we begin digging and the painstaking process of moving slowly to gather all evidence here at the scene," the sheriff told the Tyler Morning Telegraph in Wednesday's editions. "We fully expected to find her body here at the house."

Smith said the inmate also told prisoners in the county jail that he killed the woman's boyfriend and "chopped him into pieces, then dumped his body in a lake in Henderson County."

City Briefs

The Pampa News is not responsible for the content of paid advertisement

A WONDERFUL Christmas Gift is a donation to Meals on Wheels in honor or memory of a loved one.

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Consumers, beef producers worry about mad cow

By JONATHAN D. SALANT
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — From consumers to beef producers, Americans braced for the fallout from the apparent discovery of mad cow disease in the United States even as federal officials insisted the food supply was safe.

The impact was evident almost immediately: Several nations, including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, halted U.S. beef imports just hours after the Agriculture Department announced Tuesday that a cow at a farm near Yakima, Wash., had tested positive for the brain-wasting disease. Japan is the largest overseas market for U.S. beef.

Agriculture Department officials and cattle industry executives tried to allay fears that American beef supplies had become infected, saying the U.S. inspection system was working effectively: The farm where the cow originated has been quarantined and officials were tracing the movement of the cow from the farm to the slaughterhouse, and the flow of the meat to three processing plants in Washington state.

USDA officials announced early Wednesday that Vern's Moses Lake Meat Co. in Moses Lake, Wash., is voluntarily recalling approximately 10,410 pounds of raw beef that may have been exposed to tissues containing mad cow. They said the beef was produced on Dec. 9 and shipped to several establishments for further processing and is being recalled "out of an abundance of caution" even though it "would not be expected to be infected or have an adverse public health impact."

The department's Food Safety and Inspection Service said it is continuing its investigation to ensure that all the recalled beef is correctly identified and tracked, but gave no further details immediately.

There was no answer at the telephone number listed for Vern's Moses Lake Meat Co., after the recall, which was announced in the wee hours of the morning.

"We remain confident in the safety of our food supply," Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said in announcing the first suspected U.S. case of mad cow disease.

Veneman also assured Americans that no foul play was suspected.

"This incident is not terror-

ist-related," she said.

Mad cow disease eats holes in the brains of cattle. It sprang up in Britain in 1986 and spread through countries in Europe and Asia, prompting massive destruction of herds and decimating the European beef industry.

People can contract a form of mad cow disease if they eat infected beef or nerve tissue, and possibly through blood transfusions. The human form of mad cow disease so far has killed 143 people in Britain and 10 elsewhere, none in the United States.

Veneman said the risk to human health in this U.S. case was "extremely low."

Nonetheless, U.S. beef producers worried that they could suffer heavily from a mad cow scare. Restaurants that serve beef also could be affected.

"I think it has the potential to hurt our industry," said Jim Olson, a rancher in Stanfield, Ariz., who owns about 150 cattle.

Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine, called on the government to test more cows for the disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

"The U.S. needs to be far more proactive in protecting the American food supply," said Michael Hansen, a senior research associate. "We are very concerned that the diseased animal made it into the food supply and that the processing plants could be contaminated."

The disease was found in a Holstein cow, which could not move on its own, from a farm in Mabton, Wash., about 40 miles southeast of Yakima. It tested preliminarily positive on Dec. 9. Parts of the cow that would be infected — the brain, the spinal cord and the lower part of the small intestine — were removed before the animal went to a meat processing plant.

Samples from the cow were sent to Britain for confirmation of the preliminary mad cow finding, Veneman said. The results will be known in three to five days, she added. Consumers can get daily updates by reading the department's Web site or by calling 1-866-4USDACO.

Many residents of Mabton — population 2,045 — were protective of local cattle owners Tuesday and unwilling to discuss the matter with reporters, who were turned away from businesses and farms.

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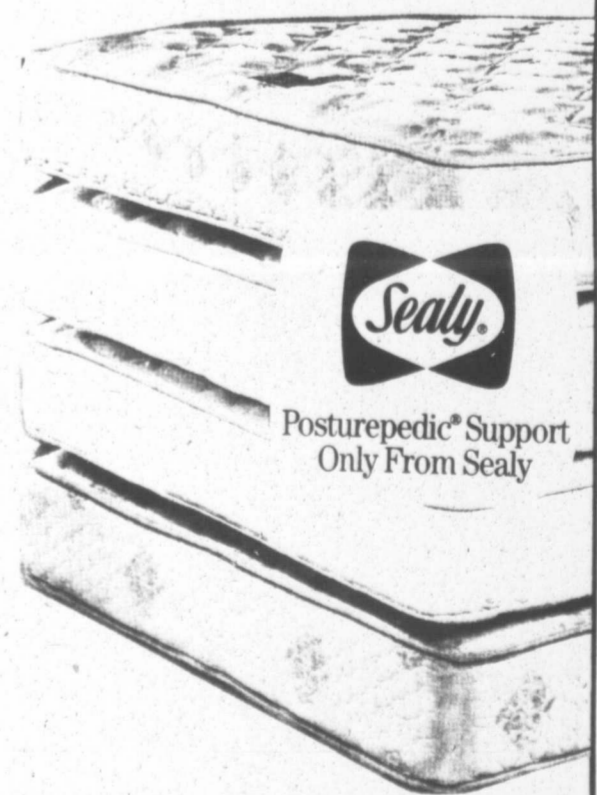
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Xcel grants aid local groups

Two Pampa non-profit organizations recently received grants from Excel Energy Foundation.

CREATE a Beat! and Pampa's Tribute to Woody Guthrie were among 19 Amarillo-area arts and culture groups awarded part of \$78,000 in grant funding from the foundation.

The grants were part of the \$92,500 total package of grants given in Xcel Energy's Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas territory.

CREATE a Beat! received \$1,000 to assist with operating expenses and fee

waivers/reductions for the After School Arts Program that started in August.

Pampa's Tribute to Woody Guthrie received \$500 to assist with costs at the Annual woody Guthrie Tribute in Pampa in October. This grant completed the matching funds for the artist fee of E-Flat Porch Band which performed at the October 2003 event. Other funding sources included Pampa Independent School District and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Old Mobeetie Texas Association received \$1,000 to help fund the Mobeetie Music Festival held in July.

DPS issues Christmas wish list

AUSTIN - The Texas Department of Public Safety has composed a wish list for the holiday season. DPS is asking travelers for the following gifts:

- Slow down-speed is the number one killer on Texas roads.
- Don't drink and drive; get a designated driver.
- Buckle up everyone in the vehicle.
- Keep cell phone chatter to a minimum.
- Drive with courtesy; it's contagious.
- Slow down in bad weather, construction areas and

heavy traffic. "Following these tips will keep your family and everyone on Texas roads safer, and that will mean a merrier Christmas for all of us," said DPS Director Thomas Davis Jr. "The sad truth is that most fatal traffic crashes don't have to happen."

DPS will have all available troopers patrolling Texas roadways from Wednesday, Dec. 24 through Sunday, Dec. 28.

DPS is once again participating in Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) - a nation-

wide effort maximizing enforcement on major interstate highways to reduce fatalities commonly associated with holiday weekends.

Alcohol is always a concern during the holidays, and DPS is supporting the statewide drunk driving campaign.

"We would prefer voluntary compliance with traffic laws," said Davis. "However, if you choose to drive without regard for the safety of others, increased enforcement means you are three times more likely to get a traffic citation or be arrested for DWI during the Christmas weekend."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

DANGER

ing more manageable after last week's extraordinary developments, North Korea remains potentially the most explosive security problem for the administration.

The Korean Peninsula has

been perhaps the world's most dangerous corner for more than 50 years, a situation that has worsened with North Korea's abandonment 14 months ago of its stated policy of nuclear restraint.

The administration had been hoping to resume negotiations with North Korea and four other regional countries last week in Beijing on the permanent dismantling of the

North Korean weapons programs. But the parties were unable to agree on objectives for the talks.

It was the one major security issue on which the administration was unable to claim progress last week.

EDITOR'S NOTE

George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.

Parents of slain child sue Fox

DENVER (AP) - The parents of slain 6-year-old JonBenet Ramsey filed a \$12 million federal defamation lawsuit against Fox News Network over a story they say cast suspicion on them.

In the lawsuit filed Tuesday in Atlanta, John and Patsy Ramsey took issue with a report that aired last year for the six-year anniversary of JonBenet's death. In it, a Denver-based employee stated there has "never been any evidence to link an intruder to her brutal murder."

John and Patsy Ramsey have maintained their innocence and said an intruder killed JonBenet, who was found strangled and beaten Dec. 26, 1996, in the basement of their Boulder home. The Ramseys now live in Atlanta.

Prosecutors and a federal judge have said evidence in the case was more consistent with the theory that an intruder killed JonBenet. The parents were never charged.



Dec. 24
1 shopping
day to Christmas

Masonic 60-year pin



(Courtesy photo)

Members of Pampa Masonic Lodge #966 AF&AM went to Pampa Regional Medical Center where they presented Bill Horst, center, a certificate and pin honoring his 60 years as a Mason. Presenting the awards are Gordon Fore, left, and Dustin Larkin, right.

Simple steps can help taxpayers with their charitable donations

WASHINGTON - As the end of the year approaches, the Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers that they may be able to use their gifts to tax-exempt charitable and religious groups to reduce their taxes.

Taxpayers also need to keep in mind some simple steps to make sure they get appropriate benefit for their generous donations. In particular, there are some important guidelines for donating used cars and other property, such as stocks and bonds.

The tax benefit for charitable contributions is only available for taxpayers who itemize deductions - about one-third of all filers. Those who take a standard deduction receive no additional tax benefit for their contributions.

In 2000, the last year for which complete data is available, about 37.5 million taxpayers made deductible charitable contributions totaling nearly \$140.7 billion. Of these gifts, nearly \$98.2 billion were cash donations.

Only contributions actually made during the tax year are deductible. For example, if you pledged \$500 in September but paid the charity only \$200 by Dec. 31, your 2003 deduction would be \$200. You include credit card charges and payments by check in the year they

are given to the charity, even though you may not pay the credit card bill or have your bank account debited until the next year.

Those itemizing deductions reduce their taxable income by the total contributed to qualified tax-exempt organizations, with some limits. The tax saving usually equals the deduction times the marginal tax rate - the top rate for the person's income level.

For example, an individual with a taxable income of \$50,000 donates \$2,000 to his or her church. The tax savings from this generosity will be \$500 - \$2,000 times the taxpayer's marginal tax rate of 25 percent.

Donations of stock or other property are usually valued at the fair market value of the property. For stocks and bonds with an active market, the fair market value is the average price between highest and lowest selling price on the valuation date. Figuring the value of other personal property can be more complicated.

For example, determining the value of a donated used car requires weighing several factors. Some car donation program operators have mistakenly suggested that donors can take as a deduction the full value listed in an established used car pricing guide. For

additional information, see IRS News release 2001-112, "IRS and State Charity Officials Urge Care When Making a Car Donation."

The tax law, however, allows a deduction for only the fair market value of the car. Fair market value takes into account not only the year, the model and the mileage of the car, but also the local market and the vehicle's condition. As a result, the fair market value of the taxpayer's car may be substantially different than the average price listed in an established used car guide.

The IRS also reminds taxpayers to keep appropriate records to substantiate the value of their gifts. For example, for any single gift of \$250 or more, a taxpayer must have a written acknowledgement from the charity by the earlier of the date the person files the tax return or the filing deadline, including extensions. A person donating property valued at more than \$5,000 must obtain a qualified written appraisal.

Taxpayers can find help regarding the donations they make in IRS Publication 526, "Charitable Contributions." A second reference, IRS Publication 561, "Determining the Value of Donated Property," answers many of the questions that donors have when they make noncash contributions.

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FDA to le of C

WASHINGTON - In the interim facility at New F. Kennedy Airport, packed stacked floor

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FDA says too pricey to legalize imports of Canadian drugs

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the international mail facility at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, packages of confiscated prescription drugs are stacked floor-to-ceiling.

The thousands of such illegal mail-order drugs stopped at America's entry points, however, are but a small fraction of the multi-million-dollar business that federal regulators are struggling to control.

As millions of Americans turn to Canada for cheaper prescription drugs, the Food and Drug Administration's top pharmacist said Tuesday that it would take hundreds of millions of dollars to set up a legal, safe program to import the medicines.

And despite growing pressure from Congress, he insisted the FDA would never rely on Canada's safety assurances for the drugs shipped out of that country, many of them made in the United States.

Tom McGinnis, FDA's pharmacy affairs director, said the FDA would not piggyback its inspections on the Canadian system because the United States inspects drug manufacturers around the world, while Health Canada often relies on inspections done by the drug maker's host country.

"We want to see everything with our own eyes. We've never accepted inspection results from another country," McGinnis told The Associated Press.

The FDA's stubborn stand on the illegal cross-border drug sales has neither slowed the market nor daunted city and state officials who are eyeing the cheaper drugs as a way to save money.

It also sets the tone for an HHS study on the safety of Canadian drug imports, which was required under the new Medicare law as a way to appease lawmakers bent on giving Americans greater access to low-cost medicines.

"We're asked to do so much with so little," said McGinnis, who was surveying the illegal take at Kennedy Airport last week. "Anything can be done with enough resources and the authority to do inspections. ... (But) you're talking about a lot of resources, and when is cost going to outweigh benefit?"

The FDA also spurned proposals last week from a group of Canadian mail-order pharmacies, which represent the heart of the

cross-border drug sales, to allow U.S. regulators to inspect their operations.

Representatives from the Canadian International Pharmacy Association met with Health and Human Services legal counsel William McConagha at FDA headquarters last Thursday as other FDA officials were trying to discourage Boston Mayor Thomas Menino from launching a program for his city to import low-cost drugs from Canada.

Canadian officials defended the safety of their drugs and their inspections.

"We conduct regulatory reviews of drugs to ensure there is sufficient evidence of safety, efficacy and quality before they receive authorization to be sold in Canada," said Health Canada spokesman Emmanuel Chabot.

He said Canada relies on its own inspectors or those from about two dozen countries that meet its requirements for good manufacturing practices.

The FDA has warned repeatedly that Canadian drugs are unsafe because they are not subject to FDA oversight and might be outdated, contaminated, counterfeit or packaged in the wrong dosage.

David MacKay, executive director of the CIPA, said the warnings have done little to slow sales, and he said all the association's pharmacies are highly regulated and licensed.

"The Canadian system is not harming any Canadians," he said. "Why is it that by crossing the border does it suddenly happen that it will harm someone?"

He said customers and the FDA can ensure drug safety by making sure the pharmacies are licensed, have a physical address, require a patient history and doctor's prescription and allow independent or FDA inspection.

McGinnis dismissed the suggestions. "It's just not going to work," he said. "There would have to be mechanisms set up, and we would have to get permission from the Canadian government to inspect."

Two cities — Springfield, Mass., and Montgomery, Ala. — are the only governments buying drugs from Canada so far. But states from New Hampshire to Wisconsin are studying the issue or are ready to start their own programs.

China claims to smash Taiwan spy ring

SHANGHAI, China (AP) — China said Wednesday it has broken up a ring that spied for rival Taiwan and that 24 Taiwanese and 19 Chinese have been captured and confessed.

The announcement, reported by the official Xinhua News Agency, didn't identify those detained or say what they were accused of doing for Taiwan, the self-ruling island that Beijing claims as its territory.

Taiwan's government already had denied that its agents were arrested after the story appeared this week in a Hong Kong newspaper.

On Wednesday, Taiwan's Vice President Annette Lu dismissed the Xinhua report as an attempt to embarrass President Chen Shui-bian ahead of the island's March 20 presidential election.

"Let's not believe in rumors," Lu said during a campaign appearance. "We all know that the Beijing authorities have all kinds of strategies for dealing with Taiwan and interfering with our elections."

China and Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949, and both sides are believed to spy

extensively on each other. Beijing has threatened to use force to bring the island under its control.

Taipei and Beijing both try to recruit as informants the hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese who do business in China. Military officers have also been recruited as spies.

Xinhua said the group had "conducted activities in violation of the law." It said the suspects were captured and interrogated "strictly in accordance with the law," and that all have been provided with daily necessities and medical services. All were in good health, it said.

"State security departments of the Chinese mainland have smashed a ring of intelligence agents," Xinhua said, citing an unnamed spokesman for China's security services.

"Currently, the case is being further investigated, though these spies have confessed all their crimes," it said.

On Monday, Hong Kong's Ming Pao newspaper claimed Chen exposed 36 of the island's spies in a speech last month that listed the locations of 496 Chinese missiles pointed at Taiwan.

The newspaper reported that China had arrested 21 Taiwanese and 15 Chinese nationals since mid-December. It reported partial names for five of the Taiwanese.

On Tuesday, Taiwan's secretive Military Intelligence Bureau took the unusual step of issuing a denial, saying: "To this moment, after undergoing verification, we can say none of our personnel has been arrested by the Chinese communists."

Chen's aides say the missile information came from satellites, not spies. They say China could not possibly have broken up a spy ring with such speed.

Earlier this month, Taiwan arrested an intelligence officer on charges of spying for China. It was the third espionage case announced by the island's military in less than a month.

Four years ago, China reportedly executed an army general and a colonel for selling secrets to Taiwan during military exercises meant to intimidate the island — one of the largest leaks ever of military secrets by Chinese army

officers.


Spying accusations have also frequently been intertwined with Taiwan's domestic politics.

In the military exercises spy case, then-president Lee Teng-hui was accused of blowing the Chinese officers' cover by claiming in a campaign speech that Chinese missiles being launched into the Taiwan Strait were carrying dummy warheads.

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Governor issues emergency declaration for quake-damaged county

By BRIAN SKOLOFF
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PASO ROBLES, Calif. (AP) — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger toured the community hardest hit by the state's first deadly earthquake in nine years, declaring a local state of emergency even as aftershocks rattled beneath the central California wine country.

"Obviously it's going to be a rough Christmas for people here in Paso Robles and the economic impact on the city has yet to be felt," said Paso Robles Mayor Frank

Meacham on Tuesday. Meacham and Dallas Jones, director of the state Office of Emergency Services, showed Schwarzenegger the scene where the quake demolished a historic clock tower building, a landmark in the community of nearly 27,000.

Schwarzenegger pointed to a severely damaged building on one side of a street and an intact building on the other side.

"Here you can see very clearly the difference in a building that hasn't been retrofitted and one that has

been retrofitted," said the governor, who stopped to shake hands with firefighters.

"Did you go to bed yet?" he asked them. "A couple of hours? Oh, that's good."

The fault system that unleashed the quake about 20 miles to the northwest of Paso Robles remained active: There had been 100 magnitude-3 or higher aftershocks by Wednesday morning.

The aftershock sequence was likely to continue for months and perhaps upward of a year, the U.S. Geological Survey said. There was a 90 percent or greater probability

that aftershocks of 5.0 magnitude or greater would follow in the next week.

Bad weather prevented helicopters from taking USGS scientists on aerial-surveys Tuesday and there was no definitive evidence of a surface rupture of the fault, geologist Davis Schwartz said.

There was no immediate estimate of the total value of quake-related damage. A detailed analysis of damage was being developed, said Office of Emergency Services spokesman Dale Chesney.

Schwarzenegger's declaration of an emergency in San Luis Obispo County directs state resources to be made available to help. It also means inspectors will come to determine whether assistance should be sought from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the Small Business Administration for low-cost loans for repair and recovery.

The quake's two fatalities,

Other damage elsewhere included City Hall in Atascadero, about 10 miles south of Paso Robles, and some cracked roads, said Ron Alsop, county emergency services coordinator.

Jennifer Myrick, 20, of Atascadero, and Marilyn Zafuto, 55, of Paso Robles, were found on the street outside the 1892 clock tower, which pitched into the street and crushed a row of parked cars.

Other damage elsewhere included City Hall in Atascadero, about 10 miles south of Paso Robles, and some cracked roads, said Ron Alsop, county emergency services coordinator.

Damage appeared limited to the rural county between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Seismologists believe the

quake occurred on the Oceanic fault zone, which runs from north of San Simeon southeast to the Santa Lucia Range on the west side of the giant San Andreas Fault. The region is largely countryside — vineyards, wineries and ranches — which limited damage.

"We're in a sense lucky that the area that was ruptured was relatively sparsely inhabited by California standards. Of course the people in Paso Robles and Atascadero are not the beneficiaries of this particular piece of luck," said Jack Boatwright, a USGS geophysicist.

Middle school food drive



(Courtesy photo)

Students at Pampa Middle School recently completed their annual food drive. The goal this year was to bring in 2,003-plus cans. The students exceeded their goal and went over the top, bringing in a total of 3,358 cans. The cans completely filled eight barrels and several boxes. Jacee Villarreal, middle school mayor, points to the total cans while Kailee Intemann, vice-mayor, points to the thermometer showing over the top.

College fund-raisers by groups against affirmative-action spark controversy

SEATTLE (AP) — Campus bake sales by conservatives who oppose affirmative-action are cooking up discord — and complaints about restrictions on free speech.

Organizers charge white students \$1 for a cookie, while blacks and other minorities pay 25 to 95 cents. Doughnuts are available for 50 cents to everyone except Asian Americans and whites, who cannot purchase them.

Unfair? So is affirmative action, organizers contend.

"It's a good example of what affirmative action does, judging people based on race," said Jason Chambers, president of the University of Washington College Republicans, which held a sale in October that shut down when some students began attacking the booth.

"People were upset. People did feel offended," said Anthony Rose, president of the UW Black Student Union. "You see something like that, you feel itemized."

In September, Southern Methodist University shut down a similar event by the Young Conservatives of Texas.

Similar bake sales have been held since February at the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, Northwestern University near Chicago, the University of Michigan and Indiana University.

A conservative watchdog group in Philadelphia contends some universities are violating students' constitutional freedoms by restricting the protests.

"They cannot defend in public what they have done to the First Amendment at the University of

Washington," said Thor Halvorsen, CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. "There is no question that the administration would never censor a group of students holding a peaceful protest in favor of affirmative action."

The UW College Republicans' Oct. 8 bake sale took place about the same time as a step performance by a traditionally black fraternity and drew plenty of attention.

Chambers said students engaged in a couple hours of good, heated discussion, until some began yelling and tearing down signs, even throwing cookies at members of the conservative group.

"I really thought that everyone on campus could maintain their composure and have a civil discussion without getting violent. I was really surprised that it went that far," Chambers said.

UW spokesman Robert Roseth said the administration had nothing to do with the shutdown. The group's members dismantled the booth voluntarily after the office of student affairs asked them if they wished to take it down, he said.

Rose, a 20-year-old junior majoring in American Ethnic Studies, backs up the university's account.

"It was for their own safety," Rose said. "They shut themselves down."

In a letter responding to the melee, Board of Regents President Jerry Grinstein expressed disappointment with the sale.

"The statements of the UW College Republicans in putting on a bake sale about affirmative action were tasteless, divisive and hurtful to many members of the university community," he wrote.

Ex-Gov. Ryan's defense claims 'politics as usual'

CHICAGO (AP) — Former Gov. George Ryan's defense against allegations he took payoffs in return for letting associates profit from state contracts and leases will show it was politics as usual and nothing more, his lawyer said.

"The government has cobbled together a number of unrelated acts, innocent acts that are nothing more than the fabric of what goes on in Illinois politics and Illinois government. They are not crimes, they are innocent acts," defense attorney Dan Webb said.

Ryan pleaded innocent

Tuesday to charges of racketeering conspiracy, mail fraud, tax fraud, filing false tax returns and making false statements to agents investigating corruption.

"I'm absolutely not guilty of those charges," Ryan said after his arraignment.

The charges in the 22-count indictment announced last Wednesday against Ryan and lobbyist Larry Warner could send them to prison for years. Warner, who allegedly collected at least \$3.1 million through his friendship with Ryan, pleaded innocent Friday.

Ryan, a Republican who

served as secretary of state from 1991 to 1999 and governor from 1999 to January, was freed on \$4,500 bail. He is accused of breaking the law while he was secretary of state and governor.

Ryan was the 66th person charged in the investigation; 59 have been convicted and none acquitted.

The scandal was a factor in Ryan's decision not to seek a second term, and his unpopularity was considered a major reason GOP candidates were routed statewide in 2002, including the election of a Democratic governor for the first time since 1972.

Prosecutors allege that Ryan and members of his family shared in \$167,000 in graft that included payoffs, free vacations and cash siphoned out of his campaign fund and camouflaged as expenses.

Webb outlined three themes for the defense:

He said prosecutors did not have witnesses who could testify that Ryan had taken a bribe; that the jury would be impressed by Ryan's "courage" in addressing problems in Illinois' death penalty system; and that Ryan was a man of modest means who makes ends meet on his pension and Social Security checks, and therefore obviously had not enriched himself through corruption.

After family gets j

SEATTLE years ago, a police to the door.

But Jose help nab his short when C knowing he walked away ranks the Marie Malva the serial mu

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After years, family finally gets justice

SEATTLE (AP) — Nearly 20 years ago, a despairing father led police to the Green River Killer's door.

But Jose Malvar's efforts to help nab his daughter's killer fell short when Gary Ridgway denied knowing her, and the officer walked away — a fact that still rankles the family of 18-year-old Marie Malvar, victim No. 29 on the serial murderer's list of 48.

"I'm just angry about the whole thing — that they didn't arrest him when my dad brought the police over there," said Jose Malvar Jr., Marie's brother. "They should have done more follow-through. More lives could have been saved."

Ridgway's brush with authorities is one of the heartbreaking chapters in the case of the man convicted of the most serial killings in U.S. history. Ridgway pleaded guilty to strangling 48 women since 1982 and was sentenced this month to 48 consecutive life terms without release.

Jose Jr., 42, watched as Ridgway was sentenced and even addressed his sister's killer in court, but has found little solace.

It was April 30, 1983, when Marie's boyfriend, Robert Woods, watched her get into Ridgway's truck and noticed its patches of primer. Woods followed them to a motel parking lot and out again. He lost them at a traffic signal in south suburban Des Moines.

On May 3, Woods reported Marie missing. He said he'd last seen her getting into a black pickup with a dark-haired man 30 to 40 years old. Ridgway was then 34.

Led by Marie's father, Jose Sr., the men of the family began scouring the neighborhood. They spotted the truck, a maroon pickup, parked in front of Ridgway's home. It was there, Ridgway would later confess, that Marie — and many others — were killed.

A Des Moines police detective stopped at the house to question Ridgway, who denied knowing Malvar.

Ridgway told investigators that he stood against a fence in his yard during the questioning to conceal scratches Marie Malvar left on his inner left arm as she fought for her life. When the detective was gone, Ridgway burned the gouges with battery acid to disguise them, then returned to the nearby woods where he had dumped Malvar's body and buried her.

The scars on Ridgway's arm are still visible, according to charging documents, which brings Marie's brother some comfort.

"I know every time he looks at that scar, he remembers my sister," Jose Jr. said. "At least she got that," he said. "At least she didn't go down without a fight."

Malvar's disappearance brought Ridgway to official attention and kept him there.

Though the Des Moines detective accepted Ridgway's story, the King County Sheriff's Green River Task Force identified him as a suspect in 1984 and continued to watch him, even after he passed a polygraph denying any knowledge of the killings.

Marie's family kept looking, too. Her ID was found at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, feeding their desperate hope. Ridgway acknowledged last summer he planted it there.

Marie's father, especially, couldn't give up, Jose Jr. said. "There were days he didn't come home, he'd just keep driving and driving." Some days he'd drive by Ridgway's and "wait to see if my sister came out of that house," he said.

Pretty, vivacious Marie was never seen again. A handful of her bones was found this fall with the serial killer's help as part of the plea deal that spared Ridgway from execution.

AP Poll: Many forgoing flu vaccine believe unnecessary

By WILL LESTER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — A substantial majority of Americans skipped getting a flu vaccine this year and many say they didn't feel they needed one or feared a flu shot would do more harm than good, an Associated Press poll found.

Now health officials are scrambling to cope with a vaccine shortage during a severe flu season.

Among the two-thirds of the population who did not get the shot were many people who are at risk, including a sizable number of seniors and a majority of young children, according to the poll conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs for the AP. Vaccine shortages were cited by only 6 percent of those who did not get the shot.

Edith Elder, 82, of Gainesville, Ga., just started taking flu shots in the last year. She had avoided them for more than three decades.

A friend of her aunt many years ago got the flu shot, ended up in a hospital and later died. For years, Elder wondered what caused her death.

"I've been getting them for the last three years," she said. "I finally decided that lady didn't die from the flu shot."

About 83 million doses of injected flu vaccine were made this year — enough for less than a third of the U.S. population. With demand very heavy this year, health officials have been working to shift the scattered remaining doses to parts of the country where they are most needed.

They are looking for ways to build public interest in the

flu vaccine so more doses will be available in future years, said Dr. William Schaffner of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases. But changing public attitudes about the vaccine is tough, he concedes.

"Once it's summer and you're out on the beach, memory about influenza and the desire for a vaccine fades," he said.

An alternative vaccine, which can be used by healthy people between the ages of 5 and 49, is the nasal spray called Flu Mist. Between 4 million and 5 million doses were manufactured, but only about 400,000 doses had been sold by mid-November.

In the AP-Ipsos poll, about a third, or 35 percent, said they got a flu vaccine while 65 percent said they did not. Women were more likely than men to get a flu shot and older adults were significantly more likely to get the flu shot than younger adults.

Of those between 50 and 64, almost half (44 percent) got the flu shot, while three-fourths of those 65 and older got flu shots.

Those most vulnerable to flu are seniors, people with chronic medical conditions, infants and toddlers and pregnant women.

Still, seven in 10 parents said they have not gotten their children vaccinated; almost three in 10 parents have done so. Experts say this year could be worse in terms of flu deaths, which normally run at about 36,000 each year.

Health officials estimate that 10 percent to 20 percent of the population get the flu. About one in 10 in the AP-Ipsos poll said they've had flu that was serious enough to require medical attention.

Seven die in house fire in Ohio

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — Fire engulfed a house early Tuesday, killing three adults and four children hours after some of them had put up a Christmas tree, authorities said.

One victim, Donald Knight, ran into the house to try to rescue his nephew and the others, said his brother, James Knight.

"The whole house was engulfed. The whole house was nothing but red," James Knight said.

Investigators did not know what caused the fire, which took 40 minutes to extinguish. Authorities said they plan to investigate whether holiday decorations or candles were involved.

Neighbors also tried to help after the fire started, including a man who used a garden hose to spray the flames and another man who tried to go inside but was turned back at the front porch steps, residents said.

Joyce Hodous, who lives three houses down the street, said she was awakened by yelling at about 4 a.m., after firefighters had arrived.

"There were children

screaming to get out, 'Please, help me!'" she said. Firefighters were already at the scene, she said.

Two adults and a child pulled from the first floor died at the house, said Battalion Chief Raymond Harple. Three others, found on the second floor, were pronounced dead at hospitals.

A seventh person, 21-year-old Nicole Cavanaugh, died Tuesday night in the burn unit at Akron Children's Hospital.

Besides Donald Knight, 43, his nephew, Jerry Knight, 9, and Cavanaugh, the victims were identified as Dale Gross, 34; Leigha Gross, 10; Cally Gross, 4; and Katlin Cavanaugh, 7 weeks. Authorities were trying to determine the victims' relationships.



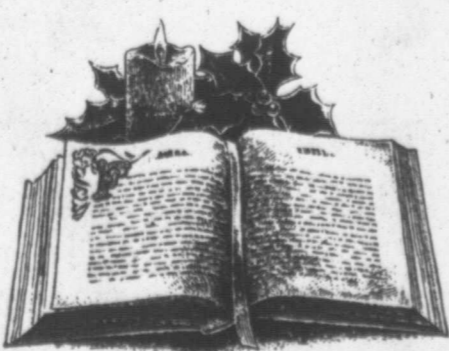
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On this Christmas Holiday, our family would like to take this opportunity to thank our special friends, and our customers for your continued support.

This time of year serves as a reminder of how important it is to be thankful for what we have and how important all of our personal and professional relationships are.

We hope the Holiday Season is enjoyable and bountiful for you and your family.



Merry Christmas
Kelly & Lana Miller
and the family of Jiffy Cleaners

Ho! Ho! Ho!



(Courtesy photo)

Visiting with Santa are (back row) Stacie Wells, Onry Wells, Hope Broadbent, Alvin Cornelison; (middle) Kaylee Broadbent, Christiary Wells, Santa, Megan Duvall, Haven Reeves, Margo Duvall; (front) Michaela Wells, Payton Wells, Nicholas Wells and Kirsten Epperson, all great-grandchildren of Alvin Cornelison, standing to the back and far right. Not pictured: Tyler and Averie Malone.

Government opens 300,000 acres to logging

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some 300,000 acres in the nation's largest forest will be opened to logging and road building under a Bush administration decision that supporters believe will revive Alaska's timber industry but activists fear will devastate the forest.

The Bush administration said Tuesday it will allow 3 percent of the Tongass National Forest's 9.3 million acres to have roads built on them and perhaps opened to use by the timber industry. The Tongass — one of the country's last temperate rain forests — covers 16.8 million acres.

The acres were originally made off-limits to road-building by former President Clinton.

"It's something that the meager timber industry in Alaska needs to operate," said Tom Partin, president of the American Forest Resource Council, a timber industry group. "We hear a lot about the timber industry in Alaska, but it's been downsized to almost nothing. With this little bit of opportunity, it might resurrect some of the industry that has been shut down."

Environmental advocates called the decision a "holiday gift" to an industry that has backed Bush in his presidential campaigns. They worry the move will devastate the Tongass.

"In fact, the timber industry just might get everything

on its list this holiday season because (Tuesday's) announcement comes just after President Bush signed a bill that increases logging under the guise of fighting forest fires," said Tiernan Sittenfeld of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, an advocacy group.

She was referring to a bill Bush signed earlier this month that eases restrictions on tree-cutting and brush-clearing in national forests to reduce the risk of wildfires.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said the decision on the Tongass "paves the way for a resumption of some wood harvest for the Tongass, enough to support the surviving timber industry in Southeast Alaska."

The decision builds on the Bush administration's decision in June to settle a lawsuit by Alaska that challenged the roadless rule, a Clinton-era ban on 58.5-million acres of national forests.

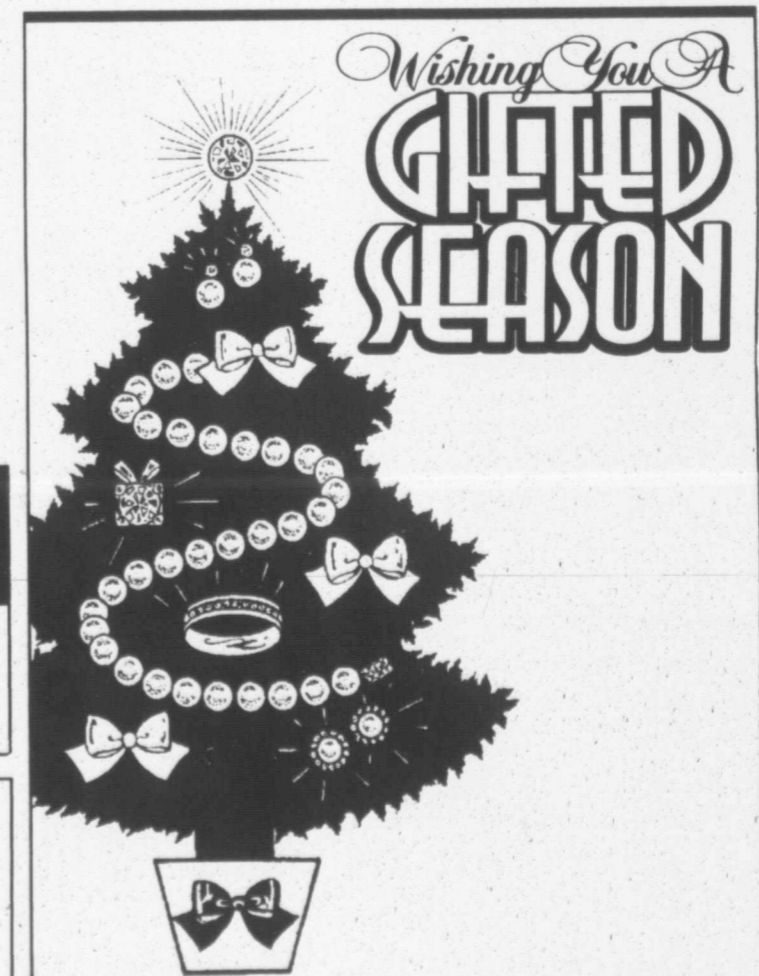
As part of that settlement, the administration agreed to

exempt the Tongass and Chugach national forests from its planned revisions to the roadless rule.

But Mark Rey, the Agriculture Department undersecretary in charge of forest policy, said that as a practical matter, 95 percent of the roadless areas in the Tongass would remain off-limits to development.

That's because the administration — while reversing the ban on road-building in Alaska's forests that Clinton adopted just before leaving office in 2001 — is reverting to an earlier Clinton plan in 1997 that set special management rules for Alaskan forests.

"So we have maintained the faith with the Clinton administration's Tongass land management plan, based on the best science available," Rey said. "We are providing for the protection of 95 percent of the land and excluding a small amount for a sustainable forest products industry in Alaska."



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Merry Christmas

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WEDNESDAY • December 24, 2003

DEAR ABBY

written by Pauline Phillips and daughter Jeanne Phillips

Old Friend Needs New Lesson In Acceptable Party Behavior

DEAR ABBY: I am 25 and moved back to my hometown six months ago. Since my return, I have been socializing with a high school friend I'll call Josh. We go out fairly often and have become good friends again. Neither of us has any particular romantic interest in the other.

I invited Josh to escort me to the wedding of an old friend and he accepted.

After the reception, a group of us went to a mutual friend's for a hot-tub party. We were all having a great time, behaving like mature adults, until Josh went into the woods to make out with "Mandy," the 19-year-old cousin of one of the guests he met in the hot tub.

While Josh and I are just friends, I expected him to treat me with respect when he escorted me to the wedding and its attendant social functions. I felt hurt and humiliated by his actions, and I ended up leaving the party.

Perhaps I'm old-fashioned, but am I wrong to think Josh behaved badly? I would never have done that to him. I want Josh to realize how much he hurt me, but I also never want to speak to him again. What should I do?

GOLDSLOCKS IN FLORIDA

DEAR GOLDLOCKS: What Josh did was rude, immature and boorish — but speak to him again. It seems he never learned that a gentleman doesn't leave the lady he's escorting for a "quickie." If he wanted to make time with Mandy, he should have taken her number and called her another time — after you were escorted safely home.

To give him the silent treatment would be letting him off easy. It's better for both of you to tell him exactly what's on your mind. If he doesn't know better, he needs to hear it. Besides, he owes you an apology.

DEAR ABBY: I am 22. I have a job and am engaged to marry a very nice man named "Jim" next year.

My parents divorced when I was 9. Mother abandoned me and I went to live with my dad, who subsequently married a lovely lady, "Diane." Diane has been like a mother to me. She and Dad have been helping Jim and me with our wedding plans.

Now that I'm older, my real mom wants to be my mom again, and she's very manipulative. When we spend time together, she treats me like I'm 9 years old. Then she complains that I don't spend enough time with her. I have told her I'm busy and she can come visit me, too, but she doesn't.

Abby, I have a wedding to prepare for. I wanted both my "mothers" to be at my wedding, but now I'm beginning to feel uncomfortable. What should I do?

BRIDE-TO-BE, CHEHALIS, WASH.

DEAR BRIDE-TO-BE: Continue with your wedding plans and stop feeling the need to explain yourself to the mother who abandoned you when you were 9. Either she has convenient amnesia, or for her, time has stood still. You can be manipulated or treated like a child only if you permit it, so don't fall into that trap.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

For Better or For Worse



Zits



Garfield



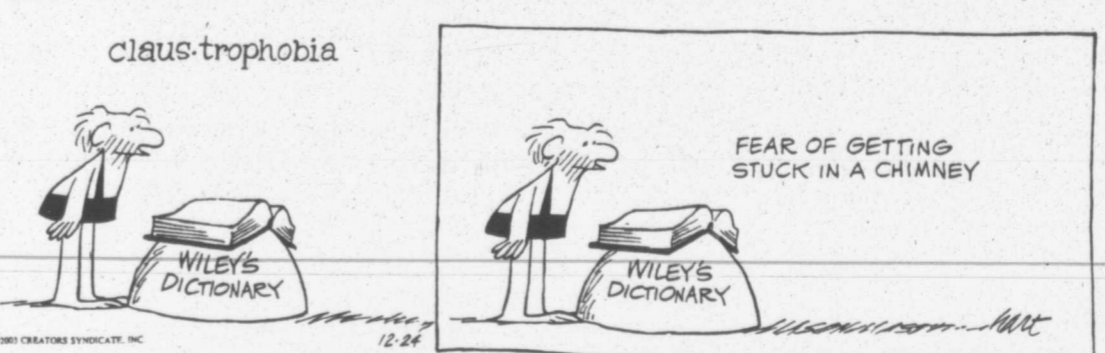
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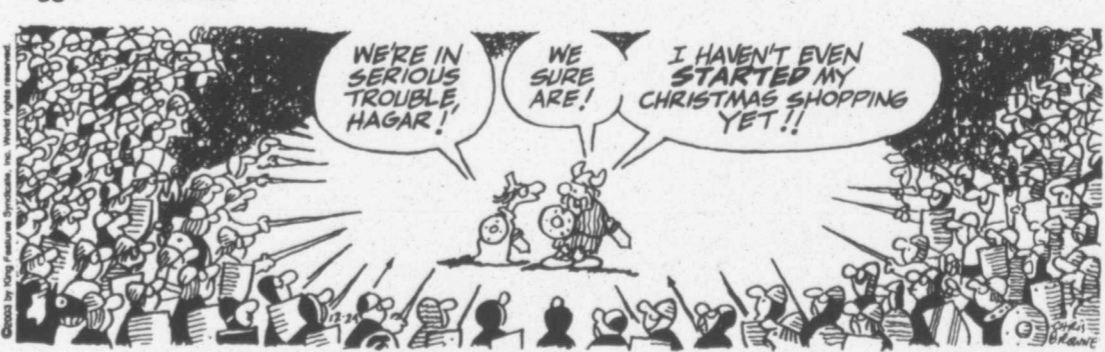
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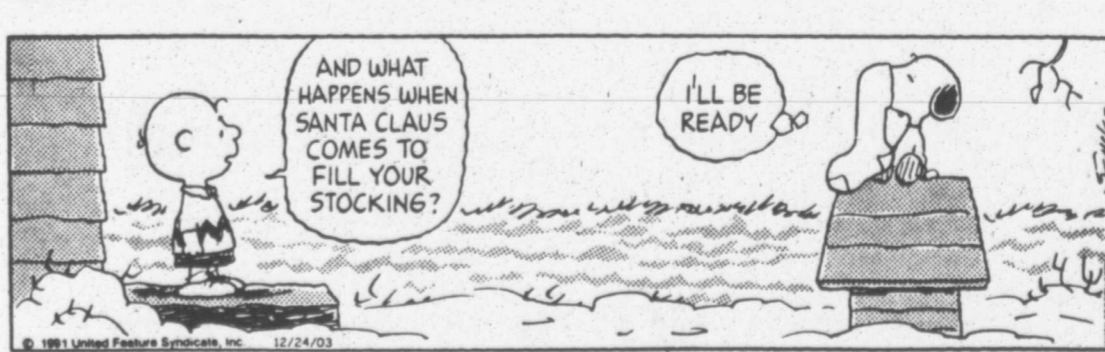
B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Computer key

6 Course activity

10 Singer Jones

11 Forbidden

12 Without company

13 Last letter

14 Stationery buys

15 Paleontology topic

16 Commotion

17 Antlered animal

18 Print units

19 Deny

22 Lowly worker

23 Charged atoms

26 Razed

29 Command to Spot

32 Cloth piece

33 Pigeon call

34 Surly

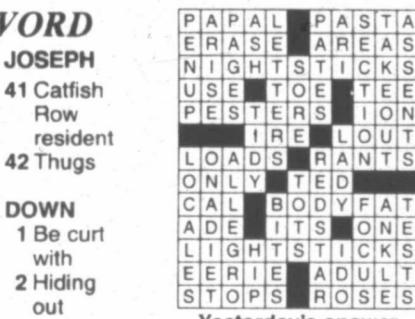
36 Casino game

37 Math comparison

38 Script makeup

39 Complete 180

40 "Frasier" pooch



Yesterday's answer

11 Flew

15 "Alice"

17 Ralph

20 Undoing

21 Auction word

24 "I'm

25 Adminis-

11 Flew

15 "Alice"

17 Ralph

20 Undoing

21 Auction word

24 "I'm

25 Adminis-

27 Devilfish

28 Gallows

29 Clean

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31 Ballet gar-

35 Letter

36 Rover's

38 Trip part

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The Family Circus



Flo & Friends



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Jury spares Malvo's life in Washington sniper case

CHESAPEAKE, Va. (AP) — Lee Boyd Malvo looked younger than his 18 years as he sat in court during his murder trial and doodled on a legal pad — and lawyers on both sides agreed his boyish-

ness contributed to the jury's decision to spare his life.

The jury of eight women and four men sentenced Malvo to life in prison without parole Tuesday for his part in the three-week

sniper spree that left 10 people dead in and around the nation's capital in October 2002.

Defense lawyers portrayed Malvo as an impressionable boy who fell under the sinister influence of mastermind John Allen Muhammad.

Jury foreman James Wolfcale did not discuss the jury's deliberation process in detail, saying only that the trial was "an extremely difficult journey for everyone. This case was both mentally challenging and emotionally exhausting."

Prosecutor Robert F. Horan Jr. said afterward that Malvo was "very lucky that he looks a lot younger than he is." He said the timing of the deliberations just days before Christmas also affected the jury.

"We used to have a theory when I was a very young prosecutor that whatever you do, don't try one on Christmas week," Horan said.

Defense attorney Craig Cooley agreed that Malvo's youthful looks probably affected the sentence. He said Malvo was relieved, but "on the other hand he's 18, contemplating living the rest of his natural life in a penitentiary setting." He said the conviction will be appealed.

Malvo, casually dressed in a sweater as he was throughout the trial, sat expressionless, his elbows on the defense table, as he heard the sentence.

The jury took 8 1/2 hours over two days to decide his fate.

Last month, Muhammad, 42, was found guilty of murder, and a jury in nearby Virginia Beach recommended the death penalty.

Malvo and Muhammad still could be tried in other shootings in Virginia and elsewhere, and they could get the death penalty.

Several relatives of the victims said they were disappointed Malvo escaped the death penalty.

Marion Lewis, whose daugh-

ter, Lori Ann Lewis-Rivera, was shot and killed by a sniper bullet while cleaning her minivan at a Maryland gas station, said the jurors should be ashamed.

"I'm very disappointed in the American justice system," Lewis said. "Our society has now been sentenced to the responsibility of seeing to this man's health and welfare for the next 30 or 40 years, and that's unconscionable."

Vijay Walekar, who lost his brother Premkumar Walekar in the sniper attacks, said he had wanted Malvo to be executed.

"What if he runs away again?" Walekar said, referring to Malvo's thwarted escape attempt the night he was arrested.

Katrina Hannum, daughter of sniper victim Linda Franklin, shook her head and cried when the sentence was read. She did not speak to reporters.

The defendant's mother, reached by phone in Malvo's native Jamaica, thanked the jury.

"I thank God that they spared his life," Una James said.

Malvo was convicted last week of two counts of capital murder in the shooting of Franklin, an FBI analyst cut down by a single bullet to the head outside a Home Depot. One count alleged Franklin's slaying was part of a series of murders, the other alleged the killing was intended to terrorize the population. Either count could have brought the death penalty.

At the trial, Malvo's lawyers presented an insanity defense, claiming the charismatic Muhammad had molded Malvo into a killer by brainwashing him with his notions of black nationalism, racism and revolutionary violence so that the teenager was unable to tell right from wrong. Malvo and Muhammad are black.

Though the argument failed in the guilt-or-innocence part of the trial, it was central to the penalty phase.

Pataki posthumously pardons Lenny Bruce

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Lenny Bruce must be swearing in his grave.

The cult comic whose brazen foul-mouthed rants set the stage for countless modern-day standup routines, has been posthumously pardoned for his 1964 obscenity conviction.

Gov. George Pataki granted the pardon Tuesday after a campaign that included Bruce's daughter and former wife, and entertainers such as Robin Williams, the Smothers Brothers, and Penn and Teller.

"Freedom of speech is one of the greatest American liberties and I hope this pardon serves as a reminder of the precious freedoms we are fighting to preserve as we continue to wage the war on terror," Pataki said.

It was the first posthumous pardon in New York state history.

Bruce's supporters called Pataki's decision a victory for the First Amendment and for the legacy of the pioneering comic, who helped transform his art.

"He was a hero to comedians

and to me also, a man who did not change his viewpoints in spite of all the odds against him and never quit fighting for what he believed," Tommy Smothers said.

"That is important, probably more than the content, the ability to stand up and fight for the right to express oneself."

Bruce's trailblazing work opened the mainstream door for such comics as George Carlin, known for his "seven dirty words you can never say on television," Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Andrew Dice Clay.

Bruce was arrested during a November 1964 performance at Cafe Au Go Go in Greenwich Village. He used more than 100 "obscene" words, according to undercover New York City police detectives who attended the show, and was charged with giving an obscene performance.

Bruce's performances at the time were littered with four-letter words, and sexual references to Eleanor Roosevelt and St. Paul, among others.

Bruce was convicted after a

six-month trial and then mishandled his own appeal, refusing to follow the court's rules. He was sentenced to four months in jail but left the state and never served the term.

Despite Bruce's frenetic stage presence, carrying the mantle of free speech in the cultural wars of the 1960s wore him down. He died of a drug overdose in 1966 with his conviction still on the books.

"He didn't choose to be a poster child for free speech," said Smothers, who lost his network TV show years later over pointed comedy about the Vietnam War and the Roman Catholic Church. "I think he was very uncomfortable with that."

Nightclub owner Howard

Solomon was convicted along with Bruce — although his conviction was eventually reversed.

Floyd Abrams, a First Amendment lawyer who campaigned to pardon Bruce, said Pataki's decision was "a New Year's gift."

"I think the decision today is really a major step forward in recognizing the mistreatment of Lenny Bruce personally and of the First Amendment that Bruce defended," Abrams said.

Bruce's life was the subject of numerous articles, books and documentaries. In 1974, Bob Fosse's film biography, "Lenny," earned Dustin Hoffman an Academy Award nomination.

LIONS CLUB SWEETHEART OF THE MONTH



(Courtesy photo)

Tara Jordan, daughter of Royce and Kim Jordan, is Pampa Lions Club's 2003 November Sweetheart of the Month. Her honors, activities and accomplishments include varsity tennis (four years); Most Outstanding Girl Tennis Player (two years); Rotary Youth Leadership Award; senior class secretary; National Honor Society member, treasurer; varsity basketball (two years); D-FY-IT; student council (three years); Concert Choir (two years), playing parts in the musicals "The Wiz" and "Once Upon A Mattress"; ASTRA Club; and Meals on Wheels volunteer. Tara is a member of Bible Church of Pampa Youth Group and ranks fifth academically in her class at Pampa High School.

Florida agency settles case involving old man who died in squalor

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The family of an elderly man who died after living in rat-infested squalor while under the care of the Department of Children & Families has settled a lawsuit with the agency.

Relatives of Clarence Lewis will receive \$100,000, the maximum per incident for which a state institution can be sued in a negligence case, the family's lawyers announced Tuesday.

The lawsuit alleged a DCF investigator closed Lewis' file without following up on a

report that the man's ceiling was falling down, his couches were rotten and that sewage had backed up in the home.

The caseworker, who was denied entry to the home by Lewis, spoke with him outside and closed the file despite noticing "a strong odor coming from the home," according to the family's law firm, Montgomery & Larson.

Lewis suffered a stroke and was found unconscious in his home in October, 2001, with rats eating at his feet. He died the following month.

The agency's internal

review found the department failed to do enough to protect Lewis after finding he was living in a rundown home infested with rats and roaches.

As a result of the legal action, DCF caseworkers who are denied entry to a home where they believe a person may be at risk are now required to contact local law enforcement authorities to gain access.

Previously, that procedure was suggested but was not mandatory.

"This case was not about money but about changes that

will protect vulnerable adults in our state," family attorney Spencer Kuvin said Tuesday.

Since Lewis was found, the DCF caseworker was suspended, her supervisor fired and the county administrator for adult protective services resigned.

Bob Brooks, spokesman for DCF in Tallahassee said the state had conducted retraining for DCF personnel in the county who deal with adult cases such as Lewis'.

Greetings OF THE SEASON

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How joyful we are that this time has come again to extend to you sincere gratitude because it is good friends and customers like you that make our business possible.

May your holiday be filled with joy and the coming year be overflowing with all good things in life.

John A., John H., Jack C., Betty J., Chrise & Annie
JOHN T. KING & SONS

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SPORTS

Boise State slips by TCU in Fort Worth Bowl

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Ryan Dinwiddie is leaving Boise State as the most efficient passer in college football, and with maybe the biggest win in school history.

Dinwiddie threw for 325 yards and three touchdowns in the inaugural Fort Worth Bowl on Tuesday night, leading the No. 18 Broncos to a 34-31 win over No. 19 TCU.

After winning its only other bowl games on its blue-turfed home field, Boise State (13-1) beat the Horned Frogs — a Bowl Championship Series contender until losing their only regular-season game Nov. 20 — on their campus.

"This is another step for the Boise State program," coach Dan Hawkins said. "It's awesome to go home with a win. I will have an awesome Christmas."

It was only Boise State's second win over a Top 25 team. The Broncos, who have won 24 of their last 25 games, won 11 in a row after a 26-24 loss at Oregon State when they missed a field goal in the fourth quarter.

Their last win wasn't secured until sophomore Mike Wynn was well short on a 51-yard field-goal attempt, the first kick in his college career, with 7 seconds left.

"This shows where we are as a program," Dinwiddie said. "This was the biggest win of the year. We definitely made this one close and exciting."

The Frogs (11-2) had won a school-record 13 consecutive home games. They ended up playing at home — in the only non-BCS game matching two 10-win teams — after turning down an invitation to last

week's GMAC Bowl because that game conflicted with exams.

"That was just two teams getting after it," TCU coach Gary Patterson said.

Dinwiddie completed 19 of 35 passes with two interceptions, but his last touchdown was an 18-yarder to Derek Schouman for the winning score with 12:43 left.

Dinwiddie finished the season with 4,356 yards passing. In his career, he threw for 9,818 yards with 82 touchdowns and just 20 interceptions.

T.J. Acree had eight catches for 150 yards, including a 27-yard touchdown in the first quarter just 1:20 after TCU's opening score.

Gabriel Franklin made a diving interception with 5:41

left, cutting in front of receiver Reggie Harrell and snagging the ball just inches off the ground. But Boise State then went three-and-out.

TCU converted two fourth downs, including fourth-and-10 from its 20 when Brandon Hassell passed to Harrell for 28 yards, before Wynn came on instead of senior Nick Browne to try to tie it.

Browne made 28 of 33 field goals this season, including a 22-yarder earlier in the game.

But he said a quadriceps muscle he strained in practice last week tightened during half-time.

Two TCU fumbles led to Boise State's 10 second-half points.

On the first play of the second half, Andy Avalos recovered Robert Merrill's fumble at the TCU 26. Three plays

later, Tyler Jones kicked a 37-yard field goal to break the 24-24 halftime tie.

The Horned Frogs responded by going 81 yards in eight plays, the last coming on Lonta Hobbs' 7-yard TD run.

But Hobbs, who ran for 117 yards on 23 carries, fumbled early in the fourth quarter when the ball was knocked out by a teammate.

Three plays later, Dinwiddie threw the game-winning TD.

"I thought we beat them on both sides of the football. Three big plays beat us," Patterson said.

After falling behind 21-7 on Hassell's 21-yard keeper, Boise State got even with two big plays in two minutes —

Dinwiddie's 54-yard TD pass to Jeff Carpenter and David Mickell's 75-yard run.

NOTEBOOK

TENNIS

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Two-time U.S. Open champion Patrick Rafter will end his yearlong retirement next month by playing in a doubles match.

He will compete at the AAPT Championships in Adelaide, but the promoter says the former No. 1 player has ruled out a full-scale comeback.

BASKETBALL

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tony Parker is becoming the type of point guard the San Antonio Spurs were looking for just a few months ago.

Parker posted a career-high 14 assists Tuesday night, to go along with 19 points, in the Spurs' 11th straight win, 111-90 over the Los Angeles Clippers.

It wasn't that much more than what's becoming his norm — six times during the current win streak Parker has handed out at least 10 assists.

HOUSTON (AP) — Jermaine O'Neal did nothing out of the ordinary as far as the Houston Rockets were concerned.

O'Neal had 21 points and 14 rebounds for his 15th double-double of the season to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 79-71 victory Tuesday night.

"That's just normal for him. He nearly always has a double-double," Houston's Maurice Taylor said.

Despite O'Neal's statistics, Taylor was more impressed with Ron Artest.

"Jermaine wasn't really shooting that well tonight," Taylor said. "It was Artest that made their team go."

Artest added 21 points and Anthony Johnson 13 for the Pacers.

"We played together tonight," Artest said. "When they took away one thing, we would go to the next option. We haven't been able to handle the zone very well, but tonight we moved the ball."

Indiana coach Rick Carlisle was impressed with Artest's enthusiasm.

"Ron loves to play basketball and this year he has made it all about basketball only," Carlisle said. "He's really a fine player and he has been focused all year."

Steve Francis led Houston with 23 points, and Jim Jackson had 14 and Taylor had a season-high 13 rebounds.

Houston coach Jeff Van Gundy was critical of his team's offensive performance.

"We struggle against the best defenses and again our passing is poor," Van Gundy said. "It's hard to shoot off a bad pass and we also missed 10 free throws."

Taylor agreed with Van Gundy.

"We weren't hitting open shots," Taylor said. "It wasn't anything they were doing, we just missed a ton of layups and open shots that usually come easy."

Deer, quail season has been holiday hit

By JERRY O'BRYANT
Abilene Reporter-News

It seems the holiday atmosphere were all enjoying lately is also evident in the outdoors.

"It's Christmastime for many of the quail hunters in this area," game warden Steve Medford of Abilene said.

Medford was not referring to the time of year, but the exceptional quality of the wild quail populations across Big Country counties.

"Last year was also a good quail hunting season locally," Medford said, "but the four or five years before that were truly bad due to drought, and hunters this year are really having fun."

Warden Medford also mentioned that area deer hunters are busy and successful but not all are staying within the letter of the law.

"Lots of night work lately," is how he explained his recent work schedule.

"When game populations are as good as they are this year the poachers and those shoot-from-the-highway types step up their activities and that, along with a good number of drug labs found by hunters in remote locations, has really kept our staff busy this season."

Medford also mentioned that the current whitetail rutting season has been hard to figure out. "In some places I'm seeing small herds of mature bucks staying together, which is some-

thing you won't normally find until late in the winter during the post-rut cycle, and then five miles down the road I'll find a buck deer chasing a doe. It's kind of hard to determine if the rut is on or off when deer are acting that way," the veteran warden said.

Despite the problems with poachers and drug dealers, Medford says this has been, and continues to be, one of the better hunting seasons he has seen in regional counties.

"There's certainly plenty of deer and quail available, and this has also been a good season for large deer antlers," he said.

One knock on this year's deer hunting, and I think all of us who hunt in areas where oak trees are prevalent can agree on this, is that when the very good acorn crop in this area started falling the whitetail deer stopped showing up at corn feeders. Medford mentioned that the fallen acorns are just about gone by now and that the hunters he's talked to lately are saying the deer traffic around feeders is definitely picking up.

There are "prices" we all pay for good spring and summer rains and rich acorn crops are one of those boons to wildlife that slightly inconvenience our rather lazy human hunting practices. Anyway, the acorns are getting scarce and you should see increasing deer traffic around your feeders and food plots during the coming days.

North Carolina State routs Kansas in Tangerine Bowl

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — North Carolina State quarterback Philip Rivers had a feeling early on during the Tangerine Bowl that his offense was going to produce against Kansas.

"You never do know if you're going to blow the doors wide open and just be hitting on everything," Rivers said. "But we felt coming in there were going to be some opportunities for big plays."

With the Atlantic Coast Conference's player of the year leading touchdown drives on the first three possessions, the Wolfpack beat Kansas 56-26 on Monday night. He passed for five touchdowns and 475 yards — both Tangerine Bowl records — while completing 37 passes on 45 attempts.

North Carolina State (8-5) never let up after jumping out

to a 21-7 lead. By the end of the first quarter, Rivers already had 168 yards passing and all 20 of his yards rushing.

Rivers threw for scores of 6, 14, 3, 40 and 21 yards.

"We felt there were a lot of holes right behind the linebackers," Rivers said. "That's where we attacked early and it got us rolling."

North Carolina State finished with 653 yards of offense, an average of 9.3 yards per play, and 34 first downs — all Tangerine Bowl records.

"We didn't get anything done," said Kansas coach Mark Mangino, who couldn't lead the school to its first winning record since 1995. "We did not play well on defense at all. We should tackle better, we should cover better, we should play the run better."

The Jayhawks (6-7) surren-

dered 30 plays of 10 or more yards, and gave up 40 points for the fifth time this season.

After four stellar seasons leading the Wolfpack, Rivers is off to the NFL.

"He's what they need and what they're looking for up there," North Carolina State coach Chuck Amato said. "He's going to make somebody a winner, because he is a winner. He's been that way since the day he showed up to our campus four years ago next month. He came in here and jumped right into it — and that's what he'll do at the next level just the same."

In the days leading up to the game, Rivers insisted he didn't consider the Tangerine Bowl an opportunity to showcase his talents to NFL scouts. Instead, he wanted to have fun in the final game that he donned the red-

and-white No. 17 — a uniform retired last month by North Carolina State.

And it was nothing but smiles for Rivers since his arrival in Orlando last week. The fun began with a theme park visit that thrilled his toddler daughter and ended with 7:48 left in the game, when Rivers and wide receiver Jericho Cotchery were pulled from the game to the last standing ovation in their collegiate careers.

Cotchery set Tangerine Bowl records with 13 catches for 171 yards, and grabbed a pass for the 39th straight game to tie a school record. His 200 career receptions for 3,119 yards puts him in the 200-3,000 club alongside only Florida State's Peter Warrick.

"Those two young men deserve every accolade for every record they could possi-

ble do," Amato said of Rivers and Cotchery. "I said, as soon as they get the record, I want to call a timeout and I want those two to leave the field together."

Added Cotchery: "The only record I was aware of was tying the most consecutive games with a catch. When people started bringing up the other record, I got nervous. I haven't had any butterflies since my first game at NC State."

Although Kansas suffered its worst loss in nine bowl games, the Jayhawks said there were many positives to bring home — beginning with the realization that the program has much to improve.

"We just need to get to work, and get faster and stronger," Kansas linebacker Banks Floodman said. "We're going to take a lot from this and take it into the offseason."



Slammers: Front row, l-r, Rachel Heuston, Brooklyn Barker, Savannah Hoover and Carlyn Teichmann; Standing, l-r, Hayley Steger, Cheyenne Collins and Cali Gibson. Coaches are Jimmy Barker (left) and David Teichmann. Not pictured is Amanda Evans.

Slammers finish Optimist girls season with perfect 12-0 mark

Hidden Hills Public Golf Course sponsored two teams this year in the 5th-6th grade Girls Optimist Basketball League.

One team, the Slammers, went unbeaten and the other one, the Jammers, finished in a third-place tie.

Both teams were coached by Jimmy Barker and David Teichmann with David Smith helping coach the Jammers.

The Slammers went undefeated with a

perfect 12-0 record to win the league championship. Celanese was the runner-up with an 8-4 record and the Jammers tied for third at 7-5.

"The league was very competitive with a lot of very close, exciting games from all seven teams," Teichmann said.

The coaches extended a special thanks to League Commissioner Tisha Sieck for her outstanding job.

A-R

ARLINGTON — The trad private right Series.

Alex Rod the day he v MVP award Rangers had about a deal.

Now aft months of c proposed tra lion-a-year p table. For ne highest-paid ing put: Rod and outfi Ramirez in B

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PAMPA

Pampa Department w ing men's a adult volley Men's and w (four players divisions wil Players must t

A-Rod is staying in Texas

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — The trade talks began in private right after the World Series.

Alex Rodriguez confirmed the day he won his first AL MVP award that the Texas Rangers had talked to him about a deal.

Now after nearly two months of discussions, the proposed trade of \$20 million-a-year players is off the table. For now, baseball's two highest-paid players are staying put: Rodriguez in Texas and outfielder Manny Ramirez in Boston.

Texas owner Tom Hicks said on Tuesday — his deadline to resolve the issue — that the deal was too complicated to complete. The Rangers now plan for Rodriguez to remain their shortstop next season, the fourth of his record \$252 million, 10-year contract.

Hicks and Red Sox owner John Henry talked twice Tuesday, their first conversation in four days. And they finally agreed — that they were done talking about the proposed trade.

"We both recognized there was too big a gulf to bridge," Hicks said. "Neither one of us thought it would take the public profile it did, or get as complex as it did."

Asked if there were last-minute negotiations or compromises on the Rangers' part in an effort to complete the deal, Hicks said, "Not really."

"We mainly made sure that we communicated what each team's position was," he said. "As the decision-makers, it was important for us to talk to each other."

Hicks insisted that the deadline was final. He even sent a letter to season-ticket holders Tuesday pledging that

next season's team would be built around Rodriguez.

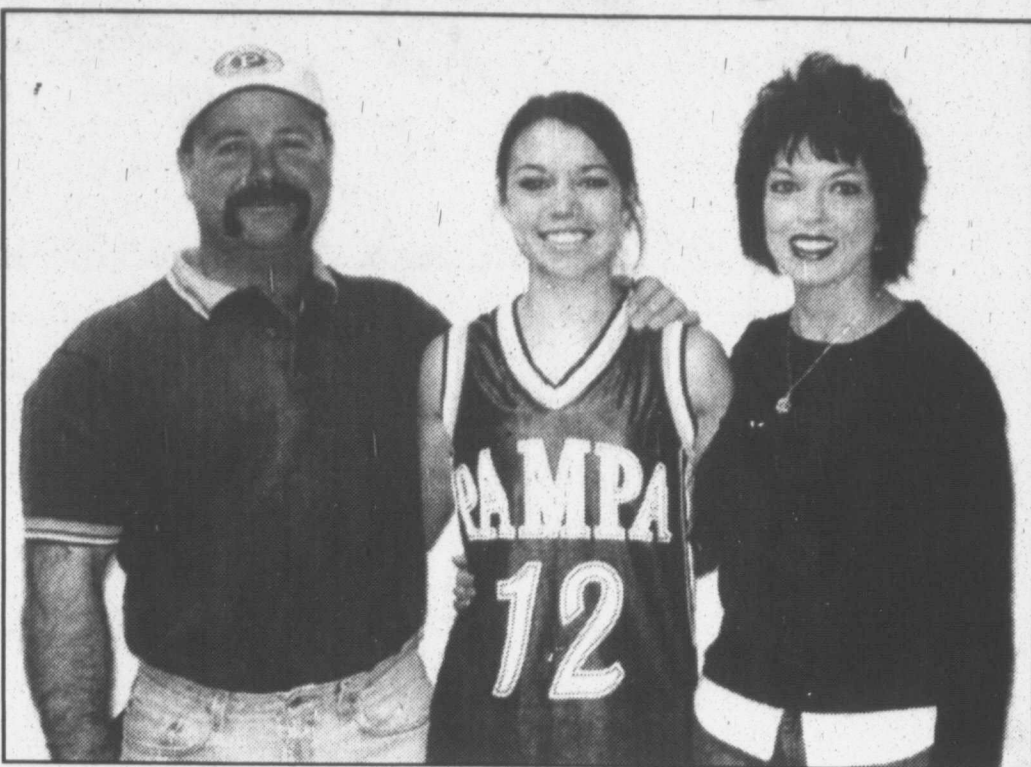
Henry, Red Sox chairman Tom Werner, and general manager Theo Epstein issued a joint statement Tuesday saying "no further discussions regarding this transaction are planned."

Rodriguez's agent, Scott Boras, also agreed that the deal was dead, and said the player's relationship with Hicks was still good.

"He learned about his owner, I think their relationship is a good one," Boras said. "In the end, there was a real question about what the level of Boston's interest level was."

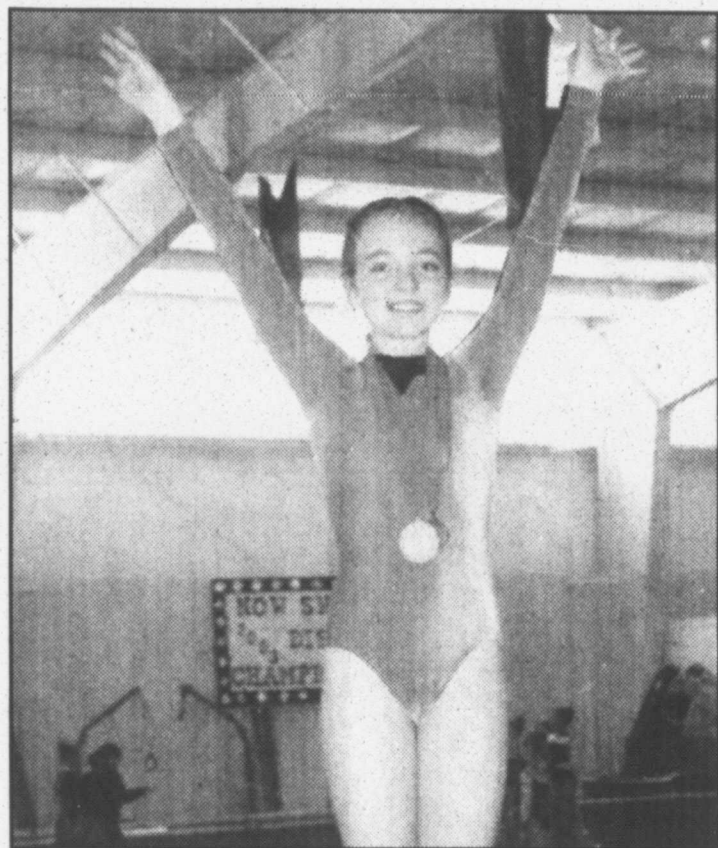
Hicks spoke several times Tuesday to Rodriguez, and said the shortstop was "happy" to remain with the Rangers, who have finished last in the AL West four straight seasons.

Harvester Hoops Spot-light



Abbi Covalt is a 5-7 senior guard on the Lady Harvesters basketball team. She is the daughter of Monte and Laura Covalt, above. Her other activities include volleyball, softball and choir. She is also a member of the First Baptist Church and National Honor Society, and is Student Council Historian.

Pampa gymnast dominated district



Payton Alvey won All-Around title at every meet she entered.

EULESS — Gymnastic of Pampa Level 5 team member Payton Alvey completed a successful season recently at the North State Semi-Finals in Eules.

The first-year Level 5 gymnast had an undefeated District season to qualify for the Semi-Finals meet, where she placed 22nd on floor exercise with an 8.525.

Payton dominated the District this season by winning the 10-year All-Around title at every meet she entered. She was also the District champion on balance beam with a score of 9.25, and was the District All-Around champion with a 34.9. Both scores were personal bests.

Payton finished in fourth place at District on floor exercise (8.85), vault (8.45) and uneven bars (8.35).

She trains at Gymnastics of Pampa under coaches Kristi Petty, Kathey Rice and Carrie Reagan.

Cougars relax at resort before Holiday trip to take on Texas

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Washington State Cougars players relaxed at a northern Idaho lakeside resort Monday on their way to the Holiday Bowl, where the thought of facing No. 5 Texas is less calming than a \$100 facial.

Coach Bill Doba and a contingent of 113 players spent the day relaxing at the Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho, about 30 miles east of Spokane, before making their way to the Cougars' third straight postseason bowl.

They will board a charter flight Tuesday from Spokane to San Diego, where the No. 15 Cougars will head directly to begin practicing for the Longhorns.

The Cougars (9-3, 6-2 Pacific-10 Conference) are 9 1/2-point underdogs to Texas (10-2, 7-1 Big 12 Conference) in the Dec. 30 bowl game.

No Cougars players took advantage of the resort's European spa, which features wildflower facial massages and hot stone massages, or a world-class golf resort that features a float-

ing green. "This is just a reward," Doba said of the annual pre-bowl stop at the resort. "We've had four tough practices. We practiced hard yesterday morning. This gives them a chance to relax. They really enjoy it."

The Cougars spent their time in a game room, playing video games, pool and competing in car races, Doba said.

Others roamed the shops of downtown Coeur d'Alene.

"The kids look forward to this as much as San Diego," Doba said. "We've made this part of the bowl routine."

Hagadone Hospitality Corp. President Jerry Jaeger said Cougars teams have stopped at the resort before the last six bowls, beginning at the 1992 Copper Bowl.

"It's become a nice tradition and we love having them come," said Jaeger, a WSU booster. "The dorms close, so they need to go somewhere for a night or two before the bowl. It's a relaxing, fun time before

they get into the tense work of a bowl game."

Players took advantage of the resort's bowling alley and swimming pools.

A cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene and a team dinner were planned Monday night, Doba said.

Once the team lands in San Diego Tuesday afternoon, it will be all business, Doba said.

The team will board buses at the airport that will take players to San Diego State University for a practice Tuesday afternoon. Position meetings will take place at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina, the team's hotel during its stay.

Sandwiched between daily workouts are trips to SeaWorld and the San Diego Zoo, as well as a luncheon sponsored by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aboard the USS John C. Stennis, an aircraft carrier whose flight deck is nearly four football fields long.

The Holiday Bowl is sponsored by Pacific Life.

Volleyball league deadline is Jan. 14

PAMPA — The City of Pampa Recreation Department will be sponsoring men's and women's adult volleyball league. Men's and women's 4 x 4 (four players on each team) divisions will be offered. Players must be 14 years old

to participate. Entry deadline will be Jan. 14 at 5 p.m., and the season will begin the week of Jan. 19, 2004.

Entry fee (sponsor's fee) is \$100 and player's fee is \$10 per player with a minimum of five players).

Roster forms, fact sheets and league by-laws are available at the Recreation Office at City Hall, Room 204.

For more information, please call 669-5740 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Three Mustangs named to 1A Super Team

Three Wheeler players have been named to the Golden Spread 1A Super Team by the Amarillo Globe-News.

Running back Josh Miller and offensive lineman Blaine Rutherford were named to the Super Team Offense. Punter James Chapman was named to the Super Team

Defense.

Miller, a 5-10, 200-pound senior, was District 3-1A's Offensive Most Valuable Player with 1,114 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns.

Rutherford, a 5-0, 210-pound senior, was among the top blockers for the Mustangs, who average 301 yards per game enroute to

winning the district championship.

Chapman, a 6-3, 180-pound senior, averaged 35 yards per kick and started three years at quarterback and safety.

Sunray quarterback Nick Martin was the Player of the Year.

College Bowl Glance		
Thursday, Dec. 25	Washington State (9-3) vs. Texas (10-2), 8 p.m. (ESPN)	Purdue (9-3) vs. Georgia (10-3), 1 p.m. (ABC)
Blue-Gray Classic	Silicon Valley Classic	Rose Bowl
Blue vs. Gray, 3 p.m. (ESPN2)	Fresno St. (8-5) vs. UCLA (6-6), 10:30 p.m. (ESPN2)	Michigan (10-2) vs. Southern Cal (11-1), 4:30 p.m. (ABC)
Hawaii Bowl	Wednesday, Dec. 31	Orange Bowl
Houston (7-5) vs. Hawaii (8-5), 8 p.m. (ESPN)	Missouri City Bowl	Florida State (10-2) vs. Miami (10-2), 8:30 p.m. (ABC)
Friday, Dec. 26	Wisconsin (7-5) vs. Auburn (7-5), Noon (ESPN)	Friday, Jan. 2
Motor City Bowl	Sun Bowl	Cotton Bowl
Bowling Green (10-3) vs. Northwestern (6-6), 5 p.m. (ESPN)	Minnesota (9-3) vs. Oregon (8-4), 2 p.m. (CBS)	Mississippi (9-3) vs. Oklahoma State (9-3), 2 p.m. (FOX)
Insight.com Bowl	Liberty Bowl	Peach Bowl
California (7-6) vs. Virginia Tech (8-4), 8 p.m. (ESPN)	Utah (9-2) vs. Southern Mississippi (9-3), 3:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Clemson (8-4) vs. Tennessee (10-2), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Saturday, Dec. 27	Independence Bowl	Fiesta Bowl
Continental Tire Bowl	Missouri (8-4) vs. Arkansas (8-4), 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Kansas State (11-3) vs. Ohio State (10-2), 8 p.m. (ABC)
Pittsburgh (8-4) vs. Virginia (7-5), 11 a.m. (ESPN2)	San Francisco Bowl	Saturday, Jan. 3
Monday, Dec. 29	Cokecreek State (7-5) vs. Boston College (7-5), 10:30 p.m. (ESPN2)	Humanitarian Bowl
Alamo Bowl	Thursday, Jan. 1	Tulsa (8-4) vs. Georgia Tech (6-6), Noon (ESPN or ESPN2)
Michigan State (8-4) vs. Nebraska (9-3), 9 p.m. (ESPN)	Outback Bowl	Sunday, Jan. 4
Tuesday, Dec. 30	Iowa (9-3) vs. Florida (8-4), 11 a.m. (ESPN)	Sugar Bowl
Houston Bowl	Gator Bowl	Oklahoma (12-1) vs. LSU (12-1), 8 p.m. (ABC)
Navy (8-4) vs. Texas Tech (7-5), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Maryland (9-3) vs. West Virginia (8-4), 12:30 p.m. (NBC)	
Holiday Bowl	Capital One Bowl	

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Member F.D.I.C.

L

To: Santa C
North Pole
Dear San
I am six
four wheel
stuff.

I also like
Love,
—David

Dear San
I want a
baby stroler
baby and a
baby woker

I hope yo
up! and als
that runs ten
Love,
—Brianna

Dear San
I want a
Dora star do
my sister is
me

I love you
—Faytha

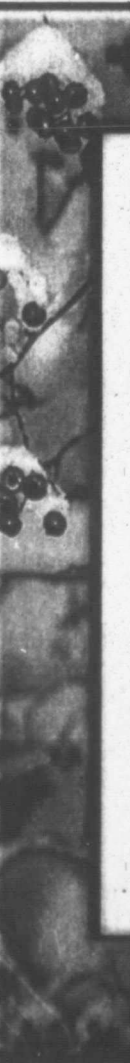
Dear San
1. Xbox
2. Cloth
3. Games
4. Remote
5. To mee
—Manuel

Dear San
1. K*Swis
2. CD play
3. Clothes
4. CD-Fra
5. Backpa
6. Meet a
my best w
7. The mo
—Abigail

Dear Santa
i wish
1. choltes
2. shoes si
3. braz do
4. lots of p
5..school s
6. CD play
7. CDs
8. note bo
9. sponge
10. vido n
11. hit clip
12. Xbox
13. My be
man help me
—Selena F

Dear Santa
1. PS2 wi
vice city
2. A remo
truck
3. School
4. G.I Joe
5. Gokart
6. Legos
—Joseph F

Dear Santa
here is my
I have som
1. I am a n
I am 5-yea
My mom i
best
2. Clothes



Letters to Santa Claus

To: Santa Claus
North Pole 85921

Dear Santa,
I am six years I want a four wheeler. I want hulk stuff.

I also like harley boots.
Love,
—David Leshér Jr., 6

Dear Santa,
I want a baby bottle and a baby stroller and a carseat ana baby and a baby bed and a baby woker and I want a babg
I hope you fill my stoking up! and also I want a baby that runs temperature
Love,
—Brianna Leshér

Dear Santa,
I want a Dora cotch and a Dora star doll I am three and my sister is writing this for me

I love you,
—Faythann Leshér, 3

Dear Santa,
1. Xbox
2. Cloth
3. Games
4. Remote controle pick up
5. To meet a fireman
—Manuel Renteria

Dear Santa,
1. K*Swiss 5 7/12
2. CD player
3. Clothes
4. CD-Franky J
5. Backpack
6. Meet a fightman my best wish
7. The movie Drumline
—Abigail Renteria

Dear Santa,
i wish
1. choltes size 8 9
2. shoes size 3
3. braz dolls
4. lots of presnts
5. school siluplies
6. CD player
7. CDs
8. note books
9. sponge bob cover
10. vido now
11. hit clips
12. Xbox
13. My best wish. the fire man help me with presnets
—Selena Renteria

Dear Santa,
1. PS2 with the game of vice city
2. A remote contol moster truck
3. School supplis
4. G.I Joe's 5 of them
5. Gokart
6. Legos lots of them
—Joseph Renteria

Dear Santa,
here is my list
I have some wishes
1. I am a nice little girl I am 5-year-old
My mom is a nice mom. is best
2. Clothes

Sock
Underwear
Shoes
1. Doll only
And mom get better
—Sosy Renteria

Dear Santa,
Hi! My name is Ashleigh, and I'm 5-years-old.
Here is what I want for Christmas:
1. Barbie Swan Lake stuff
2. Choo-choo train
3. House shoes
4. Barbie Swan Lake movie
5. Coloring books and col-ors.
Thank you very much. I love you, and I will leave some milk and cookies for you.
Love,
—Ashleigh Wood, 5

Dear Santa,
I have been a very good boy this year. I want the hulk hands and mag blocks for Christmas. Tell the reindeer to eat the food I put in the yard.
Love,
—Tate Tolbert, 4 1/2

Dear Santa, Vixen and Prancer,
I want the spiderman glove and suit. The spray that goes everywhere. Some arrows for my bow.
Love,
—Drake Tolbert, 6
P.S. Tell your reindeer to be careful.

Dear Santa,
I want a pair of shoes clothes
make up
Barbie House
Selena Barbie
Brittney Spears doll
Jenfer Lopez doll
Babie of Swan Lake doll
Doll House
Alam clock
penny bank
notebook
Mary Kate and Ashley dolls
I wish you will give me these thigas
Love,
—Petra

Dear Santa,
All I want for Christmas is a 2 week old Long Haired brown and white male chi-hawawa, and a puppy bed for it and, some toys for it and, Laddie, and a water dish and food dish
Love,
—Katie Dunham

Dear Santa,
For Christmas, I want a bunny, Scooby-Doo the movie dvd, Scooby Doo Night of a 100 frights for PS2, a cage for the bunny, food for the bunny. On ya I

forgot I want the bunny to be a male.

Sincerely,
—Caleb Dunham
Dear Santa,
How is your raindeer Chet doing in his training? How are your elfs going are?

Santa I would like the new ameracan girl Kaylie and the Bratz run away Disco Could you also throw in a breast col-lar. Got every thing Santa Okay,
—Courtney Ward-Miller
P.S. I'm been a good girl
Dear Santa,
My name is Colton. I would like for you to bring me a hand-held Game Boy, two new shirts and a trans-former arumado. I have tried to be a good boy this past year. I am 6 1/2-years-old.
My little brother is 3 1/2, and he would like to have a 3-wheeler, a lot of jets, and some new clothes. He has been a good boy part of the time.

Please remember all the other boys and girls. We will leave you some hot cocoa and cookies.

Merry Christmas to every-one.
—Colton Summers, 6 1/2, and Tucker Summers, 3 1/2

Dear Santa,
I need a care bear play house and a strawberry short-cake tent and a care bear movie I am leaving you cook-ies and milk and I made you a snowman and I will leave it by the milk and you can take the snowman I made it just for you well anyway back to the story I want a blue bike I love you very much I sent you another story I hope you love me very much I want you to have a good Christmas.
—Alana Shephard, 6

Dear Santa,
Purple shirt
Barbie talking dog
Toys
Presents
Loop earring
CD player
Barbie house
new mom
home of my own
Thank you, Santa
—Krisma Niccole

Dear Santa,
I am Tyler and i hope you can bring these things a playstation 2 with a couple of games i want the hulk game grand theft auto vice city, matrix and devil may cry love
Tyler
—Tyler Roberts

Dear Santa,
Me and my bruthr want a toy moder sikele and my sister whant a frapuling (trampoline).
—Michael, 8

Dear Santa,
I would like an electric guitar. I also want a trampo-line and drums and my mommy wants some earplugs.
Love,
—Christopher, 5

Dear Santa,
I want a trampoline and my brothers want a trampo-line, too. I also want a doll. I broke my doll.
Love,
—Jennifer, 3

Dear Santa,
I have been really good this year. I would like a Dora Magical friends doll and my mommy wants a car. She said any car will do.
Love,
—Makaylia, 1 1/2

Dear Santa,
My name is Kristen. For Christmas, I would like ello, Nemo toys, a baby doll and Polly.
Love,
—Kristen

Dear Santa,
My name is Chris Duree and this is what I want fore Christmas.
Brianedckboerd
Land air RC
Eye link comunicator
Battel for bikkini bottem game
Love,
—Chris

Dear Santa,
My name is Cameron Martin. I am 5-years-old. I would like some Yu-GI-OH! cards, a dirt bike, and a new pair of Michael Jordan shoes (red and white).
I will leave milk and cook-ies by the fireplace. Merry Christmas. I love you.
—Cameron, 5
P.S. Please bring my baby

brother Alex a bath chair so we can play in the water together. My grandma in Liberal would like a diamond ring.
Dear Santa,
I want a bed for my twin doll my bruthr wants a sume Thomas trans
—Shelby and Seth Langley

The following letters were submitted by the kindergarten class at St. Matthews Episcopal Day School:
Dear Santa,
I wod lik pll and bin
—Evan

Dear Santa,
I have bn god for a mlc-nchloins rfcmsmns
Luv,
—Matthew

Dear Santa,
I haf bn gd I wt games cuibano
—Bryce
Dear Santa,
I bin good I wi apl puppy brush
—Michaela
Dear Santa,
I wta rie of lofcrisms fnt
—Kylie

Dear Santa,
I have bn gd I wta box
—Anthony
Dear Santa,
I hbgtd I wnta eloop ras-tak anda remoot knldin nss
—Brendon
Dear Santa,
I wood lik to hav a cat I hav bin good
Love,
—Josie
(See DEAR SANTA, Pg. 15)

We Wish You A Merry Christmas

'Tis the season for us to say,
"Hope you enjoy a grand holiday."
May it be filled with joy and old fashioned sentiment!

Shepard's Crook Nursing Homehealth
916 N. Crest Rd. Ste. 101
806-665-0356



Ho...Ho...Hold The Press—It's Christmas!

Before we wrap up another holiday edition, we'd like to give you our greetings right here in black and white, along with our gratitude for your loyal readership. Happy Holidays!

The Pampa News

Happy Holidays To You

With gratitude, we extend our best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season to each and every one of you.

Your business is always appreciated. Thank you for visiting us this past year. We look forward to seeing you in 2004.

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Tenth annual School for Successful Ranching set

FORT WORTH — Put on your work clothes when you head out for the 10th annual School for Successful Ranching, March 6-7, 2004, in Austin.

"We're serious about encouraging our students to wear work clothes," says Todd McCartney, director of producer relations and education for Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. "The program is designed so students can get down in the arena with the speakers and watch the demonstrations up close."

On Saturday, March 6, students will meet at the Travis County Exposition Center to choose from concurrent sessions on fence building, windmill and solar pump installation, brush control, cattle processing and ranch management techniques incorporating cattle and wildlife.

"There won't be much time for sitting," McCartney says of the Saturday schedule. Students will be directed to one of three arenas to watch and participate in the concurrent sessions.

Allan McGinty and Darrell Ueckert, rangeland ecology and management specialists from the Texas A&M Extension Center in San Angelo, will bring affordable and effective herbicide application equipment to their session on brush control. They'll demonstrate how do-it-yourself operators can rig up their own four-wheelers or use backpack sprayers to get rid of unwanted brush like prickly pear, cedar and mesquite.

Representatives from Stay-Tite Fence Manufacturing in New Braunfels will demonstrate the proper way to install a variety of fence types. Students will be given the opportunity to participate in the process and get the feel for the different products and techniques.

John Julian of American West Windmill in Amarillo will discuss water obtained by wind and solar power. He'll demonstrate the proper application and maintenance of windmills and solar-powered water pumps for livestock and wildlife.

Ron Gill and Rick Machen, Extension livestock specialists, will demonstrate proper chute-side manners. They'll use live

cattle to show students the latest methods for administering vaccines and other cattle health management procedures. The emphasis here will be on techniques that support the principles of Beef Quality Assurance.

Saturday's schedule will wrap up with Dale Rollins, Extension wildlife specialist and former National Champion Quail Caller. He'll entertain and educate students with exercises that clearly demonstrate the profitability of managing a ranch for both cattle and wildlife.

On Sunday, March 7, the school will shift to a classroom setting at the Austin Convention Center. Bud Williams, cattle handling specialist from Bowie, Texas, will spend a half-day with students. He'll challenge their livestock handling assumptions or confirm proper stockmanship techniques they may already use.

Williams is internationally known for his intuitive, low-stress handling methods for many species of livestock and wildlife. His techniques can be applied while horseback, on foot or from a four-wheeler, in brush or open country and in feedlots.

These techniques — tested and proven on wild cattle in heavy brush, elk in the Rocky Mountains and even on massive herds of native reindeer in the Arctic wilderness — will help lower death loss, reduce stress on humans and livestock and cut herd health costs.

More than 40 years of focus on stockmanship have given Williams a blunt and forthright approach to teaching. "You will be challenged," McCartney promises. "The successful student of Bud Williams' techniques will come to the school with an open mind and a willingness to listen."

"We're excited about our 2004 School for Successful Ranching," McCartney declares. "We'll offer a variety of CEUs as well as free admission into TSCRA's annual trade show following Sunday morning's school session."

The 2004 school is being hosted by Texas and Southwestern

Cattle Raisers Association and sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Texas, Dow AgroSciences, Fort Dearborn Life Insurance Co., Pfizer Animal Health and Stay-Tite Fence Manufacturing, Inc.

As a benefit of membership, TSCRA members may register for the School for \$50. Non-member registration is \$75 per person. The cutoff date for registrations is March 1, 2004. For more information, contact Todd McCartney or Mark Perrier at the TSCRA office, 1 (800) 242-7820.

Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association is a 126-year-old trade organization whose 12,800 members manage approximately 3.6 million cattle on 53.9 million acres of range and pasture land, primarily in Texas and Oklahoma.

New hire reporting notices going out to employers

AUSTIN — Tax statements with information notifying employers of their obligation to report new hires was recently mailed to 400,000 employers.

New Hire Reporting is mandated by federal law under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and requires employers to report new hires within 20 calendar days of their start date.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) have been working together to ensure that these notifications get mailed. The notices contain:

New Hire Reporting: Good for Kids, Good for Employers

• Good for Kids: The OAG uses this information to:

- Locate parents who owe child support
- Establish new child support orders
- Enforce and modify existing orders
- Issue income withholding orders

• Good for Employers:

- Lowers your taxes by returning overpayments recovered, by TWC, to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

— Assists state agencies, such as the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission and TWC, in detecting fraudulent claims and preventing overpayments

- Reduces government spending on public assistance
- Assists the attorney general in collecting child support payments for families

• What to Report: Employers need only report six basic items to the Texas Directory of New Hires:

- Company name
- Payroll mailing address
- Company federal employer identification number

- Employee name
- Employee address
- Employee Social Security number

• How to Report: Choose any one of six reporting options:

— The Internet, including online submission and file uploads: visit www.oag.state.tx.us, select "Child Support" then click on "Employer"

— A shareware software program that generates a file for submission

— A file transfer protocol

— An electronic file mailed via diskette or tape

— A hard-copy report of the workers W-4

— Simply call 1-888-TEX-HIRE (839-4473) or fax the information to: 1-800-732-5015

Information received from employers is entered into a statewide registry and then transmitted to the National Directory of New Hires. New hires must be reported within 20 calendar days of hire. If you report electronically, new hires must be reported 12 to 16 days apart.

Leadership forum to take place at WT

CANYON — The College Talent Search program at West Texas A&M University and the John Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin will present a leadership forum for high school students Jan. 9 on the WTAMU campus.

The John Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute Student Forum is from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in the Agriculture and Natural Sciences Building. Approximately 75-100 students — primarily juniors — from high schools in Amarillo, Boys Ranch, Bovina, Friona, Hereford and Tulia are expected to attend.

"This forum is an excellent workshop for students who have an interest in learning more about public service and leadership," Julie Arias, director of WTAMU's College Talent Search program, said. "These students will discuss public-affairs issues that impact our local and state communities."

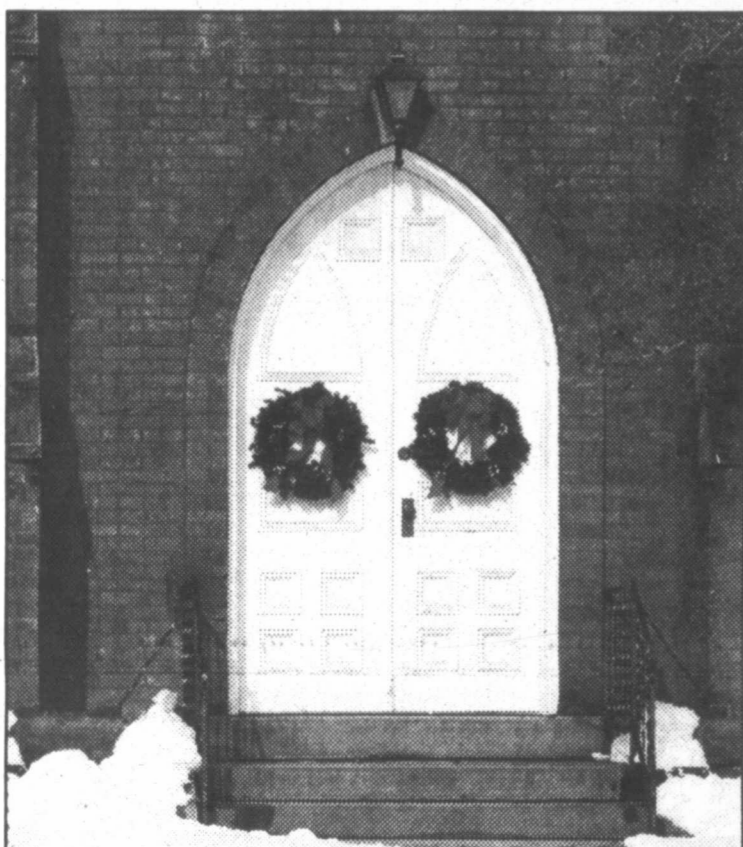
John Ben Shepperd student forums are conducted throughout Texas. They include guest speakers and breakout sessions to develop skills such as goal-setting and communication. The forum also encourages awareness of responsible citizenship.

Welcoming speaker will be Janie Rivas of the Amarillo Independent School District's Board of Trustees. David Terry, associate director of WTAMU's Enterprise Network, will deliver an address, "The Leader Within," during lunch.

John Ben Shepperd served Texas as secretary of state from 1950-52 and as attorney general from 1953-57. He was a longtime advocate of leadership opportunities and public-service training for young people.

The College Talent Search program was devised to identify and assist individuals from disadvantaged or underserved backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education.

For more information about the leadership forum or College Talent Search, contact Montana Hise! at WTAMU's College Talent Search office at 806-651-5350 or mhise!@mail.wtamu.edu.



Welcome the Season!

As we welcome Christmas into our hearts and our homes, we'd like to thank all the folks who have made us feel so welcome here.

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Texas cotton production dips 17 percent from 2002

AUSTIN — Texas Upland cotton production for 2003 is expected to total 4.2 million bales, down 17 percent from 2002 and unchanged from last month, according to figures released by Texas Agricultural Statistics Service.

"Open weather during most of November helped producers keep harvest on schedule," reported Robin Roark, State Director.

Statewide harvested acreage is estimated at 4.4 million acres, 2 percent below last year. Yield is expected to average 458 pounds per acre compared with 538 pounds last year and unchanged from the November forecast.

Production on the Southern High Plains is estimated to total 1.62 million bales, 26 percent below last year's production. Average yield, at 376 pounds per acre, is 107 pounds less than a year ago.

Statewide harvested acreage is estimated at 4.4 million acres, 2 percent below last year.

The Northern High Plains crop, estimated at 485,000 bales, is 54 percent less than last year. In the Low Plains production is estimated at 550,000 bales, 8 percent less than last year.

United States Upland cotton production is expected to total 17.8 million bales, up 8 percent from last year and unchanged from the November forecast. Yield is expected to average 715 pounds per acre compared with 651 pounds in 2002. Harvested acreage is estimated at 11.9 million acres, 2 percent below a year ago.

It's a time for laughter and peace on earth
For merriment and joy and mirth

It's a time for caring for one another
Mother, father, sister, brother

It's a time for hope and reflection, too
For goodwill and prayer and faith, anew

It's a time for sharing and giving, too
Our gratitude to each of you!

Merry Christmas & Many Thanks
L.W. and Sherry

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Shuttle disaster, soldier deaths top Texas news in '03

By **BOBBY ROSS JR.**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

From the seven astronauts who perished in the space shuttle Columbia to the dozens of Texas soldiers who died in Iraq, 2003 was, in many ways, a heartwrenching year for the Lone Star State.

Spirits lifted in December when the Fort Hood-based 4th Infantry uncovered Saddam Hussein at a safehouse near his hometown of Tikrit, pulling one of the world's most wanted fugitives out of a narrow, earthen hiding hole.

It was two Fort Hood soldiers and five from Fort Bliss who were captured March 23 in an attack near Nasiriyah that left nine comrades dead. The members of the 507th Maintenance Company survived three harrowing weeks of captivity and Pfc. Jessica Lynch was rescued separately in daring commando raid April 1.

Among 2003's other top state headlines: the legislative fight over how to redraw congressional voting districts; the deaths of 19 immigrants in a botched smuggling attempt; the slaying of a Baylor University basketball player; the striking down of a Texas law that banned homosexual sex; and the successful separation of conjoined Egyptian twins.

"The Columbia is lost," President Bush said Feb. 1, confirming the nation's worst fears after the shuttle fell to pieces, raining debris over hundreds of miles of dense East Texas woods.

The shuttle catastrophe occurred 39 miles above the Earth, in the last 16 minutes of the 16-day mission as the space-

ship re-entered the atmosphere and glided in for a landing in Florida. In its horror and in its backdrop of a crystal blue sky, the day echoed one almost exactly 17 years before, when the Challenger exploded.

The loss of seven explorers — shuttle commander Rick Husband, Michael Anderson, David Brown, Kalpana Chawla, Laurel Clark, William McCool and Ilan Ramon — brought a new round of grief to a nation still in mourning after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Hundreds of volunteers, mostly in Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Hemphill, worked long hours to retrieve shuttle debris. Law enforcement officers and the National Guard protected the largest pieces of debris for the crash investigation.

Investigators concluded that NASA's overconfident management and inattention to safety doomed Columbia every bit as much as the chunk of foam that struck the shuttle with deadly force. Without drastic changes, they said, another disaster is likely.

The nation's attention then turned to the war with Iraq, with Texas' two largest military installations — Fort Bliss at El Paso and Fort Hood at Killeen — pressed into action.

Another 20,000 troops from Fort Hood are training to ship out in 2004 to replace those deployed in Iraq. In all, 22 Texan soldiers have been killed, according to military reports. One of the latest, Pfc. Ray Joseph Hutchinson, a 20-year-old Rifleman from Houston, was killed Dec. 7 when he drove a Humvee over an explosive device that was detonated by remote control.

"He would want to be remembered as a member of the infantry and a soldier doing his job for the country and nothing more," said his older brother, Lee Hutchinson.

Meanwhile, a political fight brewed at home over congressional redistricting.

A federal trial that started in December followed months of partisan fighting and two out-of-state boycotts — House Democrats fled to Ardmore, Okla., in May and their Senate counterparts to Albuquerque, N.M., in the summer — so there wouldn't be enough lawmakers in Austin to vote on the Republican-drawn map. Finally, a map passed in a third special session when Democratic Sen. John Whitmire of Houston defected and returned to the Capitol, giving lawmakers the quorum they need to do business.

The question now before a three-judge federal panel is whether the map is unfair to Hispanics and blacks, as Democrats and minority groups argue, and violates the federal Voting Rights Act.

While acknowledging that Republican legislators drew districts for political gain, the state's attorneys say race was

not a predominant factor in drawing the map.

The crux of the fight: Democrats want to keep the existing districts that give them a 17-15 advantage in the Texas congressional delegation. The GOP, on the other hand, sees an opportunity to gain seven additional seats and complete control of Texas politics. Republicans already hold both U.S. Senate seats, the governorship and a majority in the state Senate and House.

Among other top headlines: — Seventeen people were found dead May 14 when authorities opened up a sweltering, airless trailer that had been abandoned at a South Texas truck stop with more than 100 illegal immigrants locked inside. Two more victims died later in one of the nation's deadliest smuggling attempts.

— The summer slaying of 21-year-old Baylor basketball player Patrick Dennehy and the arrest of former player Carlton Dotson on charges of murdering Dennehy were just the beginning of a months-long scandal at the world's largest Baptist university. Ensuing disclosures of major NCAA violations in the basketball program disgraced former coach Dave

Bliss and put Baylor under an intense media spotlight.

— In the most important legal advance ever for gay people in the United States, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 6-3 in June to strike down a Texas law that made homosexual sex a crime. What gay men and women do in the privacy of their bedrooms is their business and not the government's, the court said in the ruling that struck down bans on what some states called deviate sex acts.

— Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim, 2-year-old Egyptian twins joined at the tops of their heads, were separated Oct. 12 in Dallas. Both are doing well after a marathon surgery that took a day and more than a year of planning, but they face a long recovery.

— Texas voters narrowly approved Proposition 12 in September, giving the Legislature constitutional

authority to cap non-economic damages in certain civil lawsuits, such as pain and suffering in medical malpractice cases. Opponents contended that the amendment could open the door, for legislators to cap non-economic damages in other civil lawsuits, including cases in which a drunk driver kills or injures someone, or when negligence by a big corporation harms someone.

— Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn certified the state's \$117.4 billion budget plan in June, avoiding a potential constitutional battle with the governor and the attorney general.

About the same time, Gov. Rick Perry signed a bill requiring a 24-hour waiting period before a woman can get an abortion in Texas.

Legislators also passed a law giving universities permission to set their own tuition rates.

Mars rovers try to resolve clues about planet's past

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — The prospect of life on Mars has charged the public imagination for more than a century, ever since astronomers first spied what they thought were canals dug to irrigate the planet's ruddy surface.

After spacecraft and Earth-based telescopes began taking a closer look at the planet, evidence of the canals quickly vanished.

Instead, the scrutiny showed Mars to be a dusty, frigid world, shrouded by an atmosphere too thin to breathe, bombarded with radiation and largely dry beyond the ice that caps its poles. It seemed altogether hostile to life as we know it.

Ongoing scientific spade-work continues to turn up evidence that suggests that long ago Mars was a wetter, if not warmer, world where rivers large enough to carve canyons the size of the United States flowed across its surface. Life, even if just tiny microbes, could have thrived in such a place.

Beginning Christmas day, a small armada of exploratory spacecraft will reach the Red Planet, some attempting to enter orbit, others to land — a very risky business because of the engineering and physical challenges that await the robotic probes. Together, they represent one of the most ambitious efforts yet to resolve the contradictions that persist in alternately intriguing and beguiling scientists.

"There is no consensus and a lot of contradictions," said Michael Carr, a planetary geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey who has played a role in nearly every past mission to Mars.

A British spacecraft, the Beagle 2 will be released and is scheduled to land on the planet Dec. 25.

Spirit, the first of NASA's identical robot explorers, is expected to land Jan. 3. Its sibling, Opportunity, is scheduled to settle on the opposite side of the planet Jan. 24.

Dear Santa Claus,

(Continued from Page 13)

Dear Santa,
I want a motorcycle for Christmas. And a big remote control car. And a Singlet for Christmas. And new wrestling shoes for Christmas. And new head gery.
From Krysten Miller. I am eight years old.
P.S. I've been good.

Dear Santa,
How are things going? Do you have a baby reindeer yet? For Christmas, I would like some chew toys because I'm teething and a jumping jamborie.
Thank you,
Jetta Ann Miller, 3 months



Yuletide Wishes

Here's hoping the season grants all your wishes, big and small, and that you enjoy health, wealth and peace. Many thanks to all my customers for your support.

Merry Christmas...
ReDonn Woods, Pampa News

THE Pampa NEWS

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Costume dramas, offbeat smaller films among 2003's best, film historian says

BY NANCY KOLSTI
UNT NEWS SERVICE

DENTON — Old-fashioned swashbuckling costume films, smaller offbeat films coming from unique sources, and sequels that didn't live up to expectations were some of the trends in 2003 movies, says a University of North Texas film historian.

Dr. Don Staples, professor of radio, television and film at UNT, Denton, and a member of the Screen Actors Guild, called 2003 a year of many "pretty good, but not great" films, adding that only a few are truly worthy of Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations.

"There isn't going to be much controversy at the Oscars this year. Every year, you hear about films and actors and actresses who should have been nominated, but were left out. This year, the worthy ones are a small enough group to all be nominated, or at least all be on the top 10 film lists for the year," Staples said.

The critics' choice for best film of 2003, he says, should be "Mystic River," a murder mystery directed by Clint Eastwood. The people's choice for best film, however, will be "Seabiscuit," the true story of the Depression-era racehorse, he said.

"Seabiscuit" is a film that people of all ages loved," Staples said.

November and December typically bring a crop of Oscar-worthy epic films. Of the ones released so far in 2003, Staples expects "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" and "The Last Samurai" to both be nominated for awards. In addition, the stars of the two films, Russell Crowe in "Master and Commander" and Tom Cruise in "The Last Samurai," should receive acting nominations, he said.

"Both are swashbuckling, historical films like the ones with Errol Flynn in the 1930s. We have Russell Crowe with a sword in his hand and Tom Cruise with a sword in his hand," he said. "Both are long films, but if you like that type of film, you're on the edge of your seat most of the time while you're watching them."

In addition, both of these costume dramas use natural elements to have

The critics' choice for best film of 2003, he says, should be "Mystic River," a murder mystery directed by Clint Eastwood. The people's choice for best film, however, will be "Seabiscuit," the true story of the Depression-era racehorse, he said.

exotic backgrounds — the sea for "Master and Commander," which is set on a British warship during the Napoleonic Wars, and 19th Century Japan for "The Last Samurai."

These films should be joined in the nominations by two others released in late December — "Cold Mountain" and "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King." And Cruise and Crowe, Staples said, should be joined in the nominations for Best Actor by Sean Penn for "Mystic River."

He adds Johnny Depp should also be nominated for his role in "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," another swashbuckling film, but a comedy instead of a drama.

"Pirates of the Caribbean" came out in the middle of the summer as a throwaway film, but I thought it was one of the best films of the year," Staples said. "It had intelligent use of plot and story and great performances. Johnny Depp was magnificent in a role that could have been a disastrous performance."

"Pirates of the Caribbean," which is based on a theme park at Walt Disney World, was also the biggest surprise of the year, Staples said. The film made more than \$300 million at the box office, making it the second top-grossing movie in the United States for 2003 behind "Finding Nemo."

"Who would have guessed that a movie based on a theme park, that came out as a throwaway film in the middle of the summer, would be so good?" Staples asked.

Smaller films from other offbeat sources, such as the comic book-based "American Splendor," were also surprisingly good, he said. He picks "American Splendor," "The Swimming Pool" and "Lost in Translation" as his choices among the smaller films that should receive award nominations.

"Bill Murray should be nominated for 'Lost in Translation,' which was the sleeper film of the year, and Charlotte Rampling should be nominated for 'The Swimming Pool,'" he said. "These films appeal to a narrower group of the audience — adults rather than families — in their consideration of ideas and their aesthetic values."

But it was summer movies appealing to teen-agers and children that made the most money in the nation in 2003. So far, two films have grossed more than \$300, while three grossed more than \$200 million and 15 grossed more than \$100 million.

"The business people in the movie industry are happier than the critics," Staples said. "Many films did not live up to critical expectations. In some cases, sequels did not live up to the hype."

"The Return of the King," the third film in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, is expected to be "as good as, if not better" than its predecessors, "The Fellowship of the Ring" and "The Two Towers," Staples said. But it's the exception.

"Matrix: Revolutions" was definitely not as good as the first two "Matrix" movies," he said. "It is really hard when you have a great original to have an equally great sequel."

Some films starring award-winning stars also were not as great as expected, including "Intentional Cruelty," starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and George Clooney; "Matchstick Men," starring Nicholas Cage; and "Assassination Tango," starring Robert Duvall, he said.

And aside from Charlotte Rampling, Staples said he can't select any best actress nominees among the films that have been released so far.

"Nothing jumped out in terms of the female performances. Last year was the year of strong actresses. This year was the year of strong actors," Staples concluded.

Migrant assistance program still making difference at university

CANYON — Rosalia Mendoza was one of only 21 seniors at Valley High School in 1999 and, having moved to Texas from Mexico only three years earlier, English was still her second language.

The transition might have been less than smooth when she chose to exchange Turkey's small-town calm for the comparative hubbub of freshman orientation at West Texas A&M University. But Mendoza thrived at WTAMU because the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) helped her adapt to the new surroundings and succeed inside and outside the classroom.

Today Mendoza is less than a year removed from completion of dual bachelor of business administration/master of professional accounting degrees.

"I came from such a small town, and the University is so big, but I didn't have to go looking for help because help came looking for me," Mendoza said. "I was really scared coming to college because my English still wasn't very good. CAMP helped me through my first year here. It made all the difference."

CAMP, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to help students from migrant and seasonal farmworker families succeed in post-secondary education by offering pre-college transition and first-year support services.

Mendoza is one of 148 students that CAMP has served in its first five years of operation at West Texas A&M, and 104 of those are presently enrolled at WTAMU or in post-secondary programs elsewhere.

"We're committed to helping migrant students succeed in college," Martin Lopez, University CAMP director, said. "Federal

funding enables us to identify and select 30 migrant students each year and to provide them with a way of funding their entire first year of college. Thanks to the scholarships they receive, they can live on campus and not have to work. And we try to develop their leadership as well as their academic skills."

CAMP recruits are encouraged to complete comprehensive college preparatory courses and other requirements needed for admission to Texas universities. Those accepted into the program receive scholarships, monthly stipends, up to a 50-percent housing waiver, books and supplies and a variety of advising and counseling services, including financial aid advisement and assistance with the application process.

Lopez said CAMP's project goals at WTAMU include striving to ensure that 80 percent of participants successfully complete their first academic year and 70 percent go on to complete college degree programs.

"Currently, 70 percent of the 2001-2002 CAMP cohort is still enrolled in post-secondary education," Lopez said. "We're proud to be making a difference in the lives of young people who might otherwise never have the opportunity to attend college, much less to succeed at it."

Applications are being accepted right now for West Texas A&M's CAMP program, and applications received by March 15, 2004 will be given priority.

For more information about CAMP and the March 15 priority application deadline, contact the CAMP staff at 806-651-2351 or mlopez@mail.wtamu.edu. Lopez says prospective students also can ask their high school or migrant advisers about the program.

Financial aid season approaching for nation's seniors

The start of a new year is quickly approaching, and that means one thing — students planning to start college next fall should begin working on

—Look into Work Study programs.
—Surf the web for financial aid information.
• ACT recommends visiting the following web sites:

—The Financial Aid Information Page — www.finaid.org
—The Federal Government Financial Aid Page

—For more financial aid specifics, visit with a guidance counselor or log onto www.act.org on the World Wide Web.

financial aid. Experts at ACT offer tips to help families find the resources they need to complete their financial aid paperwork.

The most important form is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form. Beginning Jan. 1, students will be able to submit this form, which determines eligibility for student financial aid from federal programs. Students will need family income statements from their 2003 earnings to complete the form.

Though colleges and universities use the FAFSA, some institutions may also require students fill out additional forms. The FAFSA is available from high school counselors or on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

• Financial aid tips from ACT:

—Apply early for admission and financial aid. Make sure all required forms are complete and all required signatures are included. Check all information for accuracy.

—Check with the school you plan to attend to determine if other financial aid forms are required.

—Apply for scholarships and grants.

—Financial Aid Need Estimator and financial aid information — www.act.org/fane
—Free college scholarship search — www.collegenet.com
—Free Application for Federal Student Aid — www.fafsa.ed.gov
—Scholarship scams — www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship

Peace Be With You

May the Lord watch over you and your flock as together we celebrate the miracle of Christmas.

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PHARMACY

To Our Friends & Neighbors at the Holidays

This greeting is filled with a healthy measure of best wishes and gratitude. We hope your holiday is just what the doctor ordered.

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Thanks for Coming 'Round this Year!

May the coming season bring renewal, growth and good times to you and your loved ones, just as you have brought us so much joy this past year.

Merry Christmas!

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Science editors select year's greatest 'breakthrough'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proof that a mysterious force called "dark energy" is pushing the universe to expand endlessly at a faster and faster rate has been selected as the "Breakthrough of the Year" by the editors of Science magazine.

The bizarre idea that some unknown force exists in the universe that is opposing gravity and flinging galaxies away from each other at an accelerating clip was first proposed in 1998. New studies in 2003

proved that the force does exist and this discovery captured the top prize by the editors of Science as the year's most important, scientific development.

"It is one of the ultimate discoveries in basic science," said Don Kennedy, editor-in-chief of the journal. "It stirs our imagination even though it challenges our ability to understand."

"No longer are scientists trying to confirm the existence

of dark energy," the journal reported in its Friday issue. "Now they are trying to find out what dark energy is made of, and what it tells us about the birth and evolution of the universe."

The editors also selected nine other research advances. These included studies of genes and mental disease; evidence of global warming effects; how RNA affects genes within cells; new advances in imaging individ-

ual molecules within cells; proof that gamma ray bursts, one of nature's most powerful explosions, come from supernova eruptions; proof that mouse embryonic stem cells can transform into sperm and egg; exotic materials that bend light in a new way; discovery that the Y chromosome in humans contains duplicate genes, and the first successful test of a new cancer treatment.

All the selections, the journal said in a statement, were

chosen "for their profound implications for society and the advancement of science."

Proof for the existence of the "dark force" came from two studies that probed the very early universe — back to less than 400,000 years after the Big Bang — and confirmed that the universe was expanding.

The Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe telescope analyzed the cosmic microwave radiation background, an echo from the Big Bang, and determined the age and composition of the universe. It confirmed that only 4 percent is ordinary matter, the stuff seen every day, and 23 percent is a cold, dark matter composed of unknown particles. The rest, some 73 percent, of the universe is dark energy.

The study also narrowed the proven age of the universe to 13.7 billion years, plus or minus a few hundred thousand years. Prior estimates had been between 12 billion and 15 billion years.

Another study, the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, mapped the distribution of a quarter-million galaxies and confirmed again the domination of dark energy.

Of the dark energy finding, the journal said: "It is, perhaps, a sign that scientists will finally begin to understand the beginning."

The editors of Science also annually select the worst mistake made during the year in the world of research. For 2003, the Breakdown of the Year was the Feb. 1 loss of space shuttle Columbia. The spacecraft came apart while returning to Earth, scattering shattered pieces across east Texas. Seven astronauts were killed, and the remaining space shuttles were grounded while the National Aeronautics and Space Administration corrects flaws in the craft and in the agency's safety culture.

The shuttle is not expected to fly again until the fall of 2004.

Cooler weather? DPS offers parents tips for their child's car seat safety

AUSTIN — As winter gets into full swing, Department of Public Safety officials offer parents and other caregivers some tips on child safety seats.

When the weather turns cooler, we all get our jackets and coats out of the closet. Did you know that, according to DPS officials, putting your infant or child in their coat or blanket before putting them in their car seat can greatly affect the way the car seat is designed to work?

The harness straps in car seats are designed to lie flat and snug against your child. When they are adjusted properly, there should be no slack in the harness system.

If you wrap your baby in a blanket before placing him in the car seat, and loosen the harness straps to accommodate the extra cloth. You have

Remember to check your safety seats often and look for stress marks or hairline cracks on the shell, frayed harness straps, torn padding, etc. You can contact the manufacturer for replacement parts.

put slack into the system. The same thing happens if you put a coat on your toddler and loosen the straps before buckling him in his seat.

In a collision, this extra fabric and padding will compress and create slack in the harness system, which will allow your child to move further forward during a crash before being stopped by the harness straps — increasing the injuries they will suffer.

So what should you do? First, always keep your child in the clothes they will be wearing when they are indoors. Place the child in the infant seat or car seat, making sure the harness straps are snug over the shoulders and that they lie straight and flat down to the buckle.

Buckle the child-in and then put the coat or blanket over them — on top of the harness system. You can even turn the coat around and put

his arms through the sleeves after he is buckled into his car seat — buckle them, then bundle them.

This will ensure your kids are kept snug in their seat, the harness system is able to do its job in the event of a crash, and the kids stay warm.

Remember to check your safety seats often and look for stress marks or hairline cracks on the shell, frayed harness straps, torn padding, etc. You can contact the manufacturer for replacement parts.

For more detailed information on car seats and car seat safety, see the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>.

Angus Outreach seminar slated in Illinois

Angus producers will want to mark their calendars for the Angus Outreach Seminar, set for Thursday, Jan. 22, 2004, in Moline, Ill. The session is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Convention Center at the Airport. The hotel is located at 6902 27th Street.

American Angus Association staff Bill Bowman, director of performance programs, and Matt Perrier, director of commercial programs, will outline two new tools offered by the Association for seedstock producers and their bull-buying customers — the Total Beef Value (\$B) index, a value-based tool designed to assist commercial producers in their genetic selection, and the AngusSource program, an identification and marketing program for Angus and Angus-cross commercial steers and replacement females. They will also lead an interactive discussion about current Association programs, plus future programs in the areas of genetic programs and customer service options.

"These seminars are an opportunity to reach out to our members and those who use Angus genetics to increase awareness of and

answer questions about two of our newest programs," says John Crouch, Association executive vice president. "Most importantly, we encourage Angus breeders to attend and provide input to Association staff relative to our programs and services and ways they can best serve members now and in the future."

This is just one of many outreach seminars scheduled across the country. Remaining seminars are scheduled in Hutchinson, Kan.; Boise, Idaho; Sacramento, Calif.; Fort Worth, Texas; Athens, Ga.; Cullman, Ala.; and Winchester, Va.

Anyone interested in attending the seminar should call (816) 383-5163, accessible 24 hours a day, or send e-mail to mperrier@angus.org to RSVP. Complete information is available online at www.angus.org.

The American Angus Association, with headquarters in St. Joseph, Mo., is the world's largest beef breed organization, providing programs and services to thousands of commercial producers and more than 34,000 members nationwide.

Texas milk production up 9 percent from last year

AUSTIN — Texas milk production totaled 454 million pounds during November, up 9 percent from last year's production of 417 million pounds. October 2003 production totaled 451 million pounds.

The number of milk cows during

November averaged 311,000 head, up 1,000 head from last year but unchanged from October 2003. Production per cow averaged 1,460 pounds during November, up 9 percent from last year and up 1 percent from October 2003.

The 20 states participating in the monthly survey totaled 11.6 billion pounds, down 0.2 percent from production in these same states in November 2002. October revised production, at 12.0 billion pounds, was down 0.1 percent from October 2002.

Production per cow during November averaged 1,509 pounds, 13 pounds more than a year ago. The average number of milk cows in the 20 states was 7.71 million head, 82,000 head less than last year, and 10,000 head less than October 2003.



CIRCULATION START & STOP DEADLINES FOR CHRISTMAS

- December 22nd 9am on December 22nd
- December 23rd 9am on December 23rd
- December 24th 5pm on December 23rd
- December 25th No Paper Christmas Day
- December 26th 9am on December 26th
- December 28th 10am on December 26th

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"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them,

and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold,

I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

-Luke 2:9-11

We hope the holidays find you surrounded by peace and joy.

Thank you for being a loyal customer and friend.

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 1200 N. Hobart Pampa 665-3992

Allison Auto Rental
 623 W. Foster Pampa 665-3395

Allison Agency Germania Insurance
 623 W. Foster Pampa 665-6815

Allison Quality Quick Lube
 1807 Alcock, Pampa 688-0042

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Gift cards make shopping easy, but watch those fees

By ANNE D'INNOENZIO
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP) — Like more and more holiday shoppers, Juliette Coulter of Dallas thinks the right gift for many friends and family members is plastic and fits in a wallet.

She's spending \$300 in all this season on gift cards from Target, Old Navy, Starbucks and other stores. It means no worrying, for example, about size or style for a pair of nephews age 9 and 14.

"They have very specific tastes, and I don't want to get them the wrong thing," she said. "I want them to think I'm the cool aunt."

Gift cards are hotter than ever this season, with merchants expected to sell more than \$17 billion worth during the holidays, or 8 percent of all business, according to the National Retail Federation. It actually helps them extend the selling season, as shoppers flood the stores after the holidays to redeem their cards and, the stores hope, spend a little more.

Yet as the cards become more familiar, many recipients are grumbling about some headaches associated with them — fees that can erode their value if they are not used quickly, problems getting replacements if they are stolen or lost, what to do with that last few dollars or even cents of credit.

Aware of the issues, and

fearful of losing what has become a key piece of business, some store chains are revising their policies or doing more to educate customers about how to get the most out of gift cards.

Coulter said she doesn't worry about card fees as her recipients use them quickly — which is often the only way to make sure you get full value. Dennis Fish, of Atlanta, learned that the hard way.

Fish purchased a \$120 gift certificate from a spa for himself and his wife last year. They waited just over a year to use it — and were hit with a 20 percent "reactivation" charge. The card had a one-year expiration period.

"Never will I buy one again until I know the ins and outs of the policies," he said.

He complained, and got the charge lifted. But he's buying just two cards this year, compared to 10 last year.

Brad Ferris of Washington said the cards "drive me nuts."

"If you get a \$300 card and you only purchase \$250, you end up forking out more money to these stores because they don't refund the cash you don't spend," he said. "I always receive these cards, and they end up being more of an expense than a gift."

Besides reactivation fees, some store cards carry a kind of reverse-interest that's charged over time. Bank-issued cards often have an initial charge.

"Consumers are going to find out that their gift cards are not worth as much as they thought they were worth," said Gail Hillebrand, senior attorney at consumer advocacy group Consumers Union of U.S. Inc.

Her group supported legislation passed in California eliminating virtually all gift card and gift certificate fees effective January 2004. That state already has a law that keeps cards from having expiration dates. In New Hampshire, cards that have a \$99 value or less can be used anytime, while in Massachusetts, any gift card is now valid for up to 7 years.

Retailers say reactivation and other fees help cover costs to maintain the systems that track card credits, and are fair because the costs thus are charged only to consumers who delay in using them. There can be accounting costs, since stores don't record gift card sales on their final books until the cards are redeemed, according to the National Retail Federation.

But they are sensitive to the growing chorus of complaints. Several major chains, including Sears, Roebuck and Co.,

Barnes & Noble Inc. and J.C. Penney Co. Inc. have eliminated fees in time for the holiday season. Back in February, 18 national retailers — including Bloomingdale's, Toys "R" Us and Target Corp. — agreed to replace customers' lost, stolen or damaged gift cards.

Still, there are plenty of companies that have charges or have some sort of restrictions. A sampling:

— Wal-Mart Stores Inc. charges \$1 fee per month after 24 consecutive months of inactivity.

— Barnes & Noble Inc. will replace damaged cards, but not stolen or lost cards. In October, the retailer eliminated its \$1.50 monthly fee that it charged after 12 months of inactivity.

— American Express's prepaid card charges \$2 a month after 12 consecutive months of nonuse. There's a \$3.95 initial fee, if purchased online at americanexpress.com, or a \$7.95 charge — if purchased in person. When purchased in person, fees vary from \$3.95 to \$9.95.

— Simon Properties-Visa gift card program — which is expected to be Visa's largest gift card program this year,

has an initial fee of \$1.50, and has a service fee of \$2.50 per month beginning with the seventh month. The initial fee is still low compared to Visa's other members, which can go as high as \$7.

Lucy Lazarony, a researcher at Bankrate.com, recently studied the gift card policies of major banks and retailers. For gift cards ordered online, she said many retailers charge a shipping and handling fee ranging from \$1.95 to \$8.95 for standard shipping.

Visa USA said that consumers are seeing the value of their gift cards because it has "universal acceptance" — they can be purchased at any store that accepts Visa — and they can be replaced if stolen or lost. But company officials acknowledge that consumers could use more education about the policies.

"We are working with our members to adequately overdisclose information" to consumers, Kenny Thomas, a company spokesman said. That includes spelling out policies right on the back of the card.

Still, the cards' popularity is expected to keep growing.

C. Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, based in Charleston, S.C., said gift cards have become the "grand slam" of the 2003 holiday season.

According to Bain & Co., card sales for 2003 will total anywhere between \$42 billion to \$45 billion in sales this year, up from \$36 billion to \$38 billion in 2002. Exact figures are hard to determine.

Stores like gift cards because they cut down on returns — and about two-thirds of recipients spend more than the value of the cards, according to Rob Markey, a director at Bain.

They also increase sales of regular-price items, because shoppers using a card are less interested in getting a discount.

Michael Brown, a retail operations specialist at Kurt Salmon Associates, estimated that about 10 to 15 percent of the value of the cards are never used.

Hillebrand, at Consumers Union, knows how gift-givers can prevent that from happening.

"Write a check," she advised.

Texas troops experience highs, lows in 2003

By T.A. BADGER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

FORT HOOD, Texas (AP) — From the tragedy of a convoy ambush in the opening days of the Iraq war to the elation of this month's capture of Saddam Hussein, troops from Texas have been in the thick of the action.

And that won't change any time soon.

Roughly 20,000 soldiers from this Central Texas post will head to Iraq early in 2004 to replace troops currently deployed. About the same number of troops from Fort Hood's 4th Infantry Division on duty there now are scheduled to return home in the spring.

Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, Fort Hood's commander, will be among those shipping out.

"I anticipate the fight will continue to be tough," Metz said. "Our troops are constantly getting more ready. We're continuing to ramp up and are getting better every day."

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Gonzales, who grew up in Lubbock, divides his life

between a barrage of last-minute training and cramming in as much time as possible with his wife and four children.

"I'm eager to serve my country — this is what I came into the military for," said Gonzales, an 18-year veteran who previously served in the Persian Gulf War. "It's the opportunity to show the people of the United States that we're here for a purpose. It's about honor."

It will be the first war zone for Spc. Sara Ruiz, a 22-year-old X-ray technician with the 27th Main Support Battalion. The mother of a 20-month-old boy named Aiden, she says she's more eager to get going than she is nervous about what she'll encounter in Iraq.

"It concerns me but I have a lot of confidence in my company and my battalion," said Ruiz, a native of Gillett, Pa. "We've been training on how to handle ambushes, how to protect ourselves, how to protect other people."

The war was only a few days old when members of the 507th Maintenance Company, stationed at Fort Bliss near El

Paso, were trying to protect themselves and each other after being ambushed outside the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah.

The March 23 attack left nine soldiers dead, among them Chief Warrant Officer Johnny Villarreal Mata and Pvt. Ruben Estrella-Soto, both of El Paso; Spc. Edward Anguiano of Los Fresnos; and Spc. James Kiehl of Comfort.

Texas were also among a group of five prisoners from the 507th released in mid-April — Spc. Edgar Hernandez of Alton and Spc. Shosanna Johnson from Houston.

"I feel that my heart wants to burst out of my chest," an exulted Maria de la Luz Hernandez said on the day she heard her son, Edgar, had been freed. "I'm going to have a heart attack here with so much happiness."

Jill Kiehl, then seven months pregnant, endured nearly two weeks of anxiety waiting for word from Iraq about her missing husband of nearly two years.

When it came, the news was not good: he was among those found buried outside the hospital where Pvt. Jessica Lynch, also a member of the 507th, was rescued by Marines.

"When I first heard about this, I just screamed, 'We're over there to help you! Why are you doing this?'" Jill Kiehl said.

In all, 22 Texans have been killed in action, according to military reports. The latest was Staff Sgt. Gary Collins of Hardin, who died Nov. 8 while riding in a Bradley fighting vehicle that ran over a homemade bomb.

"I figured his odds of surviving were way better than the average person that hadn't had the training he had," Don Collins said of his son, a 12-year veteran. "His spirit will

live with me — even though it's a big hole in my heart."

Five of those Texas soldiers killed were based at Fort Hood, which has seen a total of 14 soldiers killed in action. Another nine soldiers from the state have died in accidents and other non-combat incidents in Iraq.

As the number of casualties has grown, some family members of deployed soldiers have become increasingly critical of the war. Some two dozen Texans with relatives in Iraq held a public protest in San Antonio in November.

"If my husband got killed and I hadn't done everything I could to bring him home, I'd never-forgive myself," said Candance Robison, a 27-year-old mother of two from suburban Dallas. Her husband, Army 1st Lt. Mike Robison, is serving with the 82nd Airborne Division.

A number of families at Fort Hood were swept up in the jubilation felt by their soldiers, part of the 1st Brigade Combat Team that on Dec. 13 unearthed Saddam Hussein in a hiding hole near the former dictator's hometown of Tikrit.

Kelly Wommack says her husband, Staff Sgt. Joey Wommack, was bubbling over with enthusiasm when he called home a couple of days after the capture.

"It was just like he had won the lottery or something," she said. "I was just ecstatic for him. ... I don't know how you can top your career (after this). He's on Cloud Nine."

Metz, the commanding general, will likely be gone by the time the 1st Brigade and other units return to Fort Hood next spring, but that won't dim the celebrations.


"When they come home there will be plenty of cheers and pride for them," he said. "They've gotten a tremendous victory."



**EVERYTHING'S SET...
FOR A BEAUTIFUL SEASON!**

THE TREE IS TRIMMED ...
THE GIFTS ARE WRAPPED ...
THE LIGHTS ARE LIT ...
AND NOW OUR BEST WISHES ARE ON THE WAY!
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND MANY THANKS.

Celanese



With Heartfelt Thanks

Wishing you a healthy and upbeat holiday season. It's been a pleasure caring for you this past year.

H PAMPA REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Merry Christmas From Becky And The Whole Gang!

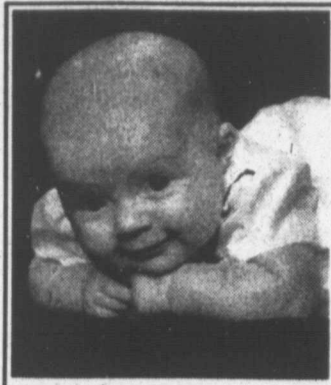


Just in the "nick" of time, we're delivering our best wishes to all of our patrons. Thanks for pulling for us this past year.

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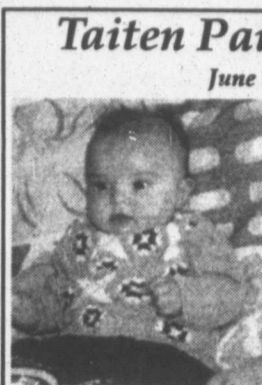


Babies First Christmas



Autumn Macy Woods
September 6, 2003

Parents... Keith & ReDonn Woods
Grandparents... Dwayne & Cindy Hall,
Monty Elkins, Regina Woods, Mike Woods



Taiten Paige Sanders
June 7, 2003

Parents... Tuffy & Heather Sanders
Sisters & Brother... Shelby, Tristen & Brennan
Grandparents... Don & Evelyn Sanders
Ken & Tammy Morgan



Tristen Danielle Winkler
June 13, 2003

Parents... Tanner & Amy Winkler
Grandparents... Keith & Patricia Winkler
Karen Ware



Dakota Allen David
November 25, 2003

Parents... David & Julie David
Grandparents... Milton & Theresa David
Sherry Olson
Wayne & Glenda Terry



Cassandra Marie Estrada
April 2, 2003

Parents... Juan & Stephanie Estrada
Big Brother... Juan Estrada Jr.
Grandparents... Antonio & Victoria Estrada
Joel & Lydia Ontiveros



Tiegan Cecil Lewis
January 31, 2003

Parents... Dean & Crystal Lewis
Sister... Tierra Cheyenne Lewis
Grandparents... Dianne Daniels
the late Cecil Eugene Daniels



Emily Whiddon
August 6, 2003

Parents... Shawn & Jennifer (Ward) Whiddon of Allen, Texas
Grandparents... Mark & Sharon Dibble
Mike & Tanya Ward
Howard & Cathy Whiddon
Great-Grandparents... Wallace & Doreen Bruce
Jim & Norma Ward



Jordyn Dunlap

Parents... Dustin & Kim Dunlap
Big Brother... Darin Dunlap
Grandparents... Sharon Dunlap
Durward Dunlap
Glenn & Martha Vaughn
Larry & Machille Wilke
Great-Grandparents... Elaine Riddle
Tommy Wilke
Edmund & Beverly Wilke



Lexie Rosser

Parents... Justin & Manda Rosser
Big Brother... Laketon Harris
Grandparents... Sharon Dunlap
Durward Dunlap
Alice & Paul Latimer
Pete & Judy Rosser
Great-Grandparents... Elaine Riddle



Ky Allen Parnell
April 20, 2003

Parents... Kyle & Kayla Parnell
Sister... Karson
Grandparents... Larry & Deanna Baker
Rick & Amy Parnell
Great-Grandparents... Doris Parnell
Marie Baker
Dillon & Aldene Caddell



Robert James Van Buskirk
June 12, 2003

Parents... Mark & Linda Van Buskirk
Sister... Summer Kaylee
Grandparents... Ronnie & Marylee Van Buskirk
Virgil & Dee Neil
Great-Grandparents... Jane Lowe
Edna & Darrell Pedersen



Chandler Jean Petty
February 16, 2003

Parents... Larry & Kristi Petty
Grandparents... Gilbert & Bobby Petty
the late Fred & Lola Hughes



Trent Mayfield
September 17, 2003

Parents... Kevin & Jodi Mayfield
Sister... Jacey
Grandparents... Virginia & Bob Maples
Eddie & Carol Mayfield
Debbie & Garoin Cannon



Tyler Randall
May 6, 2003

Parents... Randy & Sheila Randall



Jaxon Kell Jones
August 3, 2003

Parents... Daimon & Jennifer Jones
Grandparents... Kelly & Gimmye Rushing
Rick & LaJuania Jones



Kyler Teakell
September 22, 2003

Parents... Chris & Amber Teakell
Grandparents... Kenny & Karen Hathcoat
Tony & Therisa Teakell
Great-Grandparents... Mary Hathcoat
Bernice Smith
Billy & Gracie Foster



Austin Alexander Allen
February 11, 2003

Parents... Aaron & Tiffany Allen
Grandparents... Guen & Jan Allen
Deliese Olson



Hank Daniel Davis
February 20, 2003

Parents... Jerry & Angel Davis
Grandparents... Larry & Joy Davis
Jerry & Brenda Good
Great-Grandparents... Daniel & Mary Good



Hannah McPherson
May 11, 2003

Parents... Bill & Crystal McPherson
Sisters... Ashley & Marlee
Brothers... Billy & Isaiah



Cayson Lee Steward
October 16, 2003

Parents... Chris & Lanisa Steward
Sister... Caylee Steward
Grandparents... Wayne & Maryoln Topper
Kenneth & Gayle Steward
Great-Grandparents... Lessie Gist
Bertha Beck



Weston Lee Cox
November 21, 2003

Parents... Raymond & Teena Cox
Sister... Kayla Jane Cox
Grandparents... Jane & Robert Jacobs
Karen & Bob Cox
Great-Grandparents... Marge Reynolds
Alberta Cox
Ruth Konkle



Mayce AnnaBelle Ogle
March 27, 2003

"Our Blue-Eyed Angel From Heaven"
Parents... Danny & Christy Ogle
Grandparents... Chris & Connie Lockridge
Larry & Mattie Norton



Malachi Forrest King
October 3, 2003

Parents... Lucinda & Forrest King
Sister... Micaela King
Grandparents... Benny & Leti Silva
Jack & Stacy King



Connor Martin Hampton
April 23, 2003

Parents... David & Jennifer Hampton
Brothers... Coleman, Hunter, Michael B.
Grandparents... Ray & Harriet Hampton
Martin & Jan Yohn
Susan Carol Yohn
Great-Grandparents... Martin & Alma Yohn



Jetta Ann Miller
September 15, 2003

Parents... Kelly & Lana Miller
Big Sisters... Courtney, Krysten, Cashion
Grandparents... Kent & Carol Miller
Lee & Karen Young



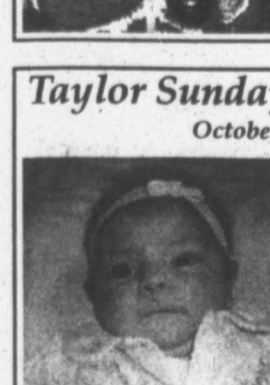
Miguel Rivera
September 10, 2003

Parents... Ruben & Danette Rivera of Fort Worth
Grandparents... Ricardo & Mary Lou Lopez
Dannie & Angie Hoover
Great Grandparents... Mary Lou Peppers
& the late G.L. Peppers



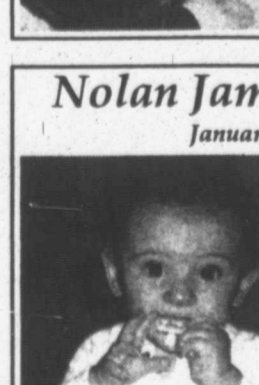
Emma Grace Stevens
July 24, 2003

Parents... Greg & Amy Stevens
Big Brother... Tanner Stevens
Grandparents... Clark & Lana Vencill
Mike & Dawna Poole
Joe & Marsha Stevens



Taylor Sunday Ann Maddux
October 24, 2003

Parents... Bryan & Irene Maddux
Brother... Trey
Grandparents... Jeff & Patricia Maddux
Juan & the late Domingo (Sunday) Polendo



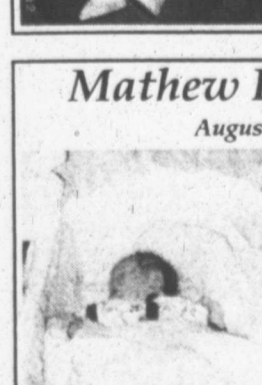
Nolan James Groomer
January 20, 2003

Parents... Stephen & Jamie Groomer
Brother... Jarrod
Grandparents... Boyd & Connie Hutcherson
Mr. & Mrs. Jon Groomer



Jaryn Elizabeth Shephard
October 11, 2003

Parents... Cassi & Jon Shephard
Grandparents... Melinda & Marty Scott
Kay & Dennis Shephard



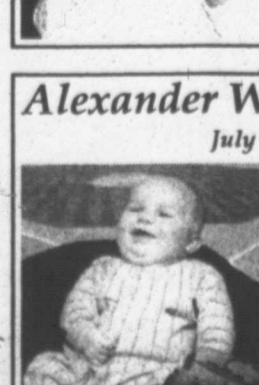
Mathew Dalton Tice
August 29, 2003

Parents... Susette & Gary Tice
Grandparents... Joan & Milton Tice
Wanda Morgan



Ashlynn Shae Thomas
February 26, 2003

Parents... Jason & Sharon Thomas
Brother & Sister... Christopher & Kristen
Grandparents... Rick & Cynelle King
Bill & Tina Thomas
Brenda & Floyd Baxter
Great-Grandparents... Betty Mackie



Alexander William Martin
July 14, 2003

Parents... Jeff & Mandi Martin
Brother... Cameron
Grandparents... Shirley Carlile
Bill & Gail Martin



Anna Marie Liu Murray
Left

Christiana Ling Murray
Right
May 16, 2003

Parents... Michael & Valerie Murray
Sister & Brothers... Alysia, Cheyne & Justice

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YEAR-END BILLBOARD MUSIC CHARTS

By The Associated Press

BILLBOARD HOT 100: TOP 10

1. "In da Club," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
2. "Ignition," R. Kelly. Jive.
3. "Get Busy," Sean Paul. VP/Atlantic.
4. "Crazy in Love," Beyonce (feat. Jay-Z). Columbia.
5. "When I'm Gone," 3 Doors Down. Republic/Universal/UMRG.
6. "Unwell," matchbox twenty. Atlantic.
7. "Right Thurr," Chingy. Disturbing the Peace/Capitol.
8. "Miss You," Aaliyah. Blackground/Universal/UMRG.
9. "Picture," Kid Rock (feat. Sheryl Crow). Lava/Universal South.
10. "Bring Me to Life," Evanescence (feat. Paul McCoy). Wind-up.

THE BILLBOARD

200 TOP ALBUMS: TOP 10

1. "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
2. "Come Away With Me," Norah Jones. Blue Note.
3. "Up!," Shania Twain. Mercury/UMGN.
4. "Home," Dixie Chicks. Monument/Columbia/Sony Music.
5. "Let Go," Avril Lavigne. Arista.
6. "Metora," Linkin Park. Warner Bros.
7. Soundtrack: "8 Mile." Shady/Interscope.
8. "Fallen," Evanescence. Wind-up.
9. "Tim McGraw and the Dancehall Doctors," Tim McGraw. Curb.
10. "Stripped," Christina Aguilera. RCA/RMG.

TOP POP ARTIST

1. 50 Cent
2. R. Kelly
3. Sean Paul
4. Justin Timberlake
5. Christina Aguilera

HOT ADULT CONTEMPORARY

1. "The Game of Love," Santana (feat. Michelle Branch). Arista.
2. "Can't Stop Loving You," Phil Collins. Atlantic.
3. "Drift Away," Uncle Kracker (feat. Dobie Gray). Lava.
4. "A Thousand Miles," Vanessa Carlton. A&M/Interscope.
5. "Beautiful," Christina Aguilera. RCA/RMG.
6. "Cry," Faith Hill. Warner Bros.
7. "Don't Know Why," Norah Jones. Blue Note/Virgin.
8. "Have You Ever Been in Love," Celine Dion. Epic.
9. "If You're Not the One," Daniel Bedingfield. Island/IDJMG.

10. "Forever and For Always," Shania Twain. Mercury/IDJMG.

HOT MAINSTREAM ROCK TRACKS

1. "Headstrong," Trapt. Warner Bros.
2. "Like a Stone," Audioslave. Interscope/Epic.
3. "When I'm Gone," 3 Doors Down. Republic/Universal/UMRG.
4. "Straight Out of Line," Godsmack. Republic/Universal/UMRG.
5. "Send the Pain Below," Chevelle. Epic.
6. "So Far Away," Staind. Flip/Elektra/EEG.
7. "Always," Saliva. Island/IDJMG.
8. "Somewhere I Belong," Linkin Park. Warner Bros.
9. "Fine Again," Seether. Wind-up.
10. "Remember," Disturbed. Reprise.

HOT MODERN ROCK TRACKS

1. "Headstrong," Trapt. Warner Bros.
2. "Seven Nation Army," The White Stripes. Third Man/V2.
3. "Like a Stone," Audioslave. Interscope/Epic.
4. "Send the Pain Below," Chevelle. Epic.
5. "Faint," Linkin Park. Warner Bros.
6. "Somewhere I Belong," Linkin Park. Warner Bros.
7. "No One Knows," Queens of the Stone Age. Interscope.
8. "Bring Me to Life," Evanescence (feat. Paul McCoy). Wind-up.
9. "Times Like These," Foo Fighters. Roswell/RCA/RMG.
10. "Can't Stop," Red Hot Chili Peppers. Warner Bros.

HOT COUNTRY SINGLES AND TRACKS

1. "My Front Porch Looking In," Lonestar. BNA.
2. "Beer for My Horses," Toby Keith Duet With Willie Nelson. DreamWorks.
3. "19 Somethin'," Mark Wills. Mercury.
4. "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere," Alan Jackson & Jimmy Buffett. Arista Nashville.
5. "Red Dirt Road," Brooks & Dunn. Arista Nashville.
6. "What Was I Thinkin'," Dierks Bentley. Capitol.
7. "I Believe," Diamond Rio. Arista Nashville.
8. "Brokenheartsville," Joe Nichols. Universal South.
9. "Real Good Man," Tim McGraw. Curb.
10. "Celebrity," Brad Paisley. Arista Nashville.

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

1. "Up!," Shania Twain. Mercury/UMGN.
2. "Home," Dixie Chicks. Monument/Columbia/Sony Music.
3. "Tim McGraw and the Dancehall Doctors," Tim McGraw. Curb.

4. "Unleashed," Toby Keith. DreamWorks/Interscope.
5. "Cry," Faith Hill. Warner Bros./WRN.
6. "Elvis: 30 (NU)1 Hits," Elvis Presley. RCA/RMG.
7. "Greatest Hits Volume II and Some Other Stuff," Alan Jackson. Arista Nashville/RLG.
8. "No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems," Kenny Chesney. BNA/RLG.
9. "Melt," Rascal Flatts. Lyric Street/Hollywood.
10. "Shock 'n' Y'All," Toby Keith. DreamWorks/Interscope.

TOP COUNTRY ARTISTS

1. Shania Twain
2. Toby Keith
3. Tim McGraw
4. Dixie Chicks
5. Alan Jackson

HOT R&B/HIP-HOP SINGLES

1. "In da Club," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
2. "Ignition," R. Kelly. Jive.
3. "Miss You," Aaliyah. Blackground/Universal/UMRG.
4. "So Gone," Monica. JRMG.
5. "Get Low," Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz (feat. Ying Yang Twins). BME/TVT.
6. "Right Thurr," Chingy. Disturbing the Peace/Capitol.
7. "21 Questions," 50 Cent (feat. Nate Dogg). Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
8. "Get Busy," Sean Paul. VP/Atlantic.
9. "How You Gonna Act Like That," Tyrese. JRMG.
10. "Frontin'," Pharrell (feat. Jay-Z). Star Trak/Arista.

HOT R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

1. "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
2. "Chocolate Factory," R. Kelly. Jive/Zomba.
3. "Better Dayz," 2Pac. Amaru/Death Row/Interscope.
4. "Kings of Crunk," Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz. BME/TVT.
5. "I Care 4 U," Aaliyah. Blackground/Universal/UMRG.
6. "Dutty Rock," Sean Paul. VP/Atlantic/AG.
7. "Under Construction," Missy Elliott. The Gold Mind/Elektra/EEG.
8. "Dance With My Father," Luther Vandross. JRMG.
9. "Still Ghetto," Jaheim. Divine Mill/Warner Bros.
10. "God's Son," Nas. Ill Will/Columbia/Sony Music.

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS

1. 50 Cent
2. R. Kelly

3. Jay-Z
4. Aaliyah
5. Sean Paul

HOT RAP SINGLES

1. "In da Club," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
2. "Get Low," Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz (feat. Ying Yang Twins). BME/TVT.
3. "Right Thurr," Chingy. Disturbing the Peace/Capitol.
4. "Get Busy," Sean Paul. VP/Atlantic.
5. "21 Questions," 50 Cent (feat. Nate Dogg). Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
6. "Can't Let You Go," Fabolous (feat. Mike Shorey & Lil' Mo). Desert Storm/Elektra/EEG.
7. "P.I.M.P.," 50 Cent. Shady/Aftermath/Interscope.
8. "I Know What You Want," Busta Rhymes & Mariah Carey (feat. The Flipmode Squad). J/Monarc/RMG/IDJMG.
9. "Magic Stick," Lil' Kim (feat. 50 Cent). Queen Bee/Atlantic.
10. "Into You," Fabolous (feat. Tamia Or Ashanti). Desert Storm/Elektra/EEG.

HOT DANCE MUSIC — CLUB PLAY SINGLES

1. "Into the Sun," Weekend Players. Multiply/FFRR/Warner Strategic Marketing.
2. "Get It Together (Rauhofer, Hamel, Superchumbo, Davis Mixes)," Seal. Warner Bros.
3. "Some Lovin'," Murk vs. Kristine W. Tommy Boy Silver Label/Tommy Boy.
4. "Dark Beat (Addicted 2 Drums)," Oscar G & Ralph Falcon. Twisted/The Right Stuff.
5. "Head," Thunderpuss & Barnes. No Label.
6. "The Wreckoning (Thunderpuss & DJ Monk Mixes)," Boomkat. DreamWorks.
7. "Send Your Love (Remixes)," Sting. A&M/Interscope.
8. "Rock Your Body (Remixes)," Justin Timberlake. Jive.
9. "Surrender (Remixes)," Laura Pausini. Atlantic.
10. "Cry Me a River (Remixes)," Justin Timberlake. Jive.

HOT LATIN TRACKS

1. "Tal Vez," Ricky Martin. Sony Discos.
2. "Fotografia," Juanes With Nelly Furtado. Surco/Universal Latino.
3. "Una Vez Mas," Conjunto Primavera. Fonovisa.
4. "El Problema," Ricardo Arjona. Sony Discos.
5. "Amame," Alexandre Pires. Ariola/BMG Latin.
6. "Mariposa Traicionera," Mana. Warner Latina.
7. "Asi Es la Vida," Olga Tanon. Warner Latina.
8. "Que Me Quedes Tu," Shakira. Sony Discos.
9. "Seduceme," India. Sony Discos.
10. "Suena," Intocable. EMI Latin.

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5 Special Notices

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HAPPY BIRTH

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5 Special Notices

ADVERTISING Material to be placed in the Pampa News, MUST be placed through the Pampa News Office Only.

14b Appl. Repair

FREE Service Call (labor only) thru Christmas, to Servicemen's Wives. Williams Appliance 665-8894

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CUSTOM homes, additions, remodeling, residential / comm. Deaver Construction, 665-0447.

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14e Carpet Serv.

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Larry Baker Plumbing Heating/ Air Conditioning Borger Hwy. 665-4392

19 Situations

WILL sit with elderly, anytime. CNA for 7 yrs. Call 665-4329.

21 Help Wanted

APPLICATIONS are being accepted until January 12, 2004 for temporary fulltime positions with USDA-Farm Service Agency. These GIS Field Technician positions will be located throughout Texas. Successful applicants will be proficient as a PC User with the ability to navigate within Windows. Experience with GIS and familiarity with ortho maps is preferable. Positions will require travel 90% of the time with applicant providing

21 Help Wanted

their own reliable transportation. Application form FSA-675 can be obtained from USDA-FSA at Gray County FSA Office, 12125 E. Frederick, Pampa, TX, or by calling (806)665-6561. Completed application forms must be returned to the Gray County FSA Office and must arrive by January 12, 2004 to be considered. Faxed Applications will not be accepted. USDA is an EEO employer.

CARPENTER needed FT Needs transportation and hand tools, drug test maybe required 665-4274

NOTICE Readers are urged to fully investigate advertisements which require payment in advance for information, services or goods.

DRIVER needed for Pizza Hut Delivery. Apply at 1500 N. Banks. No phone calls please.

NEED Cashier / Deli Worker, 2pm to 10pm. Apply in person, 1020 E. Frederic.

MCLEAN Care Center is hiring for CNA's. Contact Billy Ray Johnston @ 806-779-2469 or come by 605 W. 7th St. for more information.

Cable Tool Driller Needed Salary Negotiable Send Job History to P.O. Box 1160 Borger, Tx 79008

50 Building Suppl.

White House Lumber 101 S. Ballard 669-3291

HOUSTON LUMBER 420 W. Foster 669-6881

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NICE roll-top desk, 50 in. long with oak swivel chair, \$295. Chest type deep freeze \$50 running, 18 cu. ft. Cash. 665-6980

\$202 QN mattress set, brand new never used with warranty, QN Pillow top double sided mattress set new, still pkgd, warr, list \$550, sell \$236, Full Pillow top Double sided mattress set new, still pkgd, warr, List \$400, sell \$208, Full size mattress set, brand new, still pkgd, warranty, \$268 King Pillow top mattress set, brand new, still pkgd, warranty, Queen Cherry sleigh bed, new, still boxed, List \$750 sell \$399, new 7 pc QN cherry wood bdrm set w/sleigh bed, still boxed, sell \$999, new 7 pc QN Pinewood bdrm set w/4 poster bed, still boxed, \$999. Call 806-517-1050.

69 Misc. LRG. rolls Christmas paper, gift bags, ribbons, bows, tags! Warner-Horton, 900 Duncan 8-5 M-F.

Memory Gardens of Pampa is assigning FREE Cemetery Spaces to local VETERANS that qualify and do not own cemetery property SPACES are limited to Call today to receive yours 665-8921

69 Misc. LRG. rolls Christmas paper, gift bags, ribbons, bows, tags! Warner-Horton, 900 Duncan 8-5 M-F.

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69 Misc.

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SEASONED Oak Firewood, delivered and stacked. \$175 cord. 779-3284, 662-6161.

SM. upright deep freeze, chest deep freeze, couch & chairs-set \$50, all types appliances, furni, pull type trailer, 27 in. Sanyo, desk & chair, air conditioners, dresser, enert. ctr. 665-0255

69a Garage Sales

FINAL 2 Days! Foto Time will be open 10-5, Fri. & Sat. Cameras and projectors \$10 and \$15. Picture frames, photo accessories 50% off. Misc. bargains, display cases, glass shelves, store fixtures. It's been great for 23 years, but time for new horizons. Thanks for the biz!—Herb. 107 N. Cuyler

95 Furn. Apts.

Apts for Rent 2 br. New paint, Carpet & Vinyl, 1001 N. Sumner, 669-6292 or 665-8401.

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1 bdr. apt., furn. or unfurn. Starting at \$275. All utilities pd. Courtyard Apts., 1031 N. Sumner, 669-9712.

EFFI. apt. \$300 mo., bills pd. Rooms \$24.50 day, \$100 wk. & up, air, tv, cable, phone. 669-3221.

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VERY clean 1 bdr. Apts., w/d conn. Water & gas paid. References. HUD approved. 665-1346

97 Furn. Houses 1 bdr, fenced yard, 1006 Twiford \$295 mo \$125 dep. 665-8320

98 Unfurn. Houses PICK UP rental list from Gray Box on front porch of Lakeview Apartments. Update each Fri.

NEW Mgmt! N&L Investments, 1, 2 & 3 brm., apts., duplexes, homes & comm. prop. 665-4274.

3 bdr., 1113 Huff, c h/a; 313 N. Faulkner, 1141 Jupiter, 637 N. Dwight 2 bdr. HUD avail. 669-2080

LEASE w/ option to buy. Nice, clean, brick, 3-1-1, c h/a. \$530 mo. + dep. 1905 N. Banks. 669-6121

3 bdr., just remodeled, near Travis. \$500 mo. 665-4842, 662-3572.

BRICK 2/1/1, 600 Powell, \$425 mo, 3 br, 1 ba, 600 Lefors, \$385 mo, both fenced yards, both \$150 dep. 665-8320

2 bdr., 1 ba., 721 Lefors. \$300 mo. + \$200 dep. Call 662-5870 after 4 p.m.

99 Stor. Bldgs. TUMBLEWEED Acres, self storage units. Various sizes. 665-0079, 665-2450.

102 Bus. Rent Prop. OFFICE Space for rent, ask about 3 months free rent. 669-6841.

LOWEST Rents in City! Downtown locations—stores, warehouses, rec. facilities Call 665-4274!

AVAILABLE soon! 107 N. Cuyler (formerly Foto Time). Need more space or better location? Call Ray Duncan, 669-3333.

RESTAURANT for lease, formerly Sirloin Stockade—Borger, Tx. Mark Wedding, 214-505-8889.

103 Homes For Sale Twila Fisher Century 21 Pampa Realty 665-3560, 663-1442 669-0007

2612 Chestnut 4 bd., 3 1/2 ba., 3 car gar, 2 lvg, 2 wbp, bsmt, dining, brkfst. Apprx. 3700 sq. ft. 669-2911 663-7604.

3 bdr., fenced, corner lot, good condition. Owner will carry with \$1000 down. Call 665-4842.

COLE Addition, 3 br, garage, and carport remodeled bath, and other, new roof. Realtor 665-4180.

WE MUST sell our home. Great starter or rental prop. 2 bdr., 1 ba. 914 S. Nelson, Pampa. \$15,000 obo. 355-3357.

105 Acreage 5 acre tracts on paved road, 2 miles from Pampa. \$2500 per acre, financing available. Call 665-4842.

115 Trailer Parks TUMBLEWEED Acres, Storm Shelters, fenced, stor. bldg avail. 665-0079, 665-2450.

116 Mobile Homes 2 BDR. 2 BATH MOBILE home w/ lot for sale, in Pampa. \$14,000 cash. 376-1173, 676-2323 ask for Anna Romero.

120 Autos Quality Sales 1300 N. Hobart 669-0433 Make your next car a Quality Car

Doug Boyd Motor Co. "On The Spot Financing" 821 W. Wilks 669-6062

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122 Motorcycles 2001 Yamaha TTR-125L Excellent condition. See to believe! \$2000. 665-6835 leave message.

DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES — Here's how to work it: AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-24 CRYPTOQUOTE

NDMLEF TJEZN DL QPJH, LGZ
TJEZN DL SLVEF, JMLVEZ DTP
ITMWND CJN RLJMZ, DLVIT
TJEZN. — QWGGWJC TPEMS
TJMMWNL E

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE HEAD, LIKE THE STOMACH, IS MOST EASILY INFECTED WHEN IT IS EMPTY. — RICHTER

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Horoscope BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Thursday, Dec. 25, 2003:

If you were born today, you have a gift for making money through mobilizing imaginative ideas and unusual creativity. You also know how to charm others into thinking like you. Don't spend money before it comes in, and maintain a slightly conservative approach. Family and health take high priorities, as you will need to spend a lot of time at home. You also might decide to move or buy a new home. Impulsiveness surrounds your personal life, but it isn't necessarily a problem. If you are single, you probably have met someone quite special by now; but if not, stay open. This person could hear a different drummer and be quite unique. If you are attached, don't take any action that could impact your home life without agreement from your significant other. AQUARIUS helps you make money.

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)

***** Suddenly you perk up even more as you watch the unveiling of the day. You find so much to be happy about. Experiment and be open to different styles of celebrating. You don't always have to follow tradition. Tonight: Go until the wee hours.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

***** Take charge and run the show as only you can. Someone close to you appreciates your efforts more than you realize. Creativity surges in an unprecedented manner. You finally get what you want. Tonight: Help others enjoy the holiday.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, Dec. 26, 2003:

You could be amazed by what happens this year. Be ready for surprises, and you will not be disappointed. Your finances could be even more of a major focus for you than in past years. You will have many great ideas, but moving them along or taking action could take more effort than usual. Also, be clear in your communications, or don't take it personally that you have to repeat yourself or use different words. The objective is getting the message across. If you are single, you might want to look at some of your behavioral characteristics that keep others from getting close to you. You also might want to remain single, and need to admit that fact to yourself. If you are attached, your relationship will flow if you are willing to share more of your inner thoughts. Be vulnerable. AQUARIUS helps you make money.

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)

***** The letdown of the day after won't hit you if you get a good night's sleep. In fact, you might suggest hopping in the car and taking a drive to visit a friend or relative at a distance. You're really into communicating. Tonight: Wherever you are, you'll enjoy yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

***** You manage to handle what is needed, whether it is clean-up or consoling someone who might not have received exactly what he or she wanted. You can open up the big picture. Make calls to a distant relative you love and care about. Tonight: A must show.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

***** Listen well to behind-the-scenes news. You might be surprised by how someone spills the beans. Communications surprise others, but perhaps you most of all, because a partner suddenly reveals him- or herself. Tonight: Delight in the moment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

***** Mind your P's and Q's, and touch base with those who really count in your life. Your call could make or break someone's holiday. Nothing can replace thoughtfulness, especially on a special occasion like this one. Tonight: Put on some favorite music.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

***** Deal with others on an individual level. Relate more directly, even if it is a family day. When you spend time looking eye to eye with someone, it means more than talking to a group. Take your time with each person. Visit. Tonight: Togetherness flows.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

***** Listen to others and go along with their wishes. Your creativity comes out. Others express their feelings, and you need to be a gracious receiver, even though you're uncomfortable in that role. Love seems to emerge from you. Tonight: Enjoy your entourage.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

***** You might want to pace yourself, as you have a lot of ground to cover, and quickly at that. Although you want to celebrate, you find yourself in a position where you need to be more nurturing. Know that whatever you do is perfect! Tonight: Enjoy yourself, too.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

***** The Moon draws out your playfulness. Examine more of what you want from a particular loved one. It might be time to get a bit more serious.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

***** Family is where it's at. You might have someone on your mind who cares a lot about you who you need to call. The sooner you touch base the bet-

ter. Pitch in when you can, but express your depth in a meaningful manner.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

***** You feel free to say and do what you want. How others receive your message could be very different. A strong action toward a child or new "friend" could draw a very strong reaction at first. Let others know how much you care. Tonight: Say "yes."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

***** You might be overwhelmed by how indulgent you are. How you say "thank you" might vary, but let others know how much you appreciate their actions. Reach out for those who might not be around you. Tonight: Your treat.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

***** You're full of fun and life, even if you were down yesterday. A loving action taken by you multiplies in many different ways. You cannot and should not stay within yourself. Act like the sign you are, the friendship sign. Tonight: Anything goes.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

***** Slow down and take your time dealing with those around you. You might be a bit off right now, suffering from a case of building up to the holiday and now it's here. Look to New Year's and making your resolutions. Tonight: Crash if you want to.

BORN TODAY

Singer Dido (1971), singer Jimmy Buffet (1946), singer Annie Lennox (1954)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at <http://www.jacquelinebigar.com>.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, Dec. 26, 2003:

Your attitude changes substantially as a result. Tally up recent bills and decide if you need to make any special efforts. Tonight: Stay close to home.

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)

***** Now that the big push is over, you might opt for something you want, which actually could be an experience as opposed to a major purchase. Invite someone along only if that is what you want. Tonight: Enjoy yourself wherever you are.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

***** You speak your mind in a way that makes a big difference to those around you — not that they will follow through. Don't be upset if you have to redo this conversation. Take a hard look at expenditures. Tonight: Make it easy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

***** You're still in the pink and able to manifest what you want. What might be important is a strong discussion with a friend or another person about some of your deeper feelings. Your positive thinking is contagious. Tonight: What would make you happy?

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DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES — Here's how to work it: AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-25 CRYPTOQUOTE

XD XYLP FTM LFQODML IPD
ODMW SDLI FV PFQYBGWL KFX
GKB VFM WDGML IF RFED.

— WFTM DBYIFML

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: STRONG HANDS TO WEAK, OLD HANDS TO YOUNG, AROUND THE CHRISTMAS BOARD, TOUCH HANDS. — WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

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ENBRIDGE, a leader in the natural gas industry, is currently seeking a candidate for the position of **FIELD TECHNICIAN**. Selected candidate will be responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient operations of pipelines, compressor stations, dehydration facilities and amine treating facilities.

- Duties will include but not limited to:
- Performing operations, inspection, maintenance and documentation of pipelines, compressor and dehydration facilities;
 - Determining root cause of any major or repeated failures;
 - Performing pigging operations, drip blowing and natural gas flow changes;
 - Scheduling maintenance of equipment.
 - Installing measurement devices; measurement calibration / downloads;
 - Project coordination;
- Qualified candidates will possess a high school diploma or equivalent; a minimum of 5 years experience of various natural gas pipelines; ability to work independently; strong computer skills; and demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills. Candidates must demonstrate a strong commitment to safety and an excellent vehicle driving record.
- This position requires 24 hour on call availability for emergency response and equipment malfunctions, a substantial amount of strenuous physical activity working in all types

Unto Us a Child is Born



We wish all of you and your loved ones the most wonderful Christmas ever, and in this coming year of 2004, it is our hope that you may have...

*Enough happiness to keep you sweet, enough trials to keep you strong,
enough sorrow to keep you human, enough failure to keep you humble,
enough hope to keep you happy, enough success to keep you eager,
enough friends to give you comfort, enough wealth to meet your needs,
enough enthusiasm to look forward, enough faith to banish depression,
enough determination to make each day a better day than yesterday.*

This message was a favorite of United Supermarkets founder, H.D. "Jack" Snell Jr., and sharing it with you has been a United Christmas tradition since 1976.

All United Supermarkets and Market Street locations are closed on Christmas Day so that our employees may enjoy the holiday with their families.

United
Supermarkets