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Cold blast slams Pampa with snow

A blast of Arctic snow and wind covered the Texas Panhandle today, stranding motorists and making travel treacherous. The high temperature today was expected to be near 29, with wind chill values between minus 2 and minus 8. The forecast calls for clearing tonight with a low of 17 and wind chills of between 7 and 14. Friday should be sunny with a high near 35 and wind chills between 7 and 12.



Pampa News Photo by KERRI SMITH
A winter wonderland occurred on Somerville Street early this morning. Approximately five inches of snow had fallen by 9 a.m. and the winds were whipping the snow making visibility limited.

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Pampa News photo by MARILYN POWERS
Volunteers Ray and Katy Hupp decorate a Christmas tree with Salvation Army Angel Tree tags in the lobby of the outpatient clinic at Pampa Regional Medical Center.

Angel Trees brighten holiday

By MARILYN POWERS
 Staff Writer
 One way for Pampa residents to catch and spread the Christmas spirit is by helping make the holiday a little brighter for needy children through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. The 27th annual project was launched this week with Christmas trees going up at Wal Mart, United Supermarket, and the lobby of the outpatient services area on the south side of Pampa Regional Medical Center. Paper cutout angels are hung on the trees, with each angel representing a child in need of Christmas gifts such as toys and clothing. Each angel has the first name of a child plus that child's age, clothing sizes, and most-wished-for toy or other non-clothing item. Persons taking an angel from the trees are asked to return the gifts unwrapped, with a code number on a perforated tab at the bottom of the angel tag, affixed to the package. The gifts may be returned either to the location where the angel tag was picked up, or taken to the Salvation Army offices at 701 S. Cuyler.

Deadline for gifts to be turned in is Dec. 16. Clients will pick up their packages on Dec. 19 from a storage location provided by the City of Pampa for the Salvation Army's use during the project. Members of Altrusa Club of Pampa will wrap gifts Dec. 16, said Capt. Laura Martin of the Pampa Salvation Army. Each family will also receive a food box of canned goods along with the gifts, Martin said. The canned goods were collected during a food drive and will be divided according to the size of each family to receive the boxes, she said. Long-time Angel Tree volunteers Ray and Katy Hupp are once again helping with the project. They are placing the trees and hanging angel tags from each tree, and will pick up packages from each location daily through Dec. 16, Martin said. Children who are recipients of Angel Tree gifts are from local families who have applied for Christmas assistance through the social services program of the Salvation Army.

See ANGEL, Page 3

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County to discuss burn ban at meeting on Friday

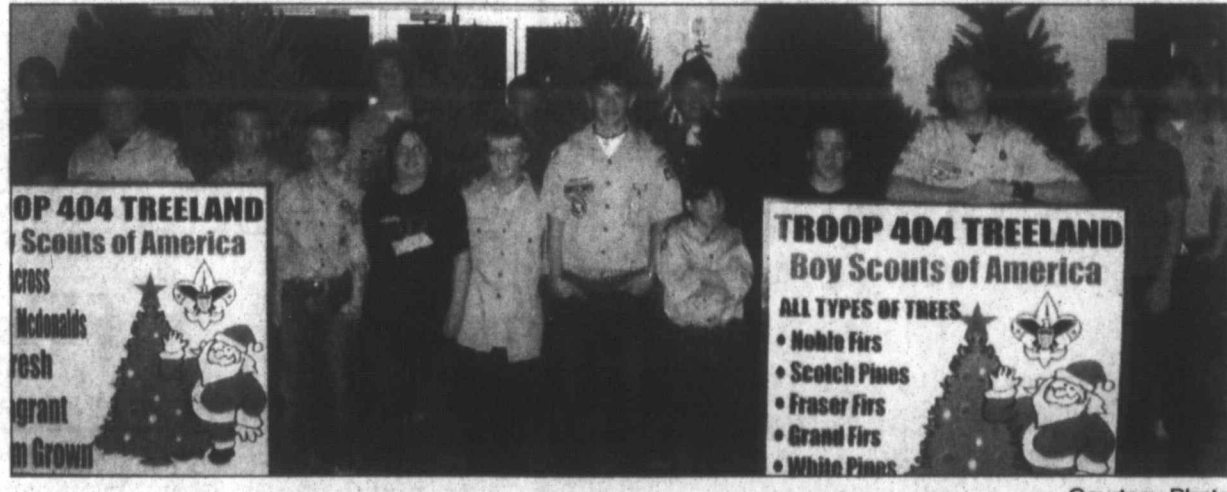
By MARILYN POWERS
 Staff Writer
 A possible burn ban is once again on the agenda for Gray County commissioners when they meet at 9 a.m. Friday in the second-floor courtroom at the courthouse, 205 N. Russell. The burn ban is being considered because of recent weather conditions including dryness and high winds. The last burn ban was implemented by county commissioners on Jan. 3 and was not lifted until July 14. Drought conditions during the first half of the year resulted in wildfires which burned portions of the county on several occasions and prompted the ban, which included prohibition of all outdoor burning, including rural residents' household refuse.

The Pampa area's largest amount of precipitation in one month this

See COUNTY, Page 3

Boy Scout Troop 404 to sell Christmas trees this weekend

By KERRI SMITH
 Staff Writer
 Fresh cut Christmas trees from Wisconsin and Wyoming will be on sale this weekend by Pampa Boy Scout Troop 404. The "Treeland" lot will be located on the corner of Hobart and Somerville, across the street from McDonald's. Trees can be purchased for only three days, Friday afternoon and evening and all day Saturday and Sunday. Troop leader Bill Schroeder said this is the first year for the tree sales. Amarillo Boy Scout Troop 80 has done this for 47 years and has had great success. Troop 80 is helping out the Pampa troop this year. The Amarillo troop told Schroeder they normally have around 30 Pampa people who drive over to buy a tree from them. Troop 404 is hoping those people will save the drive to Amarillo and purchase locally this year. Schroeder said the trees they are selling are



Courtesy Photo
Boy Scout Troop 404 is getting prepared for Treeland Christmas tree sales this weekend at the corner of Hobart and Somerville, across from McDonald's. Pictured left to right on back row are Jacob Maciel, Bobby Anderson, Kevin Schepp, Joshua Owens, Johnny Price, and Phillip Rodriguez. Front row, Hunter Shay, Ryan Clancy, Brandon Carroll, Tyler Montgomery, Nick Nelson, Dustin Neef, Nikki Clancy, Cody Hudson, Russell Carter and Dale Montgomery.

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Snow

Continued from Page 1

A winter storm warning is in effect until 6 p.m. today and a wind advisory is also in effect until midnight. Winds are expected to gust 20 to 30 mph. High profile vehicles need to be careful when driving.

Texas Department of Transportation reported that most roads in the Panhandle were open, but slick. The intersections in Pampa were the main concern for snow plows and sand trucks.

Drifts were seen around town due to the heavy blowing snow.

Pampa Independent School District classes met on time today, but let out early at 1 p.m. Saint Matthew's School and Daycare were closed.

Non-essential employees at City Hall were dismissed early and some other Pampa offices were closing early so employees could get home before the weather got worse.

Lt. Fred Courtney of the Pampa Police Department had to put the National Weather Service radar on the access cable station

because the local weather radar went down. He said it was not clear if the weather caused that problem or if it was a different technical issue. Cableone was working on getting that back up and running.

Courtney also said that four accidents had been reported before noon today.

The Texas National Guard in Camp Mabry said elements of the Guard are prepared to support operations in north and west Texas in response to the severe winter weather that began moving into the state Wednesday.

As icy winds blew in from the north, the Texas Department of Public Safety's Emergency Management Division made a request for 24 personnel and nine HMMWVs from Texas Military Forces.

The armories in Amarillo, Abilene and Weatherford are serving as the staging sites for the National Guard Soldiers and equipment. The Guardsmen have been placed on state orders through Friday.

Pampa was not the only area to be hit by the storm.

The Associated Press reported that sleet, snow and freezing rains hit the rest of the state today, can-

celing hundreds of flights and closing schools in the northern portion of the state.

Storms rolling through the Northwest and Rockies — crippling traffic and helping break a Seattle precipitation record — blew through the southern Plains and Midwest, bringing the first significant ice and snow of the season. The National Weather Service issued winter storm warnings from Texas to Illinois through Friday morning.

Freezing temperatures and snow, sleet, freezing rain combined to glaze roads with ice and snow in much of the Panhandle, South Plains and Red River Valley. As much as 7 inches of snow fell overnight in parts of the Texas Panhandle, and it snowed as far west as El Paso.

Airlines canceled 200 departures from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. The cancellations were aimed at allowing more time to de-ice all departing aircraft Thursday, airport spokesman Ken Capps said.

In an e-mail, Capps said the cancellations will be spread over all carriers that serve DFW. More than 1,000 flights depart from DFW every day.

Microsoft releases Vista, Office 2007

NEW YORK (AP) — Microsoft Corp. launched its first computer operating system in five years today, contending that the software and other new products will help people deal with information overload and become more productive.

Acknowledging Windows Vista's delays, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer kicked off a demonstration of the software by saying "it's an exciting thing to finally be here" and adding: "This is the biggest launch in our company's history, that's for sure."

Businesses that buy Windows licenses in bulk have first crack at the new operating system. Consumers won't be able to get Vista on home PCs until Jan. 30.

Microsoft and computer vendors contend that Vista will make computers more secure, powerful and graphically dynamic, especially when combined with other products Microsoft is releasing simultaneously. Those include new back-end server software for businesses, as well as Office 2007, which brings sweeping changes to widely used programs such

as Word, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint.

Ballmer repeatedly said the new offerings were suited to businesses that need to link staff, partners, documents and corporate data in far-flung locales.

"Giving people better tools to do their job is a bigger job than ever before," Ballmer said. "I think we really have the most comprehensive lineup our company has ever put in place."

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Trees

Continued from Page 1

farm grown and not forest cut. There will be five different types of trees available: noble fir, fraser fir, grand fir, scotch pine and white pine. A variety of sizes will allow for a wide range of prices.

The profit from the tree sales will help fund summer camps for the younger scouts and a trip to Canada for the older boys. Troop 404 currently has about 20 scouts ranging in age from 11 to 18 who are active in the community.

They have done painting at Freedom Museum, put up flags at Memory Garden Cemetery on Veterans Day and they perform the opening flag ceremony at Chautauqua each year.

"If someone would like to purchase one of our trees but does not have a way to transport it, we can arrange for delivery of that tree," Schroeder said. "We hope to have a profitable year so we can continue this tradition in the future."

Supplies to care for the tree, stands and disposal bags will also be available at the lot. Schroeder said that anyone with questions can contact him at 669-6917.

County

Continued from Page 1

year was in August, according to data supplied by the automated weather system near Recreation Park. In August, 5.25 inches of rain fell, followed by .91 inch in September, 2.24 inches in October, and .02 inch as of Tuesday for

November. Total rainfall for Pampa for the year to date is 16.63 inches. Previous years' precipitation totals are 18.70 inches for 2005 and 25.73 inches for 2004.

Other items on Friday's short agenda include a reinsurance contract regarding the county's health insurance plan, the county's 2007 holiday schedule, and payment of bills and salaries.

Angel

Continued from Page 1

The number of angel tags for this year's Angel Trees has dropped significantly from those for the past two years, when between 500 and 600 were represented

on anywhere from 11 to 18 trees around town.

Martin said the abrupt downward trend in the number of those seeking the Salvation Army's help for Christmas may be due to a decline in unemployment in the area.

For more information, call the Salvation Army at 665-7233.

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Viewpoints

The trickle down effect on the state's money pie

My already low opinion of unions took another hit this week in a press packet received here at The News from an organization known as CLEAT. CLEAT is an acronym that stands for Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas. CLEAT is so fired up it mailed out not just one, but FOUR of the aforementioned press packets to this newspaper. The outrage expressed within the materials is directed toward a state

law enforcement labor union called the Texas Municipal Police Association, or TMPA for short. CLEAT charges the TMPA of using taxpayer money for some rather questionable purposes and cites several past indiscretions attributed to the union. "TMPA is no stranger to funding controversy," the associations write, "since only a short time ago they were using telephone solicitors to fund their union.

They have been cited by the Texas Ethics Commission in the past for using corporate funds to make direct political contributions similar to the Tom DeLay debacle. They have another such complaint currently pending before the TEC." What exactly drove CLEAT members' current

suspicion I do not know, but the organization's media kit said it had been snooping into the TMPA for some months, sifting through open records laws to track the union's doings. "At question," CLEAT says, "are funding for lobbyists, union headquarters,

union salaries, union headquarters' telephones, union organizers' cell phones, inflated union mileage reimbursements, lattes from Starbucks and entertainment at Hooters — all paid for by the taxpayers." According to CLEAT, the TMPA is responsible for "siphoning off" 10 million dollars from municipalities and law enforcement agencies throughout the state for purportedly bogus training programs.

Not only does law enforcement as a whole suffer from the loss of funds, CLEAT claims, but universities and regional training academies are denied their full and fair share of the money pie as well. Allegations of this sort damage unions of all ilk not only because they are so prevalent, but because they are so often found to be true. What a shame.

Skylla Bryant
News Editor



Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2006. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Nov. 30, 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris, ending the Revolutionary War.
On this date:
In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.
In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens — better known as Mark Twain — was born in Florida, Mo.
In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1900, Irish writer Oscar Wilde died in Paris at age 46.

In 1936, London's famed Crystal Palace, constructed for the International Exhibition of 1851, was destroyed in a fire.

In 1939, the Russo-Finnish War began as Soviet troops invaded Finland.

In 1962, U Thant of Burma, who had been acting secretary-general of the United Nations fol-

'The real problem is what to do with the problem solvers after the problems are solved.'

— Gay Talese
American author and journalist

lowing the death of Dag Hammarskjöld the year before, was elected to a four-year term.

In 1966, the former British colony of Barbados became independent.

In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union opened negotiations in Geneva aimed at reducing nuclear weapons in Europe.

In 1993, President Clinton signed the Brady bill, which requires a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers.

Ten years ago: Some 150,000 people filled the streets of Belgrade to protest Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. 1960's novelty singer Tiny Tim, best remembered for his rendition of "Tiptoe Thru' the Tulips," died in Minneapolis.

Five years ago: Robert Tools, the first person in the world to receive a fully self-contained artificial heart, died in Louisville, Ky., of complications after severe abdominal bleeding; he had lived with the device for 151 days. Gary Leon Ridgway was arrested in connection with four of the Green River serial killings in Washington state. (He later pleaded guilty to four dozen killings, and is serving life in prison.) In Georgia, former DeKalb County Sheriff Sidney Dorsey and two other men were arrested and charged with murder in the slaying of Sheriff-elect Derwin Brown, who had defeated Dorsey in a bitter runoff election. (Dorsey was later convicted and sentenced to life in prison; the two other men were acquitted of murder in a separate state trial, but were later convicted of conspiracy in a federal trial.)

One year ago: President Bush gave an unflinching defense of his Iraq war strategy in a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy, refusing to set a timetable for U.S. troop withdrawals and asserting that once-shaky Iraqi troops were proving increasingly capable. Shimon Peres quit Israel's Labor Party, his political home of six decades, to campaign for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's new organization. Actress Jean Parker died in Woodland Hills, Calif., at age 90.



THE DEMOCRAT PLAN FOR IRAQ

The right program makes compression easy

Ever need to copy a group of files to a diskette, but discover, all too late, that they won't fit? Or how about this: You download a file with a ".rar" extension and can't open it. My friends, you need a compression program.

Compression programs have been around for years. Up until recently, you had to be a computer geek to use one, though. Cryptic interfaces and technojargon kept all but the most intrepid computer users at bay. Today, a myriad of compressor/decompressor programs exist that can take the headache out of this task.

But, wait! I'm getting ahead of myself. What is a compression program? Long ago, when floppy disks were physically larger, but held much less information, clever computer geeks devised ways of "squeezing" computer files so that they would fit. In a sense, a compression program "lets the air out" of a computer file allowing it to be stored or transported more efficiently.

As an example, let's say that I needed to send a beachball through the mail. Would I send you the fully inflated ball in a big box? Of course not. I would let the air out first (compression), wad it up and stuff it into a smaller box. Once you receive my "box" in the mail, can you immediately start playing with it? No. You must open the box, take out the beachball and blow it back up (decompression).

The same metaphor works if you want to store (archive) the beachball until next summer. You deflate the ball and put it up on a shelf somewhere. When summertime rolls around, you take it down and blow it up.

Now that you understand the need for compression, let's talk about what really happens in the compression/decompression process. One of the smallest computer data measurements is

called the "byte." A single byte of memory can store one letter of the alphabet or one numeric digit. For instance, my name, "Eric" would take four bytes of computer memory.

Imagine a standard computer file. Somewhere in

there, you'll probably find a grouping of spaces, maybe nine in row. Normally, to store nine

spaces, the computer would need to allocate nine bytes. However, a compression program can change the nine spaces to a symbolic representation of the same, while only taking up a small amount of space.

For instance, if an asterisk represented a space, the original data would look something like "*****". After the compression program, that same data would be represented by something like "9*". That symbolic repre-

sentation only takes up TWO BYTES! Now, as you guessed, once these types of changes have been made, it is impossible to use or view the files. Only after decompression will they be available to work with.

The most common compression standard is the ".zip" file. And the most common decompression/compression program on the market today is "Winzip." You can check it out at <http://www.winzip.com>. Winzip is shareware. You may use it for 45 days free of charge. If you like it, pay the \$29 fee. If not, delete it and choose another. Keep in mind: Windows XP can compress and decompress zip files without any need for third-party software. However, the process is not very intuitive.

So when would you use a compression program? I picture two scenarios: archival and transport. If your hard drive is filling up, you may

See ZIP, Page 5

Eric Spellmann
Columnist



Texas Thoughts

By The Associated Press

A sample of editorial opinion around Texas:

Nov. 20
The Victoria Advocate on China's military expansion:

The Bush administration is growing concerned about China's rapid military expansion.

Enough so that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice last week called it "outsized."

For years, Beijing's military budget has increased annually by double-digit percentages — in large part financed by its huge trade surplus with the United States. China's "reported military budget rose more than 14 percent this year to \$35.3 billion, but outside esti-

mates of China's true spending are up to three times that level," The Associated Press reported.

Traveling with President Bush to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam, Rice urged Beijing to "be a responsible stakeholder in international politics. That means that Chinese energy, Chinese growth, Chinese incredible innovation and entrepreneurship would be channeled into an international economy in which everybody can compete and compete equally."

The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, which Congress created in 2000 to monitor Beijing's behavior, was more blunt in its annual report, also released last week.

"While China is a global actor, its sense of responsibility has not kept up with its expanding power," said Larry Wortzel, the commission's chairman.

The panel warned about Beijing's military expansion, its continuing threat to the island-nation of Taiwan and its willingness to tolerate nuclear weapons programs in North Korea and Iran.

The commission also called on the Bush administration to hold China accountable for not following international rules on trade.

According to Wortzel, "China's failure to stop piracy and counterfeiting of U.S. goods and its manipulation of its currency are two examples of how it is

See CHINA, Page 5

THE PAMPA NEWS

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Ethan DeFever helped his dad, Lance, and other volunteers cook breakfast for teams involved in the recent basketball invitational staged by Pampa Lions Club and the local Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Zip

Continued from Page 4

want to compress and move a lot of your data to a CD or thumb drive. In addition, if you want to send a bunch of computer files to a friend, simply "zip" them up, burn a CD, and give it to them.

But what if your friend

does not have a decompression program? Well, they're out of luck. You have just given them a locked suitcase without the keys. To that end, compression software makers have added a new option in their programs: Self-extracting archives. Here's how it works. Taking a normal "zip" file, the program adds a little decompression program to the file

and renames it to an "exe" file. Remember: "exe" files are programs.

When your friend double-clicks on the "exe" file, it automatically runs the decompressor, extracting the files within. Adding this functionality to a "zip" file does make the overall size of the file bigger. However, the size increase is negligible on larger archives. If it helps,

think of a self-inflating life-raft. The weight of the compressed air cartridges adds to the raft, but the time-savings in an emergency are worth the bulk.

While not a new technology, file compression has come a long way, especially in the usability arena. In the near future, expect better compression rates and more standards.

China

Continued from Page 4

shirking the rules it agreed to follow when it joined the World Trade Organization five years ago," Reuters news service reported.

"It makes agreements after very difficult negotiations, then it ignores them

and goes off and does exactly what it wishes to do," the commission chairman explained.

"The fact that for many years the Chinese government has gotten away with making promises and not having to abide by them has created a climate where they don't have to take the promises seriously," added Carolyn Bartholomew, the

panel's vice chairwoman.

The United States for too long has stood by and ignored Beijing's violations of agreements it has signed and of international rules that this nation and others follow. The Bush administration has worsened the situation by depending too heavily on China to rein in North Korea, which Beijing has done only to the extent

that serves its own interests, not those of the larger region.

Rice's expression of concern suggests that finally, just maybe, the Bush administration is recognizing that China does not play well with others and that so long as Beijing insists on behaving like a heavily armed juvenile delinquent, that is how it deserves to be treated.

County to house excess inmates in tent

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — Cameron County has approved placing a tent at the county jail to accommodate overcrowding, a problem that could be exacerbated by an increase in arrests during the holidays, officials said.

Sheriff Omar Lucio said the tent at the Carrizalez-Rucker Detention Center in Olmito is mainly a precaution to avoid future overcrowding. He said he'd like to see the tent in place by mid-December.

But County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said he thinks the jail is already overcrowded. County com-

missioners on Tuesday approved the tent, which would have space for 48 nonviolent inmates. It's expected to cost \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Hinojosa said the county's judicial system is rushing to process inmates as quickly as possible to avoid backlogs.

He said the jail is "at full capacity by state jail standards."

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards calls for counties to keep 10 percent of their jail space open. Cameron County had 1,293 inmates in its four facilities Wednesday, Lucio said.

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OTHER EVENTS TO BE ENJOYED IN PAMPA

FESTIVAL OF TREES

December 2 - 9:30 am-5:00 pm
December 3 - 1:00 pm-5:00 pm

CHRISTMAS PARADE

December 2 - 2:00 pm

"THE NUTCRACKER"

Pampa Civic Ballet
December 2 - 7:30 pm
MK Brown Auditorium

Events calendar

• **Altrusa will host "Soup With Mrs. Claus"** from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday in the Old Pampa Hardware Building, 120 N. Cuyler. The meal will be \$5 per person. Carry-out will be available. Pictures with Mrs. Claus will be \$2.

• **The Texas Department of State Health Services** will be offering immunization clinics for vaccines that give protection against several childhood diseases including polio, diphtheria, lockjaw, whooping cough, measles, rubella, mumps, haemophilus influenza Type B) and chickenpox (varicella). Flu vaccines may also be offered at designated clinics. The TDH will charge money to help with the cost of keeping the clinic open. The amount charged will be based on family income and size, and the ability to pay. The following clinic will be offered: 9:30-11:45 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m., Wednesday and Dec. 20, TDH, 736 S. Cuyler, Pampa.

• **The Comprehensive Breast Center of the Don and Sybil Harrington Cancer Center** has announced the following upcoming breast cancer screening clinic: Dec. 6 and 20, Hemphill County Hospital, in Canadian; and Dec. 26, Shepard's Crook Nursing Center, 916 N. Crest, in Pampa. Participants will receive a low-cost self-exam mammogram and a breast health appraisal along with individual instruction by a registered nurse in breast self-examination. Funding is available through the Texas Department of Health for

Texas residents who qualify for assistance. All exams are by appointment only. For more information, call (806) 356-1905 or 1-800-377-4673.

• **Amarillo Museum of Art** will have its annual "Children's Christmas Workshop" from 10-11:30 a.m. Dec. 9. The event is open to children between the ages of 4 and 10. Participants will make Christmas ornaments and cards. Music will be heard and refreshments served. Cost of the workshop is \$15. Pre-registration is required as attendance is limited. For more information, call (806) 371-5050.

• **Twentieth Century Cotillion Study Club's 11th Annual Christmas Tour of Homes** will be conducted from 1-4 p.m. Dec. 10 in Pampa. Proceeds will benefit an educational loan and scholarship plan for area residents. The tour will include the Bridges home at 505 N. Gray; the Sherrill home at 1015 Deer Place; and the Stevens home at 1001 Deer Place. Tickets are \$10 and will be available at all three homes the day of the tour.

• **Pampa Community Concert Association** Presents "Live On Stage" has released its current concert schedule. The schedule is as follows: "Puttin' on the Hitz, A Salute to Irving Berlin," 7:30 p.m., Feb. 15, Borger High School Auditorium; Bronn and Katherine Journey, harpist and vocalist, 7:30 p.m., March 19, M.K. Brown Auditorium. Membership fees are \$30 for adults, \$70 for families; and \$15 for students. For more information, call 665-0343 or 665-2631.



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BUSINESS REVIEW

Pampa Realty Inc. 669-0007

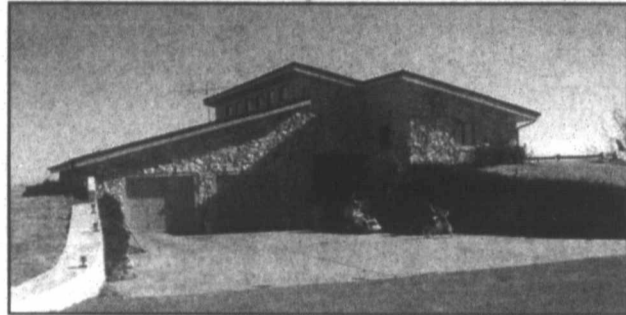


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 Emily Trennepohl664-0881
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210 W. HARVESTER 5 Bedrooms, 3.75 Baths \$326,400



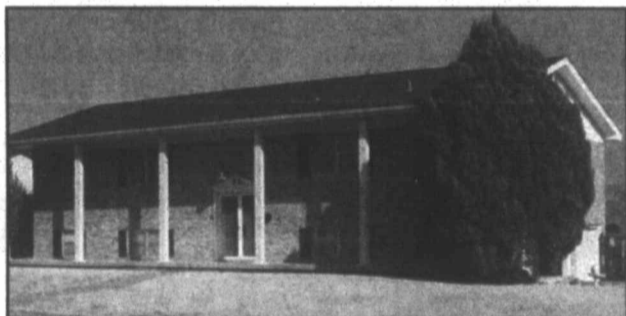
8878 HWY 70 5 Bedrooms, 3.5 Baths \$239,900



321 N. WEST 5 Bedrooms, 4.5 Baths \$190,000



1933 FIR 4 Bedrooms, 3 Baths \$182,500



1900 GRAPE 5 Bedroom, 2.75 Baths \$159,900



7967 US 83 N. Wheeler, 4 Bedrooms, 2 Baths \$130,000



1827 FIR 3 Bedrooms, 1.75 Baths \$120,000



2535 CHRISTINE 3 Bedrooms, 1.75 Baths \$119,900



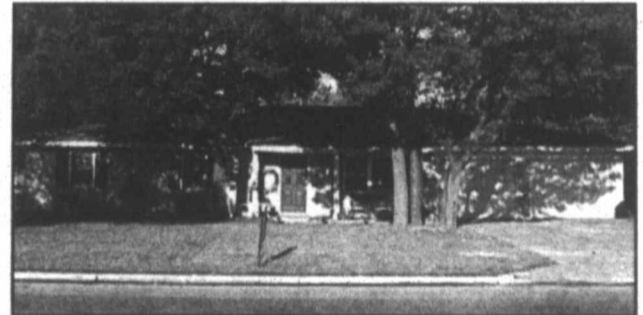
2700 DUNCAN 4 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths \$275,000



2370 BEECH 4 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths \$219,900



1615 N. RUSSELL 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths \$184,900



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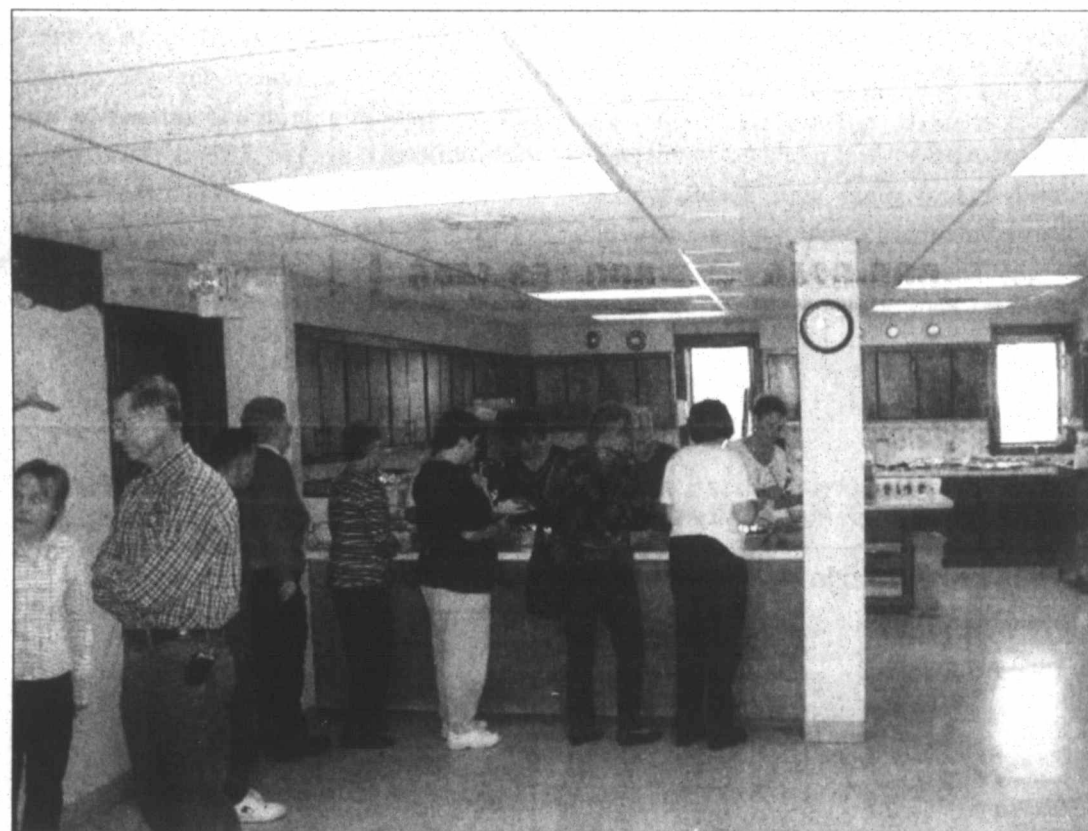
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Turkey and dressing



Mindy Hervey, Carol Hervey, Gloria Swires, Randy Swires and David Swires recently sat down to a Thanksgiving meal put on by Pampa Sheltered Workshop. The meal consisted of turkey and dressing along with all the trimmings.



Vicky Bailey, Helen Robinson, Carol Hervey and Tammy White recently served turkey and dressing at Pampa Sheltered Workshop to clients and their families for the holiday.

Radioactive traces found at 12 sites in Britain, official says

LONDON (AP) — Traces of radiation have been found at a dozen sites in Britain and five jets were being investigated for possible contamination as authorities widened their investigation into the poisoning of a former Russian spy, the country's top law enforcement official told Parliament today.

A coroner formally opened an inquest into the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, who died on Nov. 23 after falling ill more than three weeks earlier. It was quickly adjourned so police could continue their investigation, but three pathologists were expected to participate in an autopsy Friday at Royal London Hospital.

High doses of polonium-210 — a rare radioactive element usually made in specialized nuclear facilities — were found in Litvinenko's body after his death. Investigators are now checking places visited by the former KGB agent and others who had contact with him in the weeks before he fell ill on Nov. 1.

Home Secretary John Reid told Parliament that

"around 24 venues" have been or are being monitored as part of the investigation, and that experts had confirmed traces of radioactive contamination at "around 12 of these venues." He did not say whether the radioactivity found at the sites was polonium-210.

Reid told lawmakers that officials believed the risk to public health to be low. He said 1,700 calls had been made to the National Health Service, and 69 people were referred to the Health Protection Agency. Of those, 18 who may have been exposed to polonium-210 have been referred to specialist clinics, but all urine tests so far have been negative, he said.

Litvinenko also said before he died that a group of Russian contacts who met with him on Nov. 1 had traveled to London from Moscow, prompting the searches of planes.

Three British Airways planes — two at Heathrow Airport and one in Moscow — are being investigated, and Reid said that a Boeing 737, leased by the Russian airline Transaero, was also "of interest."



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Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: As a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed professional counselor and a stepparent, I would like to offer some information to "Ashamed in the South" (10/7) that might help to ease her mind. She was troubled because she didn't feel love toward her stepchildren. There seems to be an unspoken expectation that stepparents should love their stepchildren. If stepparents do love their stepchildren (and vice versa), that is a definite plus, but it is not required. What IS required, in my opinion, is that people in stepfamilies treat each other respectfully. Love often comes in time, but not always. In addition to your good advice, I would say to "Ashamed in the South": "Behave respectfully and kindly toward your stepchildren. Be open to the possibility of love, but give yourself a break. You are not a bad person because you don't feel love toward them at this time. Love their father and expect less from yourself." Abby, I can't help but believe that if she can take some of the pressure off herself, she might find that she will begin to feel differently toward her stepchildren. — **FAMILY THERAPIST IN THE SOUTH**

DEAR FAMILY THERAPIST: Thank you for a terrific letter, one which I know will ease the minds of many other stepparents who are embarking on the challenging role of blending two already-formed families into one. Not surprisingly, after that letter appeared, I heard from other stepparents wanting to offer support to the writer. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: As I prepared to adopt my child a few years ago, social workers warned me that I might not bond with him or her. They said the important thing was that even if I didn't feel love for my child,

I should treat that child as if I loved him or her. This helped me have a plan, so my actions would ensure that my child felt loved. I was lucky. I fell in love with my son the moment I first held him. That's not true for everyone -- even with a biological child. I say kudos to the writer of that letter, who, most importantly, is treating her stepchildren with love. In time she may feel love for them. But even if she doesn't, she shouldn't be so hard on herself. — **ADOPTIVE MOM IN MARYLAND**

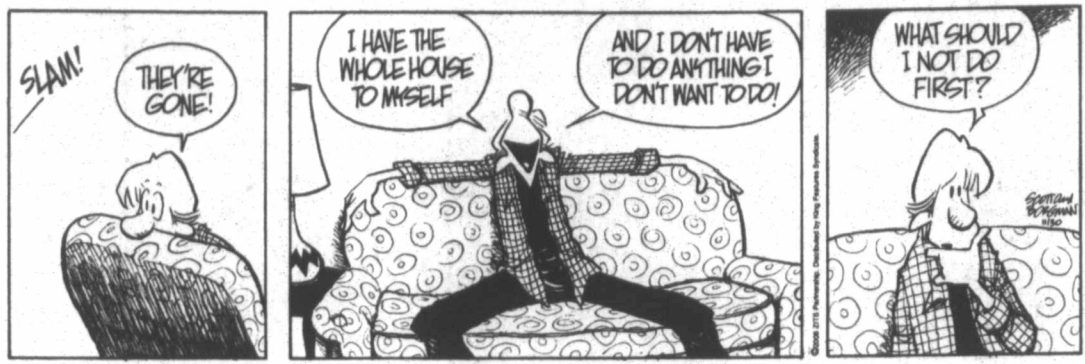
DEAR ABBY: Please tell "Ashamed in the South" that many stepparents feel bad for not immediately loving their new offspring. A wonderful family psychologist gave me some advice that has helped enormously: "Think of love as an action instead of an emotion." Thereafter, I acted as if I loved my stepchild, and over the years the habit of action grew into emotion. She's long since grown, but we're good friends, and my husband often teases me about the time we spend on the phone. — **NOT-SO-WICKED STEPMOM IN OREGON**

DEAR ABBY: Growing up, my mother was always trying to turn me against my stepmother. My stepmother always treated my sister and me as if we were her own children. She became my best friend, and still is 30 years after walking into our lives. My relationship is better with my stepmother than it is with my birth mother, and the same is true for my sister. Our stepmother has always been there for us to talk to. Please tell "Ashamed" that she could end up making a profound difference in these children's lives in the end. It was true for us. — **GRATEFUL STEPDAUGHTER IN FLORIDA**

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Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Crossword Puzzle

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS DOWN

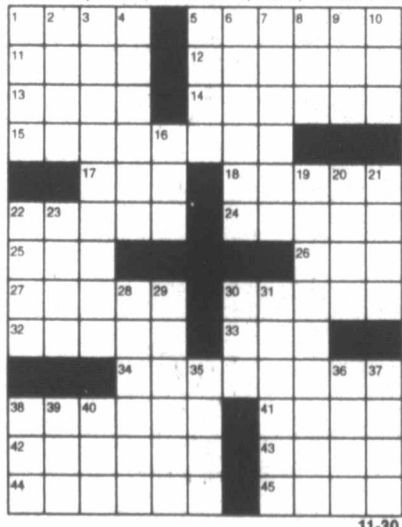
- 1 2000
- Super Bowl champs
- 5 Cartoon ghost
- 11 "Oh, sure!"
- 12 Vocal range
- 13 Pack animal
- 14 Put away
- 15 Burner spot
- 17 Racket
- 18 Contract add-on
- 22 Yawning, perhaps
- 24 Lifted
- 25 Nabokov book
- 26 Soup buy
- 27 Like Nero
- 30 Publicity act
- 32 Clear the slate
- 33 Assist
- 34 Bunker
- 38 Tiny
- 41 Ontario, for one
- 42 Dots on
- 43 Let off
- 44 Burns or Browning
- 45 Hamlet, for one



Yesterday's answer

- 1 Edges
- 2 Touch
- 3 Sensational story
- 4 Wonder of music
- 5 Run to
- 6 Cast members
- 7 "Cut that out!"
- 8 Pussy foot
- 9 First woman
- 10 Spectrum end
- 16 Cut off
- 19 "Based on a true story"
- 23 Sneaker problem
- 28 Warrant
- 29 Less messy
- 30 Melancholy
- 31 Like lords
- 35 Comfy spot
- 36 Related
- 37 Singer Seeger
- 38 Injure
- 39 Altar vow
- 40 San Francisco's Hill

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Sports Day



Pampa High School students Stephanie McVay, seated left, and Nicole Clark signed letters of intent Nov. 21 to play softball for Lubbock Christian University. Standing behind them are their parents, from left, Mark and Ginger McVay and Mary and Layne Clark.

Courtesy photo

2 Lady Harvesters to attend LCU

Two Pampa High School softball players will play for Lubbock Christian University next year.

Stephanie McVay and Nicole Clark signed letters of intent on Nov. 21 to attend LCU. When they report to the university in the fall of 2007, it will be the first time LCU has had a competing women's softball team. LCU will become eligible to compete in the Sooner Athletic Conference in the

spring of 2008.

When asked how they felt about being part of the brand new program, McVay said she thought it was a "good Christian school with a more welcoming environment."

They both said they are excited to help build a competitive program in a strong conference, but also will have a little pressure to perform well.

The new head coach is Mark Hays,

who graduated from LCU with a degree in history in 1991. He has been busy recruiting players for next year's team.

Coach Hays is what pointed Clark in the direction of LCU. She said she "really liked the coach and the size of the school."

LCU is a private four year university with an average enrollment of 2,000.

Weather postpones basketball tourney

By DONNY HOOPER
Special to The News
The Kids Inc. — Gene Messer Tournament of Champions scheduled to begin tonight has been postponed due to the snowy conditions across the Texas Panhandle.

The tournament committee is in the process of rescheduling all of today's games for tomorrow and will have the new schedule posted on the Kids Inc. Web site later today.

The tournament schedule

has three gyms listed for games: Randall, Canyon High and the WTAMU Event Center.

The Pampa boys and girls varsity teams will play two games Friday according to tournament officials, instead of one today and one tomorrow.

Pampa was scheduled to play at 3:30 and 5 p.m. today with the Lady Harvesters playing in the early game and the Harvesters playing in the late game.

Knight still dwells on teaching skills

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Bob Knight hasn't changed after 875 career victories. He admittedly still dwells on the negatives.

Another blown 14-point halftime lead. The five turnovers by Charlie Burgess.

"We had leads where we can dominate the second half in the last two games, and we didn't," Knight said.

The Red Raiders still won both games, at UTEP on Saturday night before their 70-60 victory at TCU on Wednesday night.

That got Knight within four victories of matching Dean Smith's NCAA Division I record. The next victory by the Red Raiders (6-2) will tie Knight for No. 2 on the career list with

Adolph Rupp.

"If it hadn't been for people asking me, I honestly wouldn't know what it was," Knight said. "That doesn't affect me one way or the other. All that means is I've coached a long time and had a lot of good players."

Burgess made up for his turnovers with 20 points. That included six-of-seven 3-pointers, one of them starting the tiebreaking run midway through the second half that put Tech ahead to stay.

TCU used a 20-6 run and got even at 44-all with 10:40 left on a 3-pointer by Brent Hackett, who had started the second-half surge with another 3-pointer. But the Horned Frogs weren't able to go ahead.

Even with Nowitzki's short night, Mavs keep on rolling

By The Associated Press

Dirk Nowitzki's early departure couldn't slow the Dallas Mavericks.

Josh Howard scored 26 points to make up for Nowitzki's loss, and the Mavericks beat the Toronto Raptors 117-98 Wednesday night for their 11th straight victory.

Jerry Stackhouse added 23 points for the Mavs, who haven't lost since their 0-4 start and moved into first place in the Southwest Division after Utah beat San Antonio 83-75.

"We know we are a good team no matter who's out there on the floor," center Erick Dampier said. "We're hard to beat if we're playing the type of defense that we are capable of playing. We can play with anyone in this league, so it's up to us every night and go out there every night and play good defense consistently."

Nowitzki departed with 1:46

remaining in the first quarter with blurred vision and left the arena to be examined by a team specialist. The Mavs said he had a bruised retina, and team specialist Dr. Maurice Syquin cleared him for all basketball activity.

The All-Star forward said he hopes to play Friday night against Sacramento.

"We have a lot of guys who can step in," Nowitzki said. "This team is deeper than last year's. When somebody is out, somebody else moves in."

In other games, it was: Atlanta 99, Charlotte 90; New York 101, Cleveland 98; New Jersey 106, Boston 103; Phoenix 102, Houston 91; Orlando 94, Seattle 84; Indiana 108, Golden State 106; and the Los Angeles Clippers 105, Memphis 90.

Jason Terry scored 14 points and Dampier had 13 points and 14 rebounds to lead the Mavericks,

who have won 22 straight regular-season home games against Eastern Conference opponents.

After losing their first four games, the Mavericks have embarked on the third-longest winning streak in franchise history.

"They came out with a lot of energy," Toronto coach Sam Mitchell said. "That's a good team. They didn't win 11 in a row by mistake. They have so many weapons."

Chris Bosh had 18 points and 11 rebounds for Toronto, which fell to 1-8 on the road. T.J. Ford also scored 18 for the Raptors.

Jazz 83, Spurs 75

Carlos Boozer had 23 points and 16 rebounds, Matt Harpring added 13 points and 12 boards, and host Utah snapped its two-game losing streak.

Deron Williams finished with 15 points and nine assists in the Jazz's first win over San Antonio since

April 2005. Utah also had a 50-34 rebounding advantage.

Tim Duncan had 21 points and 10 rebounds for San Antonio, which lost for the third time in four games.

Suns 102, Rockets 91

Steve Nash broke out of a bad shooting night with eight points in a 19-5 fourth-quarter run, and host Phoenix won its fifth in a row.

Amare Stoudemire had 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Suns, who dominated the boards 55-36 and snapped the Rockets' four-game winning streak. Shawn Marion had 13 points and 12 boards.

Tracy McGrady scored 23 points on 9-for-26 shooting for Houston. Yao Ming added 18 and Rafer Alston 16.

Magic 94, SuperSonics 84

Dwight Howard had 24 points and 12 rebounds, leading visiting Orlando (12-4) to its fifth straight victory and ninth in 10 games.

Howard was perfect from the field, making all eight field goal attempts and was 8-for-12 at the free-throw line. It was Howard's seventh straight double-double and ninth in his last 10 games.

Ray Allen led the Sonics with 21 points, but made just two of eight shots in the second half.

Pacers 108, Warriors 106

At Oakland, Calif., Stephen Jackson grabbed a loose ball and hit a 3-pointer with 1 second left.

Baron Davis had 24 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, and Monta Ellis scored 13 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter. The Warriors seemed poised to make Don Nelson the second coach in NBA history with 1,200 career victories, joining Lenny Wilkens. Instead, Nelson will get another shot Saturday night against Milwaukee.

See NBA, Page 10

8th Grade Green Team wraps up Hereford, 69-47

In basketball action Monday night, the Pampa 8th Grade Green Team turned in a complete team effort against Hereford, wrangling the herd 69-47. Good offensive production and aggressive defense paced Pampa to its first win of the season.

After a slow start, the Green Team trailed 15-8 at the end of the first quarter. Jonathan Polasek helped to ignite the team effort in the second quarter with four rebounds, one steal and three assists as the Green Team exploded for 21 points in the second quarter battling to a 29-29 tie at halftime.

In the third quarter, Pampa came back ready to play, outscoring the Herd 21-5 and never looked back. Pampa's defense allowed

only 18 points in the second half while the offense exploded for 40 points.

Joseph Mechelay led the team in scoring with 15 points. Garrett Ericson and Hudson Bentley each chipped in 14 and Bentley led the team in rebounds with 14. Chase Ferguson added nine points and six rebounds.

Reid Bradley had seven points, three assists, two blocks and seven rebounds. Tyler Malone had four points, five rebounds and two assists. Brendan Rice had four points and two rebounds. Mitch Simon completed the scoring with two points.

The Pampa 8th Grade teams will be in action again today and Dec. 2 as they host the Pampa Tournament.

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Cowboys in same situation with confidence

Action on the court

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys are in the same situation they were a year ago, atop the NFC East with a 7-4 record and headed to play the division rival New York Giants.

Still, things are different this time. Mainly the Cowboys' confidence.

"Right now, it's obvious we're definitely playing the best ball we've been playing all year," linebacker Bradie James said Wednesday. "We've been in this position before. You don't get too many opportunities to become No. 1. That's what this game is about."

The Cowboys head to the Meadowlands on Sunday with a three-game winning streak and wins in four of their last five games — all since Tony Romo became the starting quarterback. His first extended action was after halftime in the game before that, a home loss to the Giants.

When the Cowboys went to New York last year, they were coming off a Thanksgiving Day overtime loss against Denver.

This year, Dallas won its traditional holiday game when Romo matched a team record with five touchdown passes in a 38-10 victory over Tampa Bay. That came only four days after Romo outplayed Peyton Manning and the Cowboys handed Indianapolis its only loss of the season.

"There is a lot of confidence building

around this team right now," tight end Jason Witten said. "We're just excited. We're playing well, not turning the ball over. Everybody's expectations are up right now."

Only the Chicago Bears (9-2) have more wins than the Cowboys in the NFC. Dallas has a one-game lead over the Giants in the NFC East.

"Guys are just focused more, not to

'There's a lot of confidence building around this team right now.'

— Jason Witten
Tight end

say last year we weren't," defensive end Marcus Spears said. "I think the magnitude of what we can do now and how we can set ourselves up in the future and hopefully getting into the playoffs, I think it's important and it's prevalent. The air is thick right now."

Dallas and New York were tied for the division lead when they played last

December. The Giants won 17-10, part of a 2-5 finish by the Cowboys that kept them out of the playoffs.

"We had our chances up there last year," coach Bill Parcells said. "We just didn't make enough plays that day."

The Cowboys had four turnovers, including a fumble on the first play of the second half that New York returned for a touchdown and 17-0 lead.

"I think this is a different team. I think the team is more confident and playing better and doing a whole lot of things better at this point in time this year than it was last year," Parcells said. "Doing a whole lot of things better, almost everything. ... We've basically been running the ball OK and stopping the run. We've cut down our turnovers as of late."

In the past five games, the Cowboys have only three turnovers: a fumble and two interceptions. None of those came in the loss at Washington.

The Giants carry a three-game losing streak into Sunday, but a win would help right things quickly. New York would be tied for the NFC East lead again, with the important tiebreaker because of two wins over Dallas plus a 4-0 mark against division foes.

So this is pivotable for both teams, a game the Cowboys realize is probably their biggest of the season.



Photo by SHEILA WINTON

Blake Seick (12) brings the ball down the court against Perryton Tuesday night. The Harvesters lost a close one to the Rangers, 62-60. Harvester teams were scheduled to play in the Gene Messer Tournament of Champions beginning tonight in Canyon, but those games have been postponed.

Matthews glad to be on other side of rivalry

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Gary Matthews Jr. won't have to wait very long to find out what his former Texas Rangers teammates think about him jumping to the AL West rival Los Angeles Angels. The clubs start next season with a three-game series at Angel Stadium.

"Secretly, one of the players over there with the Rangers wants to play in Anaheim. I'm not going to name any names, but I know it and he knows it," Matthews said with a grin Wednesday at an introductory news conference one week after he agreed to a \$50 million, five-year contract with the Angels.

The switch-hitting center fielder will now experience the division's fiercest rivalry from the other side. It reached a boiling point on Aug. 16, when a bench-clearing brawl resulted in the suspensions of both managers and six players — including Texas reliever Scott Feldman, who threw at Adam Kennedy in retaliation for two Rangers batters that were plunked by Kevin Gregg and Brendan Donnelly.

A prelude to that fight took place 10 days earlier in Anaheim, when Rangers pitcher Adam Eaton gave up a three-run homer to Garret Anderson and threw his next pitch behind Juan Rivera. Eaton was immediately ejected by umpire Rob Drake, but was not suspended.

Back on July 27, 2004, in Anaheim, Kennedy and Rangers catcher Gerald Laird got into a scuffle behind the cage during batting practice — a carry-over from a dispute the night before when Laird accused Kennedy of intentionally trying to get hit by one of Ryan Drese's pitches with the bases loaded and two outs. The tussle quickly escalated into a full-scale melee involving nearly all the players from both teams.

"There's been some pretty fierce competition between the Rangers and Angels, and we've had some brawls," Matthews said. "When the Rangers came in here, it was all business. But I enjoyed this rivalry that we had. It was something I think both teams looked forward to."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

PRO FOOTBALL

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Losing isn't the only thing contagious on the New York Giants these days.

Blowups are just as popular, and Pro Bowl defensive end Michael Strahan joined the ranks of Jeremy Shockey and Tiki Barber in mouthing off in what is quickly becoming a season of frustration for the team.

Strahan intimidated an ESPN reporter who attempted to question him about comments he made on radio Monday about receiver Plaxico Burress quitting on plays.

Strahan, who has been sidelined the last three weeks with a foot injury, called out Kelly Naki, ESPN's New York-based reporter, as she stood behind about three dozen members of the media trying to question him.

Strahan, who was approached by the reporter in the locker room earlier but refused to talk with her at that time, got snippy after Naki questioned him about talking to Burress.

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. (AP) — Michael Vick was fined \$10,000 by the NFL and agreed to donate another \$10,000 to charity for an obscene hand gesture toward Falcons fans following last weekend's loss to New Orleans.

Vick rushed for 166 yards in Sunday's 31-13 loss, just 7 yards short

of his own NFL record for a quarterback.

But the Falcons dropped five passes and were booed loudly following their fourth straight loss. Vick showed his unhappiness by making the gesture with both hands as he walked off the Georgia Dome field.

ALAMEDA, Calif. (AP) — The Oakland Raiders' soap opera season took another strange turn when coach Art Shell accused a member of the organization of trying to undermine the coaching staff and rooting against the team.

Shell did not name the person, but said it was not a coach or a player.

HOUSTON (AP) — Track star Justin Gatlin worked out for the Houston Texans on Tuesday, but coach Gary Kubiak said signing him was "not something we would do right now."

Gatlin, an Olympic gold medalist and co-world record holder in the 100 meters, tested positive for testosterone and other steroids in April.

The Texans worked him out as a receiver and Kubiak said team officials told him he was "very impressive."

BASEBALL

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Albert Pujols thinks he was snubbed.

The St. Louis Cardinals' slugger is

upset he lost out to Philadelphia's Ryan Howard for the National League MVP award, saying the honor should go to someone on a playoff team.

Pujols led the Cardinals to the NL Central title this year and their first World Series championship since 1982. Howard and the Phillies missed the playoffs — though they won two more regular-season games than St. Louis did.

Pujols batted .331 with 49 home runs and 137 RBIs, while Howard hit .313 with 58 homers and 149 RBIs.

TORONTO (AP) — Blue Jays general manager J.P. Ricciardi said that catcher Rod Barajas backed out of a deal with Toronto after signing a terms sheet with the team.

Barajas switched agents and his deal with Toronto came undone.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The Tampa Bay Devil Rays are looking for ways to broaden fan support, including the possibility of shifting a three-game series against the Texas Rangers from Tropicana Field to Disney World next season.

Discussions are under way to move the May 15-17 series against the Rangers from St. Petersburg to Kissimmee at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex.

NBA

Continued from Page 9

Jamaal Tinsley scored 12 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter and Al Harrington had 28 for the Pacers.

Clippers 105, Grizzlies 90
At Los Angeles, Cuttino Mobley connected on his first nine shots, added a buzzer-beating 3-pointer off a steal to end the second quarter and finished with 24

points. The Clippers snapped a five-game losing streak and beat Memphis for only the third time in the last 14 meetings. Elton Brand finished with 20 points and nine rebounds.

Hakim Warrick scored 22 points for the Grizzlies (4-11), who are tied with Charlotte for the NBA's worst record.

Knicks 101, Cavaliers 98
Quentin Richardson scored 27 points and Eddy Curry had 24, 12 in the fourth quarter, as the Knicks

snapped the Cavaliers' six-game home winning streak. Curry and Jamal Crawford combined for 23 of New York's 28 points in the fourth as the Knicks improved to 5-5 on the road.

LeBron James had 27 points on 10-of-22 shooting.

Nets 106, Celtics 103
Vince Carter scored 23 points, 16 in the fourth quarter, and Jason Kidd added 19 as visiting New Jersey snapped a six-game losing streak.

Paul Pierce scored 31 points for Boston and Wally Szczerbiak had 25.

Hawks 99, Bobcats 90
Joe Johnson scored 22 of his season-high 36 points in the second quarter, and visiting Charlotte couldn't overcome the longest field-goal drought to open an NBA game this season.

Raymond Felton and Sean May each scored 21 points for the Bobcats, who were 0-for-13 from the field to start the game before a jumper by May with 4:07 left in the period.

Baseball Winter League seeks talented players

HARLINGEN — Ballplayers from the Texas Panhandle who believe they have the talent to play professional baseball are urged to sign up for the United League Baseball's Winter League, which will begin a 24-game schedule on Jan. 19, 2007.

Deadline for signing is Dec. 15.

The league will be comprised of four ball clubs in Texas — Harlingen, Brownsville, Edinburg and Laredo.

Amarillo Dillas field manager Buddy Biancalana will be one of the field managers.

"We are looking for players who are trying to break into professional baseball's summer leagues and those developing their skills," said Craig Brasfield, the ULB's executive general manager,

who is in charge of the winter league.

Players will be assessed and some will be selected for the 2007 ULB regular season, which will begin a 100-game schedule in early May, Brasfield said. All games will be played at Harlingen Field, two games a day, except for Sundays.

Scouts representing major league organizations, as well as minor league and independent league representatives, will make periodic appearances and evaluate the talent for their organizations, Brasfield said.

He said that managers from the ULB will be involved. They include:

"Doc" Edwards, field manager of the San Angelo Colts, who has 50 years of playing and managing in professional baseball,

including two years managing the Cleveland Indians; Eduardo "Eddie" Dennis, field manager for the Rio Grande Valley WhiteWings in Harlingen, who was a player and coach with the Toronto Blue Jays organization a number of years; Buddy Biancalana, field manager of the Amarillo Dillas, a former major league and who played all seven games with the Kansas City Royals when they defeated the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1986 World Series; Vince Moore, field manager of the Edinburg Coyotes, who has managed clubs to the playoffs in two consecutive years as manager in Edinburg, including making the championship series in 2006; and Ricky VanAsselberg, former professional baseball catcher

and field manager of the Alexandria Aces, who won the ULB championship in its inaugural season in 2006.

Players interested in being a part of this league are urged to contact Lizette Moreno at (956) 386-0080 or go online to <http://www.texaswinterleague.com> to register.

Special arrangements are being made for prospects, Brasfield said.

The ULB is a six-franchise league, which began play in 2006. It will continue the 2007 season with six ball clubs, with plans to expand in 2008.

Franchises are in Harlingen, Amarillo, Laredo, San Angelo, Edinburg and Alexandria, La.



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Wal-Mart predicts December same-store sales gain of zero to 1 percent

NEW YORK (AP) — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. issued a sobering warning for the holiday shopping season Thursday, predicting its December same-store sales gain would be no better than 1 percent.

The news, coupled with Wal-Mart's expected announcement that it suffered its first same-store decline in more than 10 years during November, came as the nation's retailers reported an overall mixed sales performance for the month. Same-store sales reflect business at stores open at least a year and are the industry standard for measuring a retailer's strength.

The nation's largest retailer reported a 0.1 percent dip in same-store sales. Including a drop in gasoline revenues from its Sam's Club division, which Wal-Mart did not

include in its calculation, same store-sales fell 0.3 percent.

Wal-Mart has struggled in recent months on a mix of problems, including the fact that its lower-income customers were hurt by soaring gas prices. But the company's lackluster sales have persisted even as the cost of gas eased, an indication that shoppers are turning away from merchandise like apparel, and sticking with basics like food and consumer products.

The nation's largest retailer reported a 0.1 percent dip in same-store sales. Including a drop in gasoline revenues from its Sam's Club division, which Wal-Mart did not include in its calculation, same store-sales fell 0.3 percent.

"This is pretty discouraging," said Ken Perkins, president of RetailMetrics LLC, a research company in Swampscott, Mass. But he added that Wal-Mart's weak sales will not be a harbinger of a broad based weakness across the retail sector.

Wal-Mart's discount stores suffered a 0.5 percent decline, while Sam's Clubs had a 2.0 percent increase.

One of the company's problems has been its inability to understand

what its customers are looking for. It filled its clothing racks with too many trendy items like skinny jeans that shoppers just didn't want.

Meanwhile, reports from other retailers were mixed.

J.C. Penney Co. said same-store sales rose 1.4 percent, helped by strong sales of jewelry, children's goods and home products. But the results fell short of the 3.7 percent forecast of analysts polled by Thomson Financial.

Costco Wholesale Corp. reported a 5 percent gain in same-store sales, below the 5.7 percent estimate.

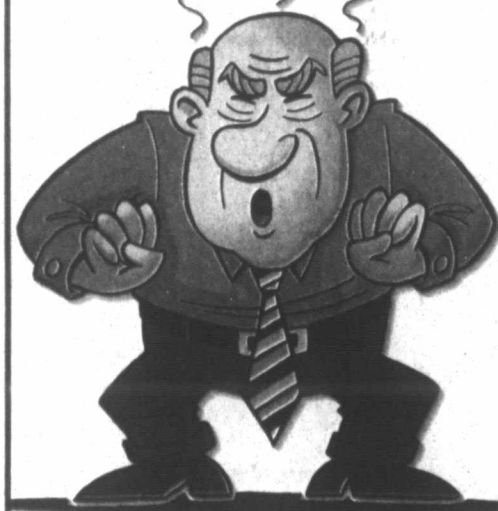
Nordstrom Inc. had a 5.4 percent gain in same-store sales, matching Wall Street expectations.

'The Nutcracker'



Dustin Whinery and Glennette Goode will be appearing in the holiday ballet "The Nutcracker" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at M.K. Brown Auditorium. Whinery will portray Nathaniel/Nutcracker Prince and Goode, Herr Drosselmeyer. The production is being staged by Pampa Civic Ballet. Admission is \$5/adults and \$3/students. Tickets will be available at the door.

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