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# The PAMPA NEWS

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 Volume 105 • No. 84 50¢ Daily • Weekend \$1.50

## Auditor: County has 'strong balance sheet'

Gray County finances passed their audit for the 2008-2009 fiscal year with flying colors, according to outside auditor. Francis, certified public accountants told the Gray County Commission this morning during the commission's regular session. He noted that while the capital murder trial of Levi King, who pleaded guilty in Lubbock to killing a family in Gray County, cost the county almost a million dollars, those kinds of expenses can't be planned for and commended the county government on their fiscal responsibility.



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID BOWSER

City workers Terry Brown and Darron Ellis work at patching Pampa streets while the sun shines this week. Today, city crews will be out filling potholes with hot mix and smoothing out city streets before the next winter storm moves through.

"We did not identify any deficiencies," Joiner said after auditing the county's finances. "It's a very good report."

The audit showed Gray County with total net assets of \$14,080,316 for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2009.

Joiner said the county had about a four month reserve, well within the recommended amount.

"It's a really strong balance sheet," Joiner said, "and has been for the past several years."

Other news at the commissioners' meeting today was not as positive.

"We've had a problem with one of our cooling units," Gray County Judge Richard Peet told the commission.

The commission voted to replace the unit atop the courthouse at a cost of

AUDIT cont. on page 3

## Ballot includes 5 nonbinding resolutions

AUSTIN (AP) - Texas Republican voters will have a chance to give their opinions on such issues as voter identification and federal stimulus spending through five nonbinding resolutions that will appear on the GOP primary ballot. The resolutions, which include perennial Republican priorities that have failed in the Legislature, were chosen by the State Republican Executive Committee and are designed to send a message to elected leaders in Austin and Washington, D.C. "These ballot propositions are Texas Republicans' chance to be heard on issues facing our state," said Republican Party of Texas chairwoman Cathie Adams. "Voters should study the questions and then use their vote to speak directly to their elected officials." Early voting starts today for the March 2 primary election. The top resolution would encourage the Legislature to "make it a priority to protect the integrity of our election process by enacting legislation that requires voters to provide valid photo identification in order to cast a ballot in any and all elections" in Texas. The issue was among the most contentious during the most recent legislative session. A voter ID bill ultimately failed, but the matter is likely to re-emerge when the Legislature next meets early next year. Democrats argue that the requirement would place undue hardships on some voters, discouraging them from taking part in elections. Republican voters in Texas usually approve primary ballot resolutions. But because they are non-binding, they'll have no practical effect. The second proposition would require government bodies in Texas to limit annual budget increases to "the combined increase of population and inflation unless it first gets voter approval to exceed the allowed annual growth or in the case of an official emergency." Versions of both the spending and voter identification propositions appeared on the 2008 and 2006 primary ballots and were approved by voters. The repeated efforts are

BALLOT cont. on page 3

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**Pancake Supper**  
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 February 16 from 5-8pm  
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 Children 5 and under are free

### It's Girl Scout Cookie time!



Local Girl Scouts are continuing their annual cookie sales, working hard to raise money for the Texas and Oklahoma Plains Girls Scout Council. The money goes to pay for the many activities to help the girls develop leadership skills, a sense of self worth and to develop life-long friendships. Some of the money is used locally for various club projects. This year is especially important for the girls of Cadet Troop 5515 to work hard because they are earning money for a trip to New York/Washington DC to experience and see the Statue of Liberty, Smithsonian Museums, and the White House, the summer of 2011. There are 10 choices of cookies for sale. If you need further information or a name of a girl scout to get a box of cookies, please call Letha Anderson at 806-802-0039. Booth Sales will be held at local businesses on select weekends until March 7. Above - Nikki Anderson (left) Mackenzie Parks have been with Girl Scout Troop 5514 for 9 yrs.



# For the record

## PAMPA FORECAST

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
High 50 Low 28	High 50 Low 30	High 49 Low 28
Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 23. West northwest wind around 5 mph.		
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50. Wind chill values between 16 and 26 early. Southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.		
Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 28. South wind between 5 and 10 mph.		
Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 50. North northwest wind around 5 mph.		
Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 30. North northwest wind around 5 mph.		
Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 49. North northwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.		
Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28. East northeast wind around 10 mph.		

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### SHERIFF'S REPORT

The Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests in the 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. today.

Monday, Feb. 15.

Kenyon James Kendall, 23, was arrested by police in connection with a bond surrender on charges of possession of a controlled substance.

Austin Kyle Morton, 23, was arrested by deputies on warrants out of Dallas for evading arrest and driving while intoxicated.

Allen Bailey Huffman,

22, was arrested by deputies for driving without a valid driver's license.

Steven Ray Crawford, 31, was arrested by deputies for driving without a license with previous convictions.

Tuesday, Feb. 16.

Jodi M. Candelaria, 36, was arrested by police on capias pro fine warrants charging her with failure to maintain speed, failure to get a Texas driver's license and failure to register her vehicle.

### AMBULANCE CALLS

Pampa EMS responded to the following calls between 7 a.m. Friday February 12 to 7 a.m. Monday February 15.

Friday

11:06 a.m.—An MICU Unit responded to the 2200 block of Perryton Parkway no patient.

3:32 p.m.—An MICU Unit responded to the 1700 block of Evergreen.

4:06 p.m.—An MICU Unit responded to Pampa Regional Medical Center

transported one patient to Northwest Texas Healthcare.

6:00 p.m.—An MICU unit responded to the 1100 block of Starkweather transported one patient to PRMC.

11:32 p.m.—An MICU unit responded to the 1000 block of Neel, no transport.

Saturday

11:09 p.m.—An MICU Unit responded to the 1900 block of Hilton transported one patient to PRMC.

Sunday

1:13 a.m.—An MICU Unit responded to the 400 block of N. Starkweather.

9:33 a.m.—An MICU Unit responded to the 1000 block of S. Lowe transported one patient to PRMC.

### LAST MINUTE ADS

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

**API MEETING, Thurs.** Feb. 18, Pampa Country Club. Speaker Richard Spears of Spears & Assoc. Social hr. 6:30pm. Mexican Buffet (\$15 ea.) 7pm. Significant others welcome! Door prizes donated by King Well Service

**CERAMIC TILE.** Keith Taylor, 874-1779 lv. msg.

**CLASSIFIED LINE Ad** Specials for Dec., Jan. & Feb. 4 lines-4 days \$18.50, 8 lines-4 days, \$21.50 (does not include Last Minute ads on pg. 2). Call for deadlines Mon.-Fri. 8-4pm., 669-2525.

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**MEALS ON WHEELS MENU**

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Apricots

**Tuesday February 23**  
Hamloaf  
Hominy Casserole  
Zucchini/ Tomatoes  
Pineapple

**Wednesday February 24**  
Chicken Nuggets  
Baked Potatoes  
Peas/ Carrots  
Peaches

**Thursday February 25**  
Shepherd's Pie  
Pickled Beets  
Corn  
Jello

**Friday February 26**  
Baked Chicken  
Sweet Potatoes  
Peas  
Applesauce

## Obituaries

### Elena Ann Donald, 75

Pampa — Elena Ann Donald died Monday, February 15, 2010 at Amarillo, TX. She was 75. Graveside services were held at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 17, 2010 in the Goodnight Cemetery with Barry Owens, Minister of Music at First Baptist Church of Pampa, officiating. Internment was in Goodnight Cemetery with arrangements by Robertson Funeral Directors of Clarendon.

Miss Donald was born July 31, 1934 in Pampa, Texas to Steve and Zola Blankenship Donald and spent most of her early

life there. She had lived in Pampa for approximately the past 30 years. She received her Bachelors Degree in music from Hardin-Simmons University, and her Masters Degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She was a music and choir teacher in the Houston area and then in the Pampa schools for many years prior to her retirement. She will be remembered as a loving, caring and generous person who loved to travel, who loved her ranch in Goodnight, and was an avid sports fan, especially of her beloved Houston

Astros. She was a member of the First Baptist Church in Pampa. She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Lena Blankenship and Walter and Maude Donald; and an aunt, Inez Blankenship. Survivors include an aunt, Isla Hooker of Garland; and numerous cousins and their families as well as many friends and former students, all of whom she considered her extended family. Memorials - The family suggests that memorial donations be to the First Baptist Church in Pampa; the Pampa Chapter of the



Donald

Salvation Army; or to the Goodnight Cemetery Association.

Sign the online guestbook at [www.RobertsonFuneral.com](http://www.RobertsonFuneral.com)

### Kenneth 'Ken' Wayne Prestidge, 56

Canyon — Kenneth 'Ken' Wayne Prestidge died February 14, 2010 at Amarillo, TX. He was 56. Services were held at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, February 18 at the First Baptist Church with Dr. David L. Lowrie, Jr., pastor, officiating. Graveside services will be 3 p.m. Thursday, at Memorial Heights Cemetery in Lefors, Texas. Burial will be in Memorial Heights Cemetery with arrangements by Brooks Funeral Directors. Kenneth 'Ken' Wayne Prestidge was born September 21, 1953 at Fort Rucker, Alabama to Carroll and Margie Prestidge. He

married Beverly Rathbun on February 19, 1994 in Clarendon, Texas. He graduated from Lefors High School in 1972. He received his bachelor's degree from WTAMU in 2000. He was the previous owner and operator of a backhoe service in Gray County for numerous years. He was currently employed as maintenance supervisor for TX DOT in Canyon for the past 17 years. Ken was a Christian, and a member of the First Baptist Church in Lefors. Ken was a fun loving husband, son, father, and Papa. All of his older grand kids loved riding on Ken's

Harley Davidson with their Papa. Ken's family always came first with him. He was preceded in death by an infant daughter. Survivors: Ken is survived by his loving wife, Beverly; mother, Margie Prestidge, of Canyon; father, Carroll Prestidge, of Kerrville; daughters, Ashley Fronterhouse, of Canyon, Cpl. Niki Baldwin and husband, Sean, of Camp Lejeune, NC; son, Shawn Prestidge, of Canyon; four granddaughters; two grandsons; and brother, David Prestidge, of Paradise, TX. Memorials: The family suggests memorials to a favorite charity.



Prestidge

Sign the on-line registry at [www.brooksfuneral.com](http://www.brooksfuneral.com)

### Melba Wilson, 78

Denison — Melba Wilson, age 78, went home to be with the Lord Monday, February 15, 2010 at Wilson N. Jones Medical Center.

There is no set time for family visitation. Memorials may be made in her name to the

American Cancer Society. Condolences may be registered online at [www.FisherFuneral.com](http://www.FisherFuneral.com)

Arrangements are under the direction of Fisher Funeral Home, located at 604 West Main in Denison.

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Stuart Smith

## Smith earns certification

Pampa Independent School District Athletic Director Stuart Smith was recognized by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association as a certified athletic administrator.

Smith said he took a test in December to earn the recognition.

"It was a certification exam to become an NIAAA certified athletic administrator," Smith said.

According to a press release from the NIAAA, Smith has demonstrated the highest level of knowledge and expertise in the field of interscholastic athletic administration. Smith said this is an advancement showing his commitment to athletics.

"It's a continuing education," Smith said. "There's another a step that I will probably go for in a couple years. A master athletic administrator. It's like getting a masters."

According to the press release the NIAAA consists of 50 state athletic administrator associations and more than 7,600 individual members. "It is dedicated to promoting the professional growth of high school administrators and preserving the educational nature of interscholastic athletics and the place of these programs in the secondary school curriculum."

## Toyota to idle 2 US plants

WASHINGTON (AP) - Toyota says it plans to idle production at assembly plants in Texas and Kentucky while it grapples with massive recalls in the United States.

Toyota spokesman Mike Goss says a plant in San Antonio, Texas, has scheduled production breaks for the weeks of March 15 and April 12. Goss says a plant in Georgetown, Ky., has scheduled a non-production day on Feb. 26 and may not produce vehicles on three more days in March and April.

He says Toyota is adjusting production so it does not build up too much inventory for dealers. Toyota has recalled 8.5 million vehicles around the world to address problems with gas pedals, floor mats and brakes.

Toyota says its workers will be retained and will receive additional training.

## Power restored

DALLAS (AP) - An electric utility says all power has been restored following a snowstorm that affected more than 500,000 Texas customers.

Oncor Electric Delivery on Tuesday had all customers back on line.

Oncor says crews late Monday completed restoring power to the Dallas-Fort Worth area after last week's snow that brought down trees and dragged along power lines.

Oncor says some customers could have spotty outages in the coming weeks "until weakened and damaged limbs or trees are removed."

## Audit

about \$24,000. The work will be done over a weekend and require bringing in a crane with a 60-foot boom.

"It's better to do it on the weekend," agreed Gray County Commissioner Gary Willoughby.

The commissioners were also told that the coolers and freezers at the jail would have to be repaired or replaced soon, but that could wait until budget time later this summer.

The county has already

replaced five compressors in the system at about \$2,000 to \$3,000 per compressors, not including labor.

In another matter, Chief Sheriff's Deputy Cary Rushing asked the commission that in order to keep track of fire departments that are being called out around the county, each fire department be required to notify the Gray County Sheriff's dispatcher or each run.

The commission agreed

and will require outside fire departments to notify the sheriff's dispatcher by radio when they are called out, arrive on the scene and leave.

"We need better communications," said Gray County Commissioner James Hefley.

The commissioners also agreed to accept a proposal from NTS concerning phone contract.

Gray County Auditor Elaine Morris said she had tried to reach AT&T, with

whom the county had been using, but was unable to contact them.

Commissioners expect to save \$250 to \$500 a month with the new contract.

Former Gray County Sheriff Randy Stubblefield appeared before the commission to request the use of Perry Lefors Airport in June for the "Burning the Bricks" celebration.

Stubblefield said the celebration on June 12 would revolved around a car show, while drag races

would be held on June 13.

He said that while entrants last year were cut back from 125 to 90, the crowds drawn to the events had grown. Last summer, he said, they hosted about 1,500 people.

"It's a big draw for Pampa," Stubblefield said. "It brings a lot of people in."

The commission approved both days.

cont. from page 1

## Ballot

"to remind (lawmakers), 'You guys didn't take care of the issue last time, maybe you should this time,'" said Bryan Preston, spokesman for the Republican Party of Texas.

Also appearing on the Republican ballot are:

•Ballot Proposition No. 3: "In addition to aggressively eliminating irresponsible federal spending, Congress should empower American citizens to stimulate the economy by Congress cutting federal income taxes for all

federal taxpayers, rather than spending hundreds of billions of dollars on so-called federal economic stimulus."

•Ballot Proposition No. 4: "The use of the word 'God,' prayers, and the Ten Commandments should be

allowed at public gatherings and public educational institutions, as well as be permitted on government buildings and property."

•Ballot Proposition No. 5: "The Texas Legislature should enact legislation requiring a sonogram to

be performed and shown to each mother about to undergo a medically unnecessary, elective abortion."

cont. from page 1

## Poll: Perry leads GOP rivals Hutchison, Medina

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - Gov. Rick Perry leads his two Republican primary opponents with 45 percent support in a new poll, and though it shows him within striking distance of winning the nomination March 2 he may find himself in a runoff with U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison.

Republican activist Debra Medina, whose campaign has attracted insurgent Tea Party voters, trails her better-known opponents by double digits in the poll conducted for the Houston Chronicle, The Dallas Morning News, the San Antonio Express-News, the Austin American-Statesman and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

The poll found Perry leading with 45 percent support among likely Republican voters, with Hutchison at 29 percent and Medina at 17 percent. Eight percent were undecided.

The Feb. 2-10 telephone survey conducted by Blum & Weprin Associates Inc. polled 1,508 registered voters, including 464 likely Republican voters. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

Polling was conducted before Medina, in an interview Thursday, refused to dismiss theories that the government was involved in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. She later said the attacks were carried out solely by Muslim terrorists.

Pollster Mickey Blum said normally poll numbers for an incumbent such as Perry would be mirrored in election returns, but that this is an unusual election.

"He looks good at this point: a 16-point lead and

now the third candidate imploding," Blum said. "He doesn't need very much to get to 50 percent. He just needs (Medina's) people to either stay home or vote for him."

If no candidate wins a majority, a runoff between the top two finishers would be April 13.

Perry and Medina have run on an anti-Washington message. Blum said the survey found a definite anti-incumbent, anti-Washington mood and noted that 44 percent of Medina's supporters said they wanted to send a message to Washington.

"This is the year of the anti-incumbent and year of the outsider," Blum said. "Perry, as the longest-serving governor, is and running to extend that record even longer. He has still managed to make himself seem like the outsider."

Hutchison spokeswoman Jennifer Baker said Perry should be concerned that a majority of the primary voters want someone else, but Perry spokesman Mark Miner said the governor expects to win. Medina said she is not expecting to lose any ground because of her controversial remarks and that her Web site has seen increased traffic.

The survey suggests Perry leads his challengers among likely GOP primary voters among all groups, including women. The governor edges Hutchison, 39 percent to 34 percent, among female voters, and he has a commanding lead among men. He has more support among Republicans in virtually every region of the state, even in Hutchison's home region of Dallas-Fort Worth.

"People don't dislike or disapprove of her," Blum said. "But among Republican primary voters, she's not quite as conservative as they are and, therefore, is facing an uphill battle."

Hutchison may be hurt some by her support for the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Forty-eight percent of the likely Republican voters said they would not vote for a candidate who supports Roe v. Wade.

The poll found Perry is not particularly popular. Less than half all of those surveyed approve of the job he's doing as governor and nearly 40 percent disapprove.

The poll also looked ahead to the November general election, asking all 1,508 respondents for whom they would vote, assuming former Houston Mayor Bill White is the Democratic nominee. White trailed Perry in a general election matchup 43 percent to 37 percent and he trailed Hutchison 42 percent to 34 percent.

Blum said that gives White a solid base even though about two-thirds of the registered voters surveyed said they did not know enough about him to have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him.

White spokeswoman Katy Bacon said the poll shows trouble for Perry because he is under 50 percent in a race against White, who has never run statewide.

The poll did not measure White's strength against Democratic primary opponent businessman Farouk Shami of Houston.

The survey offers a hint about which voters the major candidates would seek to attract in the fall. Perry and Hutchison both

do best among men, white voters, older voters and those with incomes above \$100,000. White does best

among the young, Hispanic and African-American voters and those with incomes below \$50,000.

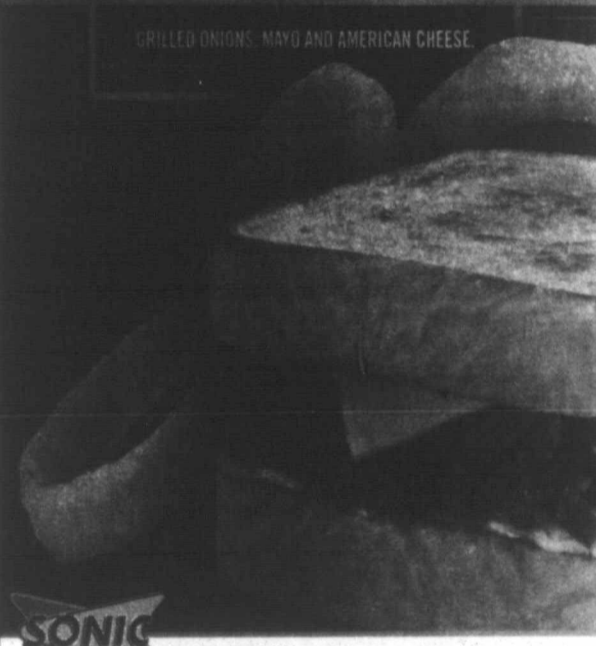
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## Candidates vote early

HOUSTON (AP) - Gubernatorial candidates Bill White and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison have cast their ballots on the first day of early voting for the March 2 Texas primary.

White, the Democratic former Houston mayor, showed up with his wife at a Houston polling place Tuesday morning and spent about five minutes at an electronic voting booth.

Hutchison and her husband

appeared about two hours later at a Dallas church.

Polls show White with a comfortable lead over six Democratic challengers. Only one of them, Houston hair care businessman Farouk Shami, has a well-funded campaign to compete with White.

Hutchison trails Gov. Rick Perry in polling ahead of the GOP primary. Debra Medina is also in the race.

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- Gray County Safety Coordinator

**I would appreciate your vote on March 2nd!**

gvcammish@yahoo.com  
• Pol Ad Paid By Gale Thompson, Treasurer, 1228 Christina, Pampa, TX 79065

# Viewpoints

## Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 16, the 47th day of 2010. There are 318 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

- 1804 - U.S. Marines slip into Tripoli harbor and burn U.S. Navy frigate Philadelphia, which had been captured by pirates.
- 1808 - France invades Spain.
- 1862 - Gen. Ulysses Grant demands the Confederate forces' unconditional surrender during America's Civil War. Some 14,000 troops surrender.
- 1871 - Franco-Prussian War ends in defeat for France.
- 1873 - Republic is proclaimed in Spain, but only lasts two years.
- 1918 - England's port of Dover is bombarded by German submarines in World War I.
- 1923 - The burial chamber of King Tutankhamen's recently unearthed tomb is unsealed in Egypt.

1933 - Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, fearing German threats, reorganize Little Entente with permanent council.

1936 - Left-wing Popular Front wins elections in Spain. Reaction from the military later leads to Spanish Civil War.

**'One does evil enough when one does nothing good.'**

— German Proverb

1942 - German submarines fire upon oil refineries in Aruba, Dutch West Indies, during World War II.

1945 - American troops land on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II and begin massive air raids on Tokyo.

1953 - South Africa institutes emergency powers under Public Safety Bill.

1959 - Fidel Castro becomes premier of Cuba after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

1962 - Anti-government riots break out in Georgetown, British Guyana.

1970 - Moscow says Arab nations will get "necessary support" from Soviet Union in their conflict with Israel.

1977 - Anglican Archbishop of Uganda and two government ministers are arrested in alleged plot to overthrow Ugandan President Idi Amin.

1983 - "Ash Wednesday" bushfires in Victoria and South Australia claim more than 70 lives.

1986 - French warplanes bomb Libyan airfield in northern Chad used as support center for rebels in their offensive against President Hissene Habre's government.

1989 - Barrage of rockets hits two Afghan cities after last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan.

1991 - Former Contra military chief Enrique Bermudez is assassinated outside downtown Managua hotel.

1993 - Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his rival, Parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, agree to negotiate a separation of powers.

1994 - Greece declares a unilateral embargo on the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia in a conflict over the use of the name Macedonia.

1995 - Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agrees to gradually lift the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and permit 15,000 Palestinian workers to return to their jobs in Israel.

1996 - Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro dissolves Parliament to clear the way for national elections three years ahead of schedule.

1997 - Rebel leader Laurent Kabila, after a plea from the United Nations, agrees to delay an attack on Zaire's largest refugee camp. The camp in Tingi-Tingi is attacked two weeks later, scattering 170,000 Rwandans.

1998 - A China Airlines Airbus A-300 jetliner returning from Bali crashes short of Taipei's airport, killing all 203 passengers and crew and seven people on the ground.

1999 - Kurds occupy and take hostages at the Greek embassies in several European countries to protest Kurd leader Abdullah Ocalan's capture by Turkish authorities after he left the Greek Embassy in Kenya.

2000 - A former Bank of New York executive and her husband plead guilty to laundering billions of dollars from Russian bankers in one of the biggest such schemes in U.S. history.

2004 - Kuwait's Parliament decides to investigate charges that a Kuwaiti supplier to a subsidiary of U.S. conglomerate Halliburton charged too much for fuel deliveries to Iraq after the U.S.-led war toppled Saddam Hussein.

2005 - Iran's intelligence minister accuses the United States of flying surveillance drones over Iranian airspace to spy on nuclear and military sites, and threatens to shoot them down.

2006 - Haitians celebrate as word quickly spreads that Rene Preval, a former president who is hugely popular among the poor, is declared the winner of the presidential election.

2007 - A Turkish court sentences seven suspected al-Qaida militants to life in prison for a pair of 2003 suicide bombings in Istanbul that killed 58 people. Ai attacks prosecutors said were ordered by Osama bin Laden.

2008 - Hundreds of Maoist militants attack six police compounds in eastern India, killing 13 police personnel, a village guard and a civilian and seizing at least 1,000 stolen pistols.

2009 - France's top judicial body formally recognizes the nation's role in deporting Jews to Nazi death camps during the Holocaust - but effectively ruled out any more reparations for the deportees or their families.

**Today's Birthdays:** Nicolaus Copernicus, Polish astronomer, (1473-1543); G.M. Travelyan, British historian (1876-1964); John Schlesinger, English film director (1926-2003); Kim Jong Il, North Korean leader (1942--); James Ingram, U.S. singer (1956--); Ice-T, U.S. actor/rapper (1958--); Andy Taylor, guitarist (1961--).



## Say "Enough's Enough" To Polarization

by Lee Hamilton

In recent appearances, President Obama has suggested that it's time for Washington to confront the intense polarization and incivility that mark our politics these days.

His first sally was his back-and-forth with the House Republican caucus at its retreat in Baltimore. He followed that a few days later with a speech to the National Prayer Breakfast decrying the "erosion of civility" in Washington and the inability of politicians in an increasingly partisan culture to listen to one another. "Those of us in Washington are not serving the people as well as we should," he said.

Lots of ordinary Americans would agree with those lofty sentiments. But what's notable is the growing concern even in Washington that, when it comes to the actual business of governing, the nation's political leaders appear so riven with conflict that they're unable to move forward on anything. Both Democrats and Republicans welcomed the President's visit with the House Republicans as a first, tentative step in trying to reduce partisanship.

Moves like these are important gestures. But intense partisanship is deeply rooted in the body politic now. Even if the entire leadership at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue were suddenly to embrace one another in honest fellowship, there would still be a long way to go in reducing polarization. That is because much of our political culture now works to drive people apart, not bring them together.

To begin with, we face a somewhat confusing paradox: In terms of electoral politics, the country is closely divided between left and right, with one side or the other gaining a majority depending on where independents choose to alight on election day. Yet in terms of political values, the nation is above all pragmatic and moderate, caring less about

ideology than about what works.

The problem is that too much in politics — the extent to which congressional districts lock in a single party's dominance, the increasing importance of primaries dominated by the ideologically driven voters in both parties, and hence the growing ideological homogeneity of both parties' leadership — works to favor division, not pragmatism.

The result is that politics now drives policy on Capitol Hill. Every vote is looked upon as a political vote, with members of Congress asking themselves not, "What's best for the country?" but, "How do we put the other guys on the spot and advance our own partisan interests?"

This trend toward the extremes has also been driven by political developments in the country at large. Demographic trends — the migration of African-Americans out of the South, the tendency of people of similar class and ethnic background to cluster together — have created communities and even regions that are dominated by one party or the other. This has been echoed by an explosion of advocacy organizations, so that groups that used to create consensus out of wildly disparate views no longer do so.

The political parties, which once forged consensus platforms at conventions that were notable for their diversity, now cater to their ideological activists. Advocacy associations — whether focused on the environment, agriculture, health, or whatever — that once needed to build an agenda acceptable to a diverse membership, now are so narrowly aimed that they feel free to pursue their parochial points of view.

The media, too, has fragmented. Americans get their information from a bewildering array of sources, and these days need never be troubled by reporting or analysis that

doesn't agree with their own preconceived views of the world. Punditry and commentary are what rule the media-sphere now, not hard reporting, and much of it is ideologically driven. There are very few prominent media voices pushing political Washington toward the center.

All of this has made it hard for fair, open-minded, and centrist politicians to gain any footing, and has pushed their counterparts in the population at large to withdraw from a politics they see as increasingly nasty, closed-minded and unattractive.

If there's a solution, it lies with ordinary Americans willing to stand up and say "Enough's enough!" The President and other political leaders can certainly try to change the tone in Washington, but they have an uphill battle to fight unless enough Americans make it clear that they



Lee Hamilton

are so tired of polarization, they'll set their own ideological prejudices aside and place a premium on politicians who demonstrate they know how to work with people who don't agree with them.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

## THE PAMPA NEWS

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## We welcome your letters

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- Letters should be brief and to the point. All correspondence will be edited for length and clarity.
- All letters must be signed. Submit your name, address and telephone number with the letter for verification. Only your name and city will be published.
- Defamatory comments will not be published.
- E-mail submissions are welcome. Send them to: editor@thepampanews.com. Please include your name, address and telephone number for verification.



**STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY PRIBBLE**  
The American Cancer Society's 2010 Relay for Life in Gray County kicked off last week with a meeting for volunteers at the Pampa Regional Medical Center. Among the volunteer teams this year are the Stephenson's, including (top photo - clockwise from left) David, Zachary, Mandy, Trevor, Jared and Tata. At left - Sandrena Meyer, a staff partner with the American Cancer Society, Amarillo, serves punch during the meeting.



**Sudoku**

Answer to yesterday's puzzle:

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

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

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## San Antonio appeals rejected lawsuit

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The board of the San Antonio Water System has voted to appeal the dismissal of its \$1.2 billion water-rights lawsuit against the Lower Colorado River Authority.

"We feel we have been wronged," board chairman Alex Briseno said Monday. A judge in Austin threw out the lawsuit on Feb. 1, ruling that the LCRA was protected by sovereign immunity, so the San Antonio system would need legislative approval to sue.

The SAWS has accused the LCRA of breaching a water-sharing arrangement by killing plans to capture and resell excess water. The SAWS has paid the LCRA since 1999 to study projects that would generate water for San Antonio.

The LCRA told the SAWS last year that there would be no water available because of growing demands in the Colorado Basin, the San Antonio Express-News reported Tuesday.

"We are going to pursue what we've put into this project," SAWS President Robert Puente said. The SAWS wants \$1.2 billion from the LCRA to cover the cost of building a desalination plant on the Gulf coast. If that amount cannot be obtained, the board told the lawyers to ask for \$51 million, which would cover the cost of the studies and the lost time.

"We would like to get

back to the task of planning for the regional water needs of Texas," LCRA spokesman Robert Cullick said. More than \$1 million

already has been spent in legal fees on both sides, he said Monday after learning of the appeal.

The SAWS had to

appeal, otherwise the status of every water contract between two government agencies would be in doubt, Puente said.



## Dear Abby...

By Pauline & Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY: I am appalled and saddened when I go out to a restaurant and see the number of adults who force their children to eat. There are so many overweight people in the United States, why try to make a child finish a meal? They will eat when they are hungry; just don't give them anything between meals.

It hurts me to see parents say, "We can't leave until you clean your plate" -- like they are bad children for not eating. Please tell me if I'm off base on this issue. -- MILWAUKEE GRANDMA

DEAR GRANDMA: Perhaps you shouldn't judge so quickly. The problem of obesity in this country has less to do with parents force-feeding their children than with children and adults who are consuming fattening foods in excessive portions and not burning off the calories. It may be that the children you are seeing want to consume only sweet, sugary foods -- and the parents are simply trying to get them to eat a balanced meal.

DEAR ABBY: A member of our family is very difficult to get along with and has a low boiling point. We never know what is going to trigger the anger, nor how long it will last. This person also likes to play the victim. Everything gets blown out of proportion and 99 percent of the time is unmerited. To us, this behavior is rude, mean and cruel. Some people avoid personal contact because they are tired of having their feelings hurt.

We know we can't change this person, but is this a form of mental abuse? Should we continue to ignore the punishment we are getting and continue

to be kind and thoughtful and hope the mood will pass? -- TIRED OF THE TIRADES

DEAR TIRED: The tirades could be considered a form of mental abuse, but they could also be signs of substance abuse, a mental illness or a personality disorder. Your relative's behavior should not be ignored. In fact, I recommend you consult a licensed mental health professional to help you better understand what's going on and how to effectively deal with it.

DEAR ABBY: My parents will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary and my mother's 70th birthday in March. They have invited my siblings and me, plus our spouses and grandchildren for a Caribbean cruise. The celebration was planned around a time when most of us could take time off work and school. Unfortunately, the event coincides with my stepdaughter's due date. Her mother (my wife) has already said she will stay behind for the birth.

The problem is, my stepdaughter has said that anyone who misses the birth of her baby will not be allowed to have a relationship with her or her child. How do I make this right for my parents and my stepdaughter? -- TROUBLED IN ILLINOIS

DEAR TROUBLED: You can't. It will be up to your wife to make her daughter understand that the world doesn't revolve around her, and that her attempt to blackmail you into being there for the birth of the baby will not punish you or your family, but rather isolate herself and the child. It's a mistake she'll regret in the future.

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**Reasons to re-elect JUDGE RICHARD PEET**

- ❖ Instead of hiring outside professionals, Judge Peet has exhibited abilities above and beyond his serving in the office of county judge
- ❖ In 1997 Judge Peet acquired contracts with over 20 panhandle counties to utilize our Golden Phoenix facility at the Pampa Regional Medical Center, thereby bringing in revenue to Pampa and Gray County
- ❖ In 1998 Judge Peet saved the county thousands of dollars by personally writing the grant application that received \$595,000 from the governor's justice fund to build a juvenile rehab facility
- ❖ In 2000 Judge Peet saved the county about \$16,000 by doing the redistricting required by law following the 2000 census and will do it again this year
- ❖ In 2001 Judge Peet worked with Architexas in writing the master plan for courthouse restoration which resulted in Gray County receiving a grant of 3.8 million dollars from the state
- ❖ In 2005 and again in 2008 Judge Peet saved the county altogether about \$24,000 by writing the criteria for the establishing of reinvestment zones, which provides business incentives in Gray County

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### Lucky Winner



Melissa Parr was the winner of a \$2,500, 3/4 carat diamond pendant in a drawing held recently at Rheams Diamond Shop in Pampa. On hand to award the prized was (from left) Diana Britten of Rheams, Parr, Pat Montoya, president of the Pampa Chamber of Commerce, and Pam Williams of Rheams.

## State sales tax revenues down in Jan. compared to same month last year

Austin - The state collected \$1.66 billion in sales tax revenue in January, down 14.2 percent compared to January 2009, according to Texas Comptroller Susan Combs.

"Collections continue to be down in major industry sectors like retail trade, oil and natural gas production, construction and manufacturing," Combs said. "January's sales tax revenue was down by double digits compared to January 2009, which was the third highest collection month ever and was also the last month of year-over-year growth. We will continue to closely monitor sales tax revenue, and although we expect further collection declines in the near term, it is anticipated the rate of decline will moderate and then return to revenue growth sometime in the second quarter of 2010."

Combs sent \$618.2 million in local sales tax to Texas cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts, down 7.1 percent compared to sales tax distributions to local governments in February 2009.

January state sales tax collections and February's local sales

tax allocations represent sales made in December, and also include earlier sales by businesses that report sales tax to the Comptroller on a quarterly or annual basis.

The Comptroller sent \$417.7 million in sales tax to Texas cities, down 6.2 percent compared to February 2009 payments. Texas counties received February sales tax payments of \$35.1 million, down 15.1 percent compared to last February.

The 163 special purpose taxing districts around the state received \$24.6 million in sales tax, down 7.8 percent compared to February 2009. Ten local transit systems received \$140.6 million in February sales tax payments, down 7.5 percent compared to a year ago.

For details of February sales tax payments to individual cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose districts, locate the Monthly Sales Tax Allocation Comparison Summary Reports on the Comptroller's Web site at [www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/allocsum/compsum.html](http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/allocsum/compsum.html).

## Oil above \$75 as dollar weakens against the euro

Oil prices vaulted above \$75 a barrel Tuesday as the dollar weakened, making oil cheaper for investors holding other currencies.

By early afternoon in Europe, benchmark crude for March delivery was up \$1.23 at \$75.36 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. With markets closed Monday in the U.S. for the Presidents Day holiday, the contract last settled on Friday, falling \$1.15 to \$74.13.

Trading volume was light

in Asia as markets in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia remained closed for the Lunar New Year.

There is often a correlation between oil prices and the dollar's exchange rate, with investors' risk appetite and other factors moving funds back and forth between commodities like oil and the U.S. currency.

The dollar has made strong gains on the euro during the past weeks as some members of the European Union have struggled with large budget

deficits. The euro bounced back slightly on Tuesday, to \$1.3649 from \$1.3607 on Monday, as the EU appeared to take a tougher stance on Greece's deficit plights.

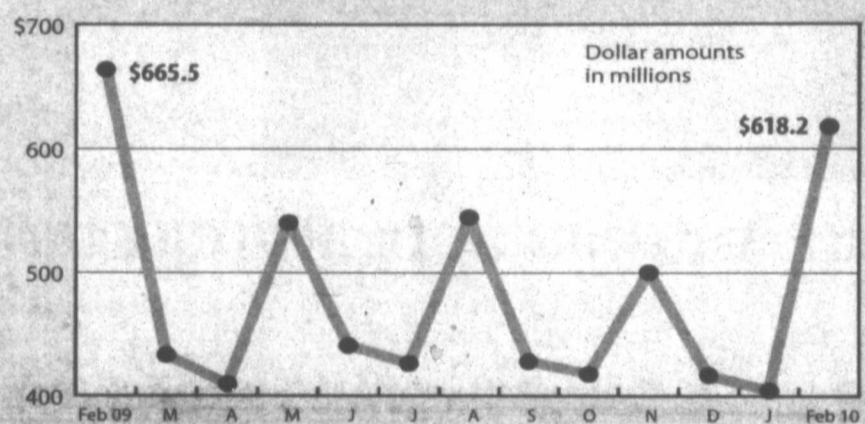
Oil has traded between \$69 a barrel and \$84 for the last few months as investors struggle to gauge global crude demand.

On Monday, Japan said its economy grew an annualized 4.6 percent in the fourth quarter while China raised reserve requirements for banks last week in a bid to slow economic growth and avoid asset bubbles.

### Susan Combs Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

#### Local Governments Sales Tax Allocations

Local governments will receive \$618.2 million in February 2010 sales tax allocations, down 7.1 percent compared to February 2009.



Source: Susan Combs, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

# Elect Mark Simmons for Gray County Commissioner Pct. 4

"Dedicated Enough to Serve. Concerned Enough to Listen."

I am Mark Simmons, 53 years old and a lifelong resident of Gray County. I grew up involved in farming, ranching, the auto and trucking businesses with my parents, Ted and Sue Simmons. I gained insight concerning the Commissioner's responsibilities from my dad who served as Pct. 4 Commissioner prior to Mr. Hefley. I graduated from McLean High School in 1974 and married my high school sweetheart, Becky. We have been married 36 years and have two precious daughters. We have a family business raising horses and cattle south of Alanreed and I am currently employed by Frank Phillips College in Borger, TX. I am a pilot (airplane & helicopter). Many in the Panhandle and here in Gray County know that Becky and I have always tried to assist and help our fellow neighbors. From soliciting, distributing and donating aid after the Wild Fires of 2006, helping many young people achieve their goals for higher education to helping assist with the smallest of things needed.

### Knowledgeable & Experienced

35 years in the workforce:

- 12 years at Frank Phillips College as head of the Warren Chisum Welding & Safety Center

- Instrumental in the design, fund appropriation, construction management, & completion of 3.2 million dollar facility.
- Work with legislatures involving state & federal appropriations & mandates to expand resources in these challenging economic times.
- Developed welding program from 6 students to 150 students
- Developed program to produce all graduates ready to enter as many fields as possible: Oil, Gas, Nuclear, Wind, and Power

- 5 years employed for Gray County, on roads and bridges. I have operated all of the heavy equipment required to maintain the 181 miles of roads and bridges in Pct. 4

- 5 years firsthand dragging roads, repairing bridges, and experiencing the daily operations
- I have a Commercial License with doubles, triples, & tanker endorsement.
- Competent mechanic;

maintained, repaired and over hauled heavy equipment

- 18 years employed in the Oil & Gas Industry, Nuclear Energy Field, Chemical Industry

- 14 years in supervision, management and engineering
- Certified Welding Inspector
- Worked with Roberts County property owners regarding water issues

My 35 years in industry, education, and management experiences have afforded me the opportunity to maintain solid working relationships with state legislatures and to stay current on wind and power technologies, oil & gas industries, water and natural resources and wildlife conservation.

### Dedicated

#### Communication

I will have an open door policy. We must have improved communication between people, our Commissioners, the other Gray County Officials, and State Legislatures to better serve you.

We must stay informed and involved at the local, county, state and federal levels to ensure responsible representation on oil, gas and wind development, farming and ranching, endangered species enactments and water and wildlife conservation.

#### Services

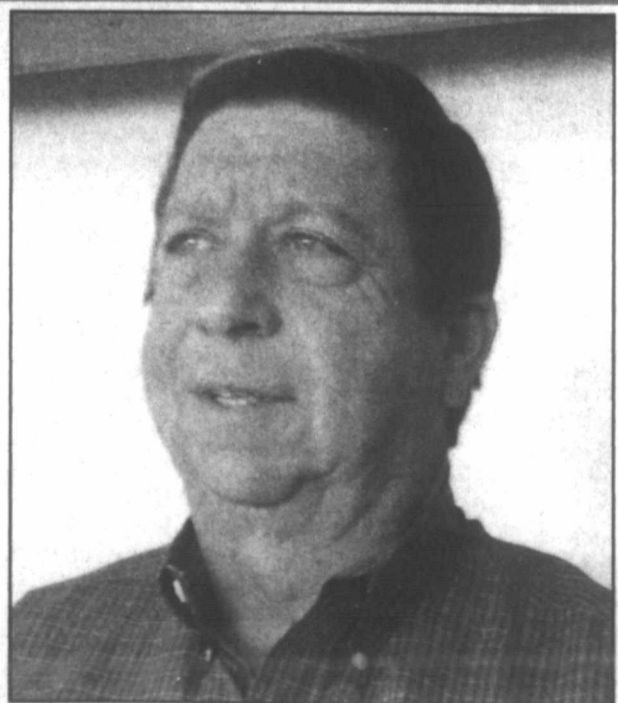
I believe the Commissioners office is a full time employee of the people and should be accessible to all residents of the county.

Precinct 4 has 181 miles of roads around McLean and Alanreed which must be maintained, oversight of the day to day operations, and with the current and future budget constraints it makes practical and economical sense to have the commissioner be from McLean/Alanreed and have firsthand experience in the Precinct 4 operations of the roads and bridges.

#### Budget

I believe in a balanced budget with accountability promoting conservative fiscal policies conducive to economical growth. The fiscal difficulties facing Gray County require replacing complacency with creative, innovative and belt-tightening methods. (Gray County suffered \$400,000 decrease in revenue the past 2 years & further losses from the King Trial - \$750,000 - which is 10% of annual budget.)

I believe that we must have our local house in order before we can expect higher government to comply. One of the fiercest enemies knocking at our door at all levels is complacency. We have too



Mark Simmons

much at risk not to act now and change the course we are now on. If you are ready to have your voice heard and want to be fully represented with resourceful, innovative and common-sense solutions, I am here to serve you. I am dedicated enough to serve you. I am concerned enough to listen to you. Contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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[markqsimmmons@hotmail.com](mailto:markqsimmmons@hotmail.com)

If you are concerned about your county, (Property Rights - Taxes - Appraisal Rates - County Services - Legislative & Federal Mandates - Eminent Domain - Power Line Right of Way)

I understand the issues, have the experience and I am the most qualified to represent you as Gray County Commissioner Pct. 4.

I am asking for Your Vote.

Know your candidate. Know the issues. Vote for the best representation.

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# Sports

## Weekly Migratory Bird Hunting Report

**West Zone Goose:** Almost a foot of snow on the ground in the High Plains got dark geese in the mood to decoy during the last weekend of the regular goose season. Outfitters said they took limits of

Canadas and a few snow geese to boot over corn and wheat. The regular goose season ended Feb. 7. The Light Goose Conservation Order began Feb. 8 and few hunters took advantage of the liberal rules.

Many did not want to fight the snow, and other did not want to fight the high percentage of adult snow geese in the population this year. Prospects are fair.

**East Zone Goose:** Stiff

east, southeast winds over the weekend aided snow goose hunters using e-callers. Many hunters reported better decoying action as a result of the mild temperatures and southerly winds. There are still good

numbers of geese on the coastal prairies, but that could change any day. Typically, five days plus or minus Valentine's Day sees snow geese begin to trickle back north. Some outfitters reported 20-30

bird shoots. With the cold front passing through early in the week, many pass-shooters took advantage of the 25-knot north winds which put many flights on the deck within shotgun range.

## Great Olympic comebacks by three figure skaters

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Comebacks make for great Olympics stories, and they come in many forms. Just look at what Seth Wescott, Bode Miller and Lindsey Vonn pulled off Monday.

Wescott came to the Winter Olympics as the reigning champion in snowboardcross, yet also as damaged goods. He hurt his leg and pelvis two months ago and it showed in the races since. The American opened

Monday's event by finishing 17th of the 32 riders in qualifying, but found his stride to reach the finals.

Then he found himself way back with five jumps left — only to make it up with a thrilling finish that snatched a gold from the host country.

Miller is America's most decorated Alpine skier and the guy who let everyone down in 2006, failing to finish higher than fifth. He didn't earn a medal at the two world championships

since then and considered retiring before deciding to give the Olympics one more try. After several days of weather delays, he was one of the first guys down the mountain. The result: a terrific time good enough for bronze, just nine-hundredths of a second behind the winner and only the third-ever downhill medal for the United States.

Vonn was the headliner coming into Vancouver, then all the hype seemed

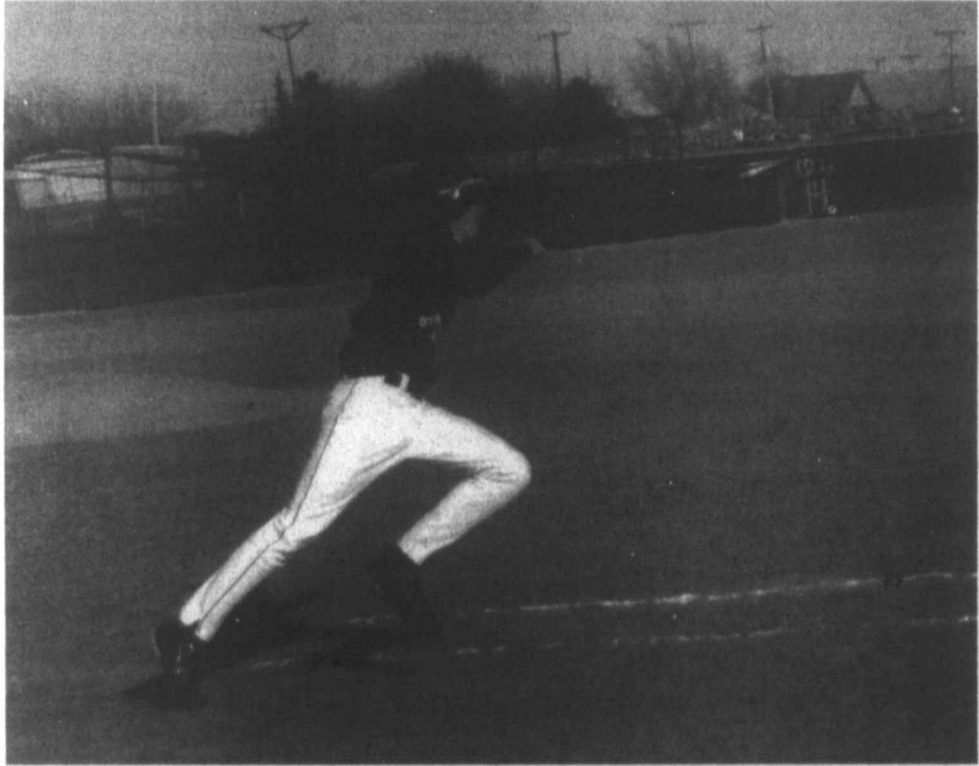
for naught when she revealed a shin injury that made it painful to even wear a ski boot. But the bad weather was a blessing for her recovery and in her first training run early Monday, on the upper section of the course, she had the fastest time in the field.

Then there was a downturn. A bumpy, afternoon run on the lower section left her hobbling again and hoping for more weather delays.

With Wescott's in-race

staff photo by **Andrew Glover**

Brent Jones runs to first after hitting the ball in the top of the second against Perryton. Jones would get a double on the play. Bottom photo Jones comes home on a double steal scoring the Harvesters Pampa won 13-11. The Harvesters will be scrimmaging at Borger Friday



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staff photo by **Andrew Glover**

Brent Jones comes home on a double steal in the second inning of the Harvesters 13-11 victory over the Perryton Rangers. This was the first time the Harvesters got to play outside due to the snow in the last two weeks. Pampa opens the regular season with the Cavalier Classic February 25-27 at Harvester field.

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**Baseball Fundraiser**  
 The Pampa Harvesters baseball team will have a brisket dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday at the Optimist Club to raise funds for the program. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$6 for children under eight years old. The team will also be selling t-shirts and bricks for their new backstop.

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Take a copy of The Pampa News with you on your getaway. Take a photo of family and friends holding the newspaper. We'll print your picture in the newspaper. So, whether you are going to Paris, France or Paris, Texas (or Clarendon for that matter)... take us along for the ride!

**Remember to:**

1. Identify every person in the photograph from left to right, front row first.
2. Give us some information about the trip and the landmark in the photo.
3. Give us the name of a contact person and a telephone number or email address.

To see your photo in the paper faster, email the photo and information to: rpribble@thepampanews.com. Have a great summer and a safe trip.



Mr. Tripplehorn,

*"I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them." Thomas Jefferson*

This is America and freedom of speech is the basis for our great society. However, your Point of Information article appears designed to illicit an emotional response. Are your assumptions and false allegations in the Point of Information a disguised effort to help re-elect the current Gray County Judge? My political ads are designed to address the problems we face in Gray County, and you made numerous false statements concerning the intent of my ads. I never mentioned any specific individuals and your allegations are presumptuous and possibly libelous.

This is America, and freedom of speech is the basis for our great society. The American Revolution began as a result of excessive taxation, and born of a desire to govern without the oppression of an elite aristocracy that had no contact with the people. Excessive taxation is a violation of our constitutional rights, and it is time that the taxpayers have a Gray County Judge who will listen to all of the citizens and not just an elite few. Change is never well accepted, but it is necessary to prevent foolish expenditures by those who are responsible for our tax dollars.

The Gray County Judge sets the budget, and spending continues to increase despite the loss of \$300,000 in revenues during the last 2 years. The \$750,000 dollars spent on the Levi King Murder trial will burden Gray County financial decisions for many years. How many Gray County citizens can afford a 10% decrease in their personal budgets without having to make serious changes in their lifestyles? The citizens of Gray County are taxed to the limit, and as our job market continues to decline what will bring new people to our community?

Since the election started, I have discussed the budget with various individuals from a cross section of our community. I contacted numerous county and district officials in the Texas Panhandle to gather information. To allow a capital murder trial expenditure that cost 10% of the total budget would not occur in other communities. Carson County joined the Indigent Defense Fund when it became available, yet Gray County did not. Who made the decision not to participate in the fund originally? Gray County spent \$750,000 prosecuting Levi King before deciding to join the fund. Our DA is now preparing for another murder trial, and how much more expense will that trial incur?

The job of a county commissioner is to maintain the roads, bridges, and waterways of the county. Mr. Tripplehorn, you do not live in my precinct; therefore, how do you know what occurs within my road system? During the snow, people in all the precincts were left without rural services for days. This was not from a lack of effort by the Gray County precinct employees; but rather, 15 years of the current Gray County Judge's budget. The reduced percentage of Gray County tax dollars available for vehicle fuel now makes it impossible to adequately maintain the roads of our county. The ad to which you refer compared a commissioner's salary against the fuel budget. Your assumptions and innuendos are incorrect, and lack factual basis.

My precinct budgeted \$225,000 in salaries for 2010 and \$39,000 for vehicle fuel. What do Gray County precinct employees do if they are not driving a truck or road grader? The analysis is simple because the majority of work must be performed with machines that require diesel fuel. The Gray County commissioners are operating on a budget that lacks adequate funding to perform their jobs. Those who work with large machinery can substantiate; the current Gray County fuel budget restricts anyone's ability to properly maintain 500 plus miles of rural county roads in Gray County.

I rhetorically asked the question, "How many Pampa residents know their Gray County commissioner?" The majority of votes for a Gray County commissioner are located within the city limits of Pampa. Most of the citizens with whom I communicate are unaware they have a Gray County commissioner, or the number of the county precinct in which they reside. The residents I questioned responded, "I do not know", or "Isn't that the guy who takes care of the roads?"

The city of Pampa owes over \$20 million in debt. Debt owed by any taxing entity within Gray County has a negative effect on "all" the citizens of Gray County. The economy of Gray County has changed, and one cannot ignore the fact that Gray County is losing its tax base. Gray County tax revenues will continue to decline as our population changes from my father's generation to the Hispanic children that now occupy the elementary schools of Pampa. We are the minority.

I personally spoke with the Mayor of Lefors the night before your "point of information" was published. All of the small rural communities in Gray County are negatively impacted by the loss of revenue. The citizens of McLean did not have road service during the recent snow storm, and the students attending school were forced to deal with ungraded roads for several days. Increases in the District Attorney's office salaries, the Levi King murder trial, and other expenses related to the backlog of the felony criminal dockets have wreaked havoc on the Gray County budget. The Gray County Judge sets the budget, and it is imperative to reduce the cost of operating the inefficient DA's office. There is no oversight in the District Attorney's office, and the 31st District needs an investigator that is autonomous to properly screen the cases filed.

The citizens of Gray County are suffering from excessive taxation. The appraisal value of your property increased at a time when the economy was driven by inflated oil prices. The "boom" is over, people can no longer find jobs, oil and gas reserves are depleted, and the tax appraisals completed on your home in 2008 are now unrealistic. If you cannot sell your home for its appraised value, your taxes are too high.

There are many who do not understand the workings of the Gray County Government, or the interplay of the commissioner's court and the judge. My ads are designed to stimulate the reader's curiosity to ask questions that need answers. The tax payers of Gray County need a County Judge that is accessible to all the citizens and not the elite few. Our primary concern must be to formulate a plan that will allow the efficient use of your tax dollars by creating a budget that maximizes output in government services and reduces the taxpayers' burden. Local government cannot continue to live on the backs of those who work hard for their money. It is time to reduce the Gray County budget, and the next Gray County Judge will have that power.

My comments concerning the snow were not directed to any one individual, and I find it problematic that Mr. Tripplehorn would make such assumptions. His "point of information" utilized language void of fact. I made a comparison of a commissioner's salary to the vehicle fuel allocated for the 2010 budget. My comments are meant to educate the citizens of Pampa and Gray County who do not have access to the budget. Not all of the voters I meet understand that the Gray County Judge sets the budget and the commissioners approve that budget and set the tax rate.

I have always disagreed with the fact that the Gray County Commissioners' is not a full time job. However, I have always agreed with others that my Commissioner has done an excellent job managing the financial resources provided to run his precinct.

The Gray County Judge sets the budget, and the commissioners approve that budget. The minutes from numerous Gray County Commissioner's meeting show the Gray County Judge voting on all decisions. In Texas, a county judge is not to vote unless there is a "tie vote" that needs a deciding vote. One must ask, "Why is the Gray County Judge voting if no tie vote exists?" Is the Gray County Judge forcing his budget on the Commissioner's Court?

Not one of my ads used a name or made reference to an individual; but rather, were analogies to provide facts that are important for all. I asked rhetorical questions to stimulate the reader's mind, and submitted facts taken from the Gray County Judge's budgets. The focus of my ads are to demonstrate that the precincts' fuel budgets were greatly reduced. I compared the total dollars of fuel for one year in the precinct against the commissioner's salary to dramatize the lack of fuel the employees would have for the big trucks and road graders.

Best Regards  
Steve N. Hall  
Attorney at Law

# Comics

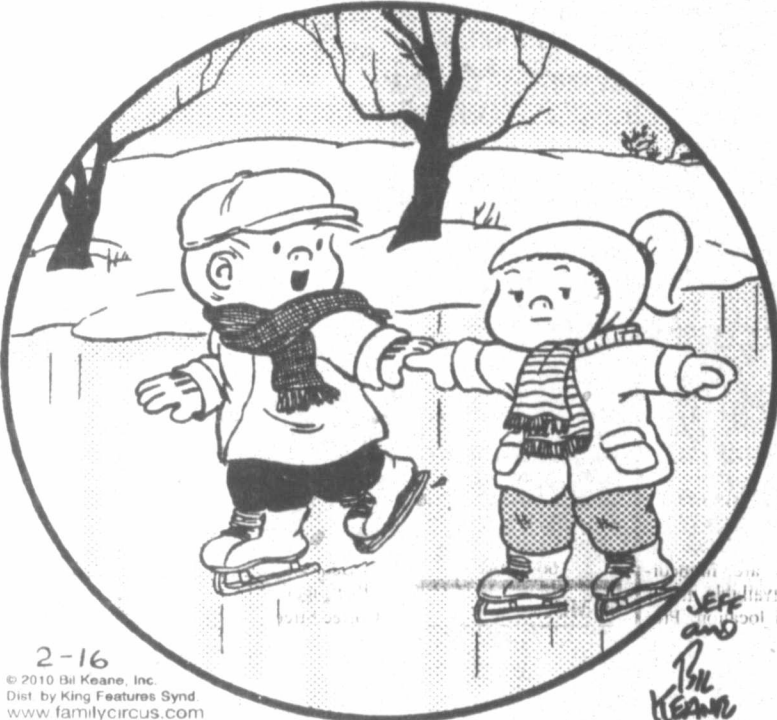
Marmaduke



"It took me 20 minutes to get dressed, so we are going for a walk."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



"Don't worry, Dolly, there aren't any judges watching us."

For Better Or Worse



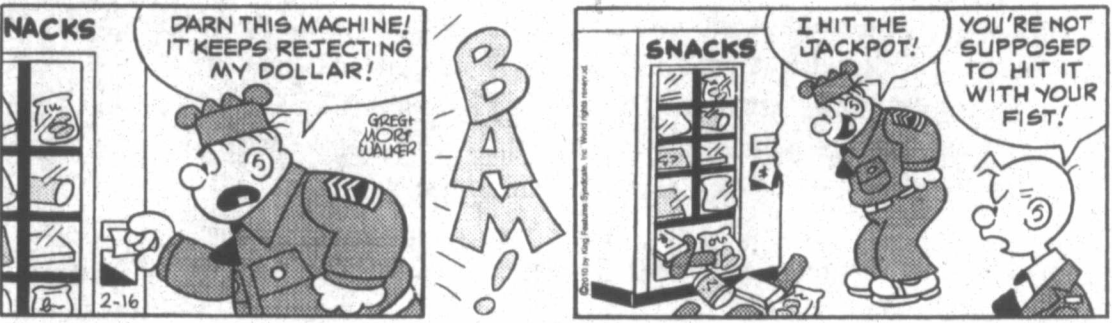
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Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



B.C.



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Flo & Friends



Daily Crossword Puzzle

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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1 Edinburgh 42 Dance native moves

5 Intolerant 43 Casual sort tops

10 Fad

12 Carried

13 "The Four of Hearts" writer

15 Boxing great

16 — Moines

17 Drs.' org.

18 Frees of suds

20 Strong — ox

21 Vegas lights

22 Circus structure

23 "Once upon —"

25 Overture

28 Sunday entree

31 Ages and ages

32 Bits of gossip

34 Cabinet wood

35 According to

36 Pilot-policing org.

37 "Hearts in Atlantis" writer

40 Ready for bed

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- 3 Using the Internet
- 4 Father's Day gift
- 5 Cookouts, for short
- 6 Debtor's letters
- 7 Axle gunk
- 8 Kind of band or show
- 9 Lease signer
- 11 Impassioned
- 14 "You betcha!"
- 19 Bath bars
- 20 Top players
- 24 Laments
- 25 Banquets
- 26 Blew one's top
- 27 Belong naturally
- 29 1959 hit for The Fiestas
- 30 Stupor
- 33 Wise ones
- 35 Doctorate degrees
- 38 Energy
- 39 Young fox

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Yesterday's answer

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# Sports

## Harvesters rallied past Perryton

BY ANDREW GLOVER  
aglover@thepampanews.com

The Pampa Harvesters baseball team finally took the field this season and won its opening scrimmage 13-11 over the Perryton Rangers at Frank Phillips College in Borger.

Head Coach Kaleb Snelgrooves said it was great to just be outside and on the field.

"We're excited to just be out here and see green grass," Snelgrooves said. "We're tired of taking ground balls inside and stuff. I some positives and some things we need to work on."

The scrimmage got off to a rough start for the Harvesters. After being held scoreless in the top of the first, Pampa allowed four runs on several hits and a walk. Pampa would turn things around after that starting in the second inning.

Brent Jones led the second inning off with a double to center field. That was followed with a single moving Jones to third. The Harvesters successfully executed a double steal of second and home. Jones scored on the throw to second. Snelgrooves said his team will be aggressive on the base paths.

"The things we've been doing inside are the finer things of bunting, and hit and run, and stealing," Snelgrooves said. "I told them I will never get on to you for being aggressive. I will be an aggressive coach so you be aggressive on the base paths."

Pampa scored another run to trail 4-2 after the top of the second. The Rangers were held scoreless in their half of the second only getting one hit. In the third inning Pampa scored three runs on two hits and took a 5-4 lead. Perryton was held scoreless in the bottom of the third and the Harvesters were held scoreless in the top of the fourth.

In the final two and a half innings the lead would change hands several times.



staff photo by Andrew Glover  
Hunter Hucks attempts a throw to first in hopes of completing a double-play in scrimmage against Perryton at Frank Phillips College in Borger. Pampa won 13-11.

The Rangers tallied three runs in the bottom of the fourth on four hits to regain the lead 7-5. In the top of the fifth, Pampa scored four runs on five hits and claimed a 9-7 lead going into the bottom of the fifth. The Rangers came back again scoring four runs to hold a 11-9 lead going into the top of the sixth.

The Harvesters scored four runs in the sixth and took the lead for good. The game was called in the middle of the sixth because there was not enough light to keep playing. Snelgrooves said his team needs to work on patience at the plate, communication and defense.

"We need to work on being patient at the plate," Snelgrooves said. "Communication. I have no problems talking I just need nine guys to talk with me. We're a little behind on defense because we had to work inside."

The Harvesters have one last scrimmage at Borger on Friday and will open the regular season with the Cavalier Classic from February 25-27.

## River Otters returning to TX Waterways

Sightings of the elusive Texas river otter have increased, some in unexpected places, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Biologist Gary Calkins. Otters have been spotted much farther west than expected, and even as far north as Wichita Falls.

"There were sightings in Gonzales, that was kind of a surprise," said Calkins, who leads TPWD's tri-annual effort to survey rivers and monitor otter population trends. "But the real westerly sightings, those stick out in my mind."

Calkins started receiving reports of otter sightings after two Passport to Texas radio broadcasts about his otter research aired last year. The biologist owes the sightings to more eyes looking and increased public interest rather than any significant change in the state otter population. Passport to Texas is TPWD's radio series of 90-second weekday feature stories airing on about 100 stations across the state.

These sightings are somewhat of a surprise, since usually otters like to keep out of sight of humans.

"Otters live in the water, and are not something people normally look for," said Calkins. "They are really kind of a shy, retiring animal and do most of

their hunting right at dawn or right at dusk so they are not something you are normally going to stumble across."

Historical range maps have shown in the past otters occurring from East to Central Texas, but too much trapping in the past limited them to the eastern quarter of the state. Department reports now show that the animals are returning to their historic range.

Calkins says river otters are an indicator of how healthy the surrounding environment is. Otters feed on things like fish and crawfish, which are very sensitive to pollutants.

"If you have crawfish and a lot of prey items in the waterway, otters are going to be more noticed in the system and show that it's generally doing well ecologically," said Calkins. "It shows there is enough food to sustain them, and the prey items are really sensitive so that's kind of a key."

These new developments with the state's otter population will be important in future research.

"What this is going to do is work as background information on what we do next on otter management," said Calkins.

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