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TODAY IN SPORTS



Friday, March 2, 2012 www.thepampanews.com Volume 107 • No. 272

75¢ \$1.50 weekend **Santorum's shifting education views** Are GOP hopeful's actions, words consistent? | p4 **Vernon proves too much** Five-run fourth downs Harvesters in Burkburnett | p10

Brandon's Flowers is 2012 BotY

ARNIE AURELLANO
 editor@thepampanews.com

It was an award decades in the making. Ever since Brandon Richards was 6 years old, he dreamed of owning his own flower shop in his hometown of Pampa. On Thursday evening at the 2012 Chamber Banquet, he was recognized for making that dream a reality, as Brandon's Flowers was named Pampa's 2012 Business of the Year.

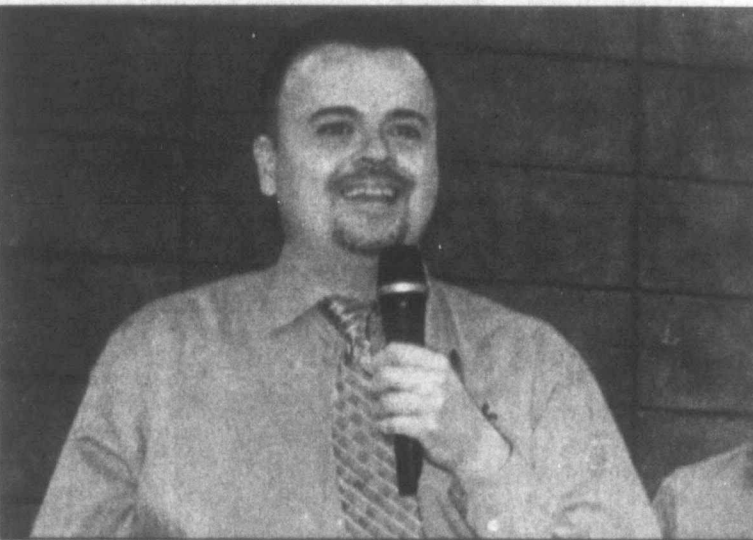
"It's amazing," said Richards upon receiving the honor. "I can't believe it. There are so many deserving businesses that have been here so long and that have done so much for the community that I can't believe they would choose me."

Smiling as he received congratulatory hugs from banquet guests, Richards made sure to deflect the praise onto his staff at the flower shop: Misty Hatfield, Donna Caskey, Debbie Cantrell, Lupe Martinez and Darlene Eads, who Richards all mentioned by name and who all came to be a part of the big night.

"I'm closer to them than most people in my life, so it was very important," Richards said. "It wouldn't have been the same without them."

Lynn Hancock, who introduced Brandon's Flowers as the Business of the Year winner, was effusive with compliments.

"When asked which business should be chosen Business of the Year, the answer is obvious, but first we must analyze several things," Hancock said. "The business must make Pampa proud, must present themselves through their business with the utmost professionalism, and bring a level of expertise that is above reproach. The Pampa Business of the Year does all of that this year. Walking into this business is like walking into a shop in New York. This year's Business of the Year combines Pampa pride, exceptional **BRANDON'S** cont. on page 3



SURPRISE!

Chamber shocks Richards, Curry with Business, Citizen of the Year awards

TOP: An overjoyed Brandon Richards takes the microphone to accept the award for Brandon's Flowers. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Richards and Faustina Curry stand with their plaques. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Curry is congratulated by former Chamber president Bob Pendergraft.



staff photos by Mollie Bryant and Arnie Aurellano

Curry awarded Citizen of the Year

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

Faustina Curry, a founding member of Pampa Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and a former Pampa city commissioner, was given the honor of this year's Citizen of the Year at the annual Pampa Chamber of Commerce banquet last night at 7 p.m. at M.K. Brown Auditorium.

"This year's recipient of Citizen of the Year has been described as a strong individual — strong in opinion, strong in spirit, strong in heart, strong in compassion and strong in the Pampa community," said Lynn Hancock in his introduction for the award.

Curry thanked her family during her acceptance speech, including her husband John, daughter Faustine, and son Stuart.

"I am so lucky and so blessed, because I have this great family, this great husband who really always supports me, even when he thinks I'm crazy," said Curry. "I have wonderful friends. The Wutherly Sunday school class, I couldn't even begin to tell you how wonderful they are and how supportive."

PAWS is only the latest in Curry's long list of community projects. Under Curry's leadership, PAWS has worked diligently to raise awareness of the Pampa Animal Shelter, and its adoption rate has rocketed from five to 10 animals a month to 45 to 50. But she will be the first to tell you that this wasn't done alone.

"I couldn't do this without the community," said Curry. "PAWS is one example, but I couldn't do anything with PAWS without everybody pitching in. The PAWS group

are wonderful people, all of them, and nobody can do this by themselves. If I didn't have all these wonderful PAWS volunteers who work endlessly trying to help take care of all these animals that are at the shelter, it wouldn't get done. It's just absolutely wonderful."

She's been so dedicated to the cause that, even before she learned that she'd won, she slipped emcee Lynn Hancock an announcement to let the gathered crowd know that a group of dogs was waiting at the Pampa Animal Shelter for a good home.

Curry closed with great gratitude for the award.

"I don't know if I deserve this, but I'm so thankful that you see the good that we're doing in Pampa," she said. "As you know, I never **CURRY** cont. on page 3

• FOR MORE ON FAUSTINA CURRY AND BRANDON'S FLOWERS, CHECK OUT THE COMMEMORATIVE 2012 CHAMBER BANQUET SECTION NEXT WEEK •

County Commission approves audit of previous fiscal year

County 'very stable and very good' financially

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

At its meeting yesterday at 9 a.m. at the County Courthouse, Gray County commissioners approved an audit of its previous fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30 of last year. John Merriss, senior auditor of Doshier, Pickens, and Francis, LLC, described the county's financials as "very stable and very good."

"Your county as a whole is in really great shape," said Merriss. "You have excellent cash balances, you're keeping your liability down low comparatively, and you're maintaining a healthy fund balance."

For the previous fiscal year, the county's total net assets stood at \$14,453,042, which was a \$102,144 decrease from the 2009-2010 fiscal year, due to an increase in expenditures. Unrestricted cash assets stood at \$4,526,937.

"Your cash in the county, both unrestricted and restricted, is up about \$242,000 this year," said Merriss. "Most of that is due to an increase in charges for services and your operating grants and contributions."

Delinquent taxes receivable saw an increase of about \$157,000.

"The main reason for that is during our analysis of those receivables this year, we realized the tax assessor was collecting more than we were estimating she was going to collect," said Merriss.

Total liabilities for the county stood at \$1,768,043, with noncurrent liabilities down about \$151,000.

Ultimately, Merriss gave a positive review of the county's financials for the previous fiscal year.

"I think you're in excellent condition," he said. "The court seems to be managing your funds responsibly and effectively. You're building a healthy fund balance in the case of planned future events or in the case of unexpected occurrences, and you're maintaining your budget **COUNTY** cont. on page 3

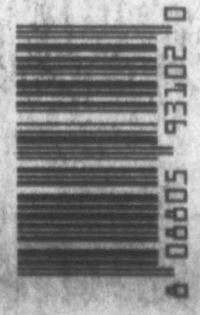
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 Tisha Holman Associate (806) 440-4153

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PAMPA FORECAST

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 47 Low 25	High 56 Low 30	High 66 Low 35

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 47. Wind chill values between 25 and 35 early. North northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 25. Wind chill values between 17 and 22. North northwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 56. West wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 30. West wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 66. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southeast.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 35. South southeast wind between 5 and 10 mph.

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BANANAGRAMS!

Each of the words below can be turned into another word on the list by changing one letter and then rearranging it to form a new word. For example, REGIMENT can be turned into STEERING by changing the M to an S.

LEVEL

1. FANATIC
2. STAMINA
3. EARTHEN
4. DIETARY
5. ANIMATE
6. AIRDATE
7. CAPTAIN
8. BENEATH

Yesterday's Answer: Common H, BROACH, HERBAL, GATHER, SHADOW

Dems, GOP cancel grassroots conventions

AUSTIN (AP) — The Democratic and Republican parties in Texas are giving up their grass-roots precinct conventions this year to ensure scheduled state meets occur on time.

"That's just not an option this year," Republican Party of Texas spokesman Chris Elam said Monday. "We have to have delegates to our state convention in order to have a state convention, and they are chosen at county and (senate) district conventions."

Usually those delegates are selected at precinct conventions on primary night after polls close.

Party members attending those open conventions, often in living rooms, choose delegates to the county or senate district conventions who, in turn, pick people for the state conventions.

The trouble is, the primary night that starts the ball rolling keeps retreating — from March to April and now May. Both parties hold their state conventions, when they pick people to go on to the national conventions and elect their presidential nominee, the first week of June.

(The party nominees in modern history have been selected through the primary process, leaving national con-

ventions more of a rally for the 'presumed nominee' than a contested race to the wire).

The parties selected host cities, blocked off hotel space and reserved convention centers more than a year ago, and neither convention is going to move.

If a San Antonio panel of judges comes up with a final map showing state house and U.S. Congressional lines by Friday, the primaries can still be on May 29 where they now sit on the calendar.

"We don't have that confirmed," Texas Democratic Party spokeswoman Rebecca Acuña said. "Because, we still don't have maps."

Meanwhile, the state Republican and Democratic parties have figured out they can keep their statewide convention dates the first weekend of June if they forego the precinct conventions.

Spokespeople for each party said Monday the local politicians are welcome to schedule and hold those tiniest of conventions if they determine it is "feasible and logical."

Those are words used in a Republican note sent to members Sunday,

and the county parties are still welcomed by their state leaders to gather and come up with resolutions for the larger conventions.

But, both parties' leadership are looking at the next level, the senate district conventions, which usually happen a couple of weekends after the primaries. Longview's Senate District 1 includes all of 14 counties plus most of Smith County under maps drawn in 2003.

Going into today's GOP votes in Michigan and Arizona, Mitt Romney led Rick Santorum, 105-71 delegates. If the race tightens, Texas Republicans could have a loud voice in a May or June primary, possibly even the last big voice if the primary follows California's June 5 vote.

The Republicans would have preferred to have their voice heard on March 6 when the state's elected lawmakers set it, Elam said.

"It's looking like it could be a closer race than we've had in quite a while," he added. "If it does work out that we could influence at the end of the race, there would be a lot of expectation to get increased attention."

Obituaries

Peggy Jo Turner, 80

Peggy Jo Turner, 80, went to be with the Lord Jesus Christ after a lengthy illness Tuesday, February 28, 2012, in Decatur. She was surrounded by her loving family.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 3, 2012, at Central Baptist Church of Pampa, with Rev. Norman Rushing, pastor, and Rev. Rick Parnell, associate pastor, officiating.

Burial will be at Fairview Cemetery under the direction of Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors.

Peggy was born the youngest of seven siblings March 2, 1931, to Thomas and Minnie Lewis in Wilbarger County. She attended school in Vernon, where she was Valedictorian of her high school graduating class in May of 1948. Peggy graduated from Howard Payne University in 1952 and later taught school in Water Valley and Archer City. In August 1955, she married Claude Amos Turner and moved to Pampa later that same year. She was an employee of Cabot Corp in Pampa and later served as Church Secretary at Central Baptist Church for 27 years. Peggy was a faithful and loving wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, and Christian servant. She cherished her children, her grandchildren and her friends. She set a Godly example by living her life through selfless devotion, sacrifice and service to others and will be greatly missed. Peggy was preceded in death by her husband Claude Turner, her son-in-law, Larry Hicks, and all six of her siblings.

She is survived by five children, Randy Turner and wife Pamela of Aurora, Rhonda Hicks of Gruver, Ronnie Turner of Groom, Regina Orr and husband Steven of Floydada, and Amy Turner of Guymon, Okla.; thirteen grandchildren; and twelve great-grandchildren. The family will receive friends from 5:30-7:30 p.m.



Turner

Friday, March 2, 2012, at Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Home in Pampa.

The family requests gifts in Peggy's memory be made to Solaris Hospice, 2250 S. FM 51 Suite 400, Decatur, TX 76234, or the Sunday School Literature Fund at a Christian church of your choice.

Sign the online register at www.carmichael-whitley.com.

Viola Gifford, 81

Amarillo—Viola Gifford, 81, died February 29, 2012, in Amarillo.

Memorial services may be held at a later date. Cremation and arrangements are under the direction of Carmichael-Whitley Funeral Directors of Pampa.

Mrs. Gifford was born May 28, 1930 in Oklahoma City. She had been a resident of Pampa since the 1950's until she moved to Amarillo in 2010. She owned and operated several businesses in Pampa.

Viola is survived by seven daughters, Sharon Couch of Guymon, Okla., Susie White and husband Tim of Yuma, Ariz., Connie Hartness of Pampa, Nita Mize and husband Les of Lefors, Linda Littlefield and husband Wade of Canyon, D. D. Gee of Shawnee, Okla., and Sis Boaz and husband Freddie of Borger; two sons, Bob Scott of Guymon, Okla. and Wayne Gifford of Pampa; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Viola was preceded in death by her husband, Alva Gifford; two sons, Butch Griffin and Barney Beesley; and a daughter, Karen Mills.

Memorials may be made to Vivian's Nursing Home, 508 N. Taylor, Amarillo, TX 79107.

Sign the online register at www.carmichael-whitley.com.



Gifford

For the record

Police Department

The Pampa Police Department reported the following incidents for the 24 hour period ending Thursday, March 1 at 7 a.m.

Animal Control agents and Pampa PD reported 17 animal related incidents.

Pampa PD reported nine traffic related incidents. Pampa EMS responded to eight medical calls.

Wednesday, Feb. 29
Disorderly conduct occurred at the 1100 block of West Foster.

A hit and run occurred at

60 and Price.

Criminal mischief occurred at the 1300 block of West Wilks.

Harassment was reported.

Fraud was reported.

An accident occurred at the 1500 block of North Hobart.

Criminal mischief was reported. A burglary occurred at the 800 block of East Beryl.

Phone harassment occurred at the 1400 block of East Kingsmill.

A suspicious person was reported at 19th and Banks.

A stolen vehicle was reported at the 800 block of East Campbell.

Thursday, March 1
A prowler was reported at the 800 block of East Kingsmill.

A domestic disturbance occurred at the 100 block of South Starkweather.

A suspicious person was reported at the 2900 block of Rosewood.

A prowler was reported at the 800 block of East Locust.

An accident occurred at Kentucky and Hobart.

A theft was reported at the 700 block of East Craven.

A suspicious vehicle was reported at the 1900 block of North Hobart.

Sheriff's Office

The Gray County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests for the 24 hour period ending Thursday, March 1 at 7 a.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 29
Shelly Deann Stover, 31, was arrested by police for theft of property over \$1,500 and under \$20,000.

Jacklyn Marie Medley, 21, was arrested by a Le-

fors Marshall on charges of resisting arrest, assault of a public servant and capias pro fine times four.

Zeek Dane Gage, 20, was arrested by a Lefors Marshall for public intoxication.

Alexander Antonio Galaviz, 18, was arrested by police on charges of possession of marijuana, capias pro fine and public intoxication.

Royce Clay Adams, 48, was arrested by deputies for theft of property over \$1,500 and under \$20,000.

Armando Jonathan Banda, 20, was arrested by deputies on charges of a violation of promise to appear, minor in possession of alcohol and no driver's license.

Mecca Cheyanne Dodd, 19, was arrested by deputies for possession of a controlled substance.

Dustin Blake Tollison, 29, was arrested by deputies for possession of a controlled substance.

Thursday, March 1
Marie Lester Tosh, 48, was arrested by police for possession of a controlled substance.

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MORNINGRUSH

Santorum jabs Romney on contraceptives

Federal court orders May primary

AUSTIN (AP) — The federal court in San Antonio has ordered Texas to hold its primary elections on May 29, resolving for now one of the biggest issues in the state's redistricting battles.

The three-judge panel issued the election schedule two days after releasing political maps for Texas to use in the 2012 election. Legal disputes over the maps for congressional and House districts have kept Texas from holding elections.

In the primary schedule released Thursday, the filing period for candidates reopens on Friday and closes on March 9. County election officials will mail out voter registration cards on April 25 and any run-off elections will be held on July 31.

While the court order clarifies the election schedule, some minority groups complain that the election maps are unfair and are seeking changes.

Texas gas prices jump a nickel

HOUSTON (AP) — A survey finds that retail gasoline prices across Texas have jumped a nickel in the past week.

AAA Texas on Thursday reported the average price statewide has reached \$3.57 per gallon.

The association says gas prices nationally rose at a higher pace, adding 13 cents to average \$3.74 per gallon.

Dallas had the most expensive gasoline in Texas this week, at \$3.59 a gallon. Amarillo had the least expensive price at the pump, at \$3.41.

AAA says continuing tensions in the Middle East have continued to pressure market crude oil prices, leading to concerns about future supplies.

High demand expected for grid

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The operator of the main Texas electric power grid says it expects a slim margin this summer between demand and capacity for generating electricity.

In its annual preliminary summer assessment released Thursday, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas says efforts are already under way to enhance voluntary reductions in power demand during peak hours this coming summer.

In a statement, ERCOT Vice President Kent Saathoff said above-normal temperatures are expected this summer, although not as extreme as last summer's. If those expectations are borne out, he says ERCOT expects to be able to meet peak demand for electric power unless there are an unusual number of generation outages.

Jury deliberates on fraud case

HOUSTON (AP) — Jailed Texas tycoon R. Allen Stanford waits to learn his fate.

Jurors in the financier's fraud trial in Houston resumed deliberations in federal court Thursday.

The jury deliberated about two hours Wednesday after hearing closing arguments from prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Defense attorneys told jurors Stanford created thousands of jobs through his legitimate business empire and never failed to repay investors who bought certificates of deposit, or CDs, from his Caribbean bank.

Prosecutors countered that Stanford bilked investors out of more than \$7 billion through CD sales and flushed away their money on a "lavish lifestyle and his loser companies."

If convicted, Stanford could be sentenced to more than 20 years in prison. His trial began Jan. 23.

Woman kills to collect on insurance

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The 31-year-old daughter of a San Antonio police sergeant has been convicted of murdering her boyfriend and father of her child to collect on his insurance policy.

The San Antonio Express-News (<http://bit.ly/A9Dgie>) reports the Bexar (BAYR) County jury deliberated for more than two hours before finding Vanessa Cameron guilty in the death of 26-year-old Allen Johnson Jr. two years ago.

The Express-News reports state District Judge Ron Rangel will decide her sentence later this month. Cameron could be sentenced to up to life in prison.

According to trial testimony, Johnson had taken out a \$750,000 life insurance policy less than a year before his body was found at an east San Antonio graveyard. Cameron was accused of hiring two people to kill him.

Fire forces N.M. closure of I-40

SANTA ROSA, N.M. (AP) — A wind-whipped fire has forced the closure of Interstate 40 in eastern New Mexico.

New Mexico State Forestry spokesman Dan Ware says the Cuervo Fire started at 1 p.m. Thursday about 20 miles east of Santa Rosa.

Winds gusting between 30 and 40 mph have helped to push the fire across an estimated 200 acres of grass on private land. Four outbuildings have been destroyed.

Fifty firefighters, 15 engines and five water tenders are responding to the fire.

Ware says the cause of the fire is unknown.

Pro-life signature drive in Okla.

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — An anti-abortion group that wants to ban abortions in Oklahoma is launching a signature drive with the goal of amending the state Constitution to define a fertilized human egg as a human being.

Officials with Personhood Oklahoma filed their proposed ballot title with the secretary of state's office on Thursday. The group now has 90 days to gather signatures from about 155,000 registered voters. If successful, supporters hope to have a question on the state ballot in November that defines a human being "from the beginning of the biological development."

Organizer Dan Skerbitz says if approved, the amendment would ban abortions and outlaw certain forms of birth control.

The Oklahoma State Medical Association opposes so-called personhood measures, saying they will threaten the practice of reproductive medicine.

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Seizing an opportunity to instill doubts about Mitt Romney's conservative credentials, Rick Santorum on Thursday said his presidential rival's gut reaction to a Senate measure that would have repealed mandatory health coverage for contraceptives shows the former Massachusetts governor is not conservative "at the core."

Romney opened himself to criticism the day before by telling a reporter that he opposed a Republican bill to block President Barack Obama's policy on contraceptive insurance coverage. Hours later, Romney reversed himself and said he had misunderstood the question.

But the damage was done. Santorum used the opening to score political points just five days before Super Tuesday's 10-state voting, suggesting that Romney was too moderate to defeat Obama in November.

"We aren't going to win with someone who doesn't excite the very people that we need to excite," Santorum said during a rally inside the New Life Assembly of God church. "We won 2010 not because we nominated moderates!"

The issue of contraceptive coverage resonates with conservative primary voters, but it also offers a contrast between each party's priorities that could have general election ramifications. While the issue roiled the Republican presidential contest, Obama railed against oil and gas company subsidies in New Hampshire.

The dispute offered a window into Romney's fundamental challenge in his second White House bid. He dominates his opponents

with money and organization, but he has struggled to win over his party's right flank because of lingering concerns about his social conservative bona fides. The turnout in message also allowed his critics to once again label him a flip-flopper.

Addressing a town hall-style meeting in North Dakota, Romney briefly spoke in favor of the Senate provision that pitted religious freedom against women's privacy rights and riled Americans in this volatile election year. He called Obama's decision to compel insurance companies to offer contraceptive coverage — even for employees of religious-affiliated institutions — "an attack on the First Amendment."

"Fortunately, there's an effort in Washington to stop that, to reverse that," Romney said.

That effort failed, however. The Senate voted 51-48 to kill an amendment offered by Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., that would have allowed employers and insurers to opt out of portions of the president's health care law they found morally objectionable. That would have included the law's requirement that insurers cover the costs of birth control.

Democrats said the measure would have allowed employers and insurers to opt out of virtually any medical treatment with the mere mention of a moral or religious objection.

A spokesman for Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich, R.C. Hammond, said if Gingrich had been a senator, he would have voted for the Blunt amendment. "The government doesn't have a role in dictating people's religion to them," Hammond said.

Separately, Gingrich's campaign said it was issuing an anti-Santorum "robocall" challenging Santorum's fiscal conservative record.

"As a senator from Pennsylvania, Santorum cozied up to the labor bosses and voted for the AFL-CIO and against a national right to work bill that would have let workers opt out of paying union dues," say the automated call, which will go to 150,000 households in both Oklahoma and Tennessee, among the states set to vote Tuesday.

Santorum, long considered a social conservative, has risen to the top-tier in the GOP contest by welcoming opportunities to stray away from the issue voters say is their top concern: the nation's economy. At a campaign rally in Atlanta, he said Romney's "gut reaction" should have been to support the bill Republican bill.

Romney spokeswoman Andrea Saul challenged Santorum's claim of being a core conservative, saying "his 'gut reaction' is to 'take one for the team' instead of standing up for what he says he believes in." Saul's reference was to the former Pennsylvania senator's recent explanation that he voted for the No Child Left Behind education law, which he opposed, because politics is a "team sport" and that "sometimes, you take one for the team."

Saul called Santorum a Washington insider and said "Romney's team is the American people."

The contraceptive flap overshadowed a dispute in Michigan, where state GOP officials changed the way they award 30 delegates from the presidential primary a day after the tally showed native son Romney and Santorum each getting 15.

Brandon's

expertise in their business, and mixes it with true love of their hometown and the people who live here."

That true love is something that Richards and his staff takes to heart, and he added that, since Brandon's Flowers opened in 1992, supplying Pampans with the flowers that accompany their most important moments is a privilege he has held very dear.

Curry

thought I was going to stay here, and I've been here, and I love it. I'd do anything for Pampa, and I'll work hard, but right now, my emphasis is on animals."

County

the way that you're supposed to."

In other business, the commission: • accepted a three year oil and gas lease, amounting to about \$1.3 million, for Gray County School Lands in Gaines, with money from the lease to go towards school districts in the county;

- approved a road crossing at CR12;
- approved seven budget amendments;
- approved a \$10,000 bond for Deputy Treasurer;
- recognized the continuing education of District Clerk and County Court Coordinator;
- approved a resolution declaring March American Red Cross month;
- decided to not renew a contract between Gray County Sheriff's Office and Carrier Corporation for HVAC maintenance;
- approved a \$3,500 bid for a low boy trailer;
- approved a tax bid of \$507 for 701 Cedar in McLean; and
- approved tax bids on property in Pampa from the Tax Assessor-Collector, dated Jan. 21, 2012.

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cont. from page 1

he said. "It was just a childhood dream, and I opened (the store) basically to get it out of my system so I could move onto something else. I didn't think I could compete with the older shops, but I went ahead and took that plunge. I'm so happy I did."

The Michigan Republican Party Credentials Committee voted 4-2 Wednesday night to instead award 16 delegates to Romney and 14 to Santorum.

Santorum spokesman Hogan Gidley blasted the decision as a "backroom deal."

"We never thought the Romney campaign would try to rig the outcome of an election by changing the rules after the vote. This kind of back-room dealing, political thuggery just cannot and should not happen in America," he said.

Twenty-eight of Michigan's delegates were awarded based on the results in each of the state's 14 congressional districts. Two went to the winner of each district. Romney and Santorum each won seven districts, so those 28 delegates were split.

The final two delegates were supposed to be awarded proportionally, based on the statewide vote, according to a memorandum circulated by the Credentials Committee. That would result in one delegate apiece, giving each candidate a total of 15 delegates.

Instead, the credentials committee said a new rule adopted Feb. 4 was written incorrectly, and the party intended all along to give both delegates to the winner of the statewide vote — in this case, Romney.

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Viewpoints

Today in History

Today is Friday, March 9, the 69th day of 2012. There are 297 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 9, 1862, during the Civil War, the ironclads USS Monitor and CSS Virginia (formerly USS Merrimac) clashed for five hours to a draw at Hampton Roads, Va.

On this date:

In 1661, Cardinal Jules Mazarin, the chief minister of France, died, leaving King Louis XIV in full control.

In 1796, the future emperor of the French, Napoleon Bonaparte, married Josephine de Beauharnais (boh-ahr-NAY'). (The couple later divorced.)

In 1861, the Confederate Congress, meeting in Montgomery, Ala., authorized the issuing of paper currency, in the form of interest-bearing notes.

In 1916, Mexican raiders led by Pancho Villa attacked Columbus, N.M., killing 18 Americans.

In 1932, Eamon de Valera was appointed head of government of the Irish Free State.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. B-29 bombers launched incendiary bomb attacks against Japan, resulting in an estimated 100,000 deaths.

In 1954, CBS newsmen Edward R. Murrow critically reviewed Wisconsin Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy's anti-Communism campaign on "See It Now."

In 1962, the science fantasy novel "A Wrinkle in Time" by Madeleine L'Engle was first published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

In 1977, about a dozen armed Hanafi Muslims invaded three buildings in Washington, D.C., killing one person and taking more than 130 hostages. (The siege ended two days later.)

In 1987, Chrysler Corp. announced it had agreed to buy the financially ailing American Motors Corp.

In 1992, former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (meh-n-AH'-kehrn BAY'-gihn) died in Tel Aviv at age 78.

In 1997, gangsta rapper The Notorious B.I.G., whose real name was Christopher Wallace, was killed in a still-unsolved drive-by shooting in Los Angeles; he was 24.

Ten years ago: Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, the 1960s black power radical formerly known as H. Rap Brown, was convicted in Atlanta of murder in the shooting death of Fulton County Sheriff's Deputy Ricky Kinchen. (Al-Amin was sentenced to life without parole.) The space shuttle Columbia's astronauts released the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit after five days of repairs. Melissa Gilbert was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild, defeating challenger Valerie Harper.

Five years ago: Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and FBI Director Robert S. Mueller acknowledged the FBI had improperly used the USA Patriot Act to secretly pry out personal information about Americans; they apologized and vowed to prevent further illegal intrusions. Brad Delp, lead singer for the band Boston, was found dead in his southern New Hampshire home; he was 55.

One year ago: After a trip to the International Space Station, shuttle Discovery ended its career as the most flown U.S. spaceship, returning from orbit for the last time. Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn signed legislation abolishing the death penalty in his state and commuting the sentences of all remaining death row inmates. Turkish television aired an interview with Moammar Gadhafi in which the Libyan leader said his countrymen would fight back if Western nations imposed a no-fly zone to prevent the regime from using its air force to bomb government opponents.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. James L. Buckley, Conservative-N.Y., is 89. Singer-actress Keely Smith is 80. Singer Lloyd Price is 79. Actress Joyce Van Patten is 78. Actor-comedian Marty Ingels is 76. Country singer Mickey Gilley is 76. Actress Trish Van Devere is 71. Singer Mark Lindsay (Paul Revere and the Raiders) is 70. Former ABC anchorman Charles Gibson is 69. Rock musician Robin Trower is 67. Singer Jeffrey Osborne is 64. Country musician Jimmie Fadden (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 64. Actress Jaime Lyn Bauer is 63. Magazine editor Michael Kinsley is 61. TV newscaster Faith Daniels is 55. Actor Tom Amandes is 53. Actor-director Lonny Price is 53. Actress Linda Fiorentino is 52. Country musician Rusty Hendrix (Confederate Railroad) is 52. Actress Juliette Binoche is 48. Rock musician Robert Sledge (Ben Folds Five) is 44. Rapper C-Murder is 41. Actor Emmanuel Lewis is 41. Actress Jean Louisa Kelly is 40. Actor Kerr Smith is 40. Rapper Chingy is 32. Actor Matthew Gray Gubler is 32. Actress Brittany Snow is 26. Rapper Bow Wow is 25. Actor Luis Armand Garcia is 20.

Thought for Today: "Cowardice asks, Is it safe? Expediency asks, Is it politic? Vanity asks, Is it popular? But conscience asks, Is it right?" — William Morley Punshon, English clergyman (1824-1881).



Santorum's shifting views on education

ANDREW MIGA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum is scornful of the government's hand in public education, saying schooling is the task of parents and pointing out that he and his wife have home-schooled their seven children.

Yet back when Santorum was a senator from Pennsylvania, he got a Pittsburgh-area school district to help pay tens of thousands of dollars in tuition for his children to receive online schooling.

It's a bit of history that's unknown to most of those now hearing Santorum pitch for conservative votes he needs to overtake GOP frontrunner Mitt Romney.

Santorum says he wants to dramatically curtail the role states and the federal government play in running schools.

"Not only do I believe the federal government should get out of the education business, I think the state government should start to get out of the education business and put it back with the local and into the community," Santorum said in a recent debate in Arizona with his GOP rivals.

He mocks America's schools as "factories" that stand as "anachronistic" relics of the Industrial Revolution and says he would home-school his kids in the White House if he becomes president. The Los Angeles Times dubbed him perhaps "the most prominent" home-schooler in America.

In the fall of 2004, Santorum's use of tax dollars to pay for his kids' home schooling became controversial because his family was primarily living in Leesburg, Va., an outer suburb of Washington. Following a local newspaper report, the Penn Hills School District near Pittsburgh tried to recover about \$73,000 that it contended the state wrongly sent to an Internet-based charter school because although the Santorums owned a house in the school district, they were living out of state. The Pennsylvania Education Department in 2006 agreed to pay the district \$55,000 to settle the dispute.

The cyberschool controversy

dogged Santorum through his 2006 Senate re-election bid and contributed to his 18-point loss to Democrat Bob Casey. Santorum's campaign did not respond this week to questions about his family's online instruction, and it's not known whether his children received teaching at home in addition to what they got online.

The Santorums withdrew their children from the cyberschool and resumed home schooling after Penn Hills officials complained about the tuition payments. Students in cyberschools log onto computers to access their assignments and teachers.

The National Home Education Research Institute, which specializes in home-school research, estimated in spring 2010 there were more than 2 million home-schooled students, about 3 percent of the school-age population. Brian D. Ray, president of the institute, said while he didn't know what percentage of those students use online charter schools, he has watched it grow significantly over the past five years.

Pennsylvania law requires school districts to pay for resident students who enroll in cyberschools, and Santorum at the time of the controversy said the Penn Hills house was his family's legal residence and that he paid taxes for it.

Erin Vecchio, a former Penn Hills school board member and former head of the local Democratic committee, at the time questioned whether it was proper for the school district to pay the cyberschool tuition for five of Santorum's children because they spent most of their time at his home in Virginia. She said Santorum should have reimbursed the district for the tuition costs.

"He should have been held accountable for that money, but he wasn't," Vecchio said in a recent telephone interview with the AP. "When he found a program that he could use to his advantage, he used it. That's the thing with Rick Santorum."

Vecchio said the fight over Santorum's residency was ironic, given how Santorum had made challenging the residency of Democrat Doug Walgren a key campaign issue when he toppled the incumbent and won his House seat in 1990.

Santorum slammed the seven-term representative for living with his family in McLean, Va.

Santorum and his wife, Karen, now own a home in Great Falls, Va., an affluent Washington suburb. They moved there after Santorum's 2006 Senate loss.

Acknowledging that its own rules were confusing, the Pennsylvania Education Department in 2006 agreed to settle the dispute by repaying the district. The state Education Department said the money was not a reimbursement, but an acknowledgment that the department gave conflicting rules about when a district can challenge the state's decision to withhold cyberschool tuition fees from the district.

On the campaign trail, Santorum's candidacy has been boosted by Christian home-school advocates, evangelical pastors and tightly knit networks of conservative activists who helped him win Iowa's leadoff caucuses and a three-state sweep of contests on Feb. 7. Limited government has been a big part of his pitch.

Santorum now says he regrets voting for the sweeping No Child Left Behind education overhaul. He's called for a significantly smaller Education Department but would not eliminate it. He's also criticized early childhood education programs as an attempt by government to "indoctrinate your children."

Santorum says government can only do so much to educate kids, and that parents bear the prime responsibility.

"Yes, the government can help," Santorum said during a recent stop in Ohio, which holds a key contest in the upcoming March 6 Super Tuesday contests. "But the idea that the federal government should be running schools, frankly much less than the state government should be running schools, is anachronistic."

He said it dates from the nation's industrialization, "when people came off the farms where they did home-school or have the little neighborhood school, and into these big factories, so we built equal factories called public schools. And while those factories as we all know in Ohio and Pennsylvania have fundamentally changed, the factory school has not."



We welcome your letters

To ensure publication, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- 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.
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Texas drought leads to odd migration patterns for birds

MAD ISLAND (AP) — Strange things are afoot in the bird world.

Endangered whooping cranes flew 2,500 miles from Canada to Texas, where they usually spend the whole winter. Instead, they pecked around for a short time and flew back. In Nebraska, other cranes never left.

Some ducks just kept flying south — all the way to Belize in Central America. And a snowy owl was spotted near Dallas, only the sixth time that's ever happened.

Throughout the winter, scientists have noticed these and other examples of bizarre bird migrations — a result, they believe, of flocks becoming desperate for food and habitat becoming increasingly scarce because of the stubborn drought in Texas. The unusually mild winter in the Northeast and Midwest has even persuaded some birds they could stay put, fly shorter distances or turn back north earlier than normal.

"We have birds scattered all over the place looking for habitat right now," said Richard Kostecke, a bird expert and associate director of conservation, research and planning at the Nature Conservancy in Texas.

The concerns go beyond a few lost flocks. Migratory birds often use the winter months to rest, eat and gain energy for the long journey back to their nesting grounds, so biologists can only guess at the effects of this season's peculiar movements.

What will happen if the birds' diets are altered or if they expend too much energy? What if they fail to migrate at all? Will they still be able to breed after a stressful winter?

"You may see a cascade of impacts," Kostecke said. "We don't know exactly where things will end up."

In a typical winter, the Texas Gulf Coast is packed with tens of thousands of birds — songbirds, waterfowl, catbirds, gnatcatchers, warblers and other migrants. But this year, an annual count done just before Christmas found the population had dropped steeply.

The number of water-dwelling birds was down significantly. Geese, for example, were 61 percent below their 19-year average. Dabbling ducks dropped 43 percent, diving ducks 60 percent and spoonbills 74 percent.

Part of the problem is lack of food. The drought — the worst one-year dry spell in Texas history — parched thousands of acres of wetlands along the coast, a habitat that is normally rich with fish, seafood, berries and insects.

At the Nature Conservancy's Mad Island preserve alone, wetlands have been depleted from 1,100 acres to a mere 200 acres. Habitat provided by rice paddies will also probably decline because many farmers are not expected to get water for irrigation. And with so little rain, freshwater is scarce.

Lucky for the birds, they can fly.

"God gave birds wings for a reason: to pick up and find what they need," said Dave Morrison, the small game director at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

A mid-winter population survey revealed that overall numbers were down about 3 percent compared with last year. In the rain-starved Panhandle, where ducks typically rely on water-filled

natural basins as habitat, there were 15,000 birds this year, compared with 36,000 last winter.

But many apparently sought refuge in the state's prairie areas, where biologists spotted 1.2 million ducks this year compared with about 885,000 last year.

The unexpected population shifts weren't limited to waterfowl on the coast. Surveys show inland species are on the move, too. They were observed in greater numbers near the Gulf, probably because their usual homes offered little food. So they kept flying — all the way to the coast, where they hoped to find more mice, snakes and other small prey.

The disruption in natural migration comes with risks, even for the birds who survive into the spring. Birds that switch migratory paths may be fine for a couple years, but they could die later if they follow the same path only to find that their destination has become much warmer or colder than expected.

One of the biggest concerns is for the whooping crane. There are only about 300 of these majestic, 5-foot birds left in the wild. This endangered flock, which scientists and the federal government have been working to revitalize for decades, flies every year from its nesting grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada to the Texas Gulf Coast.

In 2009, the year of the last major drought, an estimated 23 birds died, probably because they were

unable to find enough of the high-protein blue crabs and wolf berries to eat in Texas. Scientists were concerned the same thing could happen again.

But the first census found many of the birds weren't even on the coast. Only about two-thirds of the cranes were spotted. One family, or about a half-dozen cranes, reached the Gulf, then turned around to spend the winter at Granger Lake about 225 miles north.

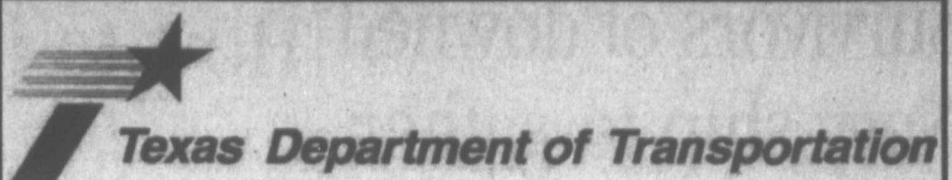
A few others were seen in unusually mild Nebraska. The rest are missing.

"They may show up on later censuses, or they may be scattered out in different places where they're finding good resources," Kostecke said.

Scientists plan to monitor the bird population to study the long-term consequences of this season's migratory patterns. Experts in Belize are sharing notes with counterparts in Texas, who are talking to other specialists in the northern United States and Canada.

Next year, they will watch whether water birds again migrate farther south or if more snowy owls appear in Dallas — an unusually urban setting for the fluffy white bird. But they hope migration returns to normal, along with weather patterns.

Just because the birds "have not parked in the place people are accustomed to this year, doesn't mean they aren't going to come back there," Morrison said.



The Texas Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Panhandle Rural Planning Organization will host an Informational Meeting on March 13, 2012 concerning the planning of future projects.

This informational meeting is held to explain how the department plans transportation projects. We would like to receive the public's input regarding the current Transportation Improvement Plan for the Amarillo District.

The meeting will be Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. It will be located at the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, located at 415 SW Eighth Ave in Amarillo.

The meeting will cover transportation plans for all areas of the Panhandle and the city of Amarillo. An overall view of the planning process will be presented, as well as the criteria used for selecting individual projects. Draft versions of current transportation plans will be presented at the meeting for public comment.

The public is invited to speak regarding projects currently planned or any additional projects that might be proposed. Speakers will be limited to five minutes. Verbal and written comments from the public regarding any project may be submitted at the meeting. Written statements and other exhibits may be submitted to the TxDOT District Office at 5715 Canyon Drive (P.O. Box 7368) Amarillo, Texas 79114-7368. Comments must be received no later than March 26, 2012.

All interested citizens are invited to attend this public meeting. Persons interested in attending the meeting whom have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact David Miller at 806.356.3246. Requests should be made no later than two days prior to the public meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

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Survivors of downed Navy ship to gather

HOUSTON (AP) — Two survivors of the World War II sinking of the USS Houston will gather in Texas this weekend along with relatives of their shipmates for a memorial service at a monument dedicated to warship.

Seventy years ago Thursday, a Japanese fleet sunk the ship off the coast of Java. The ship carried 1,068 crewmen, but only 291 sailors and Marines survived both the attack and being prisoners of war.

Fifteen of the original crew members are still alive, but Howard Brooks of New Jersey and David Flynn of Florida, both 92, are the only ones expected to attend the reunion of the USS Houston CA-30 Survivors Association. They'll join shipmates' relatives Saturday at the monument in downtown Houston's Sam Houston Park.

The Japanese sank the USS Houston and the Australian light cruiser HMAS Perth shortly after midnight on March 1, 1942, during the Battle of Sunda Strait.

After the Perth went down, the USS Houston's crew fought for a half-hour until all ammunition was spent.

"We had no planes in the air at all, but the Japanese had planes and they were dropping what we called star shells," Brooks said. "They would light up the whole area around like daylight, and we could see the ships firing at us. We were so close we could see sailors on the decks of the Japanese destroyers."

The warship was listing and ablaze when the order came over the public address system: "Hear this: All hands abandon ship!"

"At that announcement, you sort of froze for a second," Flynn, who was a radioman on the warship, tells the Houston Chronicle (<http://bit.ly/zGnyQR>).

When Flynn jumped into the water, he was bleeding from shrapnel wounds. He was fished out of the water by a Japanese boat.

Brooks, who was unhurt, clung to the side of a life raft for three days. When it washed ashore, Brooks, too, was captured by Japanese soldiers.

Both men spent the next 3½ years as prisoners of war. Brooks was among those forced to build the Burma Railway, made famous in the 1957 film "The Bridge on the River Kwai."

In Houston, the destruction of the warship resulted in a mass recruiting drive for volunteers to replace the lost crew, as well as an \$85 million fundraising campaign to pay for a new cruiser and an aircraft carrier, the USS San Jacinto.

According to a 1949 Houston Chronicle article commemorating the event, word of the USS Houston's fate "aroused a fever pitch of patriotism in Houston."

"Her loss made the war something more of a personal conflict to more than half a million people," the article reads. "Official news of her destruction ... slapped the city squarely between the eyes, and set off a series of events that stands unequalled in the nation."

No water for Colo. River rice farmers?

HOUSTON (AP) — A Central Texas river authority said Thursday that it doesn't expect Hill Country lake levels to be high enough to provide irrigation water to downriver rice farmers, which would make it the first time ever that the farmers wouldn't get the water.

Clara Tuma, a spokeswoman for the Lower Colorado River Authority, said the agency would post its final decision on its website just before midnight. But as of Thursday morning, lakes Travis and Buchanan were about 3,200 acre-feet, or more than 1 billion gallons, short of the level they'd need to reach for the farmers to receive water.

"We do not anticipate that the combined storage will reach 850,000 acre-feet today," Tuma said in an email, referring to that target level. "We expect to end the day with storage between 846,000 and 847,000 acre-feet."

Rice farmers have been preparing for such a situation for months, knowing that the worst one-year drought in Texas history had so severely depleted the Highland Lakes it was unlikely it could rain enough for them to plant their crops. This would be the first time in LCRA history that rice farmers did not receive water for their rice paddies.

Texas is one of the six largest rice producers in the country. The farmers in the Colorado River basin make up almost three-quarters of the state's total rice acreage.

At current lake levels, a small percentage of farmers, those with senior water rights along the river, will get about 20,000 acre-feet of water. The rest will not get any.

The drought has eased in recent weeks with some significant winter rains. But most of the state still remains under some level of drought.

How to identify a load-bearing wall

Dear Pat: I see these makeover shows on television. I want to open up my kitchen to the family room, and it would be fun to knock out the wall myself. Someone said to be careful of bearing walls. What are they? — Bev K.

Dear Bev: Your friend gave you excellent advice. People often see these types of do-it-yourself shows, and the projects look simple and fun. Many of these television shows are only 30 minutes long, so they don't have time to discuss all the precautions and possible problems that can occur.

A bearing wall is one that supports the structure of the house. The primary bearing walls in most homes are the exterior walls. There are secondary interior bearing walls that support a second floor or the attic above the first floor. Larger houses have more interior bearing walls because the spans are greater between the exterior walls.

If you knock out an interior bearing wall, the materials above it will not be adequately supported. This may result in a gradual settling or cracking in adjacent areas and walls above. In the worst case, drywall and lumber may actually start falling down on your head.

The trickiest part of the entire project is that it is difficult to determine which walls are bearing walls. Once all the walls are covered with drywall, it is difficult to determine what is what. Try to find the original building plans to be sure how the house structure is supported.

If you cannot find the plans, an experienced builder can often inspect a house and give you a pretty good idea of which ones are bearing walls. Interior walls that run perpendicular to the floor joists are often bearing walls. This is particularly true if there is one located directly above another, but they can be offset sometimes.

If your house has a basement or a crawl space, check under the floor for the location of the support beams. When a support beam is located directly below a wall, you can expect the wall to be a bearing one. You will usually find this near the center of the house and running the length of the house.

HOME HOW-TO

You can open up a bearing wall and remove part of it as long as it is properly supported. Go ahead with your project cautiously until you determine the nature of the wall. If it is a bearing wall, a structural engineer can design a supporting structure so you can open the wall between the two rooms.

The fun part is using the sledgehammer, but it is best to put it back in the garage for another project. Begin by removing the drywall from the wall. Do it carefully by separating the pieces at the dry-

wall joints. Once the wall is totally opened, it will much easier for a professional to make a determination on the type of wall it is. If you choose not to continue with the project, at least you will not have damaged the wall beyond inexpensive repair.

Also inspect the plumbing, wiring and heating ducts in your home. Some of them may pass inside that wall, which will make the project much more difficult. Most heating ducts are located on outside walls, but the return ducts from a second-story room may come down through that interior wall.

Send your questions to Here's How, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

HOME HOW-TO

Load-bearing Wall

A load-bearing wall gives a building structural integrity. It carries and distributes weight from the roof and top floors down to the foundation. The safest way to identify one is to hire a professional structural engineer.

INTERNAL LOAD-BEARING WALL
Load-bearing walls always run perpendicular to the joists.

LOAD DISTRIBUTION
Load-bearing walls of the lower stories hold up the roof and upper levels of a house. These load-bearing walls carry the weight of the floors above down through the home and into the foundation.

NON-LOAD INTERIOR WALLS
Not all homes are designed with internal load-bearing walls. In many cases, the roof trusses are self-supporting from the outer walls of the house. All walls along the outside of a structure should be considered load-bearing.

Source: www.homeimprovementplusperks.com/ Creators.com/Bob Kast

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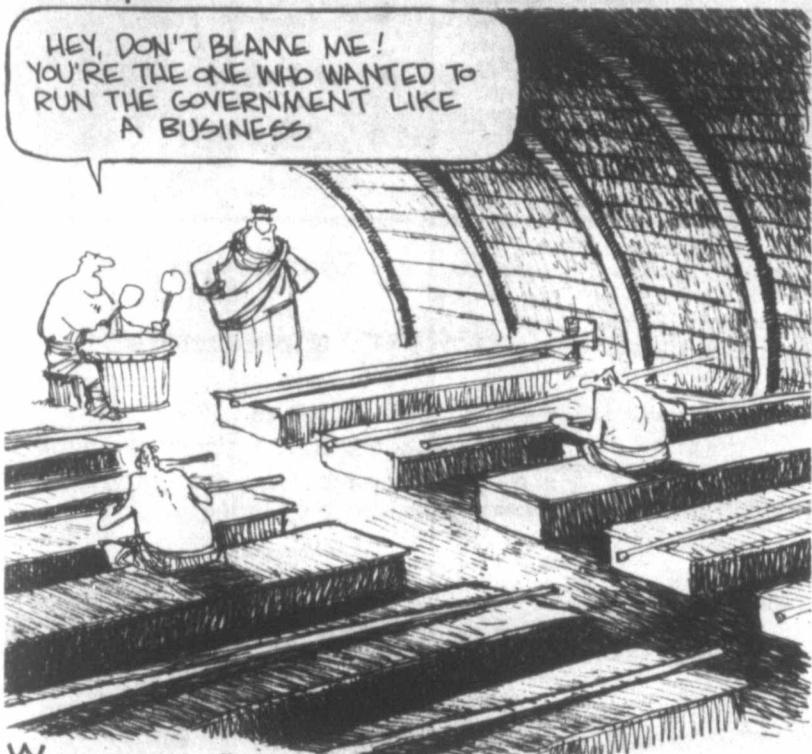
THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



3-2
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"Mommy said 'no' and Daddy said 'yes.' We need to get Grandma to break the tie."

Non Sequitur



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Nest Heads



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daily horoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Saturday, March 3, 2012:

This year you could become even more emotional. At the same time, you tune into your higher self and intuition more often. If you are single, you see life as boring when you do not have romance sizzling. Take up a new hobby! If you are attached, the two of you argue often. You can end the bickering by kissing and making up. **CANCER** can be quite romantic.

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Tension seems to build, no matter which way you turn. Someone you look up to could be a veritable terror. Anger comes out when you least expect it. You might want to work through it, even though another person is on the warpath. Tonight: Get together with friends.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You mean well, but communicating your intentions could take talent. Clearly a child, loved one or new friend is out of sorts. It appears that you might be the stimulus that is triggering him or her. Get together with friends. Tonight: The party could go to the wee hours.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You might want to consider an older relative or friend when making plans. Call this person. Know that while you are not committed to doing anything, this person really appreciates your special time together. Use care with a roommate or loved one. He or she suddenly could be on the warpath. Tonight: Out and about.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Understanding evolves to a new level if you can turn an argument into a discussion. You like what comes up, and hopefully you can detach enough to understand where the other party is coming from. Otherwise, take off for the movies, or do something for yourself. Tonight: Opt for something different.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Respond to a dear friend or loved one. You might not know what to make of an evolving situation. Suddenly, you might find that you're spending more money than you want. Use care with your expenses. Learn how to handle your jerk reactions. Tonight: Listen to the person's idea.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You could be far more challenging than you realize. A partner might have enough, and he or she lets you know. Suddenly, you are scurrying after him or her. Look at the big picture. Not every issue is worth a fight. Tonight: Where the people are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Others seem to want you with them, no matter what you or they are doing. For some of you, this implicit demand could be very annoying, as you have so much ground to cover as it is. Juggle your needs somewhat, but maintain your boundaries. Tonight: A must appearance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Intuitively, you know what to do. Though a friend could push you hard to join him or her, you are best off doing your own thing for the day. Whatever you choose to do, make sure it revitalizes you. A change of scenery might be perfect! Tonight: What you want to do.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Work once more with a partner you really enjoy. You could go a little crazy when dealing with a parent's temper. At the same time, you are wondering why you should have to. Try to clear the air. Have a discussion. Tonight: Togetherness works.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Others will let you know what their plans are soon enough; however, if you would like to take off and do something on your own, the time is now. Keep your cellphone on, in case an opportunity you cannot say "no" to comes up. Try to understand another person's frustration. It will help ease the situation. Tonight: Out and about.

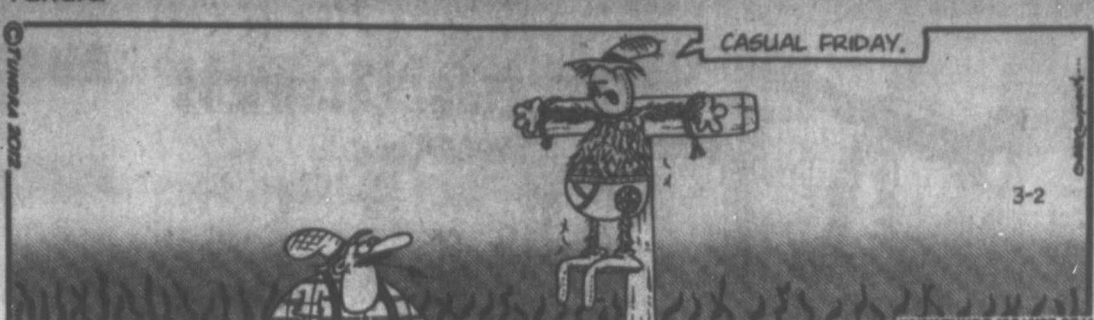
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Honor your energy and needs. You could be more tired than you realize. Revamp your plans, if need be. Try to keep errands to a minimum. Share a hobby with a child or loved one. You need an easy pace. Tonight: Hang loose.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Please note that someone you really care about is on the warpath. You might not be the cause, even if this person thinks you are. Air out the situation with some detachment. What could be difficult reactions. Tonight: Make nice.

Tundra



Shoe



Mother Goose and Grim



Zits



Garfield



Beetle Bailey



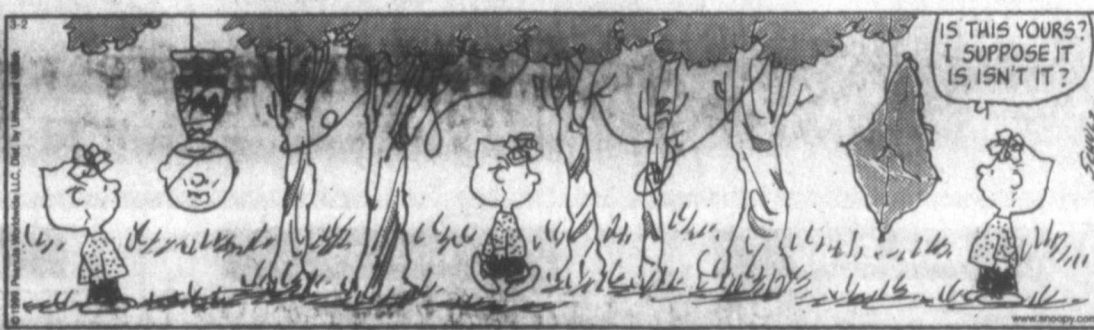
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NOTICE Readers are urged to fully investigate advertisements which require payment in advance for information, services or goods

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3-2 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

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Sports

Thompson's strong start fades as Vernon downs Pampa

ANDREW GLOVER
aglover@thepampanews.com

With strong starts by Pampa's pitcher James Thompson and Vernon's Brandon Uriquiza, it was going to come down to which team made the most of its opportunities.

Zack Smithson hit a bases loaded triple for Vernon in the top of the fifth while the Harvesters stranded three runners at second in a 9-1 loss Thursday in the opener of the Burk Burnett Tournament.

Thompson breezed through the first two innings, only allowing one hit and striking out four. Things changed as Thompson gave up six runs on four hits and walked four in 1 and 2/3 innings.

Uriquiza held the Harvesters in check the whole game as a double by Jordan Lemons was the only hit allowed. The only other baserunners allowed were two on errors and two that were hit. Uriquiza kept Pampa off balance as he struck out seven.

"Their ace pitched well," Snelgrooes said. "He kept us off balance. We need to put the ball in play more."

Vernon broke the game open in the top of the fourth. Bailey Montez led off with a four-pitch walk and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt. Thompson got Heath Dunson to ground out but Montez advanced to third. Zack Perez drove him in with a single to center. Smithson hit a single to left to load the bases. Parker Johnson followed with a two-RBI single, increasing Vernon's lead to 4-1. Thompson was then pulled for sophomore Ryan Powell.

Head coach Kaleb Snelgrooes said Thompson pitched well and credited

Vernon's hitters.

"He threw a lot of strikes and kept them off balance," Snelgrooes said. "Credit to Vernon. They did a good job with two strikes and putting the ball in play."

Powell loaded the bases with a walk and allowed another run on a passed ball. The sophomore ended the innings with a strikeout.

The Harvesters (2-3) scored their only run on a double steal in the bottom of the third. Senior Trace Carter stole second while junior Chris Howard stole home. Pampa had several chances for a big inning as they had a runner on second with one out or less out in three innings.

Junior Jordan Lemons doubled with one out in the bottom of the second but seniors Zach Graves and Devin Coleman struck out to end the inning. Carter was stranded in the third, when seniors Cole Engle and Jared Lusk flied out and Thompson grounded out.

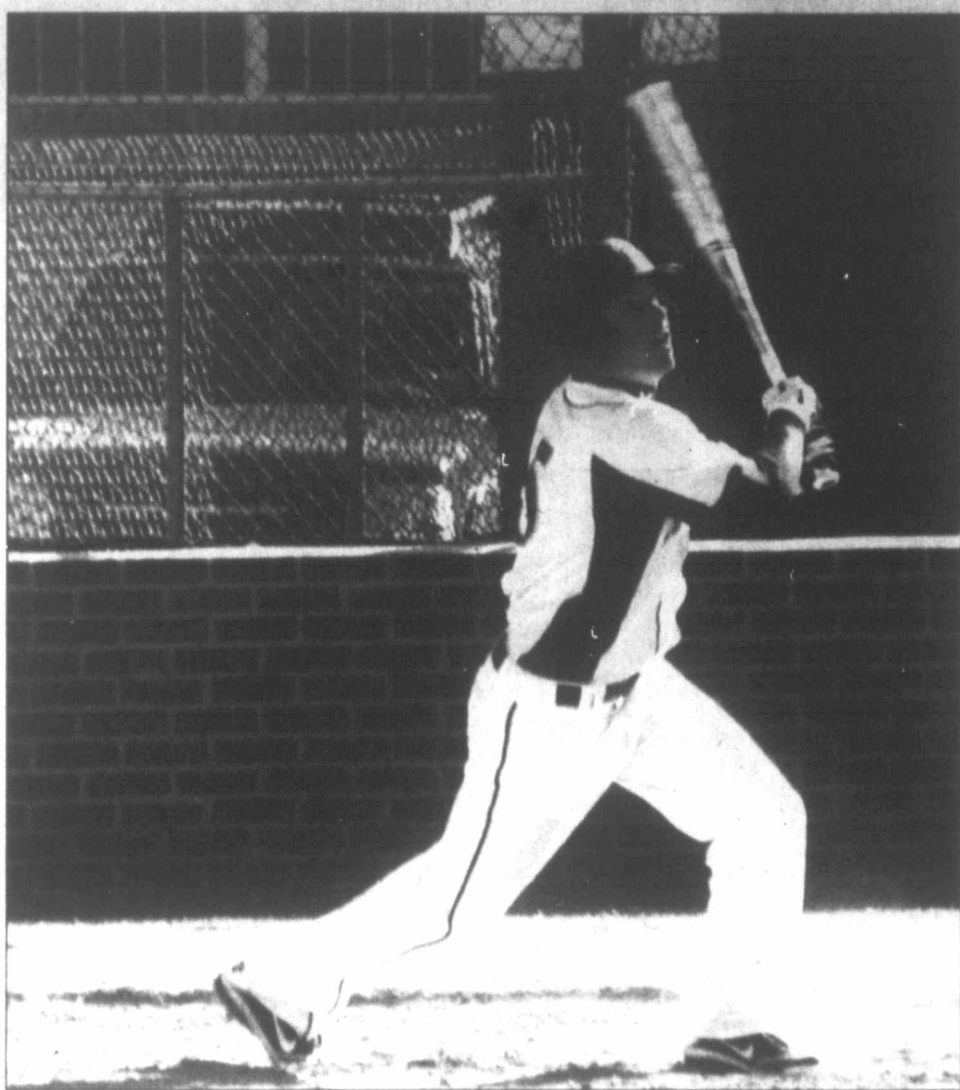
"The score doesn't dictate how close the game was," Snelgrooes said. "We had guys in scoring position and couldn't get those guys across."

Pampa shored up its fielding as they only had one error compared to 12 in the previous two games. Snelgrooes said still there were some plays they could have made that might have turned the game.

"We made plays," Snelgrooes said. "There's plays that won't show up in the box score that should of been made that would have got us out of innings."

Vernon scored eight of its nine runs with two outs.

The Harvesters also played Iowa Park Thursday and continue play Friday against Wichita Falls and Wichita Falls Rider.



staff photo by Andrew Glover

Senior Trace Carter hits a grounder in a February 23 game. Pampa struck out seven times Thursday in a 9-1 loss to the Vernon Lions at Burk Burnett.

TAPPS agrees to reschedule playoff game for Jewish school

HOUSTON (AP) — Organizers of a Texas state basketball tournament relented Thursday and agreed to reschedule a semifinal game involving an Orthodox Jewish school after parents filed a lawsuit over the original game time, which conflicted with the Sabbath.

The Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, or TAPPS, had rejected Beren Academy's requests to reschedule a semifinals game that was to be played at 9 p.m. Friday. Beren players observe the Sabbath between Friday night and Saturday night and won't play basketball during those hours.

A group of parents with boys on the team subsequently sued TAPPS and sought a temporary restraining order requiring the agency to reschedule the game.

After being notified the lawsuit had been filed, TAPPS director Edd Burleson said the association would reverse course

and allow Beren (23-5) to play Dallas Covenant at 2 p.m. Friday afternoon. Should the Stars win, they'll start their championship game no earlier than 8 p.m. on Saturday.

Headmaster Harry Sinoff and coach Chris Cole only learned of the legal action on Thursday morning, they said, and regretted that the situation reached the level of legal action.

"It's a mixed emotion," Cole said. "We feel like we've earned the right to play. Our focus all week has been trying to get TAPPS to reschedule the game times to accommodate us."

"At the same time, this was not the course of action that we wanted."

Burleson said earlier this week that association bylaws prevented TAPPS from moving Beren's game time.

The complaint says that the basketball team is "being denied, solely on account of their religious observance, a once-

in-a-lifetime opportunity to compete in their athletic conference's state basketball championship tournament.

"That is an irreplaceable opportunity," the complaint said, "and its deprivation constitutes irreparable harm attributable to disqualification of Beren and its team because of their Jewish religious beliefs and observances."

Cole made the awkward call to TAPPS on Thursday morning, stressing that the school itself did not file the legal action. Beren, with an enrollment of 247 students, immediately held an assembly in its gym, where rabbi Avi Pollak informed all the students that the game was back on.

"You could see some excitement in the hallway," Cole said. "My phone started going crazy."

When he went to bed on Wednesday night, Cole was resigned to the fact that the team's season was over. TAPPS twice

denied appeals by Beren to have the start time of its semifinal game moved, and Cole called off Wednesday's practice and presided over a team meeting instead.

"We felt like we had exhausted all opportunities," Cole said. "We kind of sat around, like a family, and just talked and reminisced about things that happened during the season. It was a nice, quiet time. Today's events were pretty shocking."

Beren, a TAPPS member since 2011, advanced to the semifinals by beating Kerrville Our Lady of the Hills last week. Sinoff said the school never planned legal action, even though the final resolution was what the school wanted from the beginning.

"We deserve this opportunity, we've made that case all along," Sinoff said. "This is good for basketball, it's good for the tournament. These are the teams that should play."

No deadline set for MLB on deciding to expand the playoffs

NEW YORK (AP) — The Braves are remembered for one of baseball's epic collapses.

Too bad for Atlanta the playoffs weren't expanded a year earlier.

Negotiators for baseball players and owners are working toward an agreement to increase the post-season field to 10 teams this season. They had hoped to reach a deal by Thursday, but both sides said talks could continue if they needed additional time to deal with the details of adding a second wild-card team in each league.

The sides spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press because the talks have not been public.

If there had been additional wild-card teams last season, the Braves would have made the playoffs in the NL, while the Boston Red Sox would have qualified in the AL. Instead, each missed the post-season by a game, both going down with historic September swoons.

"I would've taken it last year," Atlanta manager Fredi Gonzalez said Thursday.

The sides have said for weeks a deal is likely. When players and owners signed their agreement for a new labor contract in November, the section covering the postseason established a March 1 goal for deciding whether the

playoffs would increase by two teams for 2012 or 2013.

The deal would establish a new one-game, wild-card round in each league between the teams with the best records who are not division winners, meaning a third-place team could win the World Series.

Don't count on it, said Braves pitcher Tim Hudson.

The wild-card winner would face a major disadvantage going through the rest of the playoffs, according to Hudson. Last season, St. Louis passed the Braves for the wild card on the final day and went on to capture the World Series. Hudson said it would've been much harder for the Cardinals or the Braves to advance if they had played an extra game against each other first.

"The only good thing about it is one more team (in each league) gets in the playoffs," he said. "But it totally handicaps the wild-card team. Both teams will probably have to expend their best pitcher to win that game. Plus, it's another day they have to use their bullpen. Even if you get by that one game, the chances of winning the next round are not very good."

The Cardinals became the fifth wild-card team to win the World Series since the playoff field doubled in 1995, going from two division winners in each

league to three division winners and a wild card. Other wild-card champions were the Florida Marlins in 1997 and 2003, Anaheim in 2002 and Boston in

2004.

Adding two more playoffs teams this year has been complicated because the regular-season schedule was drafted last spring

and summer, and the extra game has to be put in place in a manner that doesn't disrupt the World Series schedule. In a further complication, the sides reached

a consensus that ties for division titles would be broken on the field with a tiebreaker game under the new format, and not by head-to-head record.

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