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TODAY IN SPORTS



Monday, June 25, 2012

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Volume 108 • No. 68

75¢
 \$1.50 weekend

Wildfires spread in Colorado
 Flames reach tourist areas | p5

A great beginning

Andrew Glover looks back at his time in Pampa | p10

Relay chair Robinson on 2012 event: 'Wonderful'

Robinson reports \$60,000 raised so far towards cancer awareness, research

ARNIE AURELLANO
 editor@thepampanews.com

Christy Robinson, chair of the local branch of the American Cancer Society and the Relay for Life, had one thing

to say about this past weekend's Gray County Relay.

"Wonderful," she said. "Wonderful." Of course, given that this year's Relay boasted 18 teams participating, 450 luminaries lit and \$60,000 (and count-

ing) raised towards the fight against cancer, she couldn't stop at just one word.

"Everything was top-notch. We had great teams, great participation, a wonderful luminary service. The weather was a lot nicer than it was in previous years. ... The auctions went great. We had items that brought in good money."

Robinson added that that \$60,000 figure is not a final tally, and after a down year in 2011, she's optimistic that the

number will go up.

"That's just as of right now," she said. "It's going to be more. It's better than I did last year. The year before, we did about the same amount. This year's going to be as good or better than 2010."

Robinson thanked the community for its ongoing support and added that the local outpouring of funds has been noticed by Relay officials.

RELAY cont. on page 2

RED CROSS HONORS



staff photo by Mollie Bryant

Molly Mabery, volunteer specialist with the Red Cross, awarding volunteer Rita Kretzmeier with the Clara Barton Honor Award for Meritorious Leadership at the organization's annual meeting and volunteer awards ceremony last Tuesday. Kretzmeier also received the award for exceptional volunteer for health and safety.

FSA reminds producers to report losses

THE PAMPA NEWS

To help local producers in times of need, the Gray County USDA Farm Service Agency is encouraging producers to report crop losses resulting from a weather-related disaster event within 15 days of the disaster or when the loss first becomes apparent.

Matthew Street, executive director of the Gray County FSA, said that such losses can include crops covered by crop insurance, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and crops without insurance coverage.

"Crop losses are acres that were timely planted with the intent to harvest, but the crop failed and could not be harvested because of a disaster related condition," said Street. "In order to meet FSA program eligibility requirements, producers must report crop losses to the Gray County FSA office within 15 days of the disaster occurrence or when the loss first becomes apparent."

Producers who have NAP coverage will be required to report crop losses on an FSA form CCC-576: "Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program."

Street said that it is important for producers file accurate and timely reports before the crop is destroyed to prevent **LOSSES** cont. on page 2

Studies recommend mammograms for women at age 40

PRMC mammography equipment recently given top grade by FDA inspectors

MOLLIE BRYANT
 mbryant@thepampanews.com

Last week, the American Medical Association recommended that women receive routine mammograms at age 40, rather than age 50, as suggested by the United States Preventive Services Task Force in 2009. A 2010 study found that women who receive mammograms at age 40 reduce their risk of death from

breast cancer by about 25 percent. The National Cancer Institute also recommends mammograms, or an x-ray picture of the breasts used to find tumors, every year or every other year for women 40 and over.

Mammograms are a useful tool to check for breast cancer, even when women don't have symptoms of the disease, and they can also be used after a lump has been found, in a process



called a diagnostic mammogram. When it comes to cancer, earlier detection means earlier treatment and control of the disease.

In Pampa, mammogram services are available at the Pampa Regional Medical Center (PRMC), which recently added a digital mammography machine to its arsenal. Last week, the FDA gave the hospital's mammography program its highest rating in accordance with the

Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA). The MQSA was passed in 1992 by Congress to ensure women's access to quality mammography. The inspection takes into account equipment, staff credentials and training, medical records, policies and performance.

"A 'no findings' rating is not easy to come by," said LaNona Wright, lead mammographer at PRMC. "This process is very involved. Our records must be up to date and all quality assurance testing must be done according to MQSA guidelines. We dedicate ourselves everyday to do everything right so that we can serve our customers to **MAMMOGRAPHY** cont. on page 2

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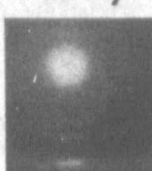
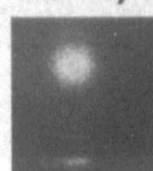

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PAMPA FORECAST

Today	Tuesday	Wednesday
		
High 101 Low 67	High 99 Low 68	High 96 Low 69

Today: Sunny and hot, with a high near 101. South southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Tonight: Clear, with a low around 67. South wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Tuesday: Sunny and hot, with a high near 99. South southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Tuesday Night: Clear, with a low around 68. South wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 96. South southwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.

Wednesday Night: Clear, with a low around 69. South wind between 10 and 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

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Mammography

the best of our ability, and this rating proves to the public that we are the best of the best.
 "We are very proud of our accomplishment, especially considering that our inspection came during our

cont. from page 1

transition from film screen to digital, but our main focus is still the early detection of breast cancer," Wright added. "Saving lives is our ultimate goal."

Losses

the potential loss of FSA program benefits.
 Failed acreage reports allow the Agency to maintain an accurate record to report how many acres of each crop were destroyed or damaged by a disaster event. This information is used to determine county and state eligibility for programs like the Average Crop Revenue Elec-

cont. from page 1

tion program, as well as future federal farm programs as legislated by Congress. Acreage reports are also used by other federal and state agencies.

For questions regarding crop losses, contact the Gray County FSA office at 806-665-6561, ext 2.

Relay

"We had our regional lady here, and she spoke a little bit," Robinson said. "She said that by far, Gray County does the best in underwriting. By far, we have the biggest response to our underwriting and to (the sales of) our luminaries also."

This year's teams, according to Robinson, were particularly creative with the ways they raised their contributions.

"Carter Sand and Gravel, they had a paintball event for their fundraiser part of it, and it was amazing," Robinson said. "They had made their own target range and they gave prizes. ... That was a huge success. The hospital did water volleyball with a water balloon. There were four on a team, and each team had a beach towel and you hit it over the net with the beach towel. That was a huge success, too, and all the (Relay) teams participated. It was really fun. It was great to see all the ways the teams have fun with (the way they raised money)."

Robinson also had compliments for 2012 Gray County Hero of Hope Ashtin Sackett, the recent Pampa High School graduate who has been fighting a rare bone cancer known as osteosarcoma.

"She was really good," Robinson said. "Her team was real active. They had their own shirts and ev-

erything. She was there and led the first lap, the Survivors Lap. She had just been for treatment, so I didn't know for sure if she was going to be able to make it or not. But she was there, and she did great."

Perhaps the only blemish at the event was the absence of the many friends and family members whom local residents have lost due to cancer, including, Robinson said, a pair of notable friends of the Gray County Relay, Shelly McCarn, who led the Survivors' Lap in 2010, lost her life to the disease this past December, and steadfast Relay supporter Robert Schaub died in March.

Family members of both McCarn and Schaub were active participants this year, making the Relay even more poignant, said Robinson.

"It's very emotional," she said. "Shelly McCarn was one of our speakers last year in the Survivor's Tent, and so was Robert Schaub. They both lost the battle. They really believed in American Cancer (Society) and the Relay, and they both walked and worked it last year. They both spoke in events representing the Relay. Both their families were active in the Relay this year, and so it's emotional for all of us."

"Shelly's two sisters, mother,

nieces, husband and son were there. Robert, his son-in-law, daughter, grandson and wife were there. Shelly's mother-in-law came from Oklahoma for the Relay. She was a big part of it. ... It was emotional because they were all out there to light their luminary bags, especially being their first year (without their loved ones). I don't even know how to express what you feel. These are life-changing events, life-changing situations. It really makes you open your eyes to see what you have."

Robinson said that their loss only strengthens the Gray County Relay's resolve in its mission.

"I think it motivates you 110 percent," she said, "because someday, there's going to be a pill for that kind of cancer. It's just like last year with (2011 Co-Hero of Hope) Lynzy Standerfer. The pill was released this year for childhood leukemia, and that's what Lynzy had. Every year, they try to release something to make your cancer battle a little easier, and we're a big part of that. Part of our money goes to research, so we're a big part of that pill. We didn't do it by any means, but we helped. As our speakers do lose their battles, it just makes you have that much more drive to help the people that are still fighting."

cont. from page 1

Obituaries

KATHERINE GILLPATRICK, 96

Katherine Gillpatrick, 96, of Pampa, died Saturday, June 23, 2012 in Amarillo.

Services are 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, June 26, 2012, in Carmichael-Whitley Colonial Chapel with Glen Walton, minister of Bell Avenue Church of Christ in Amarillo, officiating.

Burial is in Fairview Cemetery.

Mrs. Gillpatrick was born Jan. 17, 1916 in Charlie. She married J. M. Gillpatrick on July 21, 1935 in Rule. He preceded her in death on Feb. 17, 1988. Mr. Gillpatrick was a Church of Christ minister all his life, and she was a devoted preacher's wife throughout their 53-year marriage as well as a faithful Christian. She was a resident of Pampa from 1950 to 1964 and returned to Pampa in 1984 from Hereford. Mrs. Gillpatrick was a lifelong member of the Church of Christ.

She is survived by two daughters, Koell McKay and husband Rex of Pampa and Gail Moore and husband Glenn of Tulsa, Okla.; two sons, James Gillpatrick of



Gillpatrick

Pampa and Jon Gillpatrick and wife Janice of Marietta, Ga.; a sister, Bernice Randolph of Roby; eight grandchildren, Rex McKay III and wife Robin of Pampa, Mark McKay and wife Ray Ann of Dalhart, William Moore and wife Stacy of Tulsa, Okla., Glenda Bressler and husband Doug of Haskell, Okla., Josh Gillpatrick and Megan King and husband David, all of Marietta, Ga., Matthew Gillpatrick of Fort Stockton, and Lori Gillpatrick of Amarillo; 11 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by a son, Cary Gillpatrick, on Nov. 16, 2006, and by two brothers, Flavis Greer and Noble Greer.

Memorials may be made to a favorite charity. Sign the online register book at www.carmichael-whitley.com.

JEWEL ANDERSON, 88

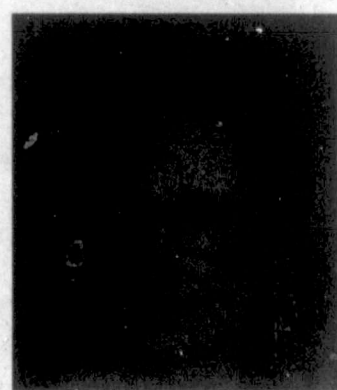
Jewel "Evelyn" Anderson, 88, of Denton, passed away Friday, June 22, 2012 with her family by her side. She was born October 8, 1923 at Union Hill (near Sanger) to Logan Monroe Quillen and Lorraine Pearl Campbell Quillen. Evelyn's ancestors were among the first pioneer families of Denton County, many are interred in the Sanger Cemetery. She married Johnny Carl Anderson, who preceded her in death.

The family will be at DeBerry Funeral Directors Monday 6-8 p.m. for visitation. Funeral services will be held Tuesday June 26, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Chapel of DeBerry Funeral Directors with burial to follow at the Sanger Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Bryan Christopher Jones, Brent Allen Jones, Braden Scott Jones, Todd Allen Erdmann, Jacob Michael Anderson and Kevin Anderson.

Evelyn is survived by a son, Harlan Kim Jones, of Washington, D.C.; daughter, Kay Erdmann, of Denton; stepson, John Anderson, of Sanger; sister, Jody Bodle, of Clovis, N.M.; and a brother, Ted Quillen of Pampa.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband and sisters, Nina Pearl Quillen and Winnie Pauline Quillen.

The family would like to express their love and appreciation to the staff of the Sterling House and Ardent Hospice for the care they gave to their mother.




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MORNINGRUSH

Triple-digit temps in Dallas

FORT WORTH (AP) — The Dallas-Fort Worth area has ushered in triple-digit temperatures for the first time this year.

The temperature hit 100 degrees at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport on Sunday afternoon.

But the National Weather Service is predicting a typical summer with an average of 18 days with triple digit temperatures in North Texas.

Last year the area had a record-breaking 71 days of sweltering 100-degree or higher days. Scorching temperatures statewide contributed to the severe Texas drought and wildfire season last year.

So far this June, San Antonio, Austin, Waco, Lubbock and Abilene are among the Texas cities to already hit the triple-digit temperature mark. As of Saturday, San Angelo has had six days with 100-plus-degree temperatures this month.

Fatal fall for climber

AUSTIN (AP) — A man has suffered a fatal fall while trying to scale down a 50- to 60-foot cliff at a park outside Austin.

Travis County Emergency Services officials say 42-year-old George Wesley Perry of Pflugerville fell from the cliff at Pace Bend Park on Saturday afternoon.

A medical helicopter lowered a flight nurse to the ground to help Perry, but he was pronounced dead after being taken by boat to a nearby boat ramp.

The agencies responding include the park service, Austin-Travis County EMS, STAR Flight emergency response services, Travis County Sheriff's Office and Pedernales Fire Department.

Bomb hoax suspect nabbed again

EL PASO (AP) — The 73-year-old Juarez man arrested for trying to enter the United States with an object designed to look like a bomb has been arrested again.

El Paso police say David Leroy Huebner was taken into custody Friday evening while trying to pick up his truck that was impounded after his Tuesday arrest.

Police say Huebner told the clerk he had a gun and a bomb before placing a bag on the counter and explaining how a bomb works.

Officers learned that Huebner did not have a weapon or explosive. He was charged with making a terroristic threat that impaired public service. He was jailed in El Paso County in lieu of \$7,500 bond.

Huebner had been arrested Tuesday and jailed in lieu of \$500 on a bomb hoax charge.

Debby forms in Gulf

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Debby formed in the Gulf of Mexico on Saturday, interfering with oil and gas production and putting officials on alert for flooding and strong winds from southern Louisiana to the Florida Panhandle.

At least one tornado linked to the storm touched down in southwest Florida, but no injuries were reported.

Debby was about 220 miles (354 kilometers) south of the mouth of the Mississippi River, with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (80 kph).

The center of Debby is expected to linger over the northern Gulf during the next few days with no landfall in the immediate forecast. Forecasters warned of up to six inches of rain along the coast, with isolated amounts of 10 inches.

It was the first time four tropical storms have been recorded before July 1 during the Atlantic hurricane season since record keeping began in 1851.

Debby forced the suspension of 8 percent of the region's oil and gas production.

Minor quake near Fort Worth

KEENE (AP) — Texas has experienced another minor earthquake.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the 2.1 magnitude quake happened just before 1 a.m. Saturday.

USGS says the earthquake was near Keene, about 25 miles south of Fort Worth.

No damage or injuries were immediately reported in the area that's also 7 miles northeast of Cleburne.

Johnson County has had several quakes in the past year. A 3.1 magnitude earthquake was reported June 15, a 3.2 magnitude quake on Jan. 18 and a 2.7 magnitude quake Dec. 7 — all northeast of Cleburne.

Graffiti case a hate crime

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Police say they suspect a hate crime in a North Texas neighborhood where racial and anti-gay slurs and derogatory images were spray-painted in bright colors on garage doors and cars.

One underage girl, a 17-year-old boy and two 18-year-old men have turned themselves in or been taken into custody as of Friday, Arlington police spokeswoman Tiara Ellis Richard said. The fifth suspect was expected to surrender to authorities.

Police believe one couple was intentionally targeted because they are gay. The 13 incidents earlier this month caused about \$5,700 in damage, and the suspects were identified through video surveillance footage obtained by investigators, authorities said.

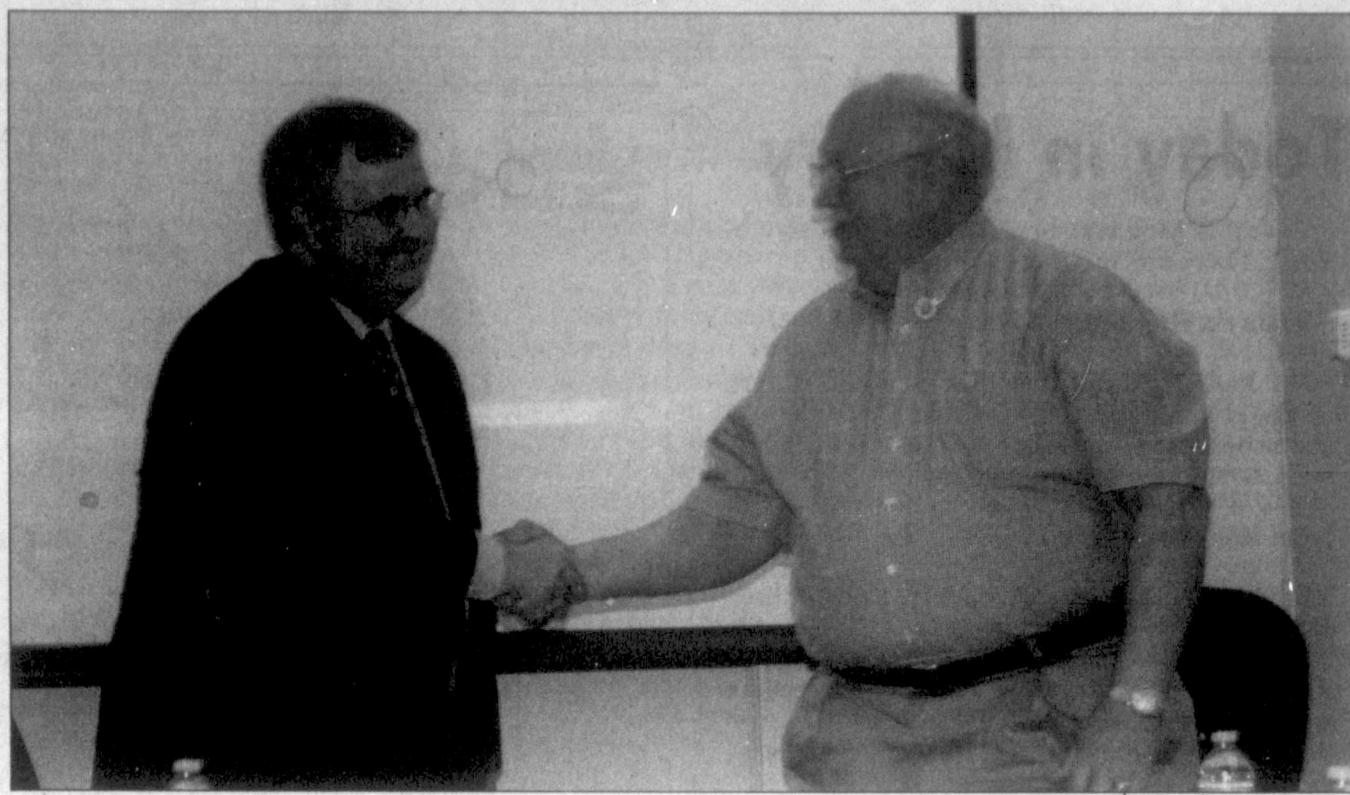
Police said the suspects face a graffiti charge, a state jail felony that carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail and a \$10,000 fine. But Arlington investigators are exploring whether the case can be prosecuted under the Texas hate crime statute, which would make it a third-degree felony, punishable by two to 10 years behind bars in addition to the fine.

The crime also will be reported as a hate crime to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Arlington police said.

"We want to send a strong message to the community that this type of behavior will not be tolerated," acting Police Chief Will Johnson said in a statement. "We take these types of disreputable incidents very seriously and utilize the necessary resources to quickly apprehend the person or person responsible."

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WELCOME ABOARD



staff photo by Mollie Bryant

Pampa Independent School District Board of Trustees President Lee Porter (right) welcomes new PISD superintendent David Young.

Boy shot at nightclub mourned

KILLEEN (AP) — About 1,000 people mourned the loss of a recent Texas high school graduate who was fatally shot outside a Florida nightclub while vacationing with his family.

During Saturday's emotional funeral service in Killeen, 18-year-old Dino Cannon was described as being respectful, outgoing, spiritual, obedient and a good friend.

"Dino's spirit lives inside each and every one of us from now until forever," classmate Kevin Pyles told mourners at Greater Vision Community Church. "Dino is now in a better place watching over us to protect us and guide us on the path to righteousness. He is all of our guardian angel."

The Killeen Daily Herald reported that Cannon's former football teammates wore their jerseys at the service.

Cannon died at an Orlando hospital on June 15, less than two weeks

after graduating from Killeen High School.

Authorities say Cannon was shot in the parking lot following an altercation with a man who had been escorted from the club and waited for Cannon to leave. Cannon reportedly was defending his sister when the suspect pulled a gun and fired. No one has been arrested.

"When this first happened, I had just vengeance in my heart, but vengeance belongs to the Lord," Cannon's uncle, Dwayne Dishmon, told mourners.

Sam Jones, Killeen High School's head football coach, said the team will remember Cannon this fall. His jersey will most

likely be taken out of circulation if it is not worn on an honorary, rotating basis next season, Jones said.

Cannon had received a recruiting call from a college football coach days before his death and planned to attend a university in the fall, Jones said.

The Rev. David L. Norman, pastor of First Baptist Church, offered words of comfort.

"Though we don't understand the mind of God, this is just one of those times where we have to really trust in the sovereignty of God because the Lord knows best," Norman said. "So, God, we thank you for the powerful testimony of Dino Cannon. We know he is with you."

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Viewpoints

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 25, the 177th day of 2012. There are 189 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 25, 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Engel v. Vitale*, ruled 6-1 that recitation of a state-sponsored prayer in New York State public schools was unconstitutional.

On this date:

In 1788, Virginia ratified the U.S. Constitution.

In 1876, Lt. Col. Colonel George A. Custer and his 7th Cavalry were wiped out by Sioux and Cheyenne Indians in the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana.

In 1910, President William Howard Taft signed the White-Slave Traffic Act, more popularly known as the Mann Act, which made it illegal to transport women across state lines for "immoral" purposes. The ballet "The Firebird" with music by Igor Stravinsky was premiered in Paris by the Ballets Russes.

In 1912, the Democratic National Convention, which nominated Woodrow Wilson for president, opened in Baltimore.

In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was enacted.

In 1942, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was designated Commanding General of the European Theater of Operations during World War II. Some 1,000 British Royal Air Force bombers raided Bremen, Germany.

In 1950, war broke out in Korea as forces from the communist North invaded the South.

In 1967, The Beatles performed their new song "All You Need Is Love" during the "Our World" live international telecast.

In 1973, former White House Counsel John W. Dean began testifying before the Senate Watergate Committee.

In 1981, the Supreme Court ruled that male-only draft registration was constitutional.

In 1991, the western Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence.

In 2009, death claimed Michael Jackson, the "King of Pop," in Los Angeles at age 50 and actress Farrah Fawcett in Santa Monica, Calif. at age 62.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush surveyed a huge wildfire in Arizona by air and declared the region a disaster area. A federal judge in Alexandria, Va., refused to accept a no-contest plea from Zacarias Moussaoui, accused of conspiracy in the Sept. 11 attacks, and instead entered a not guilty plea on his behalf.

Five years ago: A suicide bomber blew himself up in the midst of a gathering of U.S.-allied tribal sheiks at a Baghdad hotel, killing 13 people. Robert Zoellick won unanimous approval of the World Bank's board to become the institution's next president. World Wrestling Entertainment star Chris Benoit, his wife and 7-year-old son were found dead in their Fayetteville, Ga., home (authorities concluded that Benoit strangled his family, then killed himself). A judge in Washington D.C., ruled in favor of a dry cleaner sued by a dissatisfied customer who was demanding \$54 million for his misplaced pants.

One year ago: A suicide car bomber blasted a small clinic in eastern Afghanistan, causing the building to collapse and killing some three dozen people. What's believed to be the only surviving authenticated portrait of Billy the Kid sold at auction in Denver for \$2.3 million.

Today's Birthdays: Actress June Lockhart is 87. Rhythm-and-blues singer Eddie Floyd is 75. Actress Barbara Montgomery is 73. Basketball Hall-of-Famer Willis Reed is 70. Writer-producer-director Gary David Goldberg is 68. Singer Carly Simon is 67. Rock musician Allen Lanier (Blue Oyster Cult) is 66. Rock musician Ian McDonald (Foreigner; King Crimson) is 66. Actor-comedian Jimmie Walker is 65. Actor-director Michael Lembeck is 64. TV personality Phyllis George is 63. Rock singer Tim Finn is 60. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor is 58. Rock musician David Paich (Toto) is 58. Actor Michael Sabatino is 57. Actor-writer-director Ricky Gervais (jer-VAYZ') is 51. Actor John Benjamin Hickey is 49. Rock singer George Michael is 49. Actress Erica Gimpel is 48. Former NBA player Dikembe Mutombo is 46. Rapper-producer Richie Rich is 45. Rapper Candyman is 44. Contemporary Christian musician Sean Kelly (Sixpence None the Richer) is 41. Actress Angela Kinsey is 41. Rock musician Mario Calire is 38. Actress Linda Cardellini is 37. Actress Busy Philipps is 33.

Thought for Today: "It is not depravity that afflicts the human race so much as a general lack of intelligence." — Agnes Repplier, American writer and social critic (1858-1950).

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K



Super PACs destroying U.S. democracy

Leave it to Bill Moyers, one of America's most useful citizens, to sum up our country's present political plight in a succinct metaphor: "Our elections have replaced horse racing as the sport of kings. These kings are multi-billionaire corporate moguls who by divine right — not of God, but (of the Supreme Court's) Citizens United decision — are now buying politicians like so much pricey horseflesh."

Pricey, indeed. In its disgraceful, democracy-crushing judicial edict of January 2010, the Court took the big advantage that America's corporate elite already had in politics — and super-sized it. This is the first presidential election to be run under the rigged rules invented by the Court's five-man corporatist majority, and we can see the effects of this ruling.

For instance, we saw in this year's Republican nominating contests that a new, supremely authorized critter not only arose, but instantly became the dominant force in the game, allowing a handful of extremely wealthy players to shove their selfish agenda ahead of all other interests in the election process: super PACs!

These are secretive money funnels that various political partisans have set up to take advantage of the court's implausible finding that the Constitution allows corporations and super-rich individuals to put unlimited sums of money into "independent" campaigns to elect or defeat whomever they choose. (I should note that the justices' ruling was a model of fairness in that it also allows poor people to put unlimited amounts of their money into super PACs.)

These new entities amassed and spent vastly more than the campaigns of the actual candidates. Nearly all of this super PAC cash was used to flood the airwaves with biblical levels of nauseatingly negative attack ads, further debasing our nation's democratic process. Thanks for that, Supremes.

The Court's surreal rationale for allowing this special-interest distortion of elections was that super



JIM HIGHTOWER

PACs would be entirely independent from the candidates they back. In his *Citizens United* opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy blithely wrote, "We now conclude that independent expenditures, including those made by corporations, do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption."

Wow, if ignorance is bliss, he must be ecstatic!

Of course, these justices knew what they were doing: enthroning the wealthiest Americans, not merely to reign supreme over the political process, but also to control government. In a nation of 313 million people and an electorate of 217 million, fewer than a hundred uber-wealthy individuals and corporations (a tiny fraction of a fraction of even the 1 percent) shaped the GOP presidential debate and nomination to their personal benefit.

While the conventional media dwelled on such sideshows as the snarling nastiness among some of the candidates and whether or not Romney could get any love from the GOP's hard-right, Bible-pounding, social-issues faction, the million-dollar-plus givers to the super PACs were having one-on-one conversations with each candidate "in quiet rooms" (as Mitt Romney so-genteelly put it).

Super PACs are only Wave One of the financial tsunami sweeping over America's politics this year. Wave Two, also authorized by *Citizens United*, will be even larger, for it allows Fortune 500 giants to siphon as much money as they want directly out of their corporate vaults and pour it into campaigns — while keeping the sources of the money secret from voters.

These totally secret corporate political funds are laundered through outfits organized under Section 501(c)(4) of the tax code as (WARNING: The following

fact is so stupefying that it can cause temporary insanity in sensible people) nonprofit "social welfare organizations" engaged in charitable work! Never mind that the welfare of the plutocracy is the cause being served by this perverse philanthropy.

At present, the largest of these is Crossroads GPS, created by the noted political altruist and GOP hatchet man Karl Rove. It alone expects to raise \$240 million from undisclosed corporate interests and spend nearly all of it on venomous attack ads to defeat Barack Obama this fall. You'd need more than a GPS to find all the sources of Crossroads' cash, but it's known that nearly 90 percent of the \$77 million it raised in the last six months of 2011 came from a couple dozen donors chipping in from \$1 million to \$10 million each.

The unlimited special-interest money gush into American politics dethrones democratic rule, corrupts government, increases wealth disparity and social injustice, and destroys essential public trust in our society's commitment to fairness.

Super PACs are but one of the pipelines allowing corporate money to drown America's historic ideal of egalitarian self-government. The secret (c)(4) corporate "charities," the corporate "bundlers" who collect billions for the candidates' campaigns, the myriad fundraising committees run by both political parties, the sham "foundations" that permit corporate favor-seekers to make tax-deductible donations to elected officials — these and all other channels of private purchase must be capped if America is ever to have a government of, by and for the people.

Jim Hightower is a syndicated columnist, liberal political activist and author who served from 1983 to 1991 as the elected commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture.

We welcome your letters

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- E-mail submissions are welcome.
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Wildfires spread to Colo. tourist areas

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — Wildfires moved in on some of Colorado's most popular summer tourist destinations over the weekend, destroying nearly two dozen homes near Rocky Mountain National Park and emptying hotels and campgrounds at the base of Pikes Peak.

A wildfire near Colorado Springs erupted Saturday and grew out of control to more than 3 square miles early Sunday, prompting the evacuation of more than 11,000 residents and an unknown number of tourists. On Saturday, a blaze destroyed structures near the mountain community of Estes Park, where many visitors stay while visiting the park. The Larimer County Sheriff's Office said Sunday that 22 homes and 2 outbuildings had been burned.

The two fires are among eight burning in Colorado a week before the Fourth of July, a key time for family vacations to national parks and other destinations. A statewide ban on open campfires and private fireworks has been in place for more than a week.

With Colorado midway through its worst wildfire season in a decade, travelers have seen some of their favorite sites closed to the public, obscured by smoke and haze.

"We're used to flooding and tornadoes, nothing like this," said Amanda Rice of Rock Falls, Ill., who evacuated a Manitou Springs hotel late Saturday with her husband, four children and dog. Some travelers were awoken with evacuation orders. Rice, scared when she saw flames, took her family to the evacuation center before she was told to go.

"It was just this god-awful orange glow. It was surreal. It honestly looked like hell was opening up," Rice said Sunday.

Plumes of gray and white smoke poured from the mountains Sunday, obscuring at times Pikes Peak, the most-summitted high-elevation mountain in the nation and inspiration for the song "America The Beautiful." Winds were pushing smoke away from Colorado Springs, but residents and tourists watched nervously as haze wrapped around the peak.

Families planning whitewater rafting trips or visits to the stunning red-rock formations in Garden of the Gods park in Colorado Springs were instead spending their vacations passing out bottled water and setting up cots in evacuee centers.

They included Mark Stein of Morristown, N.J., whose family arrived after midnight Sunday at their Manitou Springs hotel for a week of whitewater rafting and sight-seeing.

"We were sleeping for 15 minutes when they started knocking on the door — a day from hell," Stein said of the day of travel. With his wife and two sons, Stein spent the first night of his vacation setting up cots for more than 200 evacuees who slept at the school.

"I think it's the best vacation ever. This is what the real world is about. There's a lot of people that need help," Stein said.

Also Sunday, a brushfire that began near Elbert, about 50 miles southwest of Denver, quickly spread to about **SKINNER** cont. on page 3

Only his undertaker knows for sure!

TOM MARGENAU
Creator's Syndicate

Social Security and you

Q. My husband is 66 years old. I'm only 60. We are having an argument about Social Security. He insists on waiting until age 70 to get his full benefits plus the delayed retirement bonus. I say he should take Social Security now. If he doesn't, he'll be throwing away thousands of dollars. But he says he's run the numbers, and he comes out in the long run by waiting until 70 to take his Social Security. Which one of us is right?

A. You're both right! And you're both wrong! Or to put that another way: only his undertaker knows for sure! In other words, because we don't know how long your hubby is going to live, we don't know if he should take Social Security at 66 or wait until 70.

Personally, I think you are right. He should take his Social Security now. By waiting until age 70, he isn't just throwing away "thousands of dollars," as you say. He's throwing away almost \$100,000. He is going to have to live a long time past age 70 — into his mid 80s or so — to come out ahead of the game.

But as I point out so often in this column, most financial planners disagree with me. If your husband is healthy, he probably will live that long. So he may prove you and me wrong and he'll eventually win the "Social Security game." It's just that at age 85, I'm not so sure he'll be really excited about that!

Let me share a story I've told many times about this issue. I have been working on Social Security issues for 40 years now. In that time, I've talked to thousands of widows who told me something like this message I got in a recent email: "My husband recently died. He was 73 years old. He insisted on waiting until 70 to start his Social Security. I sure wish he would have taken Social Security sooner so we would have had more time to enjoy our retirement."

On the other hand, in all those

years, I never once have run into an 85-year-old person who told me, "I did it! I beat the system! I waited until 70 to start my Social Security, and now I've lived long enough to come out ahead of the game. I sure am glad I waited!" I'm not saying those folks aren't out there. There are probably lots of them. But I am saying they are not jumping up and down with excitement in the old folks home because they beat the odds!

Q. I am 67 years old. My husband died when I was 63, and I started getting widow's benefits at that time. I never worked very much, so my own Social Security benefit is very small — much less than my widow's check. In a recent column, you talked about widows switching to full benefits at age 66. I was never switched to higher benefits. Should I be getting more money?

A. I'm sorry, but you misunderstood what I wrote in the prior column. I made the point that widows do have the option of taking reduced benefits on one record prior to age 66, and then switching to full benefits on another record on their 66th birthday.

But you have nothing to switch to. You said you took widow's benefits at age 63 because your own benefit was much smaller than your widow's rate. So you certainly wouldn't have wanted to switch to less money on your own account at age 66. You will simply continue to receive your reduced widow's benefits for the rest of your life.

I know this is water under the bridge: but you possibly should have considered taking reduced benefits on your own record at age 62. If you could have survived on that smaller amount of monthly income, then at age 66 you would have have switched

to full widow's benefits. It's too late now to do anything about that.

Q. You've written some recent columns about the children of retirees getting Social Security benefits. I am one such retiree — and I have a problem. I have been getting a separate check for my daughter since I retired several years ago. She is about to turn 18 and because she is only a junior, she will get benefits until her 19th birthday. The Social Security office told me that the checks now have to come in her own name. But here is the problem. For the past several years, I have put most of the money from her Social Security checks in a "529 fund." This is money specifically set aside for her college tuition. Now Social Security is asking for all that money back! This isn't fair. I set up that fund for the sole purpose of paying her college expenses, and there will be severe tax consequences for me if I don't use that money for her tuition. How can the government ask for that money back?

A. You can relax about the money in the "529 fund:" the government won't want the money back once you explain to them what you are doing. The rules say that prior to age 18, benefits for your daughter must be paid to either you or her mother. But once your daughter reaches her 18th birthday, Social Security checks must be paid directly to her. As part of that process, they usually ask that you return any conserved funds so that money can be turned over to her. (It's your daughter's money, after all.) However, assuming your daughter is OK with the 529 arrangement, then the money can stay right where it is, and you won't have to worry about any tax penalties.

If you have a Social Security question, Tom Margenau has the answer. Contact him at thomas.margenau@comcast.net.

Utah fire started by shooters evacuates homes

SARATOGA SPRINGS, Utah (AP) — Residents of at least 2,300 homes in northern Utah were being evacuated Friday after high winds kicked up a fire started by target shooters.

The roughly 4,000-acre blaze, or about 6.25 square miles, started Thursday near the Saratoga Springs landfill, about 40 miles south of Salt Lake City. High winds then helped fan the flames onto tinder-dry grasslands.

Authorities were initially worried as flames moved toward property owned by an explosives company. But as winds kicked up, the fire began moving toward Saratoga Springs, and crews began focusing on saving homes.

Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman Teresa Rigby said the 2,300 houses evacuated include residents who voluntarily left, along with those ordered to leave.

On Friday, fire officials were calling in additional aircraft and extra ground crews.

BLM officials say they believe the blaze was caused when a bullet hit a rock and sparked the fire. This is the 20th target-shooting related fire this year in Utah, they said.

One firefighter had suffered minor burns, and no structural damage had been reported, said Jason Curry, a spokesman for the Utah Division of

Forestry, Fire and State Lands. Utah County Sheriff Jim Tracy said he feared the fire could take down the area's power grid, shutting off electricity to up to 7,000 homes.

"Several power poles and transformers ... up and down the fire lines have burned," Tracy said Friday evening. "If the fire gets a couple more critical poles and drops that grid, wires down on the ground, it will black out this entire area."

A continued mix of hot, windy and extremely dry conditions has raised the fire danger across Utah and parts of Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada and Colorado.

At a wildfire burning on more than 69,000 acres in northern Colorado, some homes were being evacuated Friday because of several spot fires started by winds outside the main fire. Some of those residents were evacuated after the fire flared up on Sunday and had only returned home Wednesday.

The mix of conditions that makes it easy for new fires to start and spread and cause existing fires to flare up is expected to last through Saturday there.

The fire west of Fort Collins has now destroyed at least 191 homes. It's also blamed for the death of a woman found dead at her ranch.

In southern Colorado, a new 300-acre fire near Mancos was threaten-

ing at least 10 structures and prompted officials to evacuate some homes east of town, federal officials said.

Gov. John Hickenlooper's office said Friday that the governor has signed executive orders releasing \$6.2 million more in state disaster money to fight the fire and two others.

The northern Colorado fire will have \$5 million more available, on top of \$20 million made available by a previous order. The fire has qualified for 75 percent federal reimbursement for firefighting costs, Hickenlooper's office said. A fire near Lake George will get \$1 million, and the Stuart Hole fire in Larimer County will receive \$200,000. The disaster money is coming partly from reserve funds.

Meanwhile, the Village People will perform a free concert Saturday in Ignacio, Colo., to raise money for relief efforts at smaller wildfires in Colorado and New Mexico, The Farmington Daily-Times (<http://bit.ly/KZy86u>) reported.

Those attending the show at the Sky Ute Casino will be asked to give cash donations to help relief efforts at a wildfire that's been burning for over a month near Pagosa Springs and a blaze along the San Juan River that destroyed three structures in far northwestern New Mexico.

Ninety percent containment on N.M. fire

RUIDOSO, N.M. (AP) — A New Mexico wildfire that destroyed 242 homes and businesses is now 90 percent contained as crews got a break in the weather.

Crews took advantage of an afternoon rain storm on Friday to keep the 69-square-mile Little Bear fire in check and increase containment lines.

The lightning-caused fire is burning near Ruidoso and started on June 4.

Meanwhile crews continue fighting the Whitewater-Baldy blaze, the largest fire in the state's recorded history at more than 464 square miles.

That fire is 87 percent contained. It began as two lightning-caused blazes on May 16 that merged to form

one giant wildfire. Meanwhile, the U.S. Forest Service says more than 120 firefighters are battling a new wildfire just southeast of the Magdalena Ridge Observatory/Langmuir Lab.

The Magdalena Ranger District reported Sunday that the 60-acre blaze is burning on the northern flank of Sawmill Canyon. Fire crews currently are providing structure protection to the Langmuir Lab, atop the Magdalena Ridge.

No structures have been damaged and it's unclear how the fire detected Saturday began.

The fire also is around 13 miles south of Magdalena, N.M.

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Unique program races to save historic Texas courthouses

KARNES CITY (AP) — Visitors climbing the stairs to Barbara Shaw's third-floor office at her South Texas courthouse would spot the gaping cracks in the 19th century brick walls and ask whether the place was safe.

Shaw couldn't offer them much reassurance.

"I mean, what do you say? Everybody that walked in there, when they leave, what do they remember? That rickety courthouse," said the Karnes County judge, who set up shop last year in a new location where she chairs the county commission. "It was scary to walk around there."

Emergency work is under way to save the 1894 building under a unique Texas program that's spent nearly a quarter-billion dollars renovating dozens of deteriorating historic courthouses. Yet, in a state that leads the country with 254 counties, the program has struggled to meet funding requests for a long list of other buildings in such disrepair that the National Trust for Historic Preservation this month placed Texas' historic county courthouses on its annual list of most endangered historic places.

Aging courthouses across Texas are suffering from falling bricks, electrical problems, flooding and other issues.

"We feel being named to the list is giving a voice to these buildings that can't speak for themselves," said Debbi Head, a spokeswoman for the Texas Historical Commission. "These buildings need somebody to tell their stories and hear their cries for help. The attention it's going to bring as a result is going to be what's needed."

The National Trust for Historic

Preservation first placed the courthouses on its list in 1998, one year after then-Gov. George W. Bush proposed the Texas Legislature provide a financial lifeline for the endangered structures.

Since then, \$247 million has been spent to fully restore 62 courthouses and partially restore another 21, making the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program the nation's largest state-supported historic preservation program and a model for other states.

But with funding being slashed by more than half from a decade ago, at least 70 buildings remain in condition similar to the one in this rural county about 55 miles southeast of San Antonio, prompting the national group to issue its second plea.

For example, north of Karnes County in adjacent Wilson County, the elegant Italianate courthouse in downtown Floresville since 1914 is ringed by a chain-link fence and has been vacant since last year because authorities fear it's unstable. In Kingsville, south of Corpus Christi, panes of glass in the windows at the 1923 Beaux Arts style Kleberg County Courthouse are held in place with duct tape and workers in the basement are subjected to flooding. The Armstrong County Courthouse in the Texas Panhandle, a Classical Revival style building constructed in 1912, has become a safety hazard because of falling bricks and electrical system problems.

The idea of protecting the architectural treasures surfaced as far back as 1975 when the Texas Legislature approved a measure blocking counties from making structural changes or additions to their

courthouses without consulting historical commission architects. That stopped a spurt of courthouse demolitions over the previous decades and put an end to projects such as the one in Karnes County where the cathedral-like courtroom with its arched ceiling became concealed with a dropped ceiling of suspended panels to house ductwork and wiring.

Over the years, well-intentioned officials in Karnes and other counties also had stucco applied to the exterior of numerous old courthouse buildings to aid in preservation of the original brick surfaces. Instead, the stucco trapped moisture, hastened the growth of mold and had the opposite effect by accelerating deterioration.

"I think prior to the law counties would just throw up their hands and say let's just put something up," said Sharon Fleming, an architect for the historical commission.

Under the preservation program, counties are awarded state money based on scores from an application that determines the severity of the need. The award also is contingent on county officials matching the state dollars.

The most recent awards two years ago totaled \$20 million — compared with \$170 million sought by counties applying for help — included emergency money for Karnes County, which is hoping to qualify for a total restoration. It was not clear how much funding is needed to fully restore and maintain the courthouse.

"We want it to last another hundred years, at least," Truett Hurt, chairman of

the local historical society, said of the courthouse where a convicted murderer was hanged on the new courthouse lawn even before the building was dedicated in October 1894.

An addition built in 1924 that actually harmed the entire structure's integrity has been razed in the past year and the original look of the rear of the building is being restored.

Karnes County officially has about 15,000 residents although the Eagle Ford shale drilling boom likely has doubled the population in the past two years, Shaw said. Revenues from the increased oil and gas activity are providing a financial impetus to the county matching the state grant for the overall courthouse project, she said.

"We want the tradition of the courthouse to be maintained, not just saving artifacts and bricks but the tradition that goes along with the county using it," said Lewis Fisher, architect for the Karnes County project. "This is what anchors the community and they can be proud of what their forefathers did."

Shaw is looking forward to moving back into a renovated courthouse, preferably without some of the anxiety the old building gave her through the years. She recalled working alone late one night, hearing noises in the walls and thinking it was mice. She set some traps.

"I thought I was so smart," she said. "And then a bat flew past me. We had a picture we took off the wall and hundreds flew out."

"It's going to be better, so much better."

Fires

cont. from page 5

60 acres, forcing the evacuation of about 100 residents.

Half the nation's firefighting fleet is now battling fires in Colorado, said Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper. He said C-130 military transport planes from Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs would begin assisting on Monday.

With eight wildfires burning, including a fire that has scorched more than 118 square miles and destroyed at least 191 homes near Fort Collins, Colorado is having its worst wildfire season in a decade.

"People recognize this is going to take a big push" to extinguish, Hickenlooper said Sunday from a Colorado Springs grocery store, where volunteers were passing out burritos, sandwiches and drinks to 350 firefighters working near Pikes Peak.

The wildfire near Rocky Mountain National Park destroyed vacation cabins and closed the most commonly used entrance to the park. Clouds of smoke blew toward the 102-year-old Stanley Hotel that inspired Stephen King to write "The Shining."

Carolyn Baty and her husband, Darrell, vacationing from Fort Worth, Texas, were evacuated from their cabin

Saturday afternoon.

"I smelled smoke coming from both directions, and then I heard the knock on the door," Darrell Baty told The Denver Post.

A fire burning near Fort Collins has scorched more than 118 square miles, destroying at least 191 homes. Though some evacuees were allowed home Sunday, that blaze has become among the largest and most expensive in Colorado history.

Elsewhere in the West, firefighters made progress against wildfires in Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

— In California, a wildfire about 60 miles north of Los Angeles triggered evacuations of campgrounds around an off-road recreation area on Saturday. Officials said the fire has blackened at least 1,000 acres in the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area, along the Interstate 5 corridor in Gorman.

— In Arizona, the U.S. Forest Service said Sunday that containment against the Pecos Fire, just outside of Young, is up to 50 percent and remains under 12,000 acres. Officials say many of the firefighting resources are being released to their home units or to other fire assignments.



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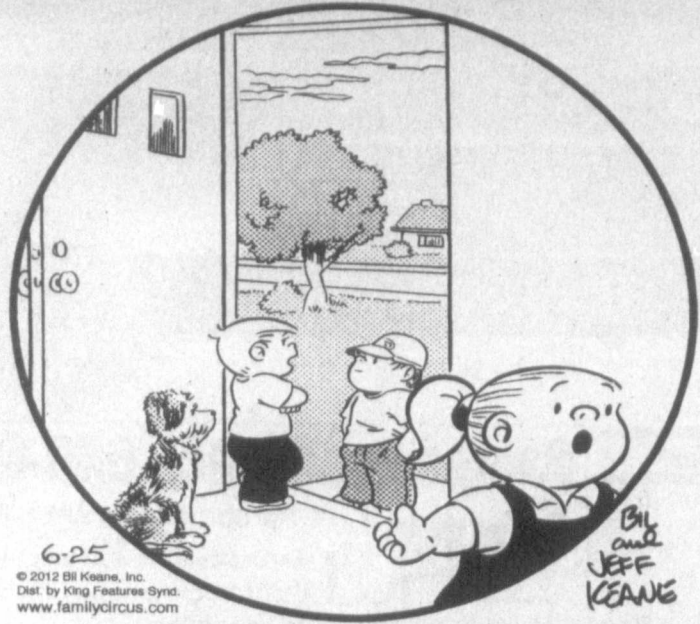
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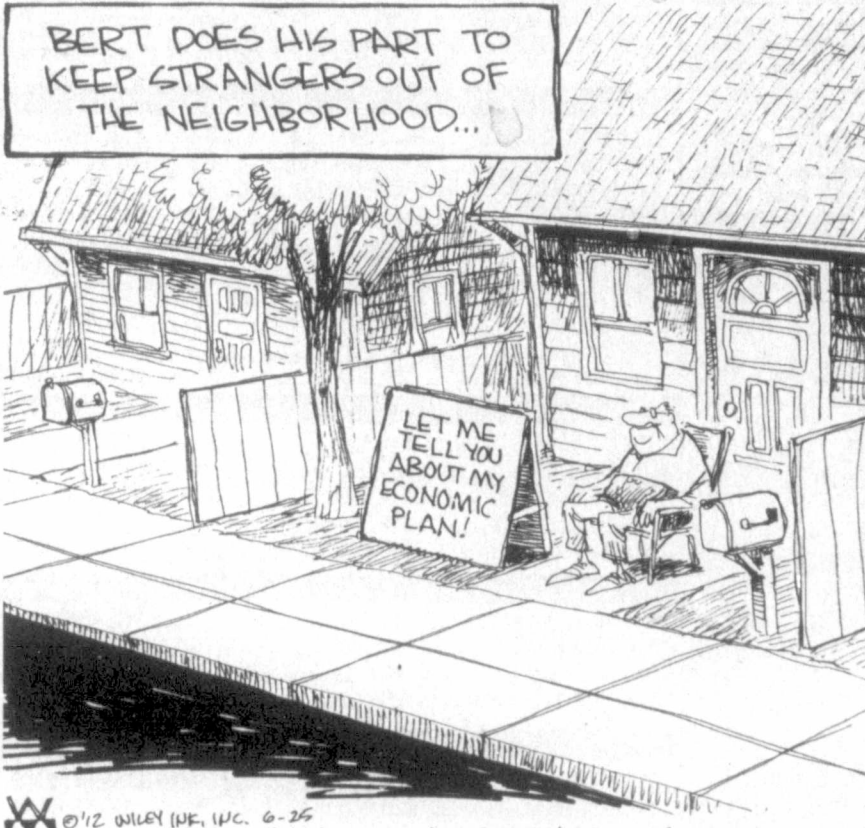
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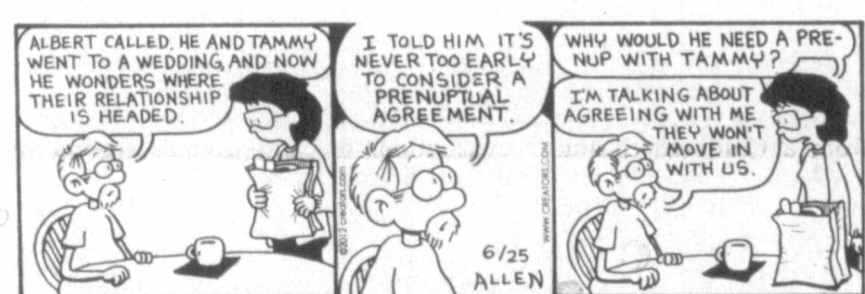


"Mommy, Billy's cooling off the whole neighborhood again!"

Non Sequitur



Nest Heads



daily horoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, June 26, 2012:

This year you alternate between communicating with excellence and withholding your thoughts. Be careful, as others could get confused by these mixed messages. If you discover that an issue is brewing, see if a misunderstanding with your communication is the source. If you are single, you will want to be open to meeting a life mate. This person could appear sometime close to your next birthday. If you are attached, the two of you nestle in. Talk to VIRGO.

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)
 ★★ What you think upon waking up might not exactly play into your day. Relationships and discussions are highlighted. If you want to resolve an issue, communicate and trust your words. All signs point to success. Tonight: Go with someone's suggestion.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 ★★ You could be rethinking a relationship with a child or a new friend. You are likely to overspend if you are not careful. Others could discover that they owe you some money. Don't make any purchases until you see the actual cash. Tonight: Put your feet up and relax.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 ★★ Listen to news that is forthcoming. If you allow your imagination to wander, you could be amazed by what comes up. Consider acting on some of these idea morsels. You could be out of sync with many people, but your ideas are good, if not great. Tonight: Be a flirt; you do it so well.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 ★★ Important phone calls and meetings need to happen early. Follow your instincts, and you'll come out in great shape. You might wonder what your limits are as you watch someone try to structure a situation. This person might need some feedback, but be subtle if you decide to make a comment. Tonight: At home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 ★★ Do not allow a money matter to remain pending any longer than need be. How you handle a situation and the choices you make could be quite exciting to others. Many people will join in and share; in fact, so many people might be around you that it could be an impromptu meeting! Tonight:

Brainstorm with your pals.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 ★★ You draw a stronger response in the morning. Use the evening to gain financial stability. You know what you want, and you can be quite precise in getting just that. Someone you look up to could be difficult to understand, as he or she thinks much differently than you do. Tonight: A late dinner.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 ★★ You might not believe that you have hit a banner day this morning, but keep the faith. Whatever you are involved in seems to flow, and perhaps a long-term desire finally becomes viable. If you detach from a volatile situation, you will see the path you are meant to follow. Tonight: Make this a special time for you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 ★★ Consider which way you want to go with a critical issue. Go within yourself, and you will see why you are triggered. At that point, you might see the answer or solution far more clearly. Follow-through counts. Tonight: Be discreet.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 ★★ Clear out your responsibilities as soon as you can. You will feel better as a result. A meeting or lunch get-together could be time-consuming in the afternoon. You will want to be free to interact and enjoy the people you are dealing with. Tonight: Out.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 ★★ You have detached long enough. Now you are ready to take a stand or move forward with a project. You know your expectations and will decide the best path to get there. Do not undermine yourself by overthinking this idea or process. Tonight: A must appearance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 ★★ You have a better sense of a key individual than you have had for a long time. Move away from the issue surrounding this bond through detachment. Look at why you get triggered, especially regarding this situation. A life issue might be emerging. Tonight: Relax to good music or a great movie.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 ★★ You might need to discuss a situation that affects others, even though you really know what to do. A conversation with a key friend or family member points you in the right direction. Trust your decisions and instincts. Tonight: Togetherness feels right.

Tundra



Shoe



Mother Goose and Grim



Zits



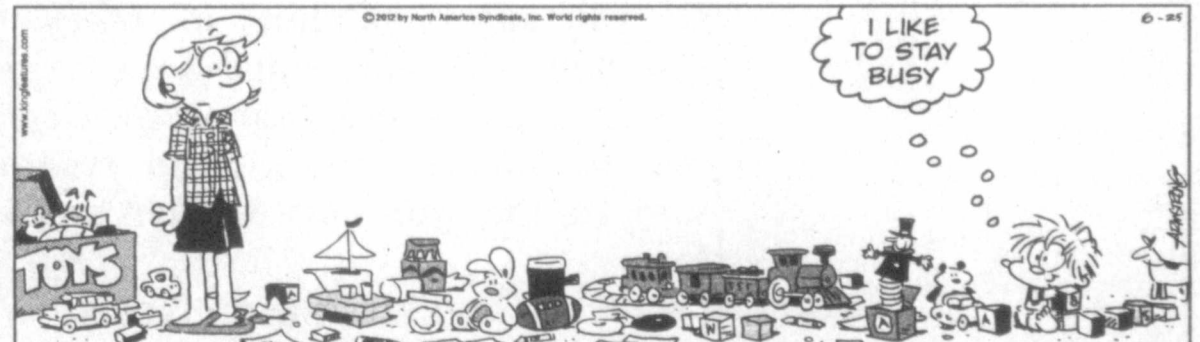
Garfield



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



Blondie



Sports

Covering sports in Pampa, Texas: A great beginning

When I first arrived in Pampa, Texas, on July 27, 2009, I got a copy of the paper I would soon be working for. I distinctively remember what was on the sports page. It had a recap of the last night's Texas Rangers' game and had a photo from that game.



ANDREW GLOVER

Well, it's safe to say we've come a long way since then.

Going back to that moment, it confirmed for me that this was the perfect job. I got to put my ideas into creating sports coverage for a city that was deprived of it. I'm going to take time and talk about our almost three-year journey.

I have to admit it started rough, as I couldn't spell half of the tennis roster's names correctly. Thanks to some nice parents, that got corrected.

Then there were my "wardrobe malfunctions." First, it was wearing blue to the Dalhart scrimmage in 2009. I'm sure there's some of our football players that aren't going to let me live down wearing the opposing team's colors to a playoff game in 2010. Eventually, I got trained to be unbiased in my reporting but a hometown reporter in my apparel.

The most important thing to me about this job was to give our kids the recognition that they earned and deserved.

I have to admit I think both my first senior class (2010) and I were sort of cheated. By the time I got to know them collectively and individually, they were gone. For those seniors, they spent three fourths of their high school career getting limited recognition for their accomplishments. I'm glad that I was able to make their last season more memorable.

There's lots of memories from that first year. I was first introduced to the football boosters at the football team's watermelon feed. I found it touching that Bob Ericson and Rick Bradley were kind of sad that I was "taking their jobs."

Thanks to me being on the sideline, Rick never got in trouble with an official.

I also got my first taste of six-man football in Lefors. I thought Texas Tech put up a lot of points in Mike Leach's offense but the Pirates took it to a new level. To this day they are the only football team I've seen score over 100 points. That game was also the highest combined score I've seen (180 points).

During the time, football and volleyball were starting, I ran into Bino Facio, whose daughter, Ashley, was a pitcher on the Lady Harvesters. Every time he saw me, he kept telling me how good the softball team is. About mid-April, I agreed with him. The next month was the most memorable as I got to cover the Lady Harvesters run to the regional quarterfinals. Fittingly, my Pampa News career ended with a playoff run by the softball team.

The class of 2011 provided my most memorable year. Pampa went from competing for just a playoff spot to competing for district titles. Playoff runs were plentiful.

For the first time, I got to see the Harvesters win a football game. Hopefully, that's a more frequent occurrence for my successor.

The volleyball team kicked it off with a run to the regional quarterfinals, achieving success that they haven't achieved in over a decade.

The one I enjoyed the most was by the Hustlin' Harvester basketball team, as it gave me VIP status on my old college floor at United Spirit Arena. Those were the four most exciting games I covered. It was hard when it ended. I remember after interviewing Jonathan Polasek for the last time, both of us were in tears.

The year was also special for me because I won third place in sportswriting at the Panhandle Press Association Convention. Others saw that we had a good thing going with our sports coverage.

My last class of seniors were some of the most talented athletes I got to cover. After spending three years together we knew each other pretty well. I enjoyed seeing them get excited when I came to

practice. Even though this class didn't have the same playoff success as the previous class, it was still enjoyable being around them.

This year's senior class will be special. Even though I am not finishing the journey with them, they will be the first senior class in a long time that's had someone cover them all four years. I'm grateful that I got to help be a part of that.

I remember at the end of those successful playoff runs, one of the common things our athletes said was, "I put this sport back where it belongs." It's an honor and humbling that I can say that, maybe, I helped put Pampa's sports coverage back where it belongs.

I would be a complete fool to say that it was all me. There were several people that helped resurrect Pampa's sports coverage.

First, I would like to thank God for leading me to Pampa.

A big thanks goes to my former publisher Randy Pribble and former editor Betsy Phillips for taking the risk on a college graduate to run their sports coverage.

I like to thank my current editor Arnie Aurellano for giving me guidance and teaching me what it meant to be a sports reporter. I also appreciated his amazing graphic mind that helped design our sports special section covers. Watching football and basketball together on Sunday nights was fun, too.

Our photographers, Charla Shults, Joe Murray, Cody Moore, David Bowser, Synda Foreman, Ryan Frazier, Emily Hart and anyone who submitted a photo to us made our job easier.

I would like to thank Pampa ISD athletic director Stuart Smith for showing me around campus that first day and opening his coaching staff to me.

Coach Parker, you definitely helped make me a better reporter. I'm grateful for how accessible you were and your team.

Coach Garza-Rodriguez, I doubt you'll read this, but it was amazing seeing what you achieved with the vol-

leyball program.

Coach Corse, I enjoyed getting to cover your program and of course the booster club's burgers.

Coach Miller, it was a blast getting to work with you. Our interviews felt more like friendly conversations. I appreciated how you valued our athletes.

Coach Valentine, it was fun seeing how you've turned around the Lady Harvester basketball program. I enjoyed getting to be in the same Sunday School class with you.

Coach Snelgrooves, we were kind of rookies together. I enjoyed getting to cover your team, even during those ridiculously cold February games.

Coach Gill, ever since that first playoff run, I've always looked forward to the end of January (the start of the season). You're definitely an unbelievable coach.

Coaches Elms, Smith, Stovall, May, Segura, Lewis and Garvin, it was fun working with you and your programs.

Coach Czubinski, it was always fun getting to talk with you after games and listening to your excitement.

Coaches Peet and Riley, I enjoyed watching your teams play.

Coaches Jurado, Word and Prescott, I was glad that I got to provide McLean athletics extra coverage.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who supported our sports coverage. Your kind words were a huge boost. I remember receiving well wishes even before I wrote a word on a page. This was a great community to be a part of.

I leave you with this. Even though we are going our separate ways, it's not an end, but a beginning for both of us. For me, it's the start of a new step in my career. For you, it's the beginning of having quality sports coverage. No matter where I end up, I will always get to say "I got my start in Pampa, Texas, covering the Harvesters."

Andrew Glover served as The Pampa News sports reporter from July 29, 2009 to June 22, 2012. He is now working as a sports reporter for the Stillwater NewsPress in Stillwater, Okla.

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