

The Brackett News

Have a Merry Christmas!



15 year, No. 46

Serving the communities of Brackettville, Fort Clark Springs, Spofford and Kinney County

1 Section, 10 Pages

Rumors of TB are unfounded

Health officials: No cases of disease confirmed in Kinney County

By J.J. GUIDRY
Editor

Word of tuberculosis cases in Kinney County was spreading faster than the infectious disease last weekend, but the rumors are untrue, according to state officials.

Sandra Morris, director of the Texas Department of Health's Communicable Disease Program, said there are no confirmed cases of tuberculosis (TB) in Kinney County.

"There has been a flurry of verbal activity," Morris said. "There is a possible suspect who no longer lives in the county, but there are no confirmations."

"I have not seen one case of tuberculosis in Kinney County and I have been in this region for three and a half years. There is no reason to panic. There is no disease in this community."

Over 30 citizens attended a public meeting hosted by Morris Monday at the Brackett ISD Auditorium.

"I have not seen one case of tuberculosis in Kinney County and I have been in this region for three and a half years. There is no reason to panic. There is no disease in this community."

Sandra Morris, Department of Health

"Please rest assured the health department is safeguarding your community," Morris told those in attendance. "We've got your back."

TB is a disease caused by bacteria called mycobacterium tuberculosis. The bacteria can attack any part of your body, but they usually attack the lungs. TB disease was once the leading cause of death in the United States.

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and be-

come infected.

People who are infected with TB do not feel sick, do not have any symptoms and cannot spread TB. But they may develop TB disease at some time in the future.

A TB skin test is the only way to find out if you have TB infection. Free skin tests are currently being offered at the Kinney County EMS building.

In most people who breathe in TB bacteria and become infected, the body is able to fight the bacteria to stop them from growing. The bacteria are walled off and become inactive, but they remain alive in the body and can become active later. This is

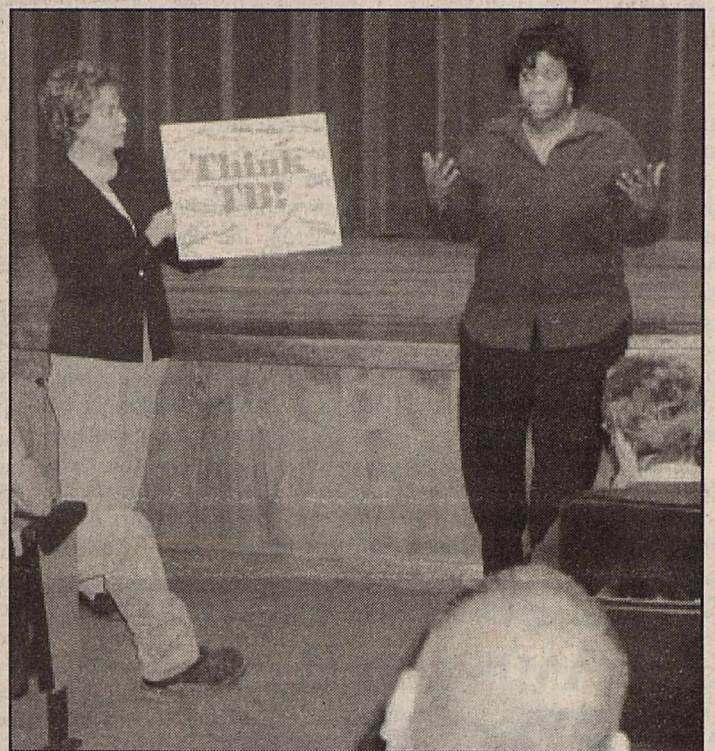
called TB infection. Many people who have TB infection never develop TB disease.

TB bacteria become active if the immune system can't stop them from growing. The active bacteria begin to multiply in the body and cause TB disease. Some people develop TB disease soon after becoming infected, before their immune system can fight the TB bacteria.

People with TB disease can be treated and cured if they seek medical help, although treatment may be long. Even better, today people who have TB infection but are not yet sick can take medicine so that they will never develop TB disease.

Each year in the United States, there are about 20,000 cases of active TB, a number that has been declining about 7 percent a year since 1992.

Another estimated 10 to 15 million people carry TB, with a 10 percent lifetime risk of developing the active form of the disease.



Sandra Morris of the Texas Department of Health discusses tuberculosis during a public meeting Monday at the Brackett ISD Auditorium.



Fighting fire, saving a house

Members of the Brackettville Volunteer Fire Department saved the Herrera house at 405 E. Second St. last Friday. The old shingle roof caught fire on the house.

Photo by Wes Robinson

Petrosky to perform at the Orange Bowl

Brackett senior Emily Petrosky will soon be headed to Miami to perform at the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1.

The FedEx Orange Bowl halftime show is an annual entertainment extravaganza replete with lights, smoke effects, fireworks, and most importantly, great musical performances.

The halftime show displays some of the country's best talent, as over 3,000 performers — dancers, majorettes, flag corps, cheerleaders and band members — from across the nation converge in South Florida.

This year's halftime show, which is themed "Party South Florida Style," will include even brighter lights, extra hip-shakin' excitement and more memorable theatrics.

Petrosky has been a varsity cheerleader at Brackett High School for the past four years and is in her second year as head cheerleader.

Petrosky earned the honor of participating in the halftime performance by being elected to the National Cheerleader Association All-American squad. This is the second year she has been nominated to the All-American Squad.

"Emily is very conscious about her responsibilities," said Cindy Brandt, BHS' cheerleader



Emily Petrosky

sponsor. "She is an outstanding student, both academically and athletically. She is just a really good person."

Next fall, Petrosky will join the collegiate co-ed squad at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan.

This year's Orange Bowl features an all-Florida contest between the University of Miami (10-2) and Florida State (10-2). The game will be aired live Jan. 1 on ABC at 7:30 p.m.

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There seems to be a new kind of Christian around these days. During the holiday season, they're busy telling us that things are hopeless.
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Blocking traffic

Traffic was blocked on Ann Street Monday afternoon when employees of Sambrano's House Moving and Leveling Company of LaPryor were assisted by the Texas Department of Transportation in moving the old Davis house from Thorn Street. The historic Brackettville home was purchased by Martin and Elaine Wardlaw and will be restored on a ranch in eastern Kinney County.

Photo by J.J. Guidry

Elections set to begin in January

Kinney County has two elections soon approaching. Citizens will consider rolling back the county's road and bridge tax, and then vote in party primaries for six county positions.

The rollback election is set for Feb. 7. Early voting will be from Jan. 19 through Feb. 2.

Filing for the six county positions is underway for the upcoming March primaries.

The six local positions on the ballot include county attorney, commissioners for Precinct 1 and Precinct 3, constable, sheriff and tax assessor-collector.

Candidates seeking election to those petitions can file through Jan. 2.

Candidates must file for election through the respective party chairmen.

Brackettville City Council member Mary Flores is county chair for the Democratic Party and Don Hood is the Republican chairman.

Early voting for the primary elections will be Feb. 17-27, and election day is on March 2.

EDITORIAL

School district responds to community's concerns

A year ago, our community was divided over issues surrounding Brackett ISD. The concerns of the community were listened to during a town meeting, they were discussed by the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and they have been acted upon by the administration and the Board of Trustees.

One of the most debated issues was the school district's polling place. Pending approval by the Department of Justice, the next school board election will be held in the Hunt Library as opposed to the Central Office.

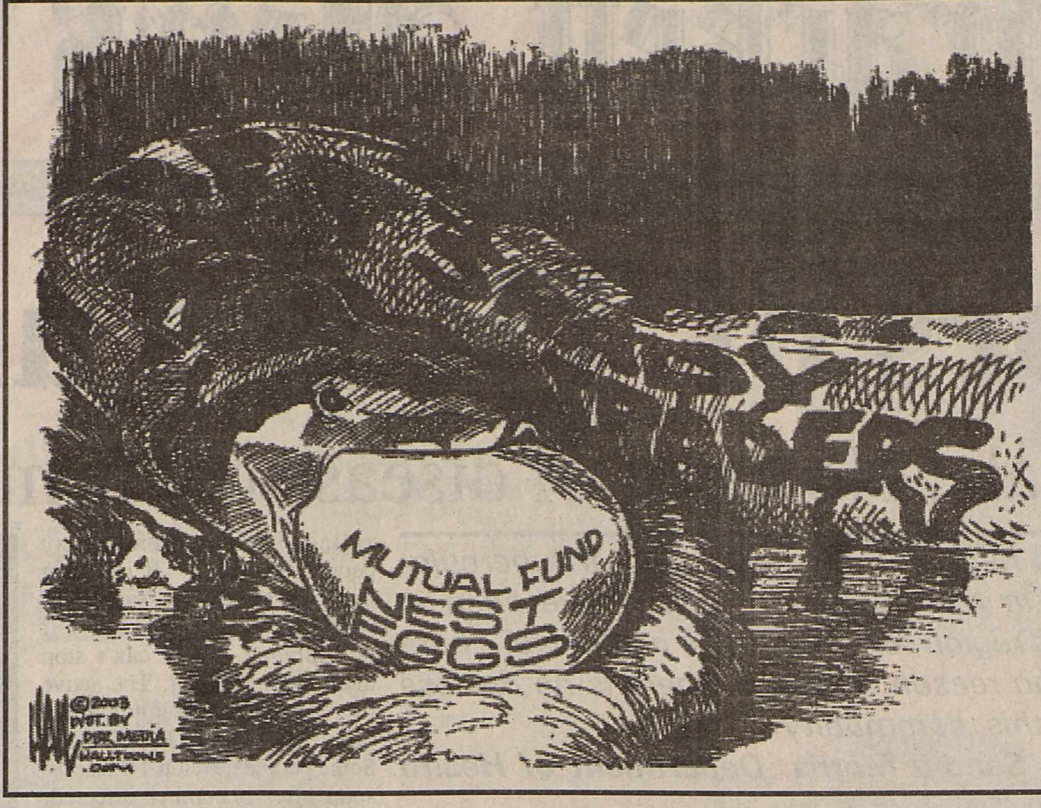
When the issue was first brought before the school board, many of the trustees said they saw no reason to move the polling place, but they did so anyway. This is a perfect example of democracy at work, and we applaud the board for having the willingness to respond to the concerns of the community.

Another issue was the school cafeteria. A growing enrollment has forced overcrowding in the cafeteria and shortened lunch periods for students. That problem will be solved when school resumes in January with the new addition to the cafeteria.

The committee and the school district also addressed communications, student discipline and behavior, the dress code, truancy problems, public display of affection, family involvement, safety and risk management, athletics and extra-curricular activities, and hiring more Hispanic and Spanish-speaking employees.

The committee, headed by Dr. Donald Smith, was appointed by Taylor Stephenson, former superintendent. Bobby Templeton, the district's new superintendent, his staff and the school board have followed through, acting on the advice of the committee.

Our school district is not perfect and there will always be room for improvement, but we feel ours is one of the best around. We are fortunate to have such capable leaders guiding our future.



But I Could Be Wrong
Chuck Hall

Christmas brings miracles

Tillman is at an age of ever increasing delight. He's coming to Granddad's house for Christmas. At least once a week he'll ask his mom how Santa will know where to find him.

The other day he sprang a new one. He told his mother that he was going to stay up all night to see Santa and watch him bring the presents. His mother politely said that he could not see Santa. She related that nobody gets to see Santa.

"Oh yeah, then how come I saw him yesterday at the store?"

When Tillman, Sarah and Tanner get to the house this year, we're going to talk. We're going to talk about what Christmas is really about.

I'm going to read the scriptures about the birth of Jesus. I'll try to teach the grandkids about the greatest gift that man has ever received. I want them to know that their Granddad is a Christian — that my faith in a living God is unwavering.

I still believe in miracles. I see the miracle of life every time I look into the eyes of those grandkids.

I hear the miracle of music when they laugh. I feel the miracle of warmth when one of them says, "I love you, Granddad." I know the miracle of life's meaning as I watch them grow.

Yep, I've known miracles in my life. The greatest is the miracle of love. The greatest love in my life is from my Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that I don't ever forget that.

I wish you and yours the merriest of Christmases. I hope you enjoy all of the love that your heart can hold. I trust the new year will be all that you hope and dream it to be.

And I hope, just this once, I can be right.

Saddam deserves the most grisly death



The Way I See It

Steven R. LaMascus

Well we caught Sodom Insane. He sure didn't look like the spiffy, fake-army-uniformed, heartless, swaggering dictator that we were seeing on TV, telling the world what a valiant battle he was going to give us, and how he was going to take his pistol and fight us to the last bullet.

I think I told somebody quite some time ago that when we found him he would be cowering in a hole like a trapped rat.

Most people like him are in reality physical and psychological cowards. They are brave only when they have their enemies in a torture chamber and when they are surrounded by strong-armed enforcers that are willing to kill anyone who looks sideways at the strutting fool. When faced with reality and without his armed goons to protect him, he cowered like a whipped puppy.

"I'm Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq, and I'm willing to negotiate," he sniveled when the U.S. soldiers dug him up.

"President Bush sends his regards," said the eloquent young warrior who discovered him.

The picture of the sniveling coward had hardly faded on the television screens when some idiot began to gripe that we weren't treating the murdering animal with proper respect. That we should not have paraded him around on television looking unkempt and dazed, like a cow in a barn.

You know what? For once I agree with the liberal fruitcakes. Instead of that, we should have been showing pictures of his worthless head displayed on a pike in the middle of Baghdad for all to see.

What Sodom deserves is the most grisly death that can be conjured up by Steven King. He deserves what he bestowed on uncouth thousands of others — terror, torture and eventually, after a long, long time in the torture chambers he built, a slow and agonizing death.

Unfortunately, we are more civilized and more humane than he is and will treat him like a person instead of the animal he is — even if an evil, ungodly, inhuman, murderous one.

I fail to grasp the mentality that can demonize President Bush for waging war against this evil son of Satan, while at the same time prancing around declaring that we are not showing the truly evil Sodom enough respect.

I guess what it takes to be a real liberal is to completely divorce yourself from any form of reality and be willing to side with the devil himself if it will further your political ambitions. Logic and reality be hanged, if it was done or said by a conservative, it must be wrong! Long live Saddam Hussein!

On the home front, Howard Dean is attacking President Bush because he won't pressure Congress to pass yet another extension of unemployment benefits, saying "it underlines the mean-spiritedness of this administration."

Jeremiah 8:12, "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? They certainly were not ashamed, and they did not know how to blush; Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time of their punishment they shall be brought down, says the Lord." NASB

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BETEL TAN
CHARLIS DANCING
LULL TACIT HOER
URGE LLAMA ELET
ETAB EELER DIRTY

The Brackett News

The Brackett News (USPS 003987) is an entirely locally owned, independent newspaper published weekly on Thursday for \$20 per year in Kinney County, \$25 outside of county but in Texas, and \$27.50 outside of Texas, by The Brackett News, Inc., 507 S. Ann Street, Brackettville, Texas, 78832, (telephone: 830-563-2852, fax: 830-563-9538) and entered as second class matter at the U.S. Post Office at Brackettville, Texas, under the Act of March 3, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Brackett News, P.O. Box 1039, Brackettville, Texas, 78832.

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Happy Holidays from Cheryl B. King, Tracy O. King, Gloria Alejandro, Tim Peskie and Cookie Arizmendi

May the warmth of family and good friends decorate your hearth and spread throughout your home this holiday season.

Merry Christmas and many thanks to one and all.

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Capitol Comment
Kay Bailey Hutchison

Looking back, moving forward

On March 4, 1789, the first session of Congress convened. More than two centuries later, Jan. 7, 2003, marked the beginning of the 108th U.S. Congress. As always, this one brought new and unexpected challenges, but overall we were able to accomplish some good things for the American people. This column is a look back over the year and looks forward to what the second half of the 108th Congress in 2004 will achieve.

Economic Security
In May, President Bush signed into law the 2003 Jobs and Growth package to return \$350 billion in tax cuts to the American people, building on the 2001 tax relief.

The legislation accelerated many of the reductions that were being phased in over several years including my marriage penalty relief bill, an increase in the child tax credit and lower marginal rates. It also provided important relief for businesses and \$20 billion to states where many are facing difficult budgetary shortfalls. I fought to adjust the allocation formula so that Texas ultimately received \$1.3 billion to help balance the state budget, a full \$100 million more than they were on track to get.

The good news is that our policies to boost the economy are working. In October, employment rose by 126,000 for a total of 286,000 new jobs over a three-month period. Additionally, the real gross domestic product, or output of goods and services produced in the U.S., increased at an annual rate of 8.2 percent in the third quarter of 2003, building on a 3.3 percent increase in the second quarter. We experienced the fastest growth in nearly two decades.

Domestic Security
We kicked off the year by confirming our nation's first secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, passing national AMBER Alert legislation to more quickly recover kidnapped children and enacting a budget to provide a spending blueprint for Congress.

We approved a record \$2.4 billion in funding to combat the global HIV/AIDS epidemic devastating Africa and the Caribbean, and passed the "do-not-call" registry bill to protect consumers from unwanted phone solicitations (which is now held up in Federal Court).

In the final days of the session we were finally able to fulfill a promise made to America's seniors by bringing Medicare up-to-date and offering a prescription drug benefit for the first time.

National Security
Perhaps the issue that most dominated 2003 was Operation Iraqi Freedom. In March we descended on Baghdad to remove the threat of Saddam Hussein. A democratic Iraq will stand as an example to all the Middle East and help ensure a safer world for future generations.

We have stood firm in support of our troops, providing the necessary funds to fight the war and help the Iraqi people more quickly gain control of their own destiny. We also passed the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act and the Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act to help military families.

Moving Forward
As with every year there are some important issues that were not resolved. We were unable to pass a comprehensive energy bill, something I have advocated during my decade of service in the Senate. Though we didn't get a bill this year, it is a top priority heading into 2004. We'll also act to reauthorize highway legislation to create better highways and transportation systems, and hope to make progress on legislation I introduced to make Amtrak a viable, national alternative.

In 2004 we'll continue to fight for the fair treatment of judicial nominees and encourage up-or-down votes in the Senate to fill critical vacancies in our nation's courts.

As we move forward, we'll undoubtedly face new challenges and we'll tackle them for the good of the American people.

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2003 Olds Alero 24,015 miles SN 5083	2002 Chevy Trailblazer 31,141 miles SN 5098	2001 Mazda 626 4 Door..... 44,995 miles SN31593A
2003 Chevrolet Venture 23,101 miles SN 5084	2002 Chevrolet Tahoe..... 43,537 miles SN31083A	2001 Chevrolet Silverado CrewCab SOLD SN70024A
2003 Chevrolet Impala..... 23,780 miles SN5086	2002 GMC Yukon SOLD SN 5075	2001 Chevrolet Prizm SOLD SN 4969
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2003 GMC Envoy SOLD SN 5059	2002 Chevrolet Silverado SOLD SN 5062	2001 Pontiac Aztek 35,249 miles SN 5064
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2003 Buick Rendezvous SOLD SN 5095	2002 Chevrolet Silverado Reg. Cab 32,431 miles SN71003A	2000 Chevrolet 5-10 Pickup 34,299 miles SN 5056
2003 Chevrolet Silverado HD Ext. Cab 15,716 miles SN70333A	2002 GMC Sierra Crew Cab..... SOLD SN 3293A	2000 Chevrolet Venture Van..... 45,749 miles SN 5070
2003 Chevrolet Suburban 23,507 miles SN 5099	2002 Chevrolet Silverado Ext. Cab SOLD SN 5101	2000 GMC Jimmy..... 43,539 miles SN 5073
2003 Chevrolet Trailblazer..... 18,515 miles SN 5074	2001 Chevrolet Suburban 43,290 miles SN31743A	2000 Buick LeSabre SOLD SN 4985
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Several local children recently participated in the Quemado Youth Rodeo, including, top row (from left): Hayley Harris, Bailey Allen, Jared Harris and Cody Clark. Middle row: Summer Allen, Walker Harris, Webb Ashley, Walter Ashley and Korley Allen. Bottom row: Adam Resendez and Ryan Clark.

New license plates help raise funds for Safe Routes to School program

AUSTIN — In 2001, the state of Texas enacted legislation to increase safety in school zones by directing the Department of Transportation to implement the Safe Routes to School program. TxDOT now has two new specialty license plates that will create funds for this initiative.

By purchasing a "God Bless America" or "God Bless Texas" license plate, drivers can display pride for their state and country while contributing dollars for construction projects that will increase the chances of their children getting to school safely.

"The responsibility to provide safe walkways and bicycle crossings for our school children is every bit as important as a quality education," said John W. Johnson, chair of the Texas Transportation Commission.

The "God Bless America" spe-

"The responsibility to provide safe walkways and bicycle crossings for our school children is every bit as important as a quality education."

John W. Johnson

cialty plate features a patriotic illustration of the American flag with an eagle positioned over the flag. The words "God Bless America" run along the bottom of the plate.

The "God Bless Texas" specialty plate design includes the state flag on the left side of the plate and the phrase "God Bless Texas" on the bottom of the

plate. The "God Bless America" and "God Bless Texas" license plates are now available for a \$40 annual fee, plus \$40 if personalized, in addition to regular registration fees. Of the \$40 annual fee, \$32 is deposited in the state highway fund to improve safety in and around school areas such as sidewalks and pedestrian or bicycle crossings.

Applications for the "God Bless America" and "God Bless Texas" specialty plates are available at county tax offices, on TxDOT's web site (www.dot.state.tx.us) or by calling the department's help desk at (512) 465-7611.

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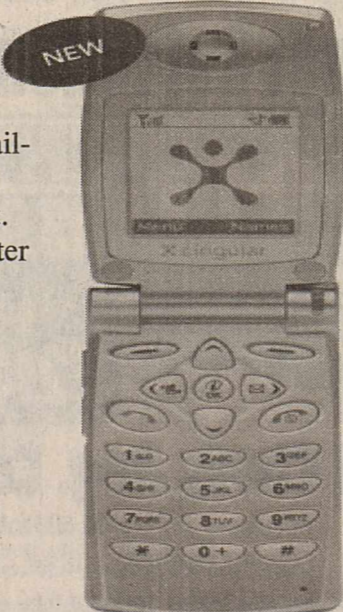
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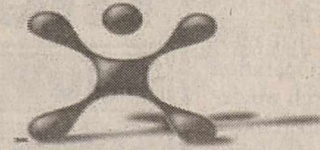


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OBITUARIES

Ivadell L. Geiser Morris

Ivadell L. Geiser Morris went to be with the Lord peacefully on Monday evening, Dec. 8, 2003.

Morris was born July 24, 1908 in Summit Station, Ohio. She lived in Brackettville for 10 years.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Erwin O. Morris. They had no children and her relatives have all passed away, except for one niece.



Morris was a living reminder of the power of unconditional love, ongoing encouragement, a positive attitude and remarkable dignity.

Thanks to all of her family and friends, she had a wonderful life. She was 95 years old at the time of her death.

Juanita H. Garcia

Juanita H. Garcia, age 77, passed away Dec 20, 2003, at her residence in Brackettville. She was born July 21, 1926, in Brackettville.

Garcia was preceded in death by her husband Eulalio Garcia, son David Garcia and siblings Pedro Hernandez, Pete Hernandez, Santos Hernandez and Ramon "Chino" Hernandez.

Garcia is survived by her children: Ajel Garcia and wife Rosemary of Sterling City, Eulalio Garcia Jr. and wife Terry of Sterling City, Mary Jane Fague of Brackettville, Oscar Garcia and wife Verdie of Del Rio, Efran and Jesus Garcia of Brackettville, Jose Garcia and

wife Lisa of Hebron, Ky., and Rosa Rios and husband Reuben of Leakey; siblings: Carmen Burdohan of Milwaukee, Jovita Munoz of Sonora, Luisa Ramos of Dalhart, Gloria DeLaRosa of San Antonio, Ester Martinez of Brackettville, and Jimmy Hernandez of Sterling City; 25 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held Monday and a Rosary was recited at the Del Rio Funeral Home Chapel.

A Mass of Christian burial was held Tuesday at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church in Brackettville. Burial followed at the Kinney County Cemetery.



Celebrating Christmas Photo by Jewel Robinson
Lou Green (from left) and Mary and J.D. Martin were all smiles at the Chamber of Commerce Christmas party last Thursday at the NCO Club on Fort Clark Springs.

Tomato soup is fast, easy to make, and tastes better than store bought

I want to share a couple of quickies. As many know, I make soup from scratch. If and when that's what is wanted, for the simple reason it not only has more "goodies" in it, it tastes better!

I must confess, I do buy tomato soup. All this is leading up to my hungries for tomato soup. It is the only thing for sure my tummy will accept when I'm not feeling well.

Wouldn't you know — no tomato soup! I got inventive and came up with an acceptable substitute I liked better than store bought. Why not use my idea and create your own?

Super Fast Tomato Soup
1 can diced tomatoes
tomato sauce (not paste)
dash of worcestershire
1 tablespoon cream soup mix
salt and pepper to taste
pat of butter (optional).

Empty diced tomatoes into a sauce pan and add the desired amount of tomato sauce to make rich broth (varies on the amount being made). Then add the remaining ingredients and heat.

If you don't have my recipe for cream soup mix, you will need to thicken (cornstarch or flour mixed with tomato juice before adding), with a dash each of onion powder, garlic, chicken granules and powdered milk.

Couscous Salad with Lime-Cumin Dressing
3 tablespoons peanut or olive oil



Goodies From G.G.

Vada Baldree

1/2 large red bell pepper, chopped
1 cup couscous
* 1 1/4 cups hot vegetable broth

3 tablespoons lime juice (may use lemon)
1 teaspoon ground cumin
3 to 4 drops hot pepper sauce
1/3 cup pine nuts (they're expensive so I use sunflower seeds)
1 scallion, finely chopped, or onion.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add pepper, cooking until tender but firm for three to four minutes.

Add couscous and stir for 30 seconds. Add broth. Bring to a boil, stirring once. Cover tightly, remove from heat and let sit five minutes. In small bowl whisk lime juice, remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, cumin and hot pepper sauce.

Fluff couscous with fork, add dressing, and toss to combine. Add nuts and scallion, and toss to combine (or use lifting motion with large fork to mix).

Serve warm or at room temperature. It makes six servings.

KINNEY COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

Monday, Dec. 15
1:46 p.m., A man reported that he had lost his cell phone between Spofford and E. Spring Street.

Tuesday, Dec. 16
12:15 a.m., A woman reported that her ex-boyfriend trespassed on her property on E. Third Street and is still harassing her at her residence on East 3rd St. The woman said she did not want to press charges, but wrote an official final warning letter and copies were provided to the County Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Office.

2 a.m., A man reported that one of his hunting cabins was on fire at his ranch on Highway 277. There were 10 hunters in the cabin at the time. No injuries were reported. The fire was

believed to have started from a wood stove's exhaust pipe at the roof outlet.

2:05 a.m., Deputy Shannon reported that the doors at the Funeral Home were open and the bolt on the door had been broken. The Funeral Home director was notified.

7:46 a.m., A 911 caller reported an accident on Veltman and Brown Street. No injuries were reported.

Wednesday, Dec. 17
10:54 p.m., A Fort Clark woman reported loud noises coming from her neighbors house on Chandler Avenue.

Thursday, Dec. 18
11:36 p.m., A Fort Clark Springs security employee requested assistance with a vehicle that refused to stop.

11:57 p.m., A man asked for assistance. He said that he told a man and a woman not to come to his residence on Tiger Alley and they said they were coming any way.

Saturday, Dec. 20
3:52 a.m., A woman requested assistance with her boyfriend at her residence on Brown Street. The man wanted to leave but she wouldn't give him the keys to his truck because he was intoxicated. Deputy Cody Shannon was dispatched to the scene. He spoke to the man, who was later picked up by his mother.

11:30 p.m., A woman reported that a man was calling and harassing her.

Sunday, Dec. 21
7 a.m., Everato Rodriguez Navarro, 37, of Del Rio was arrested by Deputy Manny Pena

for driving while intoxicated, fourth offense. He was booked into the Kinney County Jail where he was still being held at press-time.

1:10 p.m., A woman reported that two of her pistols may have been stolen from her Fort Clark residence.

5:34 p.m., The Cline Checkpoint requested assistance with a possible intoxicated driver. Deputy Ron Ring was dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival, he was advised that Mario Luna, 40, of Bandera was driving in the wrong lane and almost ran over an agent. Luna was arrested for driving while intoxicated. He was booked into the Kinney County Jail where he was still being held at press-time.

MONUMENTS

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Look towards the hope of Christ

There seems to be a new kind of Christian around these days. Maybe you've bumped into them lately.

During this season when we remember the hope that the coming of the Savior brings, they're busy telling us that things are hopeless. As we see the Gospel reaching corners of the world where it has never before been preached (Matthew 28:19), these nay-sayers are busy mourning the fact that not everyone listens.

As we see dozens of our Brackettville teens serving their community and learning of God through organizations like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, these poor folks can only seem to see teens that have gone wrong and made some poor choices.

These folks will tell you that the U.S. doesn't protect the religious rights of Christians — forgetting that in most countries they couldn't even publicly express such an opinion.

They will rightly tell you that TV has been taken over by soft



First United Methodist Church

Rev. Roger Baker

pornography and values that are not Christian — forgetting that Christian television broadcasts reach more audiences than even before and that in any case, televisions can be turned off and unplugged.

Maybe you've even taken some of these messages yourself and passed them along. It's easy to condemn non-believers when we forget that we ourselves didn't "earn" our salvation, but rather that a merciful God understood the need for mercy (Romans 3:23).

It is easy to condemn others for lives enmeshed in sin when we forget the sins that tangle our own thoughts and lives.

A true Christmas message is a message of hope — the hope

that comes from the miracle of Christmas (Romans 8:25).

As Christians, we believe that God came down from heaven to personally exhibit His love for us. That love was given even though that Infant was fully aware of the price of human existence. Christ was tempted as we are every day.

In the very fact that our God has experienced the pains and joys of everyday life, I find reason to hope. The merchants of despair seem to me to have missed the entire point of the Incarnation. (Romans 12:12)

It is so easy to become enraptured with the truth and love we find in Jesus that somehow we think that we have earned or deserve this love.

This is not the case. God's gift of love through Jesus Christ is given to us freely, and we're specifically enjoined *not* to boast. (James 4:16)

When we claim a sort of moral high ground because of the things God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we're putting the

cart before the horse. It isn't because of anything we have done that God loves us so much; rather, it's because God loves us so much that we are able to rise above our human desires to do things that the "natural man" doesn't want to do.

I'd like to see those who preach doom and gloom trade their pens of sadness for a few words of thanksgiving.

During Christmas, I'd pray that we can look towards the hope of Christ instead of preying on the hopes of those who haven't yet found their way to the love of Christ.

At First United Methodist Church, we're still amazed at the way God loves us and showed that love for us through Christ Jesus.

Join us as we worship in amazement during the entire Christmas season. We will have a Christmas Eve service at 6 p.m. and we worship every Sunday at 10:45 a.m. Bring your Bibles and smile — we have hope indeed in Christ!

God hasn't forgotten

"I'll be glad when this holiday stuff's over Joe," Bruce said.

"I didn't know you felt that way Bruce. You sound like the Grinch who stole Christmas. Relax and enjoy the holiday spirit," Joe admonished.

Bruce ratcheted up his criticism: "How can you pretend there's some kind of holiday spirit when all I see is killing, stealing and lying everywhere. If there is a God, he sure has made a mess of things."

Joe swallowed some coffee.

"Look Bruce," Joe began. "Long ago a very wise man said that God's not the cause of things he hates. God hates the killing, stealing and lying as well as all other forms of wickedness. When God created man he gave him free choice. We're subject to the things we choose for ourselves." (Sirach 15:11-14)

"I know you mean well Joe," Bruce said. "But I can't believe there's a God. It all ends right here. This earth's nothing but hell and we're all living it."

Joe looked at his friend. To his left there was a small nativity scene on the counter. Bruce followed Joe's gaze. From the hallway voices of children could be heard.

"Away in a manger no crib



Empowering Families

Dr. Donald Smith

for his bed. The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head. The stars in the sky look down where he lay. The Little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay."

Joe turned. Bruce had tears in his eyes.

"The last time I heard that song, was when I was a child," said Bruce, hardly able to hold his composure. "We always sang it at my grandmother's house. What's happened to me in all these years?"

"God loves you Bruce," Joe said. "He sent those children to let you know He hasn't forgotten you. That's why we have Christmas, my friend."

"For God so loved the world that he sent his only son that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

"In spite of all the wickedness, God hasn't forgotten."

Editor's note: This column is brought to you by the St. Henry deOsso Family Project, working in Brackettville to strengthen family, faith and education.

Pope John Paul II has been a champion of peace

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of Brackettville,

Peace be with you! May Christ the King richly bless you and your families as we bow before him on this great feast. He is truly our King and how sweet is his rule.

After the Resurrection, before he returned to the right hand of the Father, he gave us one of our greatest gifts — a Shepherd. He gave us Peter as Pope, to give us order and unity. He also gave His Spirit to guide Peter in shepherding the flock, promising that same Spirit would remain with us to protect the church until the end of time and that the gates of hell would not prevail against her.

For two millennium Peter has guarded the gate to the sheepfold. For two millennium he has laid down his life for his sheep. Its beauty and power is beyond what words can capture.

On Oct. 16, we celebrated 25 years that Pope John Paul II has served as Peter. For a quarter of a century he has fearlessly and

compassionately steered the Ark of Holy Mother Church on the rough seas that the world has to offer. Bravo Papa! The promise of Christ stands unshaken.

I would like to share with you some words he spoke on that day: "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantoabo — I will sing of your mercies, O Lord, forever." (Psalms 89:1)

"Twenty-five years ago I had a special experience of divine mercy. At the Conclave, through the College of Cardinals, Christ said to me, as once he said to Peter by the Lake of Genesaret: 'Tend my sheep' (John 21:16).

"I heard also in my soul the question he addressed to Peter at that moment: 'Do you love me? Do you love me more than these?' (John 21:15-16).

"Humanly speaking, how could I not have been apprehensive? How could so great a responsibility not burden me? I had to turn to divine mercy in order to answer the question 'Do you accept?' with confidence: 'In the obedience of the faith,



Postcard Home

Brother Henry Clay Hunt III

before Christ my Lord, entrusting myself to the Mother of Christ and of the Church, aware of the great difficulties, I accept."

"Today, dear brothers and sisters, I am pleased to share with you an experience that has now lasted a quarter of a century. Every day that same dialogue between Jesus and Peter takes place in my heart. In spirit, I focus on the benevolent gaze of the risen Christ. Although he knows of my human frailty, he encourages me to answer confidently, like Peter: 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.'" (John 21:17)

"And then he invites me to take on the responsibilities that he himself has entrusted to me. Yes, Pope John Paul II has

been a champion of peace. He has been a champion of champions of peace. He is the servant of the servants of God.

We would do well to continue to offer our prayers and our sufferings for him.

Let us remember to not be so easily deceived by appearance, for the Holy Father can truly say with St. Paul, "It is when I am weak that I am strong."

He has been, is and will continue to be a pillar of truth, a light in the darkness. Be confident, for on him we have sure footing. (Matthew 16:18)

Be wise to see that he is the good shepherd. Follow his voice for he leads us to the green pasture and to the safety of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Holy Father will serve to the end. He has taught us how to live, he is teaching us how to suffer, and he will teach us how to die.

God be with you and Our Lady be your shield!
From Rome, Brother Henry Clay Hunt III S.O.L.T.

'The Twelve Days of Christmas' has religious origins from England

It all began in Great Britain around the time of King Henry VIII. The Church of England, also referred to as "The Anglican Church," had begun. In those days, Roman Catholics were in disfavor in England and were unable openly to practice their form of Christianity.

The "Twelve Days of Christmas," according to some professional students of these matters, turned out to be their secret way of keeping their belief system alive. This carol is actually composed of a code.

It begins, "On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me."

The code is this: The "true love" is God himself. The "me" represents the Christian who receives what God gave.

The "two turtle doves" are the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The "three French horns" point to 1 Corinthians 13:13 — "And now Faith, Hope, and Love abide."

The "four calling birds" quite naturally symbolize the four gospels. The "five golden rings" stand for the first five books of the Old Testament, the Torah, the Book of Moses.

The "six geese a laying" call



St. Mary Magdalene Church

Fr. Cornelius J. Scanlan

to mind the six days of creation as declared by the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. The "seven swans a swimming" are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit gleaned from 1 Corinthians 12:9-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and First Peter 4:1-11.

The "eight maids a milking" are the eight Beatitudes as found in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

The "nine ladies dancing" correspond to the nine "fruits of the Holy Spirit" mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. The "10 lords a leaping" are the 10 Commandments.

The "11 pipers piping" were the eleven faithful Apostles, and the "12 drummers drumming" indicated the 12 major points of the Apostle's Creed.

Finally, the "partridge in a pear tree" represents Jesus Christ, who died on the trunk of a tree.

'With God nothing shall be impossible'

Praise the Lord!
"And the Angel said unto her, fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David:

"For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:30-32, 37)

"And the Angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour,



St. John's Missionary Church

Rev. Bill Adams Sr.

which is Christ the Lord.
"And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:10-12)

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you from our church family.
God bless!

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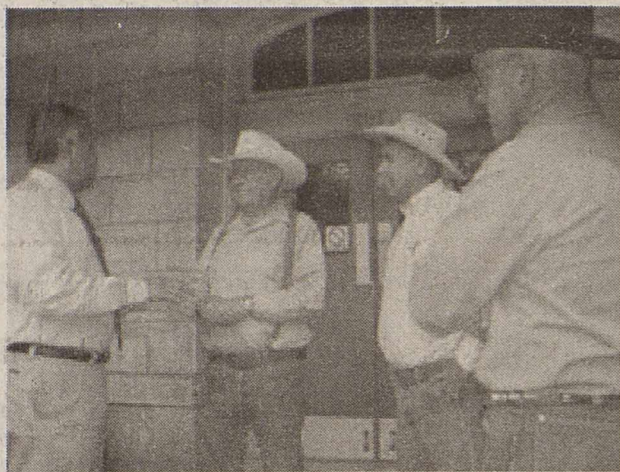
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"Children's Church every Sunday for Preschoolers!"

A Holiday Greeting from Congressman Henry Bonilla



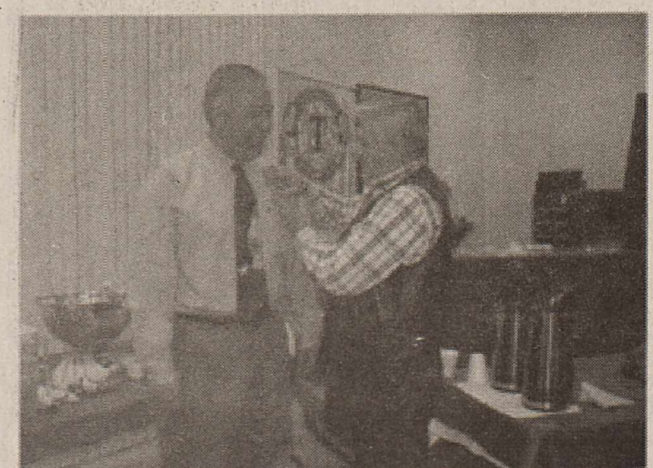
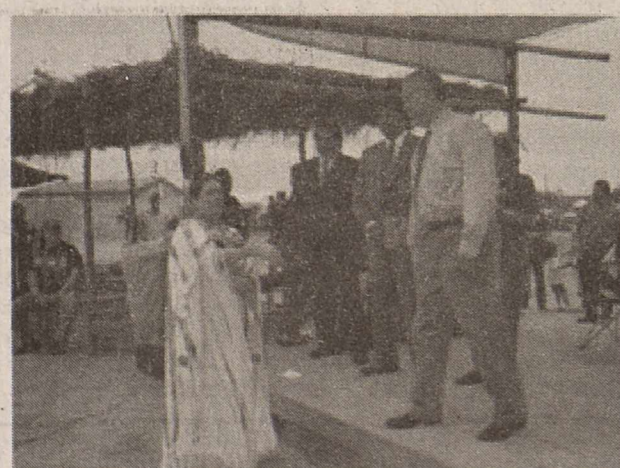
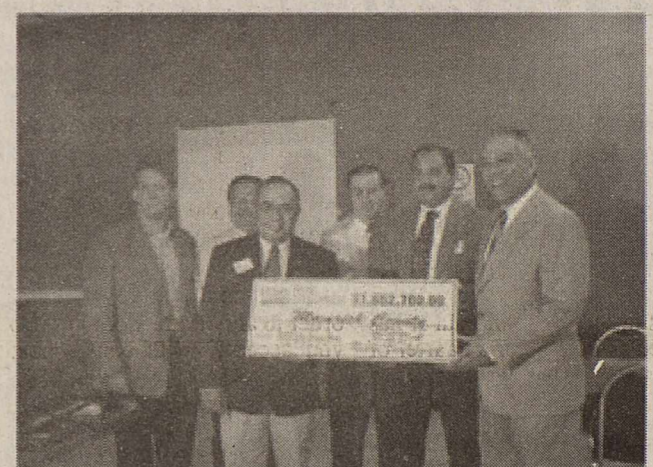
Dear Friends,

I hope that this holiday season brings you and yours all the joy on earth.

It has been my honor to represent you for the last eleven years and I look forward to another successful year for the people of the 23rd district.

All the best,

Hy Bonilla



Paid for and authorized by Texans for Henry Bonilla, Jill DeYoung treasurer

Merry Christmas!

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS 1 Late Huntley 5 One who "licked the platter clean" 10 Late coming back 14 Followers of fa or tra 15 Soldier's delight 16 Horse's feature 17 Greases 18 Devoured 19 Stain 20 Pieces of furniture 22 Leftovers 24 Forest creature 25 Garden bloom 26 Struthers 29 Presidential nickname 30 Semi-precious stone 34 "Woe is me!" 35 Snoop 36 Night noises 37 Loner 38 Within ; not far away 40 Alphabetic characters 41 Reparation 43 Cut green blades 44 Lawsuit 45 Day 46 Piece of cloth 47 Resurrected 48 Palm tree 50 Earth tone 51 Beverage 54 Waltzing 58 Pause 59 Understood 61 Gardener 62 Yen 63 Beast of burden 64 "...had a farm, O..." 65 Greek letters 66 Conger 67 Scum DOWN 1 Clumsy one 2 Head 3 Magazine title 4 Parts of fezzes 5 Smooth and shiny 6 Fruit 7 Turncoat 8 Opposed 9 Creed article 10 Trade restriction 11 Bores 12 Shorty 13 "Why don't we!" 21 Deceltul 23 Intended 25 Immeasurably bad 26 ...dressing 27 1836 battle site 28 Brewer's product 29 Departure's opp. 31 Regions 32 Uplight 33 German city 35 Bread-winners, often 36 Oinker 38 Ford 39 Glutton 42 Takes tiny bites 44 Made sure of: colloq. 46 Real estate transaction 47 Scumled 49 Official name 50 Ancient invader 51 Popular board game 52 Smart 53 Pond growth 54 Former phone call price 55 Ten cubed plus eleven 56 Poel's contraction 57 Stubborn courage 60 Destination in The Grapes of Wrath: abbr.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-67 indicating starting positions for across and down words.

ROARING TWENTIES

In the grid below, twenty words can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each word that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Words can be found in all directions - forwards, backwards, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find today's 20 words?

Today's Category: NUMBERS Grid with words: DNASUOHTTKKN, NOILLIBKHDEE, DIDKEJDDIEKE, SLENTDRRRYE, ELODHFHTKLF, VITEIETFELEI, LMWRRFIJEJV, EDEDTFSGNHED, WENSYKEDHVE, TUTDIJVEITSN, HVEYEDXEFOURI, SFORTYNXWSVN. 1. Eleven

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

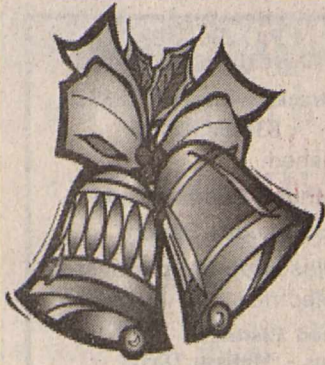
Dec 25.....Michael Gass Dec 31.....Jerry Adams Dec 26.....Dorothy Clark Jan 1.....Tootsie Herndon Dec 26.....Pat Foster Jan 1.....Mary Jane Olson Dec 26.....Pam Melancon Jan 1.....Valerie Vela Dec 27.....Margarita Pena Jan 2.....Amanda Meek Dec 27.....Christina Smith Jan 2.....Jerry Taugner Dec 27.....J.J. Smith Jan 3.....Janelle Senne Dec 28.....Jesse Garcia Jan 5.....Norman Butler Dec 29.....Clarisa Aguirre Jan 7.....Jose A. Cabello Dec 29.....Joan Boutwell Jan 7.....Juan M. Flores Dec 29.....Myrna Gonzalez Jan 7.....Michael Garcia Dec 29.....Judy Hooker Jan 7.....John Osborn

Roaring Twenties Solution: 1. Billion 11. Nine 2. Eight 12. One 3. Eleven 13. Seven 4. Fifteen 14. Six 5. Fifty 15. Thirteen 6. Five 16. Thirty 7. Forty 17. Thousand 8. Four 18. Three 9. Hundred 19. Twelve 10. Million 20. Twenty

HOROSCOPES

by Charles Cooper

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your mind is wandering as the week begins. That's because you have your sights set on the holiday. Do your best to concentrate on work so you have nothing to worry about at week's end. LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) The beginning of the week is the time to answer phone calls, e-mails, and all related work correspondence. Get these out of the way quickly. Later, you spend an enjoyable holiday with family members. TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) An unexpected business development is in your favor. While this is a hectic time of year, you manage to balance everything quite nicely. This weekend, some much needed rest is in order. SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Someone you're not really close to surprises you with a holiday gift. Accept this graciously. While unprepared, you can reciprocate at another time. GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A friend can be a great source of advice concerning a personal matter. Be sure to tend to last-minute holiday chores. You don't want to get caught short when the big day arrives. SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Any work you do of a creative nature is favored this week. Children are unusually cooperative, which is no surprise. At this time of year, you know what they're up to! CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You're pulled in different directions this week. Friends' holiday plans conflict with those of your family. Choose wisely. CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Nothing of importance really happens at work this week. Everyone is firmly entrenched in holiday mode. Enjoy this lull while it lasts. LEO (July 23 to August 22) This isn't the time to reveal your work plans to co-workers. Keep these to yourself. Later, you're able to enjoy a fun-filled holiday. AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) You reach a favorable agreement with a bigwig this week. This really frames your holiday mood. Feel free to celebrate your good fortune along with the holiday. VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Anything of a financial nature is favored this week. Despite having spent money on gifts, you still have a solid footing. Home interests are the highlight of the weekend. PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You're focused on finances this week. That's fine, but don't let it become an obsession. If you do, you'll ruin the holiday for those around you. (c) 2001 DBR Media, Inc.



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2195A 2001 Cadillac STS	2195A 2001 Cadillac STS	2195A 2001 Cadillac STS	2195A 2001 Cadillac STS
P7369 2002 Carolla	P7369 2002 Carolla	P7369 2002 Carolla	P7369 2002 Carolla
3026C 2002 Grand Prix	3026C 2002 Grand Prix	3026C 2002 Grand Prix	3026C 2002 Grand Prix
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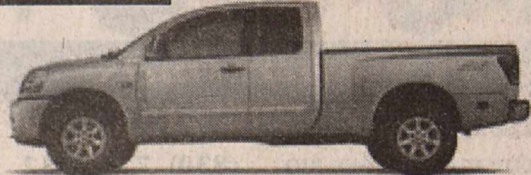
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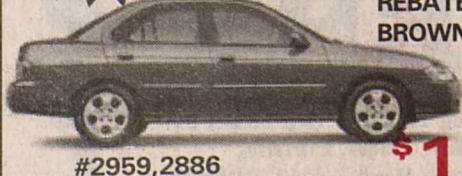
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