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BIG SPRING HERALD

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 22, 2011



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VOLUME 107, NUMBER 61

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Chamber wraps up another year, plans for future

By **AMANDA MORENO**
Staff Writer

The year is wrapping up for everyone, including the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber president Terri Johansen presided over her last meeting Wednesday afternoon.



"It has been a joy," Johansen said. "If it wasn't for the great staff I wouldn't have been able to do this. The chamber has some gems working here."

Treasurer Mark Morgan delivered the financial report. According to Morgan, November ended with a \$12,000 loss. Income for the month was only \$5,700. Officials are expecting to be about \$2,000 in the red at year's end.

"It looks like we are going to have to dip into the reserves," Morgan said. "It just means we will have to work hard again next year and do what

we can to get it to balance out at zero, instead of in the negative."

Looking into the upcoming year, Executive Director Debbye ValVerde emphasized the importance of bringing in new members.

"We will have to get out there and really run and get more members," ValVerde said.

Member dues account for a good portion of the chamber funds throughout the year.

During Wednesday's meeting the board unanimously voted to accept Howard County Council on Aging — Mobile Meals as a new member. To date the chamber has 351 members.

Jan Foresyth's report on community development focused on the upcoming annual Chamber Banquet set for Jan. 31. Big Spring native Charley Johnson will be the guest speaker. Johnson played professional football in

See **CHAMBER**, Page 3



'Tis the season (for giving)



HERALD photos/Amanda Moreno and Steve Reagan
At top, Leandro Sanchez, office manager for Drug Screening Compliance, displays toys donated to A World For Children. Above left, Kristen Partee wraps a gift earmarked for a needy Big Spring family. Partee is a member of the "Hometown Christmas" group, sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank, which purchases gifts and food items for low-income families in Big Spring. And above right, Big Spring Fire Department visited Canterbury on Wednesday morning to deliver presents. Jay Sudell, left, and Chris Glenn look on as Brandon Hayes, center, presented Mary Mendoza with her presents.

Readers,

During this holiday period, the Herald will adjust its schedule and hours in order to allow employees to enjoy time with their families and friends.

The Herald will publish a paper Friday and Sunday as usual (though Sunday's edition may arrive a bit earlier than normal) but will not publish a Monday edition. The newspaper office will be closed Saturday through Monday.

The staff at the Herald wishes you a very Merry Christmas.

Travelers: Check the weather first

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

As motorists look to hit Texas highways this holiday season, local and state law en-

forcement officials are warning drivers to take precautions when getting behind the wheel.

According to Sgt. Tony Everett, public information officer with the Big Spring Police Department, one of the things travelers should check before pulling out of the driveway is the weather.

"It is one of the biggest factors to consider," said Everett. "You can get road condition reports by calling the Texas Travel Information hotline at 800-452-9292, or pay close attention to the local weather channel. The Texas Department of Public Safety reports all road closures to both."

"Pay close attention to bridges and overpasses during freezing weather as well. Another thing to remember is to allow extra time for travel because the high level of traffic is going to in-

crease how long it takes to get where you're going."

According to Accuweather.com, motorists could see freezing rain and even snow in the Crossroads area going into the holiday weekend, with low temperatures expected to dip into the low to mid 20s Friday and Saturday nights. However, beginning late Saturday afternoon and going into Sunday, skies are expected to begin to clear and temperatures should begin to climb slightly, making for a more comfortable holiday.

Everett said planning your trip — as well as your route — ahead of time can really pay off in the event of an emergency.

"If you're traveling to see

family, be sure to tell them what your route will be," said Everett. "That makes it a lot easier when we have to go out and look for someone. Also, be sure to keep emergency items in the vehicle, such as first-aid kits and blankets. No one wants to think about what can go wrong out on the road, but it's always a good idea to be prepared."

Officials with the Texas Department of Safety are also urging motorists to be prepared when taking to the roadways, whether driving across town or across the state.

"Please drive carefully. Crashes can happen in just

See **TRAVEL**, Page 3

I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE SANTA'S HELPER... I STILL REFUSE TO PUT HIS COOKIES IN YOUR BOWL.



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Obituaries

Annie Bransom



Annie Bransom, 95, of Amarillo, formerly of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2011, in an Amarillo hospice facility. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 23, 2011, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel with the Rev. Elwin Collom, Pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church of Big Spring, officiating. Interment will follow at Roscoe Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the funeral home.

Annie was born July 26, 1916, in Roscoe, Texas, to Mack and Lettie Lake. She attended several West Texas schools as a young girl. After completing nursing school, she worked as an LVN at Sweetwater Memorial Hospital and the VA Hospital in Big Spring. Annie retired from the VA in 1976.

Annie married Ollie Bransom on Jan. 18, 1934, in Roscoe. They were married for 62 years. Ollie and Annie were very active members of the American Legion. She held various offices in the American Legion Auxiliary at the local, regional and state level.

They were also volunteers at the VA Hospital in Big Spring for many years. She was a very loving wife, mother, grandmother, aunt and friend. Annie was a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Big Spring and Arden Road Baptist Church after moving to Amarillo in 1992.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; a sister, Oleta Malone; a brother, Edward Lake; and a grandson, Kenny Burns.

The family would like to express heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Violet Wing of Craig Methodist Sagebrush Unit for their loving care of Annie for the last seven months of her life. They also want to thank the nurses and staff of BSA Hospice for the love and compassion they showed Annie and her family.

Survivors include a daughter, Pat Burns and husband Joe of Amarillo; grandchildren, Kathy Bailey and husband Don of Amarillo, Kevin Burns of Waco and Keith Burns and fiancé Leslie of Argyle; five great-granddaughters, Stacey Figel, Toni Stihling, Tammy Wilhelm, Chelsea Sparkman and Emily Burns; four great-great-grandchildren, Jadan, Kyler, Trayton and Addison; and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family suggests memorials be made to BSA Hospice, 600 N. Tyler, Amarillo, Texas 79107; or Arden Road Baptist Church, 6701 Arden Rd., Amarillo, Texas 79119.

Arrangements are under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Big Spring. Online condolences can be made at: www.npwelch.com

Paid obituary

Teresa 'Terry' Gonzales



Teresa "Terry" Gonzales, 49, of Lubbock, formerly of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 19, 2011, at Southern Specialty in Lubbock. Vigil services will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Friday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Burial will be at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

She was born Oct. 21, 1962, in Big Spring. She was a lifetime resident of Big Spring, except for the last 10 years she spent in Lubbock. She was a hairdresser and a Catholic.

She is survived by one son, Juan Enriquez of Big Spring; one daughter, Andrea DeLeon of Big Spring; one brother, Marty Deanda and wife Denise of Big Spring; four sisters, Martha Neighbors and husband Craig of Killeen, Patricia Correa of San Antonio, Roxanne Gonzales and husband Ines and Denise Deanda, all of Big Spring; several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins; and her extended family at Southern Specialty.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Juanita Gonzales; father, Benjamin Deanda Sr.; daughter, Maria Enriquez; and one brother, Benjamin Deanda Jr.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity between 7 a.m. Wednesday and 7 a.m. today:

- LAURA CONTRERAS STARR, 32, of 2506 Carlton, was arrested Wednesday on warrants for failure to report change of address/name and failure to appear.

- JESSE TONY REYES JR., 25, of 803 E. 20th St., was arrested Wednesday on a warrant from another agency.

- MICHAEL JAMES FLORES, 35, of 3007 Cactus Dr., was arrested Wednesday on a warrant for failure to maintain financial responsibility.

- EUGENE GILBERT FRANCO, 22, of 1205 Lamar Ave., was arrested Wednesday on a warrant for harassment.

- MARY FIERRO MERRILL, 55, of 500 E. 11th Place, was arrested Wednesday on a warrant for accumulated items/weeds/rubbish.

- MELISSA ANN OLIVER, 43, of 414 Tubb Loop Rd., was arrested Wednesday on a warrant for expired motor vehicle inspection certificate.

- DAVID MARGARITO MORENO, 35, of 601 Dealey, was arrested Wednesday on a charge of driving while intoxicated - third or more offense.

- TERRY LEE CARTER, 35, of 9118 Kay, was arrested Wednesday on a warrant for livestock running at large on highway.

- SCOTTY RAY BLAND, 33, of 1602 Settles, was arrested Wednesday on warrants for parent contributing to non-attendance (two counts).

- CRIMINAL MISCHIEF was reported in the 600 block of Owens.

- ASSAULT was reported in the 2600 block of Dow.

- THEFT was reported:
In the 400 block of E. Fourth Street.
In the 1200 block of E. 11th Place.

Sheriff

The Howard County Sheriff's Office reported the following activity:

Note — Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 64 inmates at the time of this report.

- LAURA CONTRERAS STARR, 32, was booked into the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on municipal warrants for failure to change address/name within 30 days and violation of promise to appear.

- TERRY LEE CARTER, 35, was arrested Wednesday by the HCSO on a charge of allowing livestock to roam.

- JESSE TONY REYES, 25, was booked into the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a motion to revoke probation for burglary of a habitation.

- MICHAEL JAMES FLORES, 35, was booked into the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a municipal warrant for failure to maintain financial responsibility.

- MARY FIERRO MERRILL, 55, was booked into the county jail Wednesday by the BSPD on a municipal warrant for weedy lot - first offense.

- MELISSA ANN OLIVER, 43, was booked into the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a municipal warrant for expired motor vehicle inspection.

- EUGENE FRANCO, 22, was booked into the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of harassment.

- SCOTTY RAY BLAND, 33, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on charges of parent contributing to non-attendance (two counts) and violation of a promise to appear.

Barbara Hull

Barbara Hull, 63, of Big Spring died Thursday, Dec. 22, 2011, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Mamie Lee Perrin Roten

Mamie Lee Perrin Roten, 86, of Stanton died Thursday, Dec. 22, 2011, in a Midland hospital. Her services are pending with Gilbreath Funeral Home of Stanton.

Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Fri 12/23	Sat 12/24	Sun 12/25	Mon 12/26	Tue 12/27
41/30 Scattered snow showers during the morning.	40/30 Chance of a few snow showers. Highs in the low 40s and lows in the low 30s.	49/30 Times of sun and clouds. Highs in the upper 40s and lows in the low 30s.	53/34 Partly cloudy. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the mid 30s.	56/34 Mainly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the mid 30s.
Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:46 PM	Sunrise: 7:44 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:47 PM	Sunrise: 7:45 AM Sunset: 5:48 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:49 PM

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Texas At A Glance



Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	41	31	cloudy	Kingsville	65	48	pt sunny
Amarillo	31	24	sn shower	Livingston	56	40	cloudy
Austin	51	39	cloudy	Longview	49	38	cloudy
Beaumont	60	44	pt sunny	Lubbock	33	25	sn shower
Brownsville	68	56	rain	Lufkin	55	40	cloudy
Brownwood	45	35	cloudy	Midland	38	30	mixed
Corpus Christi	62	49	pt sunny	Raymondville	67	51	rain
Corsicana	46	35	cloudy	Rosenberg	60	46	pt sunny
Dallas	46	35	pt sunny	San Antonio	57	44	pt sunny
Del Rio	51	39	cloudy	San Marcos	53	40	cloudy
El Paso	38	27	sn shower	Sulphur Springs	45	35	pt sunny
Fort Stockton	37	31	sn shower	Sweetwater	40	31	cloudy
Gainesville	40	30	pt sunny	Tyler	48	36	cloudy
Greenville	44	32	pt sunny	Weatherford	43	31	pt sunny
Houston	62	45	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	41	30	pt sunny

Fire/EMS

The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:

- MEDICAL was reported in the 2700 block of Cindy. One person was transported to SMMC.

- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of FM 700 and Gregg Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 600 block of Albroom. One person was transported to SMMC.

- MEDICAL was reported in the 700 block of Aylsford. One person was transported to SMMC.

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Hometown Christmas brightens holidays for some needy residents

By **STEVE REAGAN**

Staff Writer

For some needy children and their families this Christmas, Santa Claus is a lot closer than they think.

Hometown Christmas, a group of eight to 10 local residents who have been collecting gifts and food items all year, are about to pull a Santa and deliver those goodies to low-income children and their families here in Big Spring.

Group member Jeanie Knocke said Hometown Christmas was formed about three years ago.

"Wells Fargo (Bank) started it," Knocke said. "We work on it all year. We start collecting gifts in January and we keep them in the (bank) storeroom until now."

The group obtains names of needy families through Big Spring Independent School District and other sources, determines what the children want for Christmas, then gets busy filling that wish list, Knocke said.

It's not just children who benefit from the group's efforts. Along with toys and clothes for the little ones, Hometown Christmas will also deliver turkeys and hams to their families.

And for those families, Christmas is about to come a bit early.

"We're going to start delivering those gifts Friday," Knocke said.

Between 30 and 40 families are expected to receive gifts from the group this year

The group's efforts aren't limited to just Christmastime; for example, the group provided a local family with car tires in November.

Knocke said community response to the program has been heart-warming.

"We've received many, many anonymous donations," she said. "People have come through with money and toys and all kinds of items. We're very grateful for that."

Wells Fargo has established a Hometown Christmas fund and donations are accepted year-round, Knocke said.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 235 or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com



HERALD photo/Amanda Moreno

Big Spring firefighter Greg McAlister drops off a present Wednesday morning at Canterbury as part of the Angel Tree donations members of BSFD delivered.

A World for Children benefits from DSC employees in area

By **AMANDA MORENO**
Staff Writer

It's the season of giving.

Drug Screening Compliance is embracing the season of giving and took on a company wide project to help several charities located in the communities it serves.

"Each of us were asked to pick a charity to help out that would serve between 20 to 25 kids," Leondro Sanchez, office manager of Drug Screening Compliance, said.

The local office chose to help A World For Children — non-profit children's adoption agency — and provided gifts for 20 children. The children ranged in age from four months to 18 years old.

"We picked A World For Children because we wanted to help an agency that worked with kids, but at the same time one that a lot of people don't really think about," Sanchez said. "Everyone helps out the Salvation Army, but we wanted to be able to make a small impact with those who people just don't really think about."

Through this project, an estimated 100 children were served company wide in five communities.

"We picked A World For Children because we wanted to help an agency that worked with kids, but at the same time one that a lot of people don't really think about."



Sanchez

Presents going toward A World For Children were purchased by employees as well as the company.

"We each did a bag, myself, Janice Pitts and Daniel Lopez, and the company paid for the rest," Sanchez said. "This wasn't just a company project, but a personal project as well."

Contact Staff Writer Amanda Moreno at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at life@bigspringherald.com

Call 263-7331 to subscribe

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8288

Teresa "Terry" Gonzales, 49, died Monday. Vigil services will be at 7 p.m. Thursday at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Service will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Burial will be at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

Barbara Hull, 63, died Thursday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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CHAMBER

Continued from Page 1

the National Football League for several years. He is also a professor at New Mexico State University.

"He will have a good message to bring to our community. He is one of our great success stories," Foresyth said. "Big Spring is home to

him and always will be."

There are still tables available for sponsorship at the banquet.

"It will be a fun thing and a great time for chamber members to showcase what they do," Foresyth said.

Iva Jo Hanslik, VA community relations coordinator, announced a date has been set for the renaming ceremony of the VA Medical Center.

The ceremony will take place Jan. 18 at 4 p.m. A reception will take place before at 3:30 p.m.

"This will be a big day here in Big Spring for the VA," Hanslik said.

Big Spring Economic Development Board Executive Director Terry Wegman reported sales tax for Big Spring was up 20 percent for November over last November's numbers.

Ex-officio Gloria Mc-

Donald wrapped up the meeting with her report regarding what's happening with the city of Big Spring.

Renovations at the Municipal Auditorium are 14 percent complete. Crews are expected to start working on the distribution lines under Third and Fourth streets next week ahead of the Texas Department of Transportation repaving project. Traf-

fic will be down to one lane during the work, according to McDonald.

To find out more information about happenings with the chamber, call 263-7641. Chamber offices will be closed Dec. 23 and 25 for the holidays as well as Jan. 2.

Contact Amanda Moreno at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by e-mail at life@bigspringherald.com

TRAVEL

Continue from Page 1

a second, so pay attention," said David Baker, assistant director for the Texas Highway Patrol. "We want everyone to arrive safely this weekend. Be patient, slow down and drive sober."

DPS expects a large number of travelers on the road and encourages drivers to leave themselves plenty of time to get where they're going. Baker said drivers should avoid bad driving habits that lead to road rage, such as:

- Not using turn signals.
- Driving in the passing lane.
- Tailgating, flashing lights or honking.
- Using high beams in traffic.
- Not allowing adequate time for a given trip.

When confronted with aggressive drivers, the DPS recommends that you:

- Put your pride in the back seat and move aside.
- Do not speed up, block lanes, slam or tap on brakes.
- Report extreme cases

of reckless driving to the appropriate authorities when the incident occurs.

- Do not retaliate, gesture or make eye contact.
- Make sure everyone is buckled up.

Contact Staff Writer

Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD



By Eddy Pitchford

Holiday Reflection #1

Peace and joy are not found by sending money or worrying about inability to spend. They are not found with flying reindeer or even religious displays. They are found through trusting and obeying Jesus Christ.

Holiday Reflection #2

"With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God... He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:6-8)
You do not need to give gold, incense or myrrh to the Lord; you need to give yourself.

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EDITORIAL

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

-FIRST AMENDMENT

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the Editorial Board of the Big Spring Herald unless otherwise indicated.

Bill McClellan Managing Editor	Ron Midkiff Publisher	Steve Reagan Staff Writer
Amanda Moreno Staff Writer	Thomas Jenkins Staff Writer	

OUR VIEWS

Spreading Christmas joy to all around

Christmas time is fast approaching. Within a few days families will be gathered around their Christmas trees, sharing in the holiday spirit. Kids will be anxiously awaiting Santa Claus and doing their best to stay awake, but as always, Santa will sneak in once the kids are all in bed. Of course, this holiday season the nation as a whole has seen its fair share of Secret Santas popping up and providing early Christmas presents for several families. The majority of the Secret Santas have been visiting Kmart's in several states, but Big Spring has had two visits from Secret Santa.

The first visit included an anonymous donor paying off 22 layaways totaling more than \$2,000. The second visit contained a donor who paid off six more layaways. One thing is for sure, each of the recipients is grateful beyond words. The Christmas spirit is being renewed for many this year and the true meaning of Christmas is shining through.

A simple gesture can make a huge impact on someone's life. The important thing to remember is that it's not about the money spent — in all honesty, the best gifts can't be bought, but come from the heart — it is about the meaning and sentiment behind the giving.

On another note, for those looking to spend some family time together over the Christmas holiday, the Festival of Lights makes for a great time together. There are more than 1 million lights spread throughout Comanche Trail Park. There is no admission, but donations are accepted. All monies collected go towards maintaining and funding the annual Festival of Lights.

In the end, it truly doesn't matter what you do for Christmas, how you choose to celebrate. The important thing is to enjoy the time with your family, treasure the memories being made and spread as much holiday joy as you can.

After all, Christmas only comes but once a year.

May all of our readers have a safe and Merry Christmas.

HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
- By telephone at 263-7331
- By fax at 264-7205
- By e-mail Managing Editor Bill McClellan at editor@bigspringherald.com or News Editor Steve Reagan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

LETTER POLICIES

- The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.
- Limit your letters to no more than 300 words.
- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to editor@bigspringherald.com

At peace with Christmas time

It's now officially too late to do your Christmas shopping early.

That's OK. Doing your Christmas shopping late counts too. Remember, it's not the thought behind the gift that counts; it's what you spend on it.

Oh, I imagine you Xmasologists out there are offended by such crass materialism. You say that Christmas should be all about the birth of Christ and we should walk around looking pious.

I say that's nonsense.

Historically, you could even argue that the ultra-religious Christmas is un-American. The Pilgrims certainly thought so.

Like the English Parliament of that time, they considered the holiday a "popish" festival that lacked any "Biblical justification." As a matter of fact, Christmas was banned in Boston for a time in the 1600s, as though it were a dirty book.

I happen to be an expert on secular Christmas. I was born on Christmas Day into a family of non-believers and grew up thinking that they decorated the lamp-posts in downtown Detroit in my honor. Imagine my shock when I discovered that somebody had gotten there before me.

I never held it against Him, however, which is why I've never participated in the Christmas wars that swirl around the

holiday every year. Non-Christians, many of them claiming to be liberals, rail against the placing of Nativity scenes in public places or the singing of carols in schools. They go to court to block such activities, arguing that they violate the separation of church and state guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Picky, picky, picky.

I tend to side with the religionists in these matters. I doubt whether the founding fathers had Christmas decorations in mind when they created the church-state separation. Christmas simply wasn't that big a deal in those days.

As a matter of fact, one of George Washington's great military victories — his 1777 defeat of a Hessian mercenary force in what became known as the Battle of Trenton — came the day after Christmas. Taking advantage of the fact that the German troops took Christmas more seriously than Americans and would be celebrating, he seized the opportunity to rout them as they recovered from their feast.

I wonder if Richard Nixon knew he was following in the footsteps of that George W. when he ordered the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam in 1972?

The dating of Christ's birth is arbitrary, in any case. There's virtually no evidence that December 25 is the actual birth date of Jesus of Nazareth. (The New Testament, for example, makes no mention of a date.) It's more likely that the 25th was chosen because it coincides with the Roman winter solstice,

the day when winter begins to recede and the full light of day begins its return journey.

In other words, it's a festival of lights, and that's the way I choose to celebrate it. If some choose to celebrate something else, so be it.

My Christmas is essentially the Christmas of Charles Dickens. It's a Christmas of family, goodwill, compassion, and presents — lots of presents. Dickens' A Christmas Carol, written in 1843, is credited with reviving the holiday in the English-speaking world. It co-exists happily with the Christmas of Christians, who are free to buy each other presents or not.

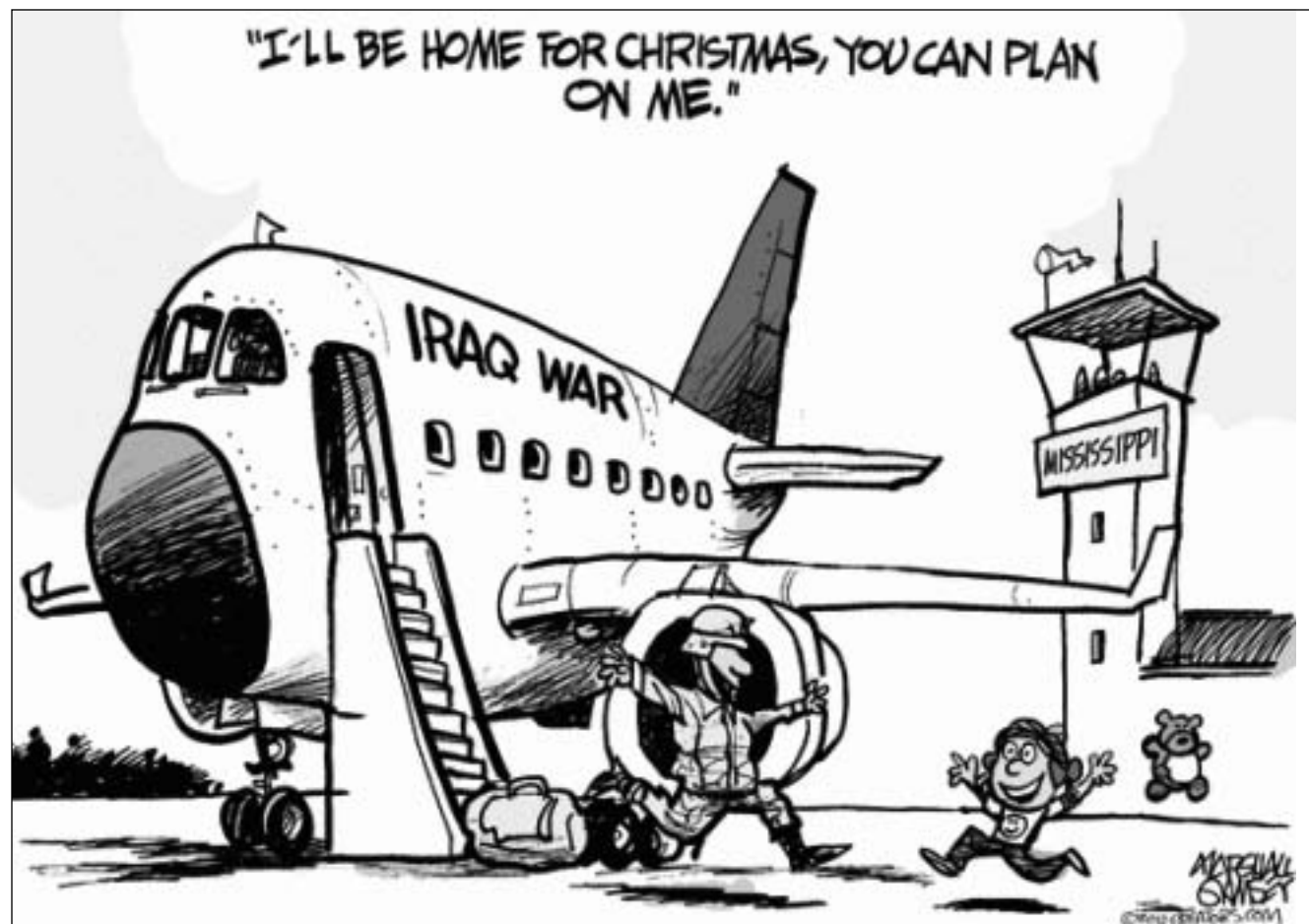
Some of those Christians complain about the presents. The holiday has become too commercial, they say.

Perhaps. But a Dickens Christmas, marked by wretched excess though it sometimes can be, is also about giving and sharing — qualities that are often in short supply the rest of the year. Besides, the economy would collapse if people stopped buying things for Christmas.

The only thing I really don't like about the holiday is "The Little Drummer Boy." It's the musical equivalent of waterboarding.

Anyway, have a happy holiday, whatever you choose to call it, and go out and buy something. What you call credit card debt is what some other person calls a job.

OtherWords columnist Donald Kaul lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan. <http://otherwords.org>



Christmas spirit is like no other

Christmas time is a season full of miracles.

It seems out of all the months and other holiday seasons, Christmas brings out a different part of people. Something about Christmas reaches into people's souls and unearths emotions, actions and other things which just wouldn't be considered ordinary any other time of year.

This year has been a different kind of year all together.

Devastation has hit hard, with the high temperatures, severe drought conditions and horrible fires, but at the same time it has turned out to be a year filled with more positives than I could imagine.

I guess for all the devastation there has to be a balance of good. Something has to renew faith in humanity.

Each year at Christmas it, isn't uncommon to see people drop a few coins in the Salvation Army kettles or pick an angel off the Angel Tree.

What is rare are the anonymous deeds done from the pure

kindness of a person's heart. The gestures that aren't made for the world to see, but are made in secret with only one hope — spreading joy to others.

It's the story of those gestures, the anonymous gifts given, which continue to renew my faith and hope in humanity.

Those stories make me believe that no matter how horrible the world may be at times, no matter how awful the situation may be, there is always something to turn it around.

Of course, money doesn't have to be involved to make it mean something. It's not about the dollar amount spent or how elaborate the gesture. The thing which really matters is the meaning behind it came from the heart and touches the heart of another.

Most of the time the good deeds which truly strike us only happen in the movies, or at least that's how it seems.

The Lifetime Channel and LMN are great places to turn to renew your hope in humanity. One movie, "Christmas Angel" which is being aired this Christmas season is the perfect example.

One man who had it all gave it all up due to the realization money doesn't buy happiness and started using his fortune to

serve others. He provides help secretly, each Christmas, to any and all who might need his help. He ends up recruiting his neighbor to help him, but provides help for her in a way she never imagined.

The meaning I'm trying to get across, which has touched me so much, is it's not about how much you spend, how big the gift, but how much heart is contained in the giving of that gift.

People have needs all year round, but Christmas time has a way of pushing those needs to the forefront of our minds.

In reality, we all need something. Sometimes it's as obvious as financial troubles, lack of home or food and other times it's something hidden deep within ourselves which we choose to hide from the world. No matter what it may be, we each carry a problem within us and we all could use a little help ... a little caring.

There are good people in the world. Caring hearts do still exist and just when you think all hope is gone, take the time to look around and you might be amazed at what you see.

Contact staff writer Amanda Moreno by email at life@bigspringherald.com or by calling the office at 432-263-7331.



DONALD KAUL



AMANDA MORENO

News in brief

Wave of bombings across Iraqi capital kills 57 people, injures nearly 200

BAGHDAD (AP) — A wave of bombings ripped across Baghdad on Thursday morning, killing at least 57 people and injuring nearly 200 in the worst violence Iraq has seen for months. The bloodbath comes just days after American forces left the country.

The blasts also came on the heels of a political crisis between Iraq's Sunni and Shiite factions that erupted this weekend. The political spat, which pits Iraq's Shiite prime minister against the highest-ranking Sunni political leader, has raised fears that Iraq's sectarian wounds will be reopened during a fragile time when Iraq is finally navigating its own political future without U.S. military support.

While the string of explosions was likely not a direct response to the political Sunni-Shiite confrontation, it will ratchet up tensions at a time when many Iraqis are already worried about security. If continued, it could lead to the same type of tit-for-tat attacks that characterized the insurgency years ago.

Iraqi officials said at least 14 blasts went off early Thursday morning in 11 neighborhoods around the city. The explosions ranged from blasts from sticky bombs attached to cars to roadside bombs and vehicles packed with explosives. There was at least one suicide bombing among the attacks.

Most of the attacks appeared to hit Shiite neighborhoods although some Sunni areas were also targeted.

A field guide to Congress' payroll tax cut dispute

WASHINGTON (AP) — If President Barack Obama, the House and the Senate all want to extend a Social Security payroll tax cut and jobless benefits through next year, why are they fighting so bitterly over doing it?

Obama, House Democrats and lopsided majorities of both parties in the Senate want to immediately renew the tax cut and jobless benefits for the next two months, and find a way later to extend them through 2012. House Republicans want to do it for a full year right away.

That doesn't sound like an unbridgeable gap. Yet the fight has evolved into a year-end partisan grudge match with no clear resolution in sight and with huge political and economic stakes.

Without action, the payroll tax paid by 160 million workers will rise by 2 percentage points to 6.2 percent on Jan. 1. That would mean \$1,000 a year less in the pockets of people making \$50,000, or about \$19 weekly. In addition, 3 million people currently receiving long-term jobless benefits will begin to lose weekly payments that average under \$300 — for many, their

only support.

Following is a guided tour, in question and answer form, through the dispute.

Americans grow frustrated by repeated stalemates

CHICAGO (AP) — As Americans watch yet another political drama play out on Capitol Hill — this time over whether to extend the payroll tax cut and jobless benefits — they have a question for Congress: Can't you all just get along? For once?

"It's like, 'Kids, kids, kids,'" said Brenda Bissett, a lawyer from Santa Clarita, Calif., as she waited for coffee Wednesday at a Starbucks in downtown Los Angeles. "It's just frustrating that there's no compromise ... I do it all the time."

Around the country, people of different backgrounds, incomes and political leanings say they're angry and downright disgusted by the posturing in Washington after the House rejected a two-month extension of the payroll tax cut passed by the Senate, then both chambers adjourned for the holidays.

If lawmakers don't act by Jan. 1, payroll taxes will jump almost \$20 a week, or \$1,000 a year, for a worker earning \$50,000, and as much as \$82 a week, or \$4,272 a year, for a household with two high-paid workers. What's more, about 6 million people could lose unemployment benefits, and Medicare payments to doctors would be slashed.

"It's just another smack in our face for the working public. We just can't get ahead," said Mike Pryor, a construction worker from Aurora, Ill. "It seems like everything that Congress is doing is always against us ... I mean, I'm at a loss for words, and I just can't understand it, why they have to keep arguing."

North Korea dubs young Kim 'outstanding leader'

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — The handover of power in North Korea to Kim Jong Il's young son appeared to be going smoothly Thursday, with official media calling him the "outstanding leader" and no outward unrest in the capital or troop movements along its borders.

Foreign governments have focused intense scrutiny on North Korea since Kim's death was announced Monday because of concerns over his untested heir's rise in a country with a nuclear program, 1.2-million strong military and a history deep animosity toward its neighbors.

But the capital remained a scene of mourning — not protest — on Thursday. U.S. and South Korean military officials said there had been no unusual military movements by the North Koreans in recent days.

"This appears to be a relatively smooth transition on the peninsula, and we hope it stays that way," Pen-

tagon spokesman George Little said in Washington, adding that there has been no increase in force protection levels for U.S. troops in South Korea.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak sought to assure Pyongyang that his country was "not hostile," despite putting its front-line troops on alert since Kim's death was announced.

Protests erupt in wake of Russian election

MOSCOW (AP) — President Dmitry Medvedev on Thursday responded to the wave of protests over fraud-tainted election, proposing a set of reforms to liberalize Russia's political system, but sternly warning that the government won't allow "provocateurs and extremists" to threaten stability.

Medvedev said in his state-of-the-nation address that Russia "needs democracy, not chaos" and that the government would strongly resist foreign pressure.

The statement follows massive rallies against fraud in the Dec. 4 vote, in which the main Kremlin party, United Russia, lost a quarter of its seats. Opposition leaders and independent election monitors said United Russia only managed to retain its majority by fraud.

A rally in Moscow drew tens of thousands demanding a repeat vote and punishment for the officials involved in fraud, the largest show of discontent since the 1991 Soviet collapse.

Another massive rally is set for this weekend.

The protests dented the power of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and signaled that his bid to reclaim the presidency in next March's election may not be as trouble-free as had been thought.

Gingrich plays political catch-up

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — Newt Gingrich is frantically playing catch-up in the Republican presidential race, spending precious time trying to get on Virginia's primary ballot while his rivals campaign in crucial Iowa and New Hampshire.

The former House speaker is paying a price for his late start in organizing.

Gingrich had to leave New Hamp-

shire on Wednesday and race to Virginia, where he needs 10,000 valid voters' signatures by Thursday to secure a spot on the March 6 ballot.

Virginia is an afterthought for most campaigns at this early stage. They are intensely focused on the Jan. 3 Iowa caucuses and the Jan. 10 New Hampshire primary, which will be followed by primaries in South Carolina and Florida.

But Gingrich's early-December rise in several polls gave him renewed hopes of carrying his campaign deep into the primary season. Failure to compete in Virginia, which is among the "Super Tuesday" primaries, would deal a huge blow to any contender who had not locked up the nomination by then.

Mitt Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, and Ron Paul, the libertarian-leaning congressman from Texas, want to knock Gingrich out long before Virginia. Their campaigns and allied groups are saturating the Iowa airwaves with anti-Gingrich ads.

Maine town holds candlelight vigil for missing toddler

WATERVILLE, Maine (AP) — More than 60 people prayed for hope at a candlelight vigil for a missing 20-month-old girl in Maine, as tips poured in and the search was expanded Wednesday to include trails and more waterways.

Fifty trained volunteers from the Maine Search and Rescue Association joined 75 to 80 law enforcement officers already participating in the search for Ayla Reynolds, which entered its fifth day.

"I can tell you, they are working just as hard as if it was their own child," Waterville City Manager Mike Roy told the group at the vigil at the First Congregational Church, where a photo of a smiling Ayla, a few children's drawings and stuffed toys contributed by local families formed a centerpiece at the front of the pews.

Residents, many of them mothers with young children, prayed, sang hymns and offered one another support and hope during the service, which was moved indoors because of freezing rain and raw temperatures.



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NFL to change concussion exams

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL is working how it handles concussion examinations after Browns quarterback Colt McCoy went back into a Dec. 8 game without being tested for one.

A certified athletic trainer, paid by the league, will be at each game to monitor play and provide medical staffs with "any relevant information that may assist them in determining the most appropriate evaluation and treatment," the NFL said in a statement Wednesday.

The trainers will not diagnose nor prescribe treatment and can't order that players

be removed from a game. Their presence is intended to assist team medical staffs in addressing a variety of injuries.

The trainer's "role will be to provide information to team medical staffs that might have been missed due to a lack of a clear view of the play or because they were attending to other players or duties," the statement said.

The trainer will be in a booth upstairs with access to video replay and direct communication with the medical staffs of both teams.

"In most cases, the athletic trainer will be affiliated with

a major college program in the area or will have previously been affiliated with an NFL club," the league said.

The league and each team are in the process of selecting the trainers.

Also, team medical staffs will be permitted to use cell phones during games to gather information relating to the care of an injured player. This is not limited to concussions.

McCoy was hurt on a helmet-to-helmet hit by Steelers linebacker James Harrison late in Pittsburgh's win. He returned to the game after missing just two plays with-

out being examined for a concussion.

The quarterback wasn't tested until after the game, when he was diagnosed with a concussion.

McCoy is still experiencing symptoms and hasn't played since.

The Browns said McCoy wasn't showing symptoms of a concussion during the game, so they didn't test him. Team doctors were treating other players and didn't see the impact from Harrison's vicious hit.

Harrison later was suspended for one game for being a repeat offender and returned

to practice Wednesday after missing a loss at San Francisco.

The NFL said the Browns would not be disciplined for their handling of the situation.

"Clubs also were reminded of the importance of team coaching and medical staffs continuing to work together to ensure that full information is available at all times to medical staffs," the NFL's statement said, "that players do not take steps to avoid evaluations, and that concussions continue to be managed in a conservative and medically appropriate way."

Colt McCoy allowed to play too soon?

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker James Harrison understands his helmet-to-helmet hit on Cleveland quarterback Colt McCoy was illegal by the letter of the law.

He can also understand, grudgingly, why the NFL suspended him one game as punishment for a series of similar hits over the last three seasons.

What Harrison doesn't quite understand, however, is why the Browns haven't also been disciplined by the league for allowing McCoy to return to the game so quickly if the quarterback was in such bad shape.

"If he was hurt so bad I don't know why they let him back in ... two plays

later," Harrison said. "Something should be done to them, I would think. I don't know. I got a game, what should they get?"

McCoy was escaping pressure late in the fourth quarter when he tucked the ball as if to run.

Harrison, who had been in coverage, approached ready to strike.

McCoy pulled up at the last second and flipped the ball to running back Montario Hardesty right before Harrison mashed McCoy with his facemask.

Harrison contended after the game that McCoy ducked. Looking at the tape he's not so sure.

"I guess he's a little



AP file photo
Colt McCoy is the center of NFL investigations of its own concussion policies and procedures.

shorter, who knows? I said. "When it came down to it, my helmet

hit his. Oh well."

The quarterback was down on the field for several moments — though was cleared by the Browns to return a few plays later — just in time to throw a clinching end zone interception in a 14-3 Pittsburgh win.

McCoy developed concussion-like symptoms following the game and hasn't practiced since while the Browns have come under scrutiny for the way they handled the situation.

Cleveland's failure to check McCoy for a concussion led the NFL to put a certified trainer in the press box at each game to help monitor head injuries.

Harrison practiced Wednesday for the first

time since the suspension.

The 2008 NFL Defensive Player of the Year doesn't think he needs to change the way he plays to avoid further disciplinary action.

"I'm doing everything they ask me to do," Harrison said. "I've lowered my target area, that's it."

Harrison, who has lashed out at league officials in the past for their crackdown on what is considered dangerous hits, seemed more nonplussed about the suspension than previous fines.

"I'm not worried about anything," he said. "I can't foresee the future. I'm not a fortune-teller. I'm going to deal with it as it comes."

Kobe injured

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant did not play in the Los Angeles Lakers' preseason finale against the Clippers on Wednesday night because of a torn ligament in his right wrist, and his status for the season opener on Christmas Day is up in the air.

A MRI revealed the extent of the injury, which occurred early in the in the third quarter of the Lakers' 114-95 loss to the Clippers on Monday night. Bryant was examined by Dr. Steven Shin of the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic. Depending on the degree of the tear, he could be sidelined as long as three to four weeks.

"He's day-to-day. As soon as I figure it out, I will let you guys know," said coach Mike Brown, who took over this season after the retirement of Phil Jackson. "The doctor has to clear him. Guys will go through the injury and get hurt, obviously. Sometimes they'll get hurt and can't play, sometimes they'll get hurt and still can play. It just depends on the situation. Come Sunday, we'll see how it is. There's a chance, though, that he could play Sunday."

Bryant, who shoots right-handed, was sent crashing to the floor by Clippers center DeAndre Jordan on a blocked layup and came up holding the wrist. He stayed in the game for another 3

minutes, then went to the bench for a good stretch and was allowed to return to the floor during the fourth quarter.

"I knew he landed on his wrist, but I was not aware that he was in significant pain," Brown said. "He did not tell me he was in pain, nor did our trainer (Gary Vitti) tell me he was in pain."

Bryant practiced Tuesday, but did not participate in Wednesday morning's shootaround.

He did not talk to the media before the game and camped out in the trainer's room.

After Monday's game, when asked about the wrist, Bryant said it wasn't a problem. Brown's understanding was that his best player did not need surgery. Last season, Bryant played in all 82 games for the fourth time in his career. And with this season reduced to 66 games because of the 149-day lockout, every game without him is a bigger deal. But the NBA's sixth all-time leading scorer continually has demonstrated his ability to play through pain at a high level.

"He came up to me in practice yesterday and said: 'My wrist is a little sore, but I'm good to go,'" Brown said. "And when it got to competitive stuff, where it was 5-on-5, he scored runners over defenders with his left hand. So he was playing a game within himself, I guess."

No charges to be filed in Fiesta Bowl investigation

PHOENIX (AP) — An investigation into whether politicians violated gift and disclosure laws when they accepted free game tickets or trips from the Fiesta Bowl led a prosecutor to conclude Wednesday that a maze of state laws was so complex and contradictory that he cannot pursue charges.

Inconsistent rules, vague reporting mandates and a legal requirement that prosecutors prove a defendant "knowingly" violated the law were major factors in his decision, Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery said. In the end, there was not enough

evidence to press charges against any of the 31 elected officials and three lobbyists who were investigated.

Montgomery said that for a successful prosecution, his office would have to prove that the officials and lobbyists knew when they filed required disclosure statements that "it was incomplete or false."

"I understand the 'appearance of impropriety' argument, and how it can be reported," Montgomery said. "But there's a difference ... in what it looks like and what we can do as prosecutors."

Montgomery cited problems

with records provided by the Fiesta Bowl, noting that many were too vague to stand up in court or directly contradicted reimbursement check records from legislators.

The decision removed a pall that has been cast over many lawmakers since April, when Montgomery began investigating whether politicians violated a law banning acceptance of free game tickets in most cases and failed to report receiving free trips or tickets.

Montgomery called on the

See **CHARGES**, Page 11

Paul Chryst to be named new Pittsburgh head football coach

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A person with knowledge of the decision says Pittsburgh has hired Wisconsin offensive coordinator Paul Chryst as its head football coach.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because an official announcement has not yet been made. The hiring was first reported by ESPN.com.

Chryst replaces Todd Graham, who left the Panthers last week after one season to coach Arizona State.

The 46-year-old Chryst helped mold the Badgers into an offensive powerhouse since joining the program in 2005. Wisconsin (11-2) is ranked

fourth in the country in scoring this season, averaging 44.6 points while winning the Big Ten championship and earning a Rose Bowl berth.

The Panthers went 6-6 in Graham's one season and are in desperate need of stability following his stunning departure.

Chryst is the school's fourth head coach in the last 13 months, following Dave Wannstedt, Mike Haywood and Graham.

That number doesn't include Phil Bennett, who served as interim coach in a 27-10 victory over Kentucky in the BBVA Compass Bowl last January, or Keith Pat-

erson, tabbed last week to lead the Panthers back to the same bowl on Jan. 7, this time against SMU.

Contract terms were not immediately available. Chryst beat out Florida International coach Mario Cristobal and interim Ohio State coach Luke Fickell for the job.

It's one the Panthers hope Chryst will hold onto as the school prepares to move from the Big East to the ACC by 2014.

The job was supposed to belong to Graham, who took over 11 months ago preaching character, commitment

See **PITT**, Page 11

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RUSTY'S OILFIELD Service In Stanton has immediate openings for Mechanic, CDL Driver, Roustabout Pushers and Helpers. Must have valid drivers license. Apply in person at 3327 W I20 in Stanton. 432-756-2821.

THE COLORADO River Municipal Water District, regional raw water supplier for the Permian Basin, is accepting applications for following positions in the Big Spring Area.

Central Control Operator - Responsible for monitoring water flows, pressures, and tank levels using SCADA system. Perform administrative support including recording readings, monitoring phones, and basic data entry. Basic computer skills including Excel needed. This position involves shift work. CRMWD is an equal opportunity employer. Benefits include health insurance, retirement plans, and sick, vacation and holiday leave. Applications are required and are available at the District's office, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79720, by calling (432) 267-6341, or our website www.crmwd.org

SEEKING REPRESENTATIVE for Field Sales. Contact Baird Companies 432-466-4056.

Help Wanted

SECURITY OFFICERS Needed for Hospital Federal Inmate Protection detail. All positions are Part-time and PRN.

Physical Requirements: Must be in general good health and vision must be correctable to 20/30 (SNELLEN) in one eye. The ability to distinguish basic colors is required. Emotional and mental stability is required. **Other Requirements:** Must be able to pass State and Federal Backgrounds and Credit Checks. **Experience Requirements:** One year (2040) hours of experience in the armed forces or coast guard which involved significant performance of guard duty of detainees or prisoners; or the equivalent experience in a federal, state, or local government, or private organization which involved protecting/police duties, or college level training in courses such as corrections or police science may be substituted for experience at the ratio of two hours of instructions for one hour of experience. Apply at Workforce Center (in the Post Office), KEYWORD: PARAGON. EOE.

TOP NOTCH Landscaping is Hiring for all positions. Experience preferred. Call (432)213-0031 Mon.-Fri. 8-5.

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Helena Chemical Company, a national agricultural-chemical company, has an immediate opening for an experienced truck driver. This position will make deliveries, load and unload product, utilize a forklift, and perform general warehouse duties. The position requires high school diploma or equivalent, CDL with HAZMAT endorsement. We offer an excellent working environment and outstanding compensation and benefits package. For consideration, please apply in person: Helena Chemical Company 100 S. St. Peter, Stanton, Texas Pre-employment drug screen required. EOE M/F/V/H

WANTED JOURNEYMAN Electrician or Experienced Apprentace Electrician with a minimum of two years experience. TESSCO 512 Industrial Snyder Texas 79549 325-574-1100

WESTERN BANK is seeking An experienced **Executive Assistant** Excellent customer service skills and a willingness to work extensively with the public is required. Must have experience handling legal and loan documents. Should be skilled in Word and Excel. Job duties will include loan processing, scheduling appointments, reviewing documents, and other secretarial duties. Legal Background preferred but not required. Salary is DOE. Western Bank is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Please send resume to P.O. Box 2767, Big Spring, TX 79720 or email to hr@thebank.net.

WORLD FINANCE Accepting applications for motivated individuals looking for an assistant manager position. Applicants should be goal oriented with great people skills. Experience not necessary. Must have a high school diploma and clean background/credit. World offers a competitive salary with full benefit package. Apply in person at 121 E 3rd St Big Spring, TX.

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FOR SALE Mesquite Firewood. \$160.00 for half cord. 50 pound sacks-\$20.00. Call Terry Jenkins at 432-270-3122.

Real Estate for Sale

1205 EAST 6th Street- 1/1 \$10,000. with \$1,000. Down. Approximately \$250 monthly for 6 years. Owner Financing Available. Call 210-828-3573.

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Lost and Found

LOST FEMALE Shih-Tzu (light blond) named Sissy. Last seen on Main & 17th Street. Call (432)264-3276.

LOST SET of car/house keys at or around Bealls Friday. Leave at Bealls with your name & address for a \$20 Reward.

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TACK & SADDLE AUCTION Tuesday Jan. 3rd 7:00pm Over \$100,000 in beautiful hand made tack and saddles many custom ranch, roping, and silver saddles. Plus over 1,000 lots of horse equipment. Many one of a kind custom pieces. **American Legion 501 Veterans Airpark LN Midland, TX** Auctioneer Mike Murphy Lic#10151 10%Buyers Fee Consignments Welcome (512)943-6114

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412 HILLSIDE 2 bdrm, 2 bath, hardwood floors, granite countertops, garage and carport. Very Nice. \$1250 month. \$1250 deposit. 432-213-2319.



902 BIRDWELL, 3 Bdrm, 1 bath unfurnished house, \$650. month/ \$650. deposit. Please call (432)270-7086.

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Real Estate for Sale

3/2 PLUS Bonus Room. 2403 Carleton. Under Remodel. Owner will Finance. \$15,000.00 Down. WILL NOT RENT. Call (432)264-9907 or 517-0062.

BY OWNER: 902 Birdwell, 3 bdrm, 1 bath, Bonus Room, New Appliances, carpeting and paint. No Owner Finance (432)270-7086.

BY OWNER 1202 Buena Vista. 3 Bedroom, 2 bath, 2 car garage, shop on 1 acre of land. Coahoma ISD. Zoned area. Call 432-466-1616, 413-7400.

LOCAL INVESTOR

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Legals

INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting supplier participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: Bid Package 4. Pre-Purchase of Electrical Equipment for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project. Bid Deadline is December 22, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer. #7191 December 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2011

Legals

INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting supplier participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: Bid Package 5. Slab and Below Construction for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project. Bid Deadline is December 22, 2011 at 3:30 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer. #7192 December 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2011

Legals

Sealed Proposals addressed to Mr. John Grant, General Manager of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, will be received at the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, P. O. Box 869, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79721, until Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. for: Contract A: Ward County 48-inch Parallel Pipeline

The Proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud at this time and place. Any Proposals received after closing time will not be accepted and will be returned to sender unopened. Advertisement, bid phase information and complete Contract Documents can be downloaded free of charge at the following web site: <http://construction.freese.com> Printed copies of the Contract Documents may be purchased at the website for the cost of printing. The cost for printed Contract Documents is not refunded.

COLORADO RIVER MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT John Grant, General Manager #7128 December 22 & 29, 2011 and January 5, 2012

sudoku

ANSWERS

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

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Legals

00010 Invitation for Bids

Sealed proposals addressed to Mr. John Grant, General Manager of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, will be received at the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, P. O. Box 869, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79721, until Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. for the construction of the following project:

O.H. Ivie Reservoir Intake Channel Dredging

At this time and place the proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. Any bid received after closing time will not be accepted and will be returned to sender unopened.

Specifications are on file and may be examined without charge in the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, P.O. Box 869, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79721, Telephone (432)267-6341, and the office of Freese and Nichols, Inc., Consulting Engineers, 4055 International Plaza, Suite 200, Fort Worth, Texas 76109-4895, Telephone (817)735-7300.

Advertisement and information for the Project can be found at the following web site:

<http://construction.freese.com>

Contract Documents may be downloaded or viewed free of charge at this web site. It is the downloader's responsibility to determine that a complete set of documents, as defined in the Instructions to Offerors are received. Printed copies of the Contract Documents may be purchased at the website for the cost of printing. The cost for printed Contract Documents is not refunded.

The web site will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of interested parties, reports or other information relevant to submitting a proposal for the Project.

There will be a non-mandatory pre-bid meeting on Friday January 6, 2012 at 1:30 pm, at the CRMWD O.H. Ivie Pump Station adjacent to the site, located at O.H. Ivie Reservoir at the intersection of FM 1929/Ray Stoker Junior Highway and Mustang Creek Road. A site trip will follow after the meeting.

A bid security bond shall be as set forth in the instructions to Bidders. Performance and Payment Bonds are required for this contract and shall be executed on the forms provided in the Contract Documents.

In case of ambiguity or lack of clarity in stating proposed prices, the Colorado River Municipal Water District reserves the right to adopt the most advantageous construction thereof, to reject any or all bids, and to waive formalities. The District anticipates that it will award the contract by February 3, 2012. No bid may be withdrawn within ninety (90) days after date on which bids are opened.

COLORADO RIVER MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
John Grant, General Manager
#7204 December 22, 2011 and January 5, 2012

Legals

PRE-INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting General Contractor, supplier and subcontractor participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: **Bid Package 6, Above Slab Construction for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project.** Bid Deadline is February 23, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com

Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer.
#7214 December 21, 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28, 2011 and January 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 10, 2012

Legals

Sealed Proposals addressed to Mr. John Grant, General Manager of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, will be received at the office of the Colorado River Municipal Water District, P. O. Box 869, 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas 79721, until Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. for:

Contract B: Ward County 48/42-inch Parallel Pipeline

The Proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud at this time and place. Any Proposals received after closing time will not be accepted and will be returned to sender unopened.

Advertisement, bid phase information and complete Contract Documents can be downloaded free of charge at the following web site:

<http://construction.freese.com>

Printed copies of the Contract Documents may be purchased at the website for the cost of printing. The cost for printed Contract Documents is not refunded.

COLORADO RIVER MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
John Grant, General Manager
#7217 December 22 & 29, 2011 and January 5, 2012

Legals

PRE-INVITATION TO BID

The Colorado River Municipal Water District and Garney Companies are soliciting General Contractor, supplier and subcontractor participation including those that qualify as SWMBE's for the following: **Bid Package 7, Big Spring Pump Station's Below and Above Slab Construction for the Ward County Water Supply Expansion Project.** Bid Deadline is January 19th, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be received at CRMWD 400 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, TX 79721-0869 For more information contact Marcus Grace at (816)536-6485 or email mgrace@garney.com

Garney Companies, Inc is an Equal Employment/Opportunity Employer.
#7213 December 21, 22, 23, 25, 27 & 28, 2011 and January 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, & 10, 2012

Tomorrow's Horoscope

The sun poses a challenge to Uranus in Aries, promising that no matter how cool, calm and collected a person may seem on the outside, one never knows what kind of molten lava emotions might be stewing underneath, waiting for the perfect circumstance to be liberated. With this in mind, a gentle approach to human interaction is advised.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You are always capable of dreaming up the kind of zesty plan that makes your eyes widen and your pulse quicken. This is one of the things loved ones count on from you. You'll be a leader in fun today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You have to be able to measure what you're doing — not because it matters to you so much, but because it will help you when you're talking about it to others. People will only understand what is concrete and quantifiable.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You have a way with words, and you'll use it to

get into an elite situation or out of a tricky one. You align yourself with the people who are in the place you want to be.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You may be a bit tired because the recent high level of activity is taking its toll. You'll get a second wind this afternoon, though, that comes out of your total commitment to make something happen.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Every waking moment, you'll be scanning your environment for people and resources that fit into your goals and make them easier to attain. Sometimes you won't even be conscious of the fact that you are doing this.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your schedule will be filled with things you feel you must do, not things you really love to do. Make a plan to remedy this situation by the weekend before someone else makes plans that worsen the situation.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You decide what you're going to do and how you're going to do it. What will really make the action complete is some kind of reward or celebration at the end of the cycle. It doesn't have to be big to be significant.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov.

21). You'll be processing some negative thoughts. Greet obstinate, unhelpful ideas like old friends. Thank them for visiting, and then send them on their way. You don't have to believe everything you think.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll be like a successful salesperson working the room. What you're selling might be difficult to name correctly; it's never what you think it is. More people will buy today than did all of last week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You communicate in a kind of emotional shorthand with the ones you love. Celebrate the ease that comes with this tie. You've been through the good and the bad, and you're still united in friendship.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Those who behave in heartless ways baffle you, but you give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they just don't know the happiness they will find by leading with their heart.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Everything happens in stages. The action stage is coming. For now, you're still contemplating how you might make a change and mentally perusing your options.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 22). It's a year of tough choices. You'll shine as a decisive, sincere and devoted individual. Community involvement helps you establish a new niche. Actions that help your work will also be quite pleasurable, and vice versa. February is lucky for finance. March will end a hot pursuit with a satisfying outcome. Aries and Gemini people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 30, 1, 24 and 18.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail.

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sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

From the Mailbag

Fast dealer. Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 4
♥ K Q 9 2
♦ 9 7 6 3
♣ 8 5 4 2

WEST
♠ 10 9 8 3
♥ 10 7 5 4 3
♦ 2
♣ 10 9 6

EAST
♠ A
♥ A J 6
♦ K Q J 10 8 5 4
♣ 7 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q J 7 6 5 2
♥ 8
♦ A
♣ A K Q J

The bidding:
East 1♦ South 1♥ West 1♥ North 1♥
1♦ Dblc Pass Pass
3♦ 4♣ Pass Pass
Dblc Redble
Opening lead — two of diamonds.

Dear Mr. Becker: I don't know whether or not you can help me with my problem, but I am in a desperate predicament, and I am willing to grasp at any straw.

A year ago, I was playing in a rubber-bridge game and held the South hand. You can imagine my disappointment when I heard East open the bidding ahead of me. I needed so little to make a small or grand slam — just an ace or two — and this guy on my right ups and bids a diamond. Well, I ended up in four spades

doubled and redoubled, as you can see, and won the diamond lead with the ace. I then led the king of spades. East took it and returned a diamond that I ruffed and West overruffed.

West then put East on lead with a heart, and another diamond lead ruined me. It didn't matter whether I trumped high or low — West was bound to get another trump trick, and I went down one.

That night, I couldn't sleep, and the same thing happened the next night and the night after that. My appetite fell off terribly, and I lost interest in everything. I continued in a depressed state for weeks, and I finally consulted a psychiatrist.

After a couple of treatments — during which I spent as much time on the psychiatrist's couch as I did at home in bed — he told me the cause of my troubles, but it didn't help.

I tried a few other skull doctors, and they all told me the same thing. They said I should not have trumped the diamond return at trick three but should have discarded my heart. Then when West overruffed the next diamond lead, he wouldn't be able to put East back on lead and I would have made the contract.

So now I know what I should have done, but I still can't sleep. I just keep reliving this nightmare over and over again. What I'm hoping is that if I see this hand in print, maybe it will all go away. Expectantly, N. Somnia

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.
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CLAY

CLAY

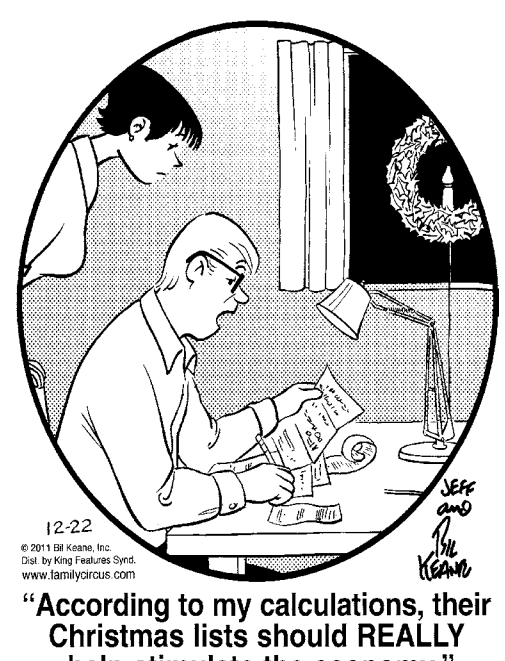
Table with 20 columns (KMid, UNi, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KPBT, KWWT, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN) and 24 rows (5:PM to 1:AM) listing various TV programs and channels.

DENNIS THE MENACE



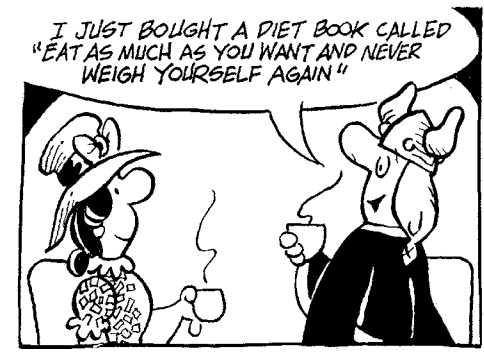
"I WONDER WHOSE IDEA THIS WAS?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

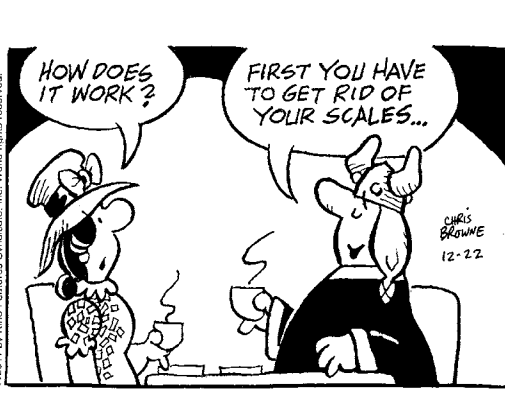


"According to my calculations, their Christmas lists should REALLY help stimulate the economy."

HAGAR



BLONDIE



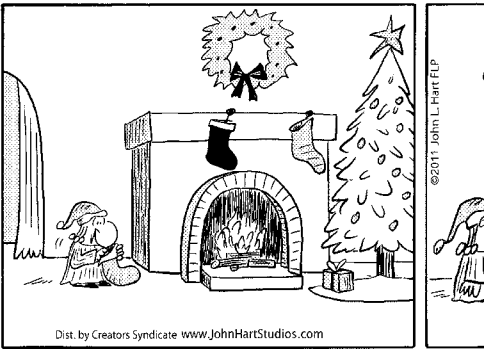
BC



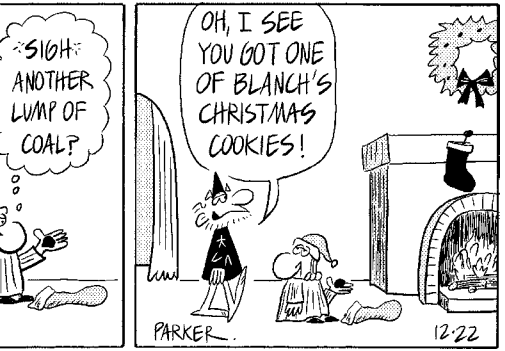
WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BEEBLE BAILEY



AGNES



This Date In History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 22, the 356th day of 2011. There are nine days left in the year. Winter arrives at 12:30 a.m. Eastern time. Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 22, 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrived in Washington for a wartime conference with President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Answer to previous puzzle

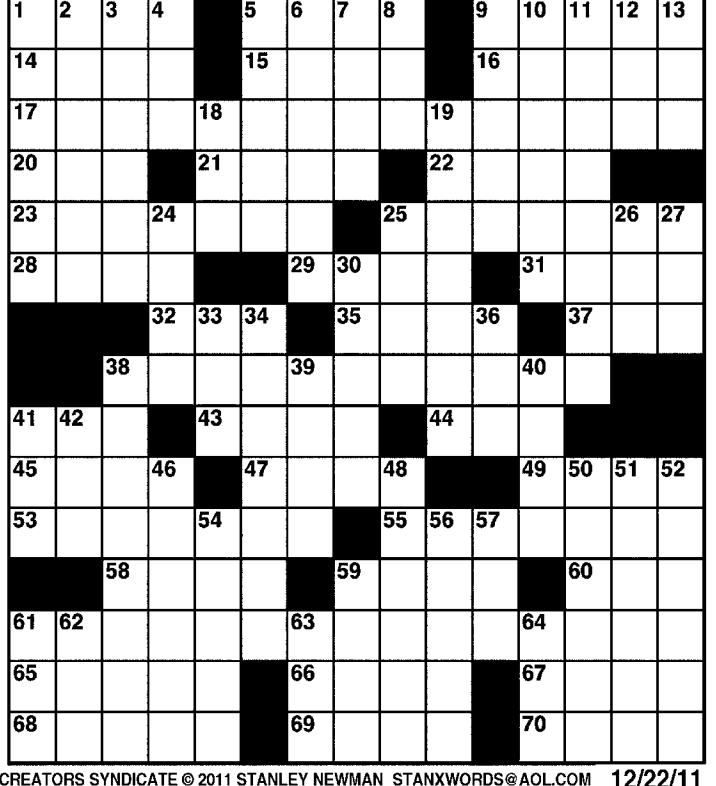
Answer to previous puzzle: BABE DAWNS DEBT ORAL ELIOT AURA NICK PINTA PRIM EEK HEADINGHOME SLIPONS DEN NEED SPITEFUL EGGED GAINS ANA ROOK FAVES ACID IOU MOVER BRITS ENTWINED ERIN AND ENRAGES HANDINGOVER DXI AMID EATER COPS WELL SLING OWES KNEE SASSY ONLY

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS 1 Picnic dish 5 Meat-loaf serving 9 Fritter away 14 Prefix for conference 15 colada 16 More or less 17 Prospers 20 "Patience virtue" 21 Luau instruments 22 Transmission selection 23 Come through 25 Reddish-brown horses 28 Do copy work 29 "Scram!" 31 "Now or never" time 32 S&L offerings 35 Grimm fiend 37 Have title to 38 Chow down 41 Beaded shoe, for short 43 Social misfit 44 One to hang out with 45 Much 47 Young woman 49 Heads for the hills 53 Can't stomach 55 Break in some races 58 Fill to the gills 59 Off-white shade 60 Charlemagne's dominion: Abbr. 61 Comes to terms 65 Examine electronically

TOOLING ALONG by Fred Piscop

- 11 Became disillusioned with 12 Yank 13 Ordinal suffix 18 Station-wagon descendant 19 Self-indulgent episode 24 Hanking 25 Loses firmness 26 Jurisprudence 27 Thesaurus entry: Abbr. 30 Nose woes 33 Slip into 34 More lithe 36 Pilot's update 38 Guys from Glasgow 39 Chapters of history 40 Woes 41 More than miffed 42 Soccer stadium shout 46 Working together 48 Other half 50 Following closely behind 51 Esprit de corps 52 Incantations 54 Stoop parts 56 Following closely behind 57 Something sipped with a scone 59 Door fastener 61 FDR successor 62 Amazed state 63 Airline to Oslo 64 Corporate-alias abbr.



CHARGES

From Page 6

Legislature to overhaul and consolidate reporting and gift laws for lobbyists and elected officials, toughen reporting requirements, ban gifts outright and make some violations a felony. He said changes were needed "in order for the public's expectation of open and honest government to be met."

Combining the laws into one simplified statute will help clear up confusion and help prosecutors if they need to pursue a case, he said.

He advocated the gift ban or, at the least, the allowance of only gifts of very low retail value. Under his recommendations, elected officials should accept "nothing — you can accept a handshake and that's it," Montgomery said.

He said he wants a law to require quarterly financial reporting, up from the current yearly mandate, and an online system for easier compliance.

In addition to a possible felony charge for "knowing and intentional" violations, Montgomery wants clarifications that allow misdemeanor criminal or civil penalties for reckless reporting failures. He suggested that legislative staff attorneys be removed from their role advising lawmakers, to avoid any attorney-client privilege issues.

Federal authorities are separately investigating other aspects of the Fiesta Bowl scandal, including an alleged scheme to reimburse employees for political contributions. One former executive has been charged in that case.

The county attorney's probe was prompted by an internal bowl investigation into illegal political contributions and lavish spending by top bowl officials. Montgomery took over the case after the Arizona Attorney General's office declared a conflict of interest.

That internal probe, released in March, listed many current or former lawmakers as the recipients of game tickets or free trips. Many failed to report them on their disclosure reports. The Fiesta Bowl asked politicians who received more than \$161,000 worth of free trips or game tickets to explain how they benefited the tax-exempt group, and implied it may seek repayment if the expenditures can't be justified. Some had

already done so.

Montgomery investigated 28 current or former state lawmakers, three elected officials who are not legislators, and three prominent lobbyists. The politicians were split about evenly between Democrats and Republicans.

The 8-month probe involved going through 4,000 pages of documents that included nearly 10 years of financial disclosure statements, Montgomery said.

Senate President Steve Pierce, a Republican, referred inquiries to the spokesman for the chamber's Republicans, who was not immediately available. House Minority Leader Chad Campbell said in a statement that Democrats support the ethics reforms and gift bans that Montgomery outlined.

The county attorney said some lawmakers told his office that they accepted the trips as ambassadors of the state, not for personal benefit or enjoyment. Some disclosed them routinely, while others failed to do so until the scandal hit and then filed amended reports. Former state Senate President Russell Pearce typically disclosed all gifts, tickets and trips, but not the Fiesta Bowl trips, which Montgomery said could indicate the Republican legislator believed he did not have to report those items.

"There were some legislators who were angry that I was investigating them because they thought it was clear they had done nothing wrong," Montgomery said.

Topping the recipients were Pearce, who received more than \$39,000 in tickets, trips and other freebies. From 2002 through 2009, Pearce went on VIP trips sponsored by the Fiesta Bowl to games in Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Pasadena, Boston and Dallas. Other top recipients were former Republican lawmaker Robert Blendu with \$17,213, and Democratic state Sen. Linda Lopez with \$16,877.

Longtime bowl President and CEO John Junker was fired after the internal investigation. On June 13, the bowl hired University of Arizona President Robert Shelton to lead the efforts to repair its reputation. The bowl's lawyer said it has been cooperating with local, state and federal investigations and made substantial changes.

PITT

From Page 6

and a "high octane" offense designed to take the Big East by storm.

It never happened as the Panthers struggled adapting from Wannstedt's pro-style approach to Graham's modified spread attack. Pitt allowed 57 sacks this season, easily the most in the FBS, and Graham drew the ire of the fan base for shifting blame from himself to quarterback Tino Sunseri.

The growing pains led to a wildly uneven season in which the Panthers let winnable games slip away. Pitt held double-digit second-half leads over Iowa, Cincinnati and rival West Virginia only to collapse in the final minutes.

Chryst will be tasked with helping the Panthers learn to finish, something that wasn't a problem for the Badgers since the former Wisconsin quarterback joined then coach Barry Alvarez's staff in 2005. He stayed on after Alvarez was replaced by Brett Bielema.

Paterno fans wish him happy birthday outside his home

STATE COLLEGE (AP) — About two dozen fans gathered briefly outside Joe Paterno's home Wednesday night to wish the former Penn State coach a happy 85th birthday and sing a Christmas carol.

Paterno's son, quarterback coach Jay Paterno, thanked the crowd on behalf of his father. He said that because of chemotherapy Paterno was a little weak so he couldn't come outside.

Joe Paterno has been diagnosed with what his family has called a treatable form of lung cancer.

"Happy birthday JoePa, Happy Birthday JoePa ... and many more," the fans serenaded several times to the tune of the traditional birthday song during their seven-minute visit. Most of the gathering, which included a

few children, stayed on the sidewalk and just off the Paternos' property, about 30 feet from the front door.

Wearing rain slickers or hooded jackets, most fans gathered at a statue dedicated to Paterno outside Beaver Stadium and made the roughly 15-minute walk to Paterno's modest ranch home near the end of a dead-end street.

The property is decorated with bright Christmas lights.

Fans said they began planning the visit about two weeks ago. They also delivered cards as part of a drive from a Penn State alumni group in Baltimore to send Paterno 109,000 birthday cards — a number nearly identical to the capacity of Beaver Stadium.



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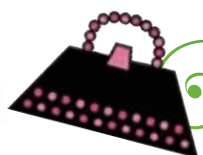
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