

BIG SPRING HERALD

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At the Crossroads of West Texas

50 CENTS DAILY/\$1.25 WEEKEND

WEEKEND EDITION

January 3-4, 2004

WEATHER

Tonight:

SUNDAY SUNDAY NIGHT
64°-66° 29°-31°

Senior tours

An RSVP meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday to plan upcoming vacation tours. The meeting will be held in the Dora Roberts Community Center.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program offers tours throughout the year. The 2004 schedule includes new destinations as well as some of the old favorites.

For more information, contact the RSVP office at 264-2397 or Bilbrey Tours at 1-888-692-1308.

INSIDE



Hometown Hero: In the Dusty Café in Dusty, Wash., (pop. 12), Wylie Gustafson's autographed CDs and tapes are displayed right below cheeseburger prices. But his neighbors know the country-western singer best between his road gigs, when he comes home to tend his 120-acre ranch, pitching in at branding parties and friendly roping competitions. Gustafson learned cowboy songs and yodeling from his dad; now he honors the western life style and yodeling's deep roots.

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Vol. 100, No. 41

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www.bigspringherald.com

To reach us, please call 263-7331. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you miss your paper, please call 263-7335 before 7 p.m. on weekdays and 11 a.m. on Sunday.

Voting begins Monday in special election

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

Voters wanting to avoid the election day rush to the polls in the Jan. 20 special election will have the chance to cast their ballots beginning Monday, as early voting in the District 31 Senate race gets under way.

"We'll get early voting going Monday morning at 8 a.m.," said Howard County Clerk Donna Wright. "We'll have it set up in the



WRIGHT

hall outside the Clerk's Office starting Monday, and early voting will continue through Jan. 16 from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday."

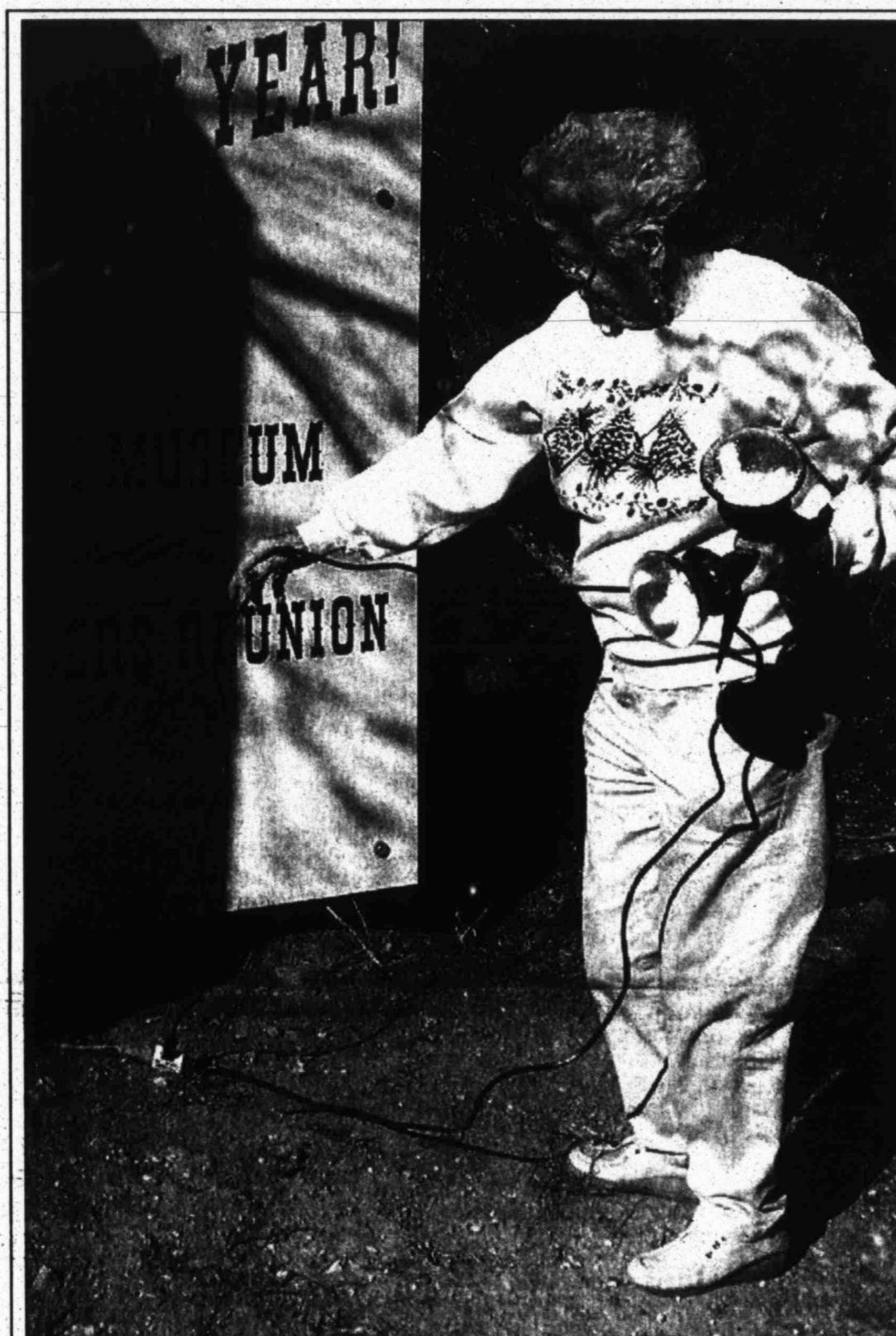
The special election was called shortly after Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, announced in December that he would resign. Bivins cited his nomination by President Bush as ambassador to Sweden and a desire to

spend more time with this family as the reasons.

Six men and one woman have filed in hopes of replacing Bivins.

They are Elaine King Miller of Amarillo, the lone Democratic candidate, and farmer Lee Gibson of Dumas, businessman Kirk Edwards of Odessa, businessman Kel Seliger of Amarillo, business-

See VOTE, Page 3A



HERALD photo/Thomas Jenkins

Festival of Lights Chairperson Pat Simmons begins the arduous task of taking down lights and displays Friday afternoon at Comanche Trail Park. Simmons said she expects the disassembly of the luminous display to hit full stride some time on Monday.

After the Festival of Lights comes the king-size cleanup

By BILL McCLELLAN

News Editor

A half-million lights make for wonderful displays during the Festival of Lights. Unfortunately, those lights have to come down again.

"We got a lot done today, but I expect we'll be doing this into next week," a weary Pat Simmons, Festival of Lights chairman, said Friday.

Fortunately, she has the help of some volunteers as well as groups that sponsored various displays this year.

The hard work is worth it, said Simmons, noting that the lights drew almost 18,000 visitors to Comanche Trail Park from Dec. 15-31.

"We did good. I was really hoping we'd get 20,000 people, but we did OK," she added.

Visitors to the festival included people from 37 states and seven foreign countries.

"We had so many stop from just off the highway, attracted by our poinsettias. They said it was awesome, but the word I heard the most about the poinsettias were they were 'breath-taking,'" said Simmons.

See FESTIVAL, Page 3A

22-year-old Borden County man dies in accident

By THOMAS JENKINS

Staff Writer

The Thursday death of a Borden County man marked the first traffic fatality of the new year.

Texas Tech University student John Harding, 22, of southern Borden County, was pronounced dead at the scene. Harding was a 2000 Borden County High School graduate and had attended Howard College.

Borden County Sheriff Billy

Gannaway said Harding was discovered about 10:45 a.m. Thursday along FM 1785 near Fairview School, about 15 miles west of Lake Thomas.

"He was found by a passing motorist," said Gannaway. "The accident occurred sometime after 1:30 a.m., but wasn't discovered until later that morning."

"Harding was driving a 1997 Chevrolet pickup when he veered off the roadway on a curve. We believe he over-cor-

rected, causing him to lose control of the vehicle. He was not wearing a seat belt at the time of the accident and was ejected."

Harding was pronounced dead by Justice of the Peace Jane Jones, who ordered the body be taken to Lubbock for an autopsy.

Gannaway said it's unclear at this time whether alcohol was involved.

"We just don't know yet," said Gannaway. "We're waiting on the autopsy report. It's really

hard to speculate on something like this. There could have been a deer in the roadway or some other factor we don't know about. It's just too early to tell."

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday at the First Baptist Church under the direction of Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at newsdesk@crc.com.net

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Obituaries

John Harding



John Harding, 22, of Borden County, died on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004, in Borden County from injuries received in an auto accident. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5, 2004, at the First Baptist Church, Big Spring, with the Rev. Randy Hardman, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gail; and the Rev. Kevin Parker, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church, officiating. Interment will follow at Trinity Memorial Park.

He was born on Sept. 8, 1981, in Colorado City.

John graduated from Borden County High School in 2000 and was a member of the 1997 state champion football team. He had attended Howard College and was currently attending Texas Tech University. He enjoyed shooting skeet and trap, coyote hunting, snake catching and deer hunting. John deeply loved his family and friends and country life. He attended the First Baptist Church of Gail.

Survivors include his parents, Joe and Rhonda Harding of Vincent; his sister, Sarah Harding of Vincent; his brother, Clay Harding of Vincent; his maternal grandmother, Emma Carr of Big Spring; his uncles, Rodney Carr and Rich Carr, both of Big Spring; his uncle and aunt, Freddy and Judy Brown of Big Spring; his aunt, Billie Harding of Vincent; and his cousins, Emily Carr and Brian Brown.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Dalton Carr; his grandparents, Pat and Vergie Harding; and an uncle, Randy Carr.

The family will receive friends from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at the funeral home.

The family suggests memorials to First Baptist Church Youth Fund, P.O. Box 297, Gail 79738.

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

Paid obituary

Homer Chestine Dunn



Homer Chestine Dunn, 78, of Coahoma, died on Friday, Jan. 2, 2004, in a local hospital. Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2004, at the Nalley-Pickle & Welch Rosewood Chapel in Big Spring with the Rev. Jim Binnix, officiating. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8, 2004, at the Fairview Cemetery in Pampa with the Rev. Chris Webb, officiating. Graveside arrangements under the direction of Carmichael-Whatley Funeral Directors, 600 N. Ward, Pampa.

He was born on Sept. 29, 1925, in Ringling, Okla., and married Colleen Hatfield on July 12, 1947, in Wheeler.

Mr. Dunn was raised in Lefors. He served in the United States Navy during World War II. He worked for Texaco and retired as senior production supervisor from the Vealmoor production office in December 1988. He was a member of Midway Baptist Church and a member of the McLean Masonic Lodge.

A loving husband to Colleen for 56 years, he adored his children and worshipped his granddaughters.

He is survived by his wife, Colleen Dunn of Big Spring; three sons, Dennis Dunn and wife, Janice, of Lefors, Michael Dunn and wife, Amy, and Terry Dunn all of Coahoma; one daughter, Jonetta Sweatt and husband, Roger, of Big Spring; one brother, Bob Dunn and wife, Clarice, of Pampa; one sister, Geraldine McPherson and husband, J. M., of Snyder; and four granddaughters, Lori Polhemus and Cindy Dunn both of Odessa, and Sarah Dunn and Katie Dunn, both of Coahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Henry "Sonny" Dunn.

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

Paid obituary

Sheriff's report

PHONE HARRASSMENT was reported in the 5700 block of Cedar Road.

GETTING INTO MAILBOXES was reported along the south service road of I-20.

Subject transported to the Salvation Army after a **TRESPASSER** was reported at the old Stucky's along I-20.

GAS DRIVE OFF was reported at Uncle's.

RECKLESS DRIVER was reported westbound on I-20.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY was reported at Roy Anderson Ballpark.

FALSE ALARM was reported in the 3600 block of I-20.

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE was reported along Rockhouse Road.

LOOSE LIVESTOCK was reported along Stallings Road.

Weather

Sunday...Partly cloudy. Cooler. Highs in the mid 60s. North winds 15 to 20 mph.

Sunday night...Partly cloudy. Much colder. Lows around 30. Northeast winds 5 to 15 mph.

Monday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s. Southeast winds 5 to 15 mph.

Monday night through Wednesday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s. Lows in the lower to mid 30s.

Wednesday night and Thursday...Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 60s. Lows in the upper 30s.

Thursday night...Partly cloudy. Lows in the lower 40s.

Friday...Partly cloudy. Breezy. Highs in the lower 60s.

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Bulletin board

If you have items for the Bulletin board, contact the Herald news room at 263-7331 or email editor@bigspringherald.com

Monday

Senior circle meets at 4 p.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center for sit and be fit aerobics. People age 50 and over are welcome to participate. Call 268-4721.

Evening Lions Club meets at 6:30 p.m. at La Posada.

Howard County ARC meets at 806 East Third in Bingo Hall. Call 264-0674 for more information.

Big Spring Chapter and Council RAM meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Masonic building, 221 1/2 Main St.

District Committee Lone Star of Big Spring meets at noon at 610 Scurry.

Tuesday

Intermediate line dance classes meet at 9 a.m. in the Senior Citizens Center. Call 267-1628 for more information.

Big Spring Rotary meets at noon in Howard College Cactus Room.

VFW Post 2013 meets in VFW Hall at 7 p.m., 500 Driver Road.

Coahoma Senior Citizens luncheon is held at 11 a.m. in Coahoma Community Center.

Big Spring Chapter 67 Order of the Eastern Star meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Masonic Lodge, 219 Main Street.

Sheriff's Possee meets at 7 p.m. in the Clubhouse on Andrews Highway.

American Red Cross, Canterbury South, 1600 Lancaster, meets at 7 p.m.

.Alzheimer's Ass. Greater West Texas Chapter meets at 2 p.m. in Howard County Library, 500 South Main, in the conference room.

Wednesday

Line dancing begins at 1 p.m. in the Senior Citizens Center located in the Industrial Park. Call 267-6966 for more information.

Duplicate Bridge Club meets Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 1 p.m. at Big Spring Country Club.

The Optimist Club meets at 7 a.m. in the Howard College Cactus Room.

Downtown Lions Club meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room.

Senior Circle meets at 10 a.m. at Scenic Mountain Medical Center classroom for stretch and tone.

Fraternal Order of Eagles meets at 7 p.m. in the Eagles Lodge, 203 West Third.

Friday

Spring City Senior Citizens country and western dance is held from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. All area senior citizens are invited.

AMBUCS meet at noon at LaPosada.

Greater Big Spring Rotary meets at noon in the Howard College Cactus Room.

Saturday

Potton House, 200 Gregg, a restored historical home, is open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. A one time admission fee of \$2 for adults and \$1 for children and senior citizens is encouraged.

Heritage Museum, 510 Scurry, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hangar 25 Air Museum, located in the McMahon-Wrinkle Airpark, is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sunday, 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Big Spring Squares meets on first and third Saturdays. Call 267-7043 or 263-6305 for more information.

BIG SPRING HERALD

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FESTIVAL

Continued from F

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AP: D

The Associate

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Security wa Vermont Yan August 2001, Regulatory C staged a dril three mock gained access The agency ga Yankee w rating among 103 reactors.

The NRC h responsibility at Vermont 's Vermont law an active stat ating a pane security and , and requiring ators to set a for the state t event of a nu ter.

Dean's can Saturday it was the fedemt's resp ensure secu plant, but tler Vermon operators and make improv the 1990s.

"After Seg Governor De the buck st terms of secu sonally ran creating a C agency," spo Carson said.

Carson ac there were before 2002 i nuclear pi

SUNDAY ANY 2 R FOOT SANDW \$6 NO COUPON SUB 10th & GRI 267-SUBS

FESTIVAL

Continued from Page 1A

And while the lights are being loaded up and stored away, planning for the 2004 Festival of Lights is already beginning.

"We do have some ideas already we are planning. We certainly want to improve on the walking trail. We just ran out of time this year," said Simmons. "We're also

going to include some more poinsettias — some baby poinsettias."

Simmons said co-chairman Bobby McDonald and his wife Gloria had been traveling during the holidays, getting some ideas to enhance the festival.

"I'm going to try and relax for a little while," said Simmons, who works with Keep Big Spring Beautiful and numerous other projects, as well as coordinating the

Christmas Bird Count each year. "Then we'll look at some ideas and begin to line up volunteers. I think we'll ask adopt-a-spot members to be on our committee for next year."

Foreign countries represented at the Festival were Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Germany, Jordan and Mexico.

States were Alaska, Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California,

Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, Washington D.C., Wisconsin and Wyoming.

AP: Dean was warned on lax Vt. security

The Associated Press

Presidential hopeful Howard Dean, who accuses President Bush of being weak on homeland security, was warned repeatedly as Vermont governor about security lapses at his state's nuclear power plant and was told the state was ill-prepared for a disaster at its most attractive terrorist target.

The warnings, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press, began in 1991 when a group of students were brought into a secure area of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant without proper screening. On at least two occasions, a gun or mock terrorists passed undetected into the plant during security tests.

During Dean's final year in office in 2002, an audit concluded that despite a decade of repeated warnings of poor safety at Vermont Yankee, Dean's administration was poorly prepared for a nuclear disaster.

"The lack of funding and overarching coordination at the state level directly impacts the ability of the state, local and power plant planners to be adequately prepared for a real emergency at Vermont Yankee," state Auditor Elizabeth M. Ready wrote in a study issued five months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Security was so lax at Vermont Yankee that in August 2001, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staged a drill in which three mock terrorists gained access to the plant. The agency gave Vermont Yankee the worst security rating among the nation's 103 reactors.

The NRC has primary responsibility for safety at Vermont Yankee. But Vermont laws required an active state role by creating a panel to review security and performance and requiring plant operators to set aside money for the state to use in the event of a nuclear disaster.

Dean's campaign said Saturday it ultimately was the federal government's responsibility to ensure security at the plant, but that he badgered Vermont Yankee's operators and the NRC to make improvements during the 1990s.

"After September 11, Governor Dean decided the buck stops here in terms of security and personally ran this effort, creating a Cabinet-level agency," spokesman Jay Carson said.

Carson acknowledged there were weaknesses before 2002 in Vermont's nuclear preparedness,



and Dean moved quickly afterward to place state troopers and National Guardsmen at the plant, distribute radiation pills to civilians, demand a federal no-fly zone over the plant to prevent an aerial attack, and increase emergency preparedness funding.

"As many have said before, hindsight is 20-20 and no one could have predicted what could have happened on a terrible day in September 2001," Carson said.

"In retrospect, every state in the entire country could have been safer. The important thing is after Governor Dean recognized these vulnerabilities, he took swift, bold steps to make things better," Carson said.

State Auditor Ready, a Democrat and Dean backer, agreed things improved after her critical 2002 report and that security tests this year showed Vermont Yankee was safer. "Once Governor Dean got that report there was swift and thorough action," she said.

But even after Ready's report recommended the state's nuclear preparedness spending triple from \$400,000 to \$1.2 million, Dean budgeted only half the increase.

That led Dean's state emergency management director, Ed von Turkovich, to tell the Legislature in 2002 that the increase to \$800,000 "does not cover the expenses related to the program" and that Vermont's nuclear preparedness was "in trouble, grossly underfunded, under-resourced and has been for years."

The lack of preparedness was blamed in the 2002 audit on inadequate funds. "Vermont receives the least amount of funding for its Radiological Emergency Response Plan, in total dollars, of any New England state that hosts a nuclear power plant," the audit disclosed.

The audit was not the first warning to Dean, documents show. On Feb. 14, 2000, von Turkovich wrote Dean's top deputy, Administration Secretary

Kathleen Hoyt, expressing concern the state was not forcing Vermont Yankee, which was up for sale, to set aside more money for preparedness.

"We are sympathetic to the utility's concern for controlling costs with respect to the pending sale of the plant and have committed to expend additional state and federal resources to subsidize this program in the coming year," von Turkovich wrote.

"However, I believe in the near future, the present or new owners will need to broaden their level of support for preparedness activities that need to be accomplished on behalf of the communities that reside in the Emergency Planning Zone," he wrote.

The documents contrast with Dean's position as a presidential candidate who has portrayed himself as more concerned about nuclear security than Bush.

"Our most important challenge will be to address the most dangerous threat of all: catastrophic terrorism using weapons of mass destruction," Dean said in his speech in Los Angeles last month. "Here, where the stakes are highest, the current administration has, remarkably, done the least."

Dean also has suggested Bush was unprepared before and after Sept. 11 to fight terrorism. "We are in danger of losing the war on terror, because we are fighting it with the strategies of the past," the Democratic candidate said.

The Vermont documents show Dean and his top aides received numerous warnings about Vermont Yankee.

In August 1991, an aide sent a handwritten memo to Dean saying there was a "security error" at Vermont Yankee that was "not public."

A group of students "on a tour were taken into a secure area without checking through security first," the aide wrote, saying the matter was minor but would be disclosed to federal regulators. Dean initialed the memo, indicating he read

it.

In 1992, the NRC provided information to Dean about "declining performances at Vermont Yankee in three important areas: plant security, engineering/technical support and safety assessment/quality verification," documents show.

Dean responded by writing the head of the plant that the problems could "have an impact on the health and safety of the people of Vermont" and "it is my expectation that you will do all in your power to correct this declining trend." It was one of several such letters he wrote.

Just months later, the Vermont Nuclear Advisory Panel, a state panel, reported that it was concerned about two nuclear fuel mishandling incidents at the plant. "The panel finds it unacceptable that the fuel handling incidents occurred as a result of complacent operator and management actions," the panel reported.

Environmental groups sent Dean repeated letters about the plant's security and safety. During a 1998 federal security test, mock terrorists sneaked a fake gun past security and six times scaled, undetected, the plant's security perimeter fence.

The 1998 test was alarming because seven years earlier, protesters had managed to breach the same security by scaling the fence or rafting down an adjacent river. The 2001 security test again penetrated Vermont Yankee's security.

Senate District 31 covers 26 counties including Howard, Midland, Martin and Glasscock.

FILING

Continued from Page 1A

T.E. "Junior" Trevino Jr. also filed for candidacy. Hale is a Republican; Trevino a Democrat.

"I wish there could have been more," said Republican Party Chairperson Margarita Durand-Hollis moments after the 6 p.m. filing deadline had passed. "On the Republican side we don't have the precinct chairmen filing, so it's kind of disappointing. I suppose with the holidays and all they don't realize how important it is for them to file."

"Things have pretty well gone as expected, from the county commissioner races to the county attorney. A few filings surprised us, especially in the sheriff's race. We didn't expect them to come so late."

"Apathy is the biggest enemy that democracy has," said Burns. "I'm afraid too many people sit on the sidelines grumbling about things going

on, but they don't get in the process and participate. Democracy is not a spectator sport."

"It's a shame that in America we have the rights, and all too often forgotten is the duty, to participate in democracy, whether it's as a voter or a candidate. We have to do something to get the public more interested in the process, and I'm not just talking about voters, but people running for office."

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at newsdesk@crc.com.net

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8233

Nita Wash, 71, died Wednesday. Funeral Services were 10:30 AM Saturday at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Trinity Memorial Park.

Ann Armstrong, 82, died Thursday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Irene Foster, 64, died Friday. Graveside services will be 2:00 PM Wednesday at Markley Cemetery, Markley, Texas. The family will receive friends from 5 until 6 PM Sunday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

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*Cold Mountain (R)

Daily: 2:00, 5:10 & 8:20

*Mona Lisa Smile (PG-13)

Daily: 2:10 & 7:00

*Cheaper By The Dozen (PG)

Daily: 2:30, 5:00, 7:20 & 9:50

*Peter Pan (PG)

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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.

Chuck Williams
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Susanne Reed
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John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

Bill McClellan
News Editor

OUR VIEWS

Be cautious as school bells ring once again

The holiday season was absolutely wonderful, but now it is time to get back into some familiar routines — school. For most area public school children, the first bell rings Tuesday morning. We all need to be prepared.

That includes making some type of arrangements for getting our children to school in the morning and back home again in the afternoon. For those of us who work, it can be a harried time. We're balancing their schedule with ours, trying to get to work, then maybe taking a quick afternoon break so we can rush to the school and pick up the children and deliver them to a relative's house, daycare or home.

We've all been outside the school building when the final bells rings. It is a beehive of activity, with children scampering everywhere and cars lined up waiting. Obviously, the potential for an accident is increased. Fortunately, however, there have been few of those over the years.

That's because most of us observe the speed limits in school zones and are aware of the potential danger.

Here are some important points to remember:

- Slow down. Always obey the speed limit when traveling through neighborhoods and school zones.
- Be attentive. Watch for children gathering near bus stop and walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks.
- Remain alert. Hurried children may dart into the street without looking for traffic.

None of us are so busy, nor is there any emergency so important that we can afford to put our young people at risk by driving in an unsafe manner.

We salute:

Each week, the Herald salutes individuals and groups from our community and area who have been recognized for special achievements or accomplishments.

We recognize these special people for working to help make our region a better place to live, work and play.

This week we salute:

- Completion of the modern lighting project at MCMAHON-WRINKLE AIRPARK.

• BOB AND DOROTHY DEAVENPORT, who were honored for their contributions to Martin County with the establishment of a scholarship in their name. It will be administered by the Permian Basin Area Foundation.

• The FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, which concluded this past week, and all the VOLUNTEERS who made the festival the entertaining display that it was.

Is there an individual or organization in our community that you feel should be saluted? If so, please send us their name and why you think they should be recognized. We must have your name and telephone number and you must provide it in writing.

A SMALL PRAYER

By K. Rae Anderson

May we recognize opportunities to serve you, Lord. Amen

Running away only brings you closer

Everyone makes New Year's resolutions ... well, at least almost everyone does. I am no exception. And for the past few years, mine has simply been to be a better man than I was the year before.

Not a better journalist. Although, I have found that as I become a better man I prosper professionally.

And not to lose weight, as some might expect.

No, what I'm talking about is improvement of a spiritual nature ... in my case, to be a better Christian.

A dozen years or so ago, I wouldn't have been writing this column. At that time, I spent a lot of time being anything but Christ-like in my dealings with anyone. In fact, in those days one might have observed that I was doing my best to hide from God.

Obviously, that did not work.

Today I understand that my life was changed in no small part because my parents and other family members refused to give up on me. They kept me in their very active prayer lives. And as a result, the harder I tried to run from the Lord, the closer I moved to him.

I'm certainly no paragon of virtue. I am human and most definitely have feet of clay. In fact, I fall way short of the kind of person I want to be on an almost daily basis.

I am, however, trying to practice spiritual principles to improve myself and learn from my shortcomings.

And today I have a great many people locally that help guide me and have a positive influence on my life. People like Everett Bender, Judge Robert Moore, Mayor Russ McEwen, Commissioner Bill Crooker, the



JOHN A.
MOSELEY

Rev. Sam Segundo, Municipal Judge Tim Green, Murray Murphy, the Rev. David Kimberly and Jim Campbell to name just a few.

There are others, however, like my friends Joe and Tammie Martin, who live in The Colony, who are just as influential in my life.

Tammie e-mailed me an interesting little missive New Year's Day that I'd like to share:

A man went to a barber shop to have his hair and his beard cut. He began to have a good conversation with the barber. They talked about many things and various subjects.

Suddenly, they touched on the subject of God. The barber said: "Look man, I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer.

"Well, it's so easy, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God does not exist. Oh, tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God exists, there would be no suffering nor pain. I can't think of loving a God who permits all of these things."

The customer thought for a moment, but he didn't respond because he did not want to start an argument. The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop. Just after he left the barber shop, he saw a man in the street with long hair and a beard. His hair was very long and he looked dirty and unkempt.

The customer entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber: "You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say they don't exist?" asked the surprised barber. "I am here and I am a barber. Why, I just worked on you!"

"No!" the customer exclaimed.

"Barbers don't exist because if they did there would be no people with long hair and beards like that man outside."

"Ah, barbers do exist, what hap-

pens is that people do not come to me."

"Exactly!" affirmed the customer. "That's the point! God does exist. What happens is people don't go to Him and do not look for Him. That's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world."

Thanks, Tammie.

But perhaps the person I need to thank most in this vein today is my mother.

You see, she provided me with what I can only describe as an unbelievable surprise Christmas Day.

I can't begin to remember how many years ago it's been since my Christmas present from my parents wasn't a Christmas card filled with cash.

So I was somewhat astounded when the family gathered in my brother Mark's living room to open Christmas presents that morning when I was handed a package with a label indicating it was from my mother.

I was intrigued.

But I would be stunned and moments later weeping, once the wrapping was torn open and the heavy box opened.

Because there, in a dense nest of packing tissue, lay my father's Bible and the volume of commentaries he used in preparing to teach his Sunday School classes each week.

"Is that better than cash?" she asked with a gleam in her eye.

I had to confess that in the past three years since his death, there had been countless times I'd wished for my dad's Bible, but didn't have the heart to ask her for it.

To my way of thinking, with the exception of our Savior, it was the best Christmas present ever.

Thanks, Momma.

Managing Editor John A. Moseley can be contacted by calling (432) 263-7331, ext. 230, or he can be e-mailed at editor@bigspringherald.com.

YOUR VIEWS

TO THE EDITOR:

In your article of Dec. 18 concerning display of holiday lights, you referred to "The Hidden Treasure" of Ken Haven's house on Lawrence. Here is "The Rest of the Story."

I came home from bowling on Thursday night to find a stranger in my yard putting up lights. I introduced myself and learned that it was a new neighbor from up the street by the name of Ken Havens. As I talked to Ken, he told me that he wanted to do this for the entire street to make a special memory for his little girls, ages 2 and 4.

He furnished all the lights and labor and another neighbor, Hillard Ditmore, made the stakes to attach the lights. As we talked, I mentioned that I had some icicle lights for the front of my roof and he attached the lights for me.

Ken and his family recently moved to Big Spring from Grand Prairie where our oldest daughter lives. As it turned out, Ken and his family only lived a few blocks from our daughter. She told us that the Haven house was always beautifully decorated.

Ken works in Midland but chose to live in Big Spring because Elizabeth's family lives here. We are very fortunate to have Ken, Elizabeth, Haleigh and Hannah Haven living in our neighborhood.

— WENDEL AND WYNONA PAYTE BIG SPRING

TO THE EDITOR:

The faculty and staff at Big Spring High School would like to thank the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) for volunteering its time and involvement with the students, teachers and staff of BSHS.

More importantly, the PTO's interest in the high school has impacted the lives of students and the morale of teachers. The current challenges of edu-

cating students can sometimes become overwhelming.

However, the expectations at BSHS are higher than ever before, and the PTO members are valuable part in overcoming our challenges.

Susan Watkins, the PTO's president, organized a group of parents to create an Angel Tree for our faculty. The Angel Tree provided teachers with needed classroom supplies to aid them and to assist teachers with their instruction. In addition, the PTO has provided many other services for the staff and faculty that allow opportunities for staff development, bonding and other unforeseen events. More importantly, the PTO has been essential in fostering an environment of care, commitment and pride in our high school.

On behalf of the entire staff and faculty of BSHS, I would like to express our gratitude to Watkins and all the members of PTO for our partnership.

— MIKE RITCHIE BSHS PRINCIPAL

TO THE EDITOR:

My heart-felt gratitude goes to an unidentified man who was in McDonalds around 3 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and to the staff and management of our local McDonalds.

That afternoon I left my purse at a table and did not discover my loss until late that evening when McDonalds had closed. In this time when identity theft occurs so frequently personal papers are mislaid or lost, a bad time lies ahead for the individual who suffers such a loss.

I truly felt my purse was lost forever.

On Friday morning early, my husband, Ross, went to McDonalds to inquire. The manager returned my purse to him, telling him an unknown man had handed it to two of the girls working the

counter.

My "thank you" goes to each of you for restoring my faith in the honesty and integrity of my fellow man or woman. My tribute goes to McDonalds, to Ross and to my Lord for seeing me through this time.

A reward was offered but refused.

— MILDRED CALLIHAN BIG SPRING

TO THE EDITOR:

I don't believe the capture of Saddam Hussein will have any effect of the war being conducted against the U.S. and it's allies.

Saddam's power was always his ability to command and control. The day he went on the run he lost his power to control.

Personally, I have never thought it was wise to spend \$150 billion rebuilding Iraq, when the U.S. has so many problems here at home.

The war has been a bumble job from the start. Americans were conned into believing Saddam had something to do with 9-11 and that he amassed weapons of mass destruction.

None of that has been proven and I suspect that the government knew it was not true from the get-go.

— MILARD ROSS BIG SPRING

TO THE EDITOR:

The Heritage Museum would like to sincerely thank the many people who contributed their time, effort and sponsorship to the "Red Dress Luncheon and Style Show."

JoAnne Forrest, events chairperson, did an exceptional job. We would like to thank the other members of the committee including, Katie Cathey, Jan Foresyth, Quail Dobbs, Lenita Fryar and Charlene Ragan.

Thank you to the models; Diane Newton, Jann Caffey, Schrecengost, Magen Patti

— GINA GIST ODESSA

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Conservative Texas Rep. Ralph Hall switches to GOP

AUSTIN (AP) — After nearly a quarter-century as one of the most conservative Democrats in Congress, Texas Rep. Ralph Hall switched parties to become a Republican and said he expects support from the White House.

"I've known (President Bush) since he was a young boy. He's a Godly man. He's a Texan and he was the governor and he's our friend," Hall told The Associated Press. Bush praised Hall's decision, welcoming him to the Republican Party.

"Ralph is a close friend of the Bush family. He is a well-respected leader of the highest integrity, and a tireless advocate for the people of Texas," Bush said.

Hall, 80, made the move Friday, the final day for candi-

dates to file to get their names on the ballot for Texas' March 9 primary.

Hall's switch follows a GOP-led drive — bitterly contested by Democrats — to remake Texas' congressional districts more to their liking. Party strategists contend they can gain five or more seats through a mid-decade redistricting, a change that could greatly strengthen their grip on power in the House.

Democrats and some minority groups objected to the plan, saying it violates minority rights, and challenged it in court. A three-judge federal panel was evaluating the districts and expected to rule soon.

Before Hall's move, the House had 228 Republicans, 205 Democrats, 1 Democrat-leaning

"I think I can get re-elected much easier if I run as a Republican."

Rep. Ralph Hall



independent and 1 vacancy.

Hall said he would have resigned if the old redistricting map had been overturned, but when no ruling came from the court, he decided to run as a Republican.

"I think I can get re-elected much easier if I run as a Republican," Hall said.

He told The Associated Press that he's always said that if being a Democrat hurt his district, he would switch or resign.

He said GOP leaders had recently refused to place money for his district in a spending bill and "the only reason I was given was I was a Democrat."

He also said he did not agree with "all these guys running against the president."

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, said Democrats are "reaping what they've sown."

"Their leaders have lined up behind Howard Dean's brand of angry, intolerant politics. They've made their message clear: 'moderates need not apply' and that's a sad trend for a once-great party," DeLay said.

Rep. Martin Frost, Texas' most senior Democrat, declined comment late Friday. Texas Democratic Party Chairman Charles Soechting said he was

disappointed but would wait to hear from Hall before commenting further.

Hall was first elected to the House in 1980 and has long been one of the most conservative Democrats in Congress. Speculation that he might switch parties first surfaced in 1995, when the GOP gained control of the House for the first time in 40 years.

He said then he wouldn't, arguing that it would be better to try and move the Democratic party toward the middle.

Hall's defection has historic overtones. His district in Texas includes territory once represented in Congress by the late Sam Rayburn, who served as a Democratic speaker for much of the time between 1940 and 1961.

Medical examiner: Remains may be those of missing girl

FORT WORTH (AP) — Skeletal remains found in a rural area of northwest Fort Worth may be those of a 6-year-old girl abducted near her grandparents' home nearly five years ago, the medical examiner said Friday.

Along with a skull and bone fragments, a pair of pink Barbie tennis shoes were found. Opal Jo Jennings was wearing such a pair of shoes when she disappeared, said Dr.

Nizam Peerwani, Tarrant County chief medical examiner.

"We are absolutely not sure these are Opal Jennings' (remains). We suspect they are," Peerwani said at a Friday news conference.

Medical examiners determined that the child was between ages 5 and 7. They could not determine the child's gender, but the size 13 shoes and other items found nearby led

them to believe it is Opal.

The bone fragments' weathered condition is also consistent with someone who died in 1999, Peerwani said.

Enough remains have not been found to determine a cause of death. Nor were the child's teeth found, which would help in identification, Peerwani said.

A search for additional bones was to continue Friday and Saturday. The

spot is less than 10 miles from where Opal was abducted March 26, 1999, as she played with two other children outside her grandparents' home in Saginaw.

Positive identification will be made through DNA testing at an Illinois lab, Peerwani said. Results may take up to six weeks.

Richard Lee Franks of Fort Worth was convicted in 2000 of aggravated kidnapping in the girl's disappearance. He told investigators that he gave her a ride to a convenience store and dropped her off safely. Franks is serving life in prison.

Lt. Jesse Hernandez, a police spokesman, said a couple on horseback spotted a section of skull in a culvert Tuesday afternoon.

The riders found the fragments in bushy, rough terrain on the west side of Lake Worth. The city of Fort Worth owns the 116 acres of undeveloped property.

Texas briefs

3 slain members of missionary family eulogized

KEENE (AP) — Flags from the United States and the Republic of Palau hung Friday near the three-rose-covered caskets of a missionary family who were beaten and stabbed to death in the Pacific island chain.

Ruimara DePaiva, 42, his wife, Margareth, 37, and their 11-year-old son, Larrison, were killed Dec. 22 at their home in Airai state during an apparent burglary, according to a court affidavit.

Hernan DePaiva lovingly remembered his brother, sister-in-law and nephew for their devotion to missionary work.

"They gave their lives as missionaries to the people of Palau," Hernan DePaiva told more than 100 mourners at Keene Seventh-Day Adventist Church. "They gave themselves to the Lord."

The missionaries' 10-year-old daughter, Melissa, survived the attack and was at the service. She told Palau authorities she'd been assaulted and placed blindfolded in the trunk of a car before the attacker left her on the side of a road.

the renovated buildings and dedicated staff, but many buildings are empty or underused. He said he will consider a city task force's recommendation to lease empty space to companies with compatible uses.

"I have no intention of putting a 'for sale' sign on this property and boarding up the windows," Principi said.

In August, Veterans Affairs recommended

closing the Waco hospital and six others but also proposed opening other medical centers. The VA wants to shift services closer to where veterans live and modernize or close hospitals that have become costly to maintain.

Principi said the commission studying the matter will make its recommendation in a few weeks, and he will decide by early February.

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National briefs

Spacecraft collects dust particles

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — A NASA spacecraft flew through the bright halo of a distant comet Friday to scoop up less than a thimbleful of dust that could shed light on how our solar system was formed.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration said its Stardust spacecraft passed within an estimated 143 miles of the comet Wild 2 as it plowed through the gossamer cloud that cloaks the dirty ball of ice and rock.

Mission members said the unmanned probe made its closest approach at 11:44 a.m. PST, while traveling at a relative speed of 13,650 mph.

"We passed the closest approach point without any injury, apparently," said scientist Donald Yeomans, of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Stardust was designed to gather hundreds if not thousands of dust particles streaming from Wild 2 (pronounced Vilt-2) during the flyby 242 million miles from Earth.

The unmanned spacecraft also was to snap 72 black-and-white close-ups of the comet's nucleus, thought to be just 3.3 miles across.

Bishops' progress being tracked

(AP) — An upcoming report on whether Roman Catholic bishops are implementing their new mandatory discipline plan for sexually abusive priests will say most dioceses are complying, but "there is still a lot that needs to be done," the official overseeing the audit said Friday.

Kathleen McChesney, a former top FBI agent and head of the bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection, said the sheer size of some of the largest dioceses slowed their progress, while others lacked the personnel or financing for quick compliance.

The plan not only dictates how bishops should respond to abuse claims, but also requires them to take steps to prevent molestation, such as conducting background checks on all clergy and lay workers in the diocese and training them to identify abuse. The largest archdioceses employ more than a thousand priests alone, McChesney said.

"Considering it's only been about a year since people have been working on it, there's been a lot of progress, but nobody is going to tell you that it's all been done," McChesney said, in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "What you're going to find is that most of them are (complying), but there is still a lot that needs to be done."

The report, which is scheduled to be released Tuesday in Washington, is based on audits of all 195 U.S. dioceses conducted by the Gavin Group, a Boston consulting firm led by former FBI official Bill Gavin.

Third Washington herd quarantined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Authorities have quarantined a third herd of Washington state cattle in a widening investigation of mad cow disease after they located another cow from the same Canadian herd as the infected cow.

At least some cows quarantined since the discovery last month of a Holstein with the brain-wasting disease will be destroyed, either because of possible exposure to the infection or to quell public fear, Dr. Ron DeHaven, the Agriculture Department's chief veterinarian, said Friday.

"It would be safe to assume that ... some or all those animals will need to be sacrificed," DeHaven said of the quarantined cattle. A decision on the first cows to be killed will be made soon, he said.

Results of DNA testing that should determine conclusively whether the original sick cow was born in Alberta, Canada, in April 1997 are expected next week, DeHaven said.

The herd put under quarantine in the last day or two is at a dairy farm in Mattawa, near Yakima, where investigators traced one of 80 cows that entered the United States with the diseased Holstein in late 2001.

Security head arrested for DWI

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of security at Washington Dulles International Airport was placed on administrative leave because of his arrest on drunken driving charges as the airport was on a heightened state of alert early New Year's Day for terrorist activity, the Transportation Security Administration said Friday.

Charles Brady, acting federal security director at Dulles, was pulled over Thursday morning, hours after a British Airways jetliner was detained at the airport because of intelligence information.

Airport spokeswoman Tara Hamilton said a Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority police officer took Brady into custody after he saw him driving erratically.

The Transportation Security Administration named Adm. James Schear acting federal security director at Dulles during an investigation of Brady's arrest, agency spokesman Darrin Kayser said.

Jennifer Marty, TSA spokeswoman, said Brady and other federal security directors at the nation's airports were notified on New Year's Eve that they should plan to stay at work until 2 a.m. because the agency was conducting emergency drills. Brady was pulled over at 1 a.m. EST and taken to the Fairfax County Detention Center, where he spent the night before being released Thursday afternoon.

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Terrorist threat impacts flight schedules

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing another week of uncertainty over the terrorist threat from the air, international airlines and foreign governments greeted increased security with a combination of skepticism and support as flight cancellations and delays spread.

"The decision to operate next Monday's flight to Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) will be kept under review throughout the weekend," British Airways says on its Web site.

Airlines have canceled seven flights since Wednesday, with Mexico City and London the points of origin and Los Angeles, Washington Dulles International Airport and Riyadh, the destinations. Dulles was the takeoff point for the hijacked flight that destroyed part of the Pentagon in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

But British Airways' afternoon flight from London's Heathrow Airport to Dulles took off on schedule Saturday after the government said it was safe. The airline had been forced to cancel the flight on Thursday and Friday because of

security concerns.

"The Department for Transport has confirmed to us that they are satisfied that it is safe for the aircraft to go," said an airline spokeswoman, on the condition of anonymity.

South Korea's national police agency responded sympathetically to American requests for international cooperation, saying it would deploy armed officers on individual U.S.-bound flights if warranted based on information about a terrorist threat to any specific flight.

Aeromexico canceled two flights from Mexico City to Los Angeles because of U.S. security concerns and a third turned around after takeoff because Mexico thought the airline hadn't screened passengers properly.

Authorities on the ground "said that we didn't search coats and sweaters worn by customers," said Fernando Ceballos, Aeromexico's assistant director of airports. "We didn't agree with that, but we ordered the plane back anyway." In France, a police offi-

cial said six cases of mistaken identity were behind the pre-Christmas grounding of six Air France flights between Paris and Los Angeles over terrorism fears. The names of six passengers sounded similar to those of terrorist suspects provided by the FBI, prompting the French government to ground the planes, the official said.

Watch lists that investigators use have phonetic spelling of Arab names, a senior FBI official said, making mistakes inevitable because individuals will have similar names.

Mistakes are inevitable, but the failure to respond "is a far worse alternative in spite of the inconvenience to passengers," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller, West Virginia, senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Pierre Debue, director of the French border

police, said U.S. officials have asked France to check out a few suspicious names on passenger lists nearly every day since Christmas Eve.

One turned out to be a 5-year-old child, and another was a prominent Egyptian scientist, he said.

Rockefeller said all the activity in the international air traffic system is being driven by "very specific" intelligence derived from "an enormous amount of much more than single-source reporting." He said the information can come from computerized watch lists, interception of communications and intelligence agents.

British Airways said a flight to Riyadh, which had been due to leave London's Heathrow Airport on Saturday, was scrubbed along with a return flight scheduled to leave Riyadh on Sunday.

BIG SPRING HERALD
Weekend Edition, January 3-4, 2004

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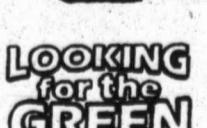
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*Overall Odds are 1 in 4.55



#301 Looking for the Green (\$5)

*Overall Odds are 1 in 3.79



#305 Money Island (\$2)

*Overall Odds are 1 in 4.93



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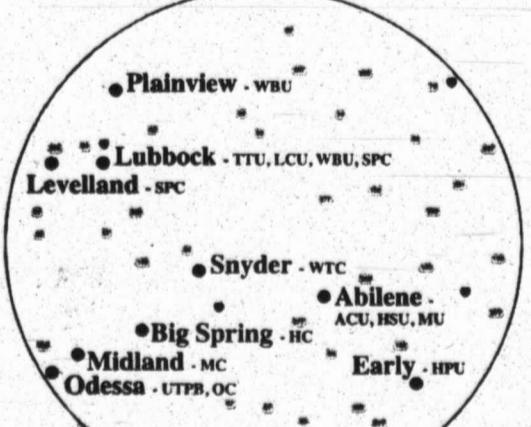
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Charter jet crashes in resort in Egypt, killing everyone on board; terrorism not suspected

SHARM EL-SHEIK, Egypt (AP) — A charter jet carrying 148 people — mostly French tourists — crashed Saturday into the Red Sea shortly after taking off from the resort of Sharm el-Sheik, killing everyone on board, officials said.

Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry said the crash was apparently caused by a mechanical problem and not terrorism. But it occurred as the British prime minister was visiting the resort and amid a week of heightened concerns about terrorism that have led to canceled flights around the world.

French anti-terrorism authorities in Paris said they did not expect to open an investigation since the crash appeared to have been an accident.

France's Deputy Transportation Minister Dominique Bussereau said that the pilot of Flash Airlines flight FSH604 detected problems shortly after takeoff and tried to turn back.

Egypt's military sent helicopters and small patrol boats to search an area of the sea littered with floating suitcases and other debris.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said that 133 of the people aboard were French tourists. A French Embassy official in Cairo said the list of those on board also showed one Moroccan and 13 crew members. There was one additional passenger whose nationality was not known.

"Samia, Samia," he wailed. Next to him, his wife screamed, "My daughter, my daughter."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair was vacationing at the resort, but a spokeswoman at his office in London said neither Blair nor any members of his family were aboard the plane.

The Boeing 737 jet, which disappeared from radar after it took off shortly before 5 a.m., was headed to Cairo for a crew change before continuing to Paris. No distress call was made, airport officials said on condition of anonymity.

People waiting for family members at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris early Saturday were pulled aside by airport authorities and taken by shuttle bus to a nearby hotel.

"Up until now, the cause is a technical one," Minister of Civil Aviation Ahmed Shafeeq told state-run Egyptian television. "There was a malfunction that made it difficult for the crew to ... save the plane."

France's deputy transportation minister, Dominique Bussereau, said Saturday that the flight had a problem on takeoff and crashed when it tried to turn back. He spoke during a press conference at Charles de Gaulle airport, where the flight had been scheduled to arrive at 9 a.m.

The trip was organized by FRAM, one of France's biggest tour operators.

Looking pale and shaken, a couple in their 50s arrived at the Charles de Gaulle terminal early Saturday. The man asked an airport official: "My children are at Sharm. How do I find out if they were on the plane?"

The couple was then taken to the crisis center.

French authorities will help Egypt "in order to shed light as quickly as possible on this catastrophe that has plunged our country into mourning," Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said in a statement.

The United States was also sending an accident investigator, said Keith Holloway, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington. He said Egypt had requested the help.

Flash Airlines said in a statement that the wreckage was found about nine miles from the airport, according to the Egyptian news agency MENA. Engineers from the national carrier EgyptAir were helping to determine what happened.

Flash Airlines, which has been in business for six years, said the Boeing 737 was one of two it owned. About 20 people,

including weeping relatives of crew members, had gathered at the airline's offices in Cairo.

One man arrived at the office to check on his daughter, a 30-year-old flight attendant. He walked out in despair 15 minutes later, supported by relatives. "Samia, Samia," he wailed. Next to him, his wife screamed, "My daughter, my daughter."

The weather was clear in Sharm el-Sheik, 300 miles southeast of Cairo on the Sinai peninsula, and other flights were taking off without incident, officials said.

The jet flew in early Saturday from Milan, Italy, and dropped off passengers in Sharm el-Sheik, the airline said. New passengers then boarded for the flight to Paris.

The airplane had received its maintenance checks in Norway and the most recent one showed no problems, the airline said.

► World briefs

Quake devastates Arg-e-Bam

BAM, Iran (AP) — Most of the 30 circular guard towers have crumbled into avalanches of dirt, along with parts of the thick, mud-brick walls. The bathhouses, gymnasiums and a Zoroastrian temple that survived for centuries now resemble a moonscape.

The earthquake that killed nearly a third of this Iranian city's people last week also devastated its archaeological jewel — the Arg-e-Bam, or Citadel of Bam, the world's largest mud-brick fortress, parts of which date back 2,200 years.

But even as aftershocks sent more of its walls crashing down, Iran's government is vowing to rebuild it.

"The citadel was almost as precious as the lives lost in the earthquake," Fakoor Pass, director of cultural heritage for Kerman province where Bam is located, told The Associated Press on Friday. More than 30,000 people are believed to have died in the 6.6-magnitude tremor that struck before dawn Dec. 26, burying thousands alive as they slept.

Afghans narrow their differences

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghans on both sides of an ugly ethnic divide at the country's constitutional convention said they narrowed their differences during crisis talks with American and U.N. officials Friday.

The progress during a one-day break at the loya jirga could avert a complete collapse of the gathering, seen as a historic opportunity to help this war-torn nation toward the promise of peace and stability.

At the 502-member grand council, President Hamid Karzai's fellow ethnic Pashtuns have swung behind his call for a strong presidency.

HOWARD COUNTY AWARDED FEDERAL FUNDS THROUGH FEMA

Howard County has been awarded federal funds under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. Howard County has been chosen to receive \$14,637 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

A Local Board made up of the County, City, United Way and other local charitable organizations will determine how the funds awarded to Howard County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary non-profits or units of government, 2) have an accounting system, 3) practice nondiscrimination, 4) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 5) if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact United Way of Big Spring at (432) 267-5201 for an application. The deadline for applications is January 10, 2004.

COSSACKS MOTORCYCLE CLUB PERMIAN BASIN CHAPTER

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Pediatric Cardiology Clinic in Big Spring Sponsored by Covenant Heart Institute

On January 13th, Covenant Heart Institute will sponsor its Pediatric Cardiology Clinic at Covenant Malone & Hogan Clinic, 1501 W. 11th Place. Mindee Flippin, M.D., of Covenant Heart Institute, will see patients on Tuesday, January 13, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Please call 1-877-60HEART (877-604-3278) for an appointment. www.covenantheartinstitute.com/regional_outreach.html



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We apologize for anyone not listed that has helped. Many individuals contributed or assisted with this event however, it is nearly impossible to list everyone. Please take no offense if your name is not listed.

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Sports

BIG
SPRING HERALD

Do you have an interesting sports item or story idea? Call Tommy Wells at 263-7331, Ext. 237. Email results to: sports@bigspringherald.com

Page 8A
Weekend, January 3-4, 2004

BIG SPRING

Weekend, J

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By TOMMY W

Sports Editor

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Quick start sparks 'Dogs past Kats, 59-43

By BRANDON HALLFORD

Special to the Herald

GARDEN CITY — The Coahoma Bulldogs shot a scorching 75 percent from the field in the first eight minutes of play Friday night en route to opening a 20-10 lead and cruising to a 59-43 victory over the Garden City Bearkats.

Coahoma wasted little time getting things started. The Bulldogs exploded out of the gate, hitting six of their first nine shots from the field — six of seven from inside the 3-point arc — and reeling off a 15-4 run over the first four minutes.

In all, Coahoma had five different players push home baskets in the first period.

After Garden City's Chais Goodwin had buried a shot that

pulled the Bearkats to within eight early in the second, senior Bulldog Kelby Kemper pushed the Bulldogs' dagger a little deeper by knocking down back-to-back treys at the seven minute mark, pushing the score back into double-digits at 26-12.

Kemper ended the night hitting three-of-five attempts from behind the arc.

Coahoma went for the kill over the final minutes of the first half. The Bulldogs, now 8-8 for the year, taxed the Garden City defense for a 13-3 run in the last three minutes to go into the break holding a 43-21 lead.

Sam Tindol was the main assassin during the run, tallying all six of his points during the stretch.

The Bulldogs defense took

Buffalo, Wildcats to open district play

The Forsan Buffaloes and Westbrook are scheduled to open the area's district action this week.

Forsan will open the area's district slate on Jan. 8 when it faces Colorado City. Westbrook is scheduled to travel to Blackwell on Jan. 6.

State-ranked Grady begins its loop schedule on Jan. 9 against Borden County.

Coahoma, Stanton and Big Spring will begin loop play on Jan. 16.

over in the second half. Coahoma allowed Bearkats to shoot just 36 per-

cent from the floor over the final 16 minutes. Several third-quarter fast break opportunities enabled Coahoma to expand its lead to 53-29 after three periods of play.

Adrian Abrego ended a personal 6-0 run for the Bulldogs in the closing seconds of the third by heaving up a prayer that found nothing but net with just five seconds left in the frame.

Coahoma went frigid down the stretch, however, hitting just two of its 10 shots in the fourth.

Garden City was unable to take advantage of the Bulldogs' shooting woes. The Bearkats managed to only cut their deficit to 16 before time ran out on the comeback.

"I'm really happy that we

See COAHOMA, Page 10B

Manning, Ole Miss nip OSU in Cotton

DALLAS (AP) — Eli Manning and Rashawn Woods decided against entering the NFL draft last spring. Both wanted the chance for another big college season.

They both accomplished just that, though only Manning ended his career with a win in the Cotton Bowl.

Manning also got the offensive MVP trophy, leading No. 16 Mississippi to a 31-28 win over No. 21 Oklahoma State despite a record-setting performance by Woods.

"Everything about this year has been great. It's been a great run ... it's been a fun ride," said Manning, who completed 22 of 31 passes for 259 yards and two touchdowns. "It has to end sometime. We picked a great way to end it."

Manning also had a 1-yard TD run with 12:32 left, capping a 97-yard drive that also ended a streak of 24 straight points by Ole Miss (10-3) which provided just enough to overcome a Woods-led comeback.

Oklahoma State's career receiving leader set Cotton Bowl records with 11 catches for 223 yards.

Five of those catches and 131 yards came after Manning's scoring run. But the Cowboys (9-4) never got the ball back after Woods' leaping 17-yard TD catch over a defender with 4:38 left.

"It was one of those games where we felt like we just ran out of time," Oklahoma State coach Les Miles said.

The Rebels won their first January game since the 1970 Sugar Bowl when Manning's father, Archie, threw a TD and ran for another one in a 27-22 win over Arkansas. Ole Miss finished its first 10-win season since 1971.

"When I came to Ole Miss, everyone expected me to bring the program back to its glory days," said Manning, who broke his own record with 3,600 yards passing this season. "I See COTTON, Page 10A

Nutt spurns \$2 million offer by 'Huskers to stay with Hogs

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (AP) — Houston Nutt rejected Nebraska's \$2 million coaching offer, saying strong family ties and a job left undone kept him at Arkansas.

"I could not take my family, myself, and get on that plane," Nutt said at a news conference Saturday morning. "My heart was here."

Nutt said he was flat-tired at Nebraska's offer, but that it was best for him to remain in his home state.

"They're going to take care of me," Nutt said.

At Arkansas, Nutt has won nine games in the regular season twice, in 1998 and 2002.

Herald Photo/Tommy Wells
Coahoma's Isaac Brewer puts up a shot in the second quarter of the Bulldogs' win Friday.

Lady Kats get back on track

Niehues, Lady Kats roll to 66-34 win over Coahoma

By TOMMY WELLS

Sports Editor

GARDEN CITY — You'll have to forgive Amanda Henson and the Garden City Lady Kats if they break into a rendition of the Black Eyed Peas and asks "Where's the love, y'all?"

Seems over the last week, they don't know.

One thing Miranda Hester and the Coahoma Bulldettes found out Friday night is you won't get any love in Garden City — especially from a team still smarting from a loss to Reagan County less than 72 hours earlier.

"I think we played really well tonight," said Lady Kats head coach Brent Kirkland, who watched his team reel off a convincing 66-34 win. "We bounced back from the loss at the tournament. The girls came out focused and executed."

For Coahoma, Garden City's play in the first eight minutes probably seemed more like an execution. The Lady Kats forced seven turnovers in the first eight minutes and turned a 12-0 run in the first three minutes into a 24-2 advantage.

Henson, one of four seniors on the squad, and Megan Niehues provided the bulk of Garden City's early power. The two forwards combined for 17 of the Lady Kats' first-quarter points.

Hester ended the Lady Kats' first-quarter shut-out bid with three minutes left in the frame by sinking a pair of free throws.

Garden City answered Hester's scoring efforts with one of their own. The Lady Kats, now 14-3 overall, reeled off the final 12 points in the quarter and took a 22-point cushion into the second.

Sterling Gee ended



Herald Photo/Tommy Wells
Garden City's Jessica Hoch grimaces as she battles Coahoma's Kassi Hutchison for a rebound during the third quarter Friday night. Garden City improved to 14-3 for the season with a 66-34 victory.



Herald Photo/Tommy Wells
C.J. Lowery and the Big Spring Steers will host the Pecos Eagles Tuesday in the Steer Gym. The Steers are scheduled to open District 4-4A play on Jan. 16 against Frenship. The BSHS girls will begin loop play on Friday in San Angelo against the Lake View Maidens.

Steers set to begin final preps for 4-4A campaign

By TOMMY WELLS

Sports Editor

The Big Spring high school basketball teams will begin their final preparations for their upcoming District 4-4A campaigns Tuesday.

The BSHS boys' basketball team, which has compiled a 3-14 record over the first month and a half of the season, will begin the final week of non-district play on Tuesday when they host the Pecos Eagles in the Steer Gym.

The varsity teams will begin play at 7:30 p.m.

The JV will play at 6 p.m.

Following their match-up with Pecos, the Steers will travel to Lubbock on Friday to face Cooper.

The Big Spring Lady Steers will close out their non-district slate Friday against the Lubbock Coronado in the Dorothy Garrett Coliseum. Games begin at 6:30 p.m.

The Lady Steers open district play on Jan. 9 in San Angelo against Lake View.

Ira sweeps pair from Westbrook

By TOMMY WELLS

Sports Editor

IRA — The Ira Lady Bulldogs sank a shot in the closing seconds Friday night and escaped with a wild 59-57 overtime victory over the Westbrook Lady Cats.

With the loss, Westbrook finished its non-district slate with a 1-1 record.

Westbrook, which had three players reach double figures in scoring, battled back from an early deficit to take a big lead into the half. After falling behind by an 11-5 count in the first, the Lady Cats posted a 22-10 spree in the second quarter and took a 27-21 cushion into the half.

Ira forced the game into overtime by outscoring Westbrook by a 24-16 clip in the second half.

Allison Bray led all WHS scorers with 22 points. Senior Sheena Fernandez added 20 while Codee Waldrep added 13.

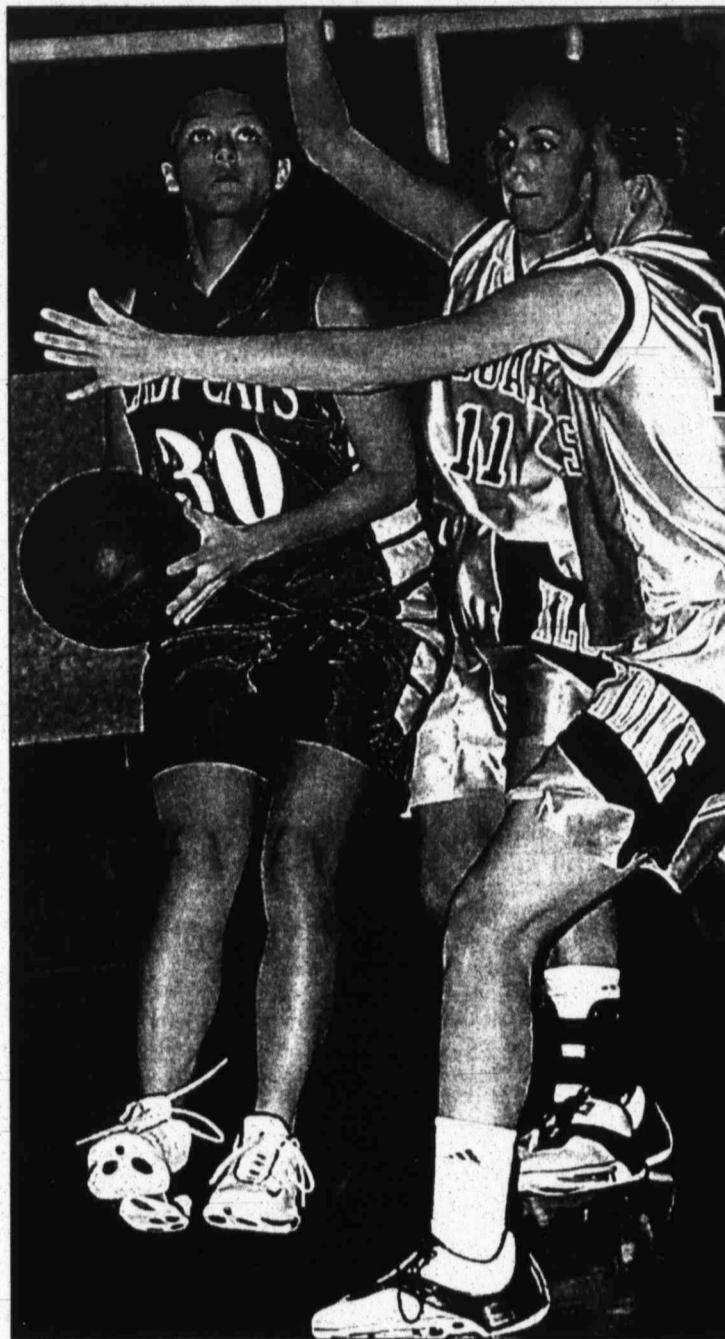
The Westbrook boys, despite getting double-digit efforts from Jared Matlock, Trey Chavez and Cory Morton, suffered a 70-56 setback.

The Bulldogs, who collected 29 points from Jake Barnes, blew a close 15-10 game at the end of the first eight minutes open with a 43-33 run in the second and third quarters.

Matlock finished the game as Westbrook's top scorer, netting 20 points. Chavez and Morton added 14 and 10, respectively.

With the loss, the Wildcats slipped to 4-7 for the year.

Ira won the JV game by a 50-21 margin.



Westbrook's Sheena Fernandez attempts to get a shot past two defenders in a recent game. Fernandez scored 20 points in the Lady Cats' 59-57 loss to Ira Friday.

Reagan County soars past Stanton

BIG LAKE — The Reagan County Owls outscored the Stanton Buffaloes by a 32-18 margin in the first half Friday night and rolled to an easy 62-45 non-district victory.

With the win, Reagan County improved to 14-4 for the year.

The Owls, who knocked down three 3-point shots in the game, struggled early against the Stanton defense. The Owls held a

slim 14-9 advantage at the start of the second period.

They found their stride in the second, however. The Owls reeled off an 18-9 spree in the frame and took a 14-point lead into the half.

Reagan County all but sealed the win in the first eight minutes of the second half. The Owls stretched their lead to 51-33 with a 19-point surge.

The Buffs, who were led by freshman Michael

Niehues and the final stanza to knot the score. K'lann Niehues and Tracy Eggemeyer tallied GCHS' final points.

In the overtime frame, Garden City grabbed a quick on two free throws by Victoria Ortiz.

Casillas pulled Coahoma to within one, at 22-23, with just over a minute to play with a free throw.

Niehues led all GC scorers with 10 points apiece. Eggemeyer and Ortiz each added seven.

Roberts paced Coahoma with 10. Casillas and Wood had five and four.

With the win, Garden City improved to 5-5 for the season.

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Next stop for Louisiana State, Oklahoma in Sugar? Splitsville!

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Stephen Peterman eyed the prize, sitting right there on the 25-yard line at the Superdome.

"I ain't touching it," the LSU offensive lineman said, referring to the crystal trophy that surely will be held aloft Sunday night by the team that wins the Sugar Bowl.

"Rub it like a genie? Has anybody ever touched it and lost? Not me," he said Friday. "It's a jinx. You can't touch it — it's not ours yet."

Even if it does end up with No. 2 LSU and not No. 3 Oklahoma, there's virtually no way the Tigers can call themselves undisputed champions.

Like it or not, the Sugar Bowl is headed for Splitsville. The winner automatically receives the USA Today/ESPN coaches' crown — and more questions about

which team truly was tops this season in college football.

That's because No. 1 USC won the Rose Bowl on Thursday. The Trojans posted an impressive 28-14 victory over Michigan, all but assuring themselves the championship in The Associated Press poll.

"Good. They won the Rose Bowl," Oklahoma All-American defensive tackle Tommie Harris

said. "They can be No. 1 as long as we can be national champs."

Still, the specter of a shared title is sure to take some of the shine off the Sugar.

"You can't really say you're the best if you haven't been through the battle," LSU receiver Michael Clayton said. "There's no better way to determine who's the best than to square off and have a game. I think the

world would really enjoy something like that."

And for now, that's not happening. Despite cries from critics of the Bowl Championship Series, there's no playoff in sight.

"Everybody agreed before the season to respect this system, that it was something we could live with," LSU coach Nick Saban said. "I think they'll do something to make the system more effective in the future."

Ravens' Belichick a landslide choice as NFL's top coach

(AP) Bill Belichick owns three Super Bowl titles and Saturday, after his best coaching job, he won The Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year.

In a year of masterful coaching throughout the league, Belichick led the New England Patriots to the NFL's best record, 14-2. The Patriots, fighting off injuries almost from the outset of the schedule, won their final 12 games, setting franchise records for winning streak and victories in one year.

They did so in great part because of Belichick's brilliance as a game-planner, motivator and in-game strategist.

And they did so with a variety of starting lineups, unusual for a championship-caliber team.

"We have had a number of different people,"

Belichick said. "It has been that kind of team.

"Again, I am not caught up on the big starter thing. ... I think all of the players have been active at one time or another. They have contributed in one way or another. So it has been a lot of different mixes through the course of the year from game-to-game, and from one part of the season, and so I guess that part of it has been maybe a trademark of this season."

Another trademark in 2003 was the strong coaching in many cities. Although seven head coaches either were fired or resigned, there was admirable work done by Marvin Lewis in

Cincinnati, Bill Parcells in Dallas, Andy Reid in Philadelphia, John Fox in Carolina, Tony Dungy in Indianapolis, Brian Billick in Baltimore and Dick Vermeil in Kansas City.

Belichick, with 35 1/2 votes from a nationwide panel of 50 sports writers and broadcasters who cover the NFL, easily beat Lewis, who received seven votes. Parcells was next at 6 1/2 and Reid received one.

"If you had asked me at the beginning of the year, I'd say, 'Hell, no!'" star cornerback Ty Law said. "But he changed my mind."

"He's done an outstanding job," he said.

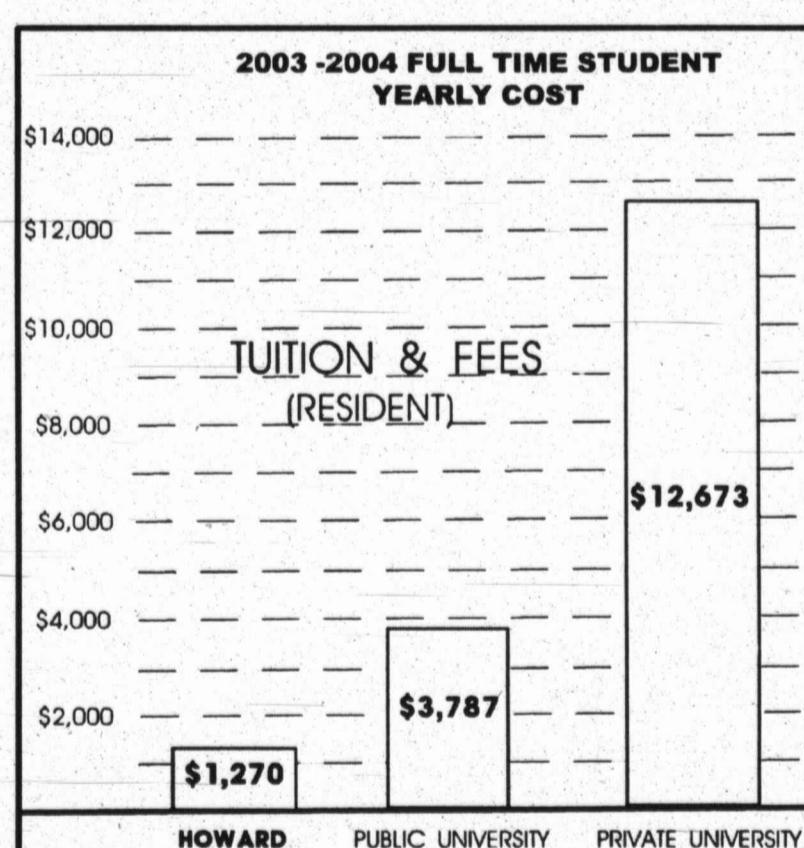
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Jansa, GC Bearkats reach .500 with win

By TOMMY WELLS

Sports Editor

GARDEN CITY — Whether it was the great coaching by Koby Abney or the hot-shooting efforts of Evan Jansa and Alex Halfmann, the Garden City Bearkats are back to .500.

Garden City evened its season record at 5-5 Friday afternoon by turning a 15-5 fourth-quarter run into a 44-39 come-from-behind win over the Coahoma Bulldogs.

Jansa and Halfmann both scored into double figures in the contest, hitting for 18 and 12, respectively.

Coahoma, which had 13 points from Joe Holguin, owned the first quarter. The Bulldogs, now 2-11 overall, out-scored the Bearkats by an 11-8 clip in the first period of play.

Holguin helped the Bulldogs add to their lead in the second. He pushed in three shots from the floor and spearheaded a 10-7 run that sent the game into the half with Coahoma holding a 21-15 advantage.

Jansa and Halfmann both hit stride in the third and helped the Bearkats pull to within five, at 34-29, at the start of the fourth.

Jansa and Halfmann combined for 10 of

COTTON

Continued from Page 8A

didn't want to put that kind of pressure on myself."

Still, he finished with a school-record 10,119 yards, becoming only the fifth Southeastern Conference passer with 10,000 yards. That is 1,082 less than the SEC record held by older brother Peyton Manning, the Indianapolis Colts' quarterback and the NFL's co-MVP who played at Tennessee from 1994-97.

Since that Sugar Bowl win, Ole Miss had played in January only two other times. They lost in the Gator Bowl twice, to Auburn in Archie Manning's final game in 1971 and to Michigan in 1991.

"This raises the bar for us," coach David Cutcliffe said.

Woods' TD catch came just four minutes after Vernand Morency's second touchdown run. On that 72-yard drive, he caught two passes for 63 yards — both on plays when cornerback Travis Johnson was called for pass interference and still couldn't prevent the Woods from holding on.

"My job is to go out there and make plays for my team," said Woods, who had a 17-yard catch on another flagged play. "As far as how they played me, that doesn't concern me. I'm just here to make plays."

Woods finished with three straight 1,000-yard seasons. He had 293 career receptions for 4,414 yards and 42 touchdowns.

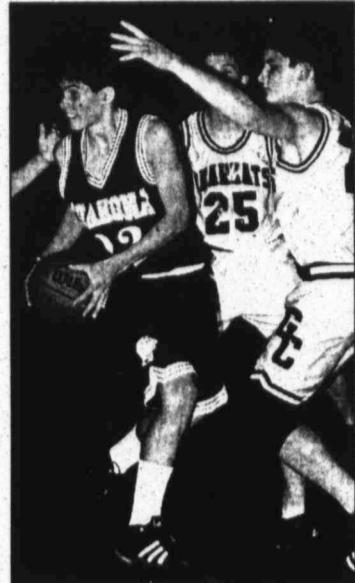
Oklahoma State's Josh

COAHOMA

Continued from Page 8A

were able to maintain the defensive intensity in the second half," said Coahoma head coach Kim Nichols, who leads his team into District 3-2A play in two weeks. "We needed to do that, now we just have to be more consistent and we will be all right. We get Wall next and that should be a good test."

Wall, which is slated to play in Ciahoma on Jan.



Herald Photo/Whitney Wells
Coahoma's Joe Holguin looks for a place to pass Friday against Garden City's Jared Bradford (25) and Colton Schwartz.

Garden City's 14 third-quarter points. Colton Schwartz and Cade Halfmann also tallied baskets in the frame.

Jansa took the Garden City offense on his shoulders in the fourth. He pumped in eight of his game-high 18 points in the closing minutes and helped the Bearkats rally for the win.

J.R. Medrano added to Garden City's fourth-quarter heroics with four points. Alex Halfmann added two.

Cody Griffith finished the contest with 11 for Coahoma.

Fields set a Cotton Bowl record with 307 yards on 21-for-33 passing. The junior's 55th career TD pass broke the school record held by offensive coordinator Mike Gundy (1986-89).

On the long drive that provided the game-winning margin, Manning converted third-and-13 and third-and-12 plays with passes of more than 20 yards.

"I just sat there watching him, thinking Eli Manning is a bad boy," said Woods, meaning that as a compliment.

Tremaine Turner ran 20 times for 133 yards, including a game-clinching 25-yard run on third-and-5 from midfield with 2:43 left after the Cowboys' two quick TDs. Oklahoma State, also called for pass interference on a third-and-10 during the drive, was out of timeouts.

Turner caught a 16-yard pass for Manning's first TD, and his 2-yard TD run opened the second-half scoring.

After Jon Holland intercepted Manning's pass on the final play of the first quarter and returned it to the Ole Miss 44, Tatum Bell scored on a 3-yard run for a 14-7 lead.

Ole Miss then scored on four straight series, and Oklahoma State didn't score again until the fourth quarter.

After the Cowboys tied the game at 14 on Morency's 4-yard TD run, Fields was sacked on fourth-and-4 from the Ole Miss 30. The Rebels then set up Jonathan Nichols' 34-yard field goal to end the half and put Ole Miss ahead to stay.

8, is currently ranked among the top teams in Class 1A and sits at 18-0 for the season.

Goodwin took game-high honors, tallying 24 points for the Bearkats while Taylor Nieheus and Blake Chudej added six and four, respectively.

Kemper lead the way for the Bulldogs, torching the Bearkats for 22 while Isaac Brewer and Adrian Abrego also hit double figures, going for 14 and 12 apiece. Sam Tindol and Tyler Fowler added six apiece.

Used Car Clearance Sale Continues

CARS

2000 Chevrolet Cavalier - Stk# 268, Automatic, Power Steering, AM/FM Stereo.

Was \$7,995.....**NOW \$6,995**

2001 Chevrolet Cavalier Coupe - Stk# C61, Black, Automatic, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, CD.

Was \$8,995.....**NOW \$7,995**

1997 Chevrolet Monte Carlo Z34 - Stk# 305, Power Equipped, Tilt/Cruise, CD, Leather, Rear Spoiler, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$8,995.....**NOW \$7,995**

2001 Chevrolet Lumina - Stk# 564B, White, Automatic, Power Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Cassette.

Was \$8,995.....**NOW \$7,995**

1999 Buick Regal GS - Stk# C29, V6 3.8L Supercharged, Gran Touring Pkg., Tilt/Cruise, CD, Leather, Power Seat, Rear Spoiler.

Was \$9,995.....**NOW \$8,995**

2001 Buick Regal LS - Stk# 351, V6, Auto., Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Cassette, CD, TracControl, Power Seat.

Was \$12,995.....**NOW \$10,495**

2001 Buick Century Custom - Stk# 397, V6, Automatic, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Cassette, Traction Control, Power Seat.

Was \$11,995.....**NOW \$10,495**

2001 Buick LeSabre Limited - Stk# C110, Auto., Power Steering, Power Windows/Locks, CD, Traction Control, Leather, Dual Power Seats.

Was \$12,995.....**NOW \$11,495**

2002 Chevrolet Impala - Stk# C81, Power Equipped, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Cassette, CD, Power Seat.

Was \$12,995.....**NOW \$11,995**

2003 Oldsmobile Alero GL - Stk# C119, Automatic, single CD, Power Seat, Rear Spoiler, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$13,995.....**NOW \$12,995**

2000 Mercury Grand Marquis LS Sedan 4D - Stk# C146, V8, 4.6 Liter, Auto., Power Steering, Power Windows/Locks, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$13,995.....**NOW \$12,995**

2003 Buick Century - Stk# C120 & C121, V6, Automatic, Power Windows/Locks, AM/FM Cassette, Power Seat. 2 To Choose From!

Was \$14,995.....**NOW \$13,995**

2001 Buick LeSabre Custom Sedan 4D - Stk# C143, V6, 3.8 Liter, Auto., FWD, A/C, Power Seat, Alloy Wheels, 23,000 Miles.

Was \$14,995.....**NOW \$13,995**

2003 Chevrolet Malibu LS - Stk# C57, Automatic, AC, Power Equipped, AM/FM Stereo, CD, Power Seat, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$15,995.....**NOW \$14,495**

2000 Buick LeSabre Limited - Stk# C103, Auto., AC, Power Windows/Locks, CD, OnStar, Leather, Dual Power Seats.

Was \$15,995.....**NOW \$14,995**

PICKUPS

2003 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 - Stk# C98, Automatic, Power Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, CD, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$17,995.....**NOW \$16,995**

2001 Ford F150 Supercrew XLT - Stk# C109, V8 5.4L, Automatic, Power Equipped, CD, Running Boards, Grille Guard, Towing Pkg.

Was \$19,995.....**NOW \$18,995**

2003 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Pickup Extended Cab Short Bed - Stk# C159, Auto., 2WD, LS, A/C, Power Steering, Power Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$19,995.....**NOW \$18,995**

2003 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 Crew Cab - Stk# C30, V8 6.6L Turbo Diesel, OnStar, Leather, Running Boards, Towing Pkg., Dual Rear Wheels.

Was \$38,995.....**NOW \$35,995**

2003 Chevrolet Avalanche 1500 Sport Utility Pickup 4D - Stk# C151, 4WD, A/C, Rear Air, Power Steering, Power Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, Alloy Wheels, 6,000 Miles.

Was \$34,995.....**NOW \$33,995**

SPORT UTILITY

2002 Dodge Durango Sport Utility 4D - Stk# C147, V8, 4.7 Liter, Auto., 2WD, A/C, Power Steering, Power Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, Cass., Third Seat, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$17,995.....**NOW \$16,995**

2003 Jeep Liberty - Stk# C136A, Power Windows/Locks, CD, leather, W/Cloth Inserts, Molded Wheel Flares, Low Miles!

Was \$18,995.....**NOW \$17,995**

2001 Chevrolet Suburban 1500 Sport Utility - Stk# C151, Auto., 2WD, LT, A/C, Rear Air, Power Steering/Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, Cass., Towing Pkg., Alloy Wheels.

Was \$26,995.....**NOW \$25,995**

2003 Chevrolet Suburban 1500 Sport Utility - Stk# C156, Auto., 4WD, Z71 Off-Road Pkg., A/C, Rear air, Power Steering/Windows/Locks, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Stereo, Cass., Alloy Wheels.

Was \$32,995.....**NOW \$30,995**

MINI VANS

2000 Chevrolet Express Conversion - Stk# C157, V8, 5.7 Liter, Auto., A/C, Rear Air, High Top, Quad Seats, TV & More.

Was \$17,995.....**NOW \$16,995**

2003 Chevrolet Venture Extended Minivan 4D - Stk# C158, V6, 3.4 Liter, Auto., FWD, Power Sliding Door, A/C, Rear Air, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$19,995.....**NOW \$18,995**

2003 Chevrolet Venture Extended Minivan 4D - Stk# C152, Auto., FWD, Power Sliding Door, 7-8 Passenger, A/C, Rear Air, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$19,995.....**NOW \$18,995**

1998 Dodge Dakota Club Cab - Stk# C47, Sport, 5 Speed, Power Steering, Tilt/Cruise, AM/FM Cassette, Alloy Wheels.

Was \$7,995.....**NOW \$6,995**

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Now, in Texas,
the key to your house
can open a lot more
doors than ever.

You're in control of your finances with a
Wells Fargo Home Equity Line of Credit.

3.99%
APR*

No Fees, No Closing Costs

Something big has just happened for homeowners in Texas — they have access to money in ways that were never possible before. Home renovations, bill consolidation, college tuition — you can get money for the important things in life. You just use the money when you need it, as you need it, and you only have to apply once no matter how many times you use it. Interest rates on equity lines of credit are lower than most other financing options and the interest is usually tax deductible. The first step is to talk with a Wells Fargo banker and they'll answer your questions and help you find the equity line of credit that's perfect for you. Just visit a Wells Fargo banker, call 1-800-WF8-OPEN (1-800-932-6736) or visit wellsfargo.com.

*Effective September 14, 2002. A variable annual percentage rate (APR) of 3.99% will be made available on home equity lines of credit in the \$14,000 to \$20,000 range with a maximum combined loan to value of 80%. An LTV of 120,000 to 140,000 range with a maximum combined loan to value of 70%. Minimum term is one year and a three year PNC Home Equity Line of Credit. There is no annual fee. The rate is subject to change monthly, with a minimum of 3.99% and a maximum of 3.99%. The rate applies that minimum payments be made from a Wells Fargo checking account. A \$10,000 minimum loan amount is required. Interest and fees are subject to change monthly. The holder is the

Life

BIG
SPRING HERALD

Texas range was his home

By Marsha Allen

HERALD Lifestyle Editor

He rode the range of Howard County and surrounding communities.

But, instead of riding the range on horseback, he performed his duties in a Jeep or truck.

Jesse Priest, retired Texas Ranger, spent his entire life in law enforcement.

Born to Jesse Sr. and Bruxie Priest in Bertram, Mr. Priest served in the U.S. Navy from 1947 to 1948, serving at Treasure Island in the San Francisco bay area.

After serving for many years with the Highway Patrol, Priest transferred to the Texas Rangers.

"We're involved in criminal law enforcement," said Priest. "We mostly assist local law enforcement in their criminal investigations statewide."

Priest, who stands 6 ft. 2 inches tall, has been involved in many investigative cases. But he said, possibly the worst one he remembers, that remains sharply in his memory, involved a double murder in Jack County.

"Two women had been killed and threw in a stock tank in a pasture," he said.

"They were killed by, more or less, a hired killer."

"A stock tank is a tank of water in the pasture. They had been in there for about two weeks."

"They weren't tied together. They had each been tied with weights, and they came to the top."

The investigation continued for a while, "but we eventually caught them and got them convicted. We got the one that actually did the killing, and he got 75 years, and the one that did the hiring, he got 50 years."

There are six companies statewide, and each company has a captain and a lieutenant, plus approximately 12 to 15 men to cover designated areas.

"They call them companies, and they have certain counties in an area," he said. "For instance, the Midland district office

Courtesy photo

Right, the Ranger Company with which Priest served held an annual meeting on a ranch near the Big Bend area. Priest is at far right. Others are left to right, Capt. J.P. Lynch, Clay Bednar, Lol Dawson, Clayton McKinney, Alfred Ailee Jr., A.L. Mitchell, James Sikes, S.C. Merchant, Joe Coleman, George Frasier, Norman Autry, Charlie Hodges, Pedro Montemayor and W.D. Vickers.

Far right, Priest tips his hat to fellow Texas Ranger professionals.

HERALD photo/Marsha Allen



HERALD photo/Marsha Allen

covers all the way from Brownwood, Eastland, up through Lamesa, and then all the way to El Paso. Quite a big area." This district includes the Big Spring area.

Priest, retired 20 years ago, but he had served long enough to watch changes in the day to day operation of the Rangers.

"The biggest changes were in the equipment and in the technology," he said.

Keeping with traditions



Photo/Texas Rangers museum Web site
Early Texas Rangers started the tradition of distinctive hat wear, and kept the law on horseback statewide.



HERALD photo/Marsha Allen

of the Rangers is big part of the organization's esteem. "Our traditions are, for instance, in the dress," he said. "You know the big hats and the boots. You know, we dress, more or less, semi-Western."

Priest's hat is a cream-colored Stetson. "We don't wear black ones," he said.

"They got that from Roy Rogers or Gene Autry, maybe. The black hats were always worn by the bad guys. So we wear the white or the tan."

Rangers can choose their own hats and boots, and "we usually wear the belts and the big buckles, too," he said.

Priest said his sidearm of choice was a .357 caliber Smith and Wesson.

"The state furnished guns, but a Ranger could wear what he wanted to," he said. "Whatever you were comfortable with."

Much of the clothing tradition depends on where a Ranger's service is, he said. "If you were in an area where everybody wears suits, then you wear a suit, but if you're out in a pasture somewhere, well, then you wore Levi's or whatever. You wore what was normal for the area being covered."

For their badge placement, most clip the badge to their shirts, he said, "because it's too easy to loose otherwise."

When first formed, The Texas Rangers roamed primarily on border areas, he said.

The Rangers have women serving, as well, he said. "There's a lady Ranger over in Waco. She's about five feet tall. She's very competent."

Each Ranger usually works on his own, unlike, for instance, city patrolmen, who often patrol two to a patrol car.

Rangers once had Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, but since city and county law enforcement agencies have created their own SWAT teams, the

Page design/Marsha Allen

Rangers, more or less, have not utilized their teams.

To become a Texas Ranger one must have had at least eight years previous law enforcement experience, he said.

"I think now you have to have had service with the Department of Public Safety," he added.

To operate out-of-state, Rangers get permission to conduct investigations. "That's why we are so valuable," Priest said. "We can cover anywhere that needs to be covered. A lot of these smaller counties, about all they have are a sheriff and maybe one deputy, and if they have a murder or a big burglary, we go help them."

Rangers do not own their own horses and

horse trailers, he said. "Now days, they have Jeeps, and if you have a problem on a ranch or something like that, we just get a horse from a rancher. And there is very little work done on a horse anymore, because if there's work in a pasture we can use a Jeep or a truck."

After 24 years in law enforcement, Priest retired in 1980 and has been working to compile journals of his days as a Texas Ranger.

Rangers covered the range to protect

With origins dating to the earliest days of Anglo settlement in Texas, the Texas Rangers form the oldest law-enforcement agency in North America with statewide jurisdiction.

They are part of the history of the Old West, and part of its mythology.

Dating to 1823 when Stephen F. Austin recognized the need for a body of men to protect his fledgling colony, he employed 10 men to act as rangers for the common defense. These men protecting settlers from Indians. When no threat seemed evident, the men returned to their families and land.

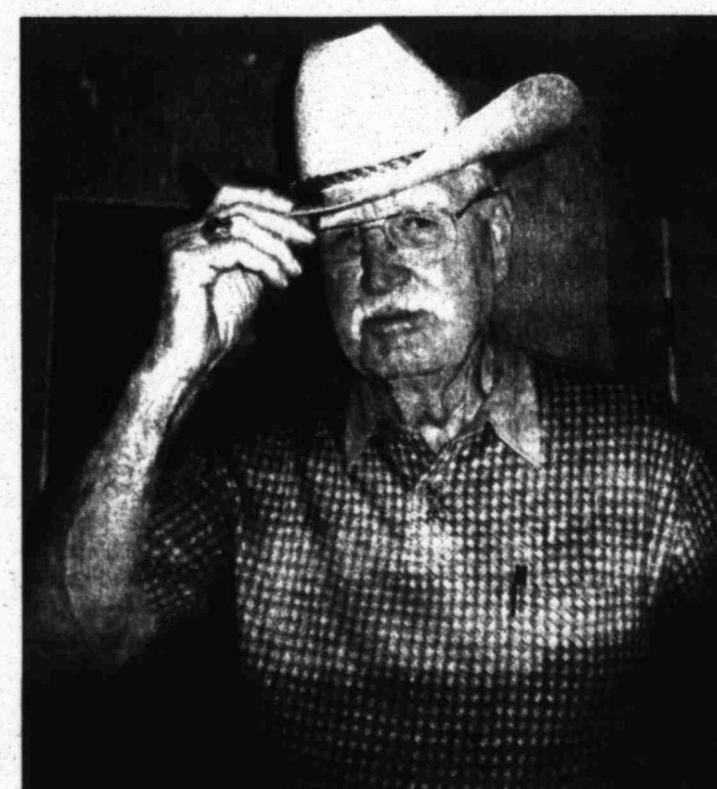
By 1835, Texas independence was imminent. A council of area government representatives created a Corps of Rangers to protect the frontier from Indians.

These Rangers were paid \$1.25 a day and elected their own officers. They furnished their own arms, mounts, and equipment. The following year, when Texas declared its independence from Mexico, some Rangers took part in the fighting, though most served as scouts.

For more information on The Texas Rangers check the Web site of the Ranger museum in Waco at www.texasranger.org.



Courtesy photo
At one time all Texas Rangers owned their own horses, but the modern Ranger will probably hunt down their man by Jeeps or trucks.



JAN
04
2004

Video games always changing

Buy for parents' enjoyment, too

For today's parents, paying more attention to the video games their children play is a must.

Most importantly, they want to see whether the games they're buying will capture their kid's imagination and attention beyond horror.

One of the latest trends that addresses this need is the move towards quality video games that extend kids' interaction with the characters they've grown to love through other mediums, such as film and TV.

Kids regard these games as an opportunity to partake in great game-play, along with their favorite friends.

Developers also are offering cinematic graphics, hidden bonus content, great music and in some instances, functions that blur the line between gaming and computer-like functionality.

The result is that parents, who typically don't play games themselves, can be comfortable knowing that the games their kids are playing are safe and offer wholesome family fun.

Parents also can breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that the money they've spent for the latest and greatest game will provide hours of play, and hence, value, for their cost.

With the vast number of game titles on retailers' shelves these days, it makes sense for parents to look closely at the long-term entertainment value of video games they purchase before handing over their hard-earned money.

Paskos and Bradley

Wedding



Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Monroe Bradley

Jennie Lee Paskos and Clinton Monroe Bradley

Jennie Lee Paskos and Clinton Monroe Bradley were united in marriage on Saturday, Nov. 8, 2003, at Lake Brownwood with the Rev. Edmond Wheless officiating. A dinner and reception immediately followed the exchange of vows in the recreation hall at Lake Brownwood State Park.

The bride is the daughter of Hong V. Paskos and Gary A. Paskos Sr. of Waco and the granddaughter of Helen P. Long of Waco and the late Peter A. Paskos.

She graduated from Waco High School in 1990, earning a bachelor of business administration in management information systems from Baylor University in 1997. She is a support professional for Microsoft in Irving.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy E. Bradley of Big Spring and the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar H. Bradley of Jacksboro. He graduated from Jacksboro High School in 1993, and received an associate's degree in automotive technology from Texas State Technical College in 1995. He is president and founder of Texas Auto Service, Inc., in Southlake.

The bride was escorted down the aisle by her nephew, Andrew Michael Paskos. Serving the bride as the maid of honor was Tanya L. Peskos, cousin of the bride. The groom's best man was Kevin L. Powell, a friend of the groom. Wedding ceremony ushers included C.J. Thompson, friend of the groom and Alan Paskos Jr., brother of the bride.

Floral arrangements and decorations were created by Judy Livingston of Livingston Florist located in Gustin. After a honeymoon to Playa del Carmen, Mexico, the couple resides in North Richland Hills.

Pancreatic cancer: silent, fast

Pancreatic cancer is "silent" and fast. It accounts for just two percent of all cancer diagnoses, but has been tantamount to a death sentence for many of the over 30,000 Americans who get it each year.

While old books and brochures tell its victims to write their wills and say good-bye, there are new treatments that can save their lives.

"The formula that works best is experience plus repetition," says Tufts/New England Medical Center's Chief Surgeon, Dr. William Mackey. "It's in your best interest to find a surgeon who is highly experienced in the treatment of pancreatic cancer and who sees patients with this disease on a very regular basis."

Dr. Steer has provided reprieves to dozens of pancreatic cancer patients every year, achieving a 20 percent cure rate for a tumor that chemotherapy can hardly touch.

Medical students are taught early in their careers, "Don't mess with the pancreas." This slipper-shaped gland is situated deep behind the stomach and is part of the digestive tract.

It makes enzymes that aid in food digestion and produces insulin, which helps to regulate blood sugar levels.

When a tumor grows inside the pancreas, it can remain undetected until it obstructs the bile ducts or other nearby structures. In its early stages, pancreatic cancer is curable through surgery and adjunctive chemotherapy.

New painless and non-invasive diagnostic studies allow an individual to be checked if having indigestion, loss of appetite, jaundice or weight loss symptoms that should prompt suspicion for pancreatic cancer. See your doctor to be sure.

A special tour for a special event.

Pancreatic cancer is clearly a disease best treated in a major academic medical center by a real pro."

Dr. Steer, vice chairman of surgery at Tufts, has devoted his clinical practice to the treatment of patients with pancreatic cancer and his research to discovering the basic mechanisms underlying pancreatic diseases.

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BirthPlace Tour: Monday, January 5 at 7:00pm

For over fifty years, little Midlanders and their families have counted on Midland Memorial Hospital...for life.

Meet us at the first floor lobby to take part in our special BirthPlace Tour. Visit our Postpartum, Labor, Delivery, Nursery, and our new Breast Feeding Shoppe, Beautiful Beginnings. Meet our outstanding staff and find out what to expect when your special time arrives.

The smallest details matter most to us. Labor, Delivery, Recovery, and Beautiful Beginnings in The BirthPlace at Midland Memorial Hospital West Campus.

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WEST CAMPUS
Count On Us. For Life.

4214 Andrews Highway 432-522-3260
www.midland-memorial.com

Washing machines are better

Nostalgia was always on the lips of her daughter about the rustic life in Alabama in the early 40s.

But Mom would just grumble, 'you just don't know, child. It wasn't all a bed of roses.'

Then she would promptly begin a diatribe about the hardships she endured, which, of course, her daughter doesn't remember too much about, nor experienced in great proportion.

Rather the nostalgia drift in conversation about hardships of everyday living in yesteryears was always, 'in the good ole days.' But, according to beloved late Mom, good ole days with everyday chores left a lot to be desired.

Mom said, 'how would you like to have to get up at dawn and fire up a wooden cook stove before you could brew a cup of coffee?'

Or, how would you like to have to heat the water

drawn from a well over a fire every time you wanted to take a bath?

Or, one of her favorite retorts was, how would you like to have to go out in the dark, the very dark of night to empty your bladder, or whatever? With just a flashlight or a candle for light? There were no street lights in that small town.

And, remember, daughter dear, in the dead of night it was hard to see those water moccins that slithered up from the river coming after chickens. And worse yet, scorpions that liked to hide out nestled in the privy just waiting for a slipped foot.

And, daughter dearest, she would continue to inform, cows and mules got sick; chickens sometimes didn't lay and lights in the house would flicker out when there were thunder storms.

The house roof was tin,

so when lightning bolted all around, the lights dangling on long electric cords in the middle of the room would get a hit, and the house would be plunged into darkness in the middle of trying to study, read or sew.

But, would come her extended elocution, there was little crime, people treated one another with respect, and a man went to work and did everything he could to keep his family intact. The morals of yesteryear seemed a clearer division of right and wrong as compared with the morality of modern life.

But, don't you remember how much simpler people lived then, would be the question on her daughter's lips.

Mom would press her fingers together as she nodded contemplating her next words.

"It was all that, my dear, it wasn't as easy as you might think. We endured some pretty uncomfortable lifestyles compared to today. I'm glad you remember the honorable things about

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Menus

Senior Citizens Center

MONDAY—Beef enchiladas, Spanish rice, beans, salad, milk, cornbread, fruit.

TUESDAY—Chicken fried steak, potatoes, broccoli and cheese, fruited gelatin, milk, rolls, pie.

WEDNESDAY—Spaghetti and meat sauce, mixed vegetables, salad, milk, cobbler.

THURSDAY—Merry Christmas.

FRIDAY—Closed for Christmas.

Westbrook ISD

BREAKFAST MONDAY—Cereal, toast, jelly, juice, milk.

TUESDAY—Sausage, biscuits, jelly, juice, milk.

WEDNESDAY—Breakfast pizza, juice, milk.

THURSDAY—Oatmeal, toast, jelly, juice, milk.

FRIDAY—HOLIDAY LUNCH

MONDAY—Chicken strips, gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, biscuits, honey, milk.

TUESDAY—Burritos with chili & cheese, corn, Spanish rice, fruit cup, milk.

WEDNESDAY—Ham, tossed salad, French fries, cookies, sliced bread, milk.

THURSDAY—Fajitas, tortillas, cheese, salsa, salad, corn, chocolate pudding, milk.

FRIDAY—HOLIDAY LUNCH

MONDAY—Pizza, corn, mixed fruit, milk.

Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. Billie Shults

Celebrating 50 years together

Billie and Aliene (Pilcher) Shults of Big Spring celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Dec. 19, 2003, with a reception held at La Posada Restaurant.

They observed their special day in the company of loved ones and friends who traveled from Midland, Vernon, Decatur and Ft. Worth and Clovis, N.M. Their children and their spouses hosted the occasion.

The couple met in St. Jo by introduction through mutual friends after Mr. Shults return from service during the Korean Conflict. They married in Gainsville Dec. 19, 1953.

Mr. Shults is a native of Forestburg and she is a native of St. Jo. They have lived in St. Jo, Abilene, Vernon, Rankin, Wichita Falls, and in Big Spring since 1967. He is a retired truck driver from Western Container and she is retired as store manager from Rainbo Bread Co. The couple attends First Church of God Church in Big Spring.

Their children include three sons, Mike and Effie Shults, Ronnie and Cheryl Shults and Scott and Tammy Shults, and one daughter, Sue and Frank McIntosh, all of Big Spring. They have 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The couple enjoys spending time with their large family. They agree that to make it to 50 years of marriage it takes maintaining a good relationship with one's spouse.

► Births



Mireya Angel Ontiveros

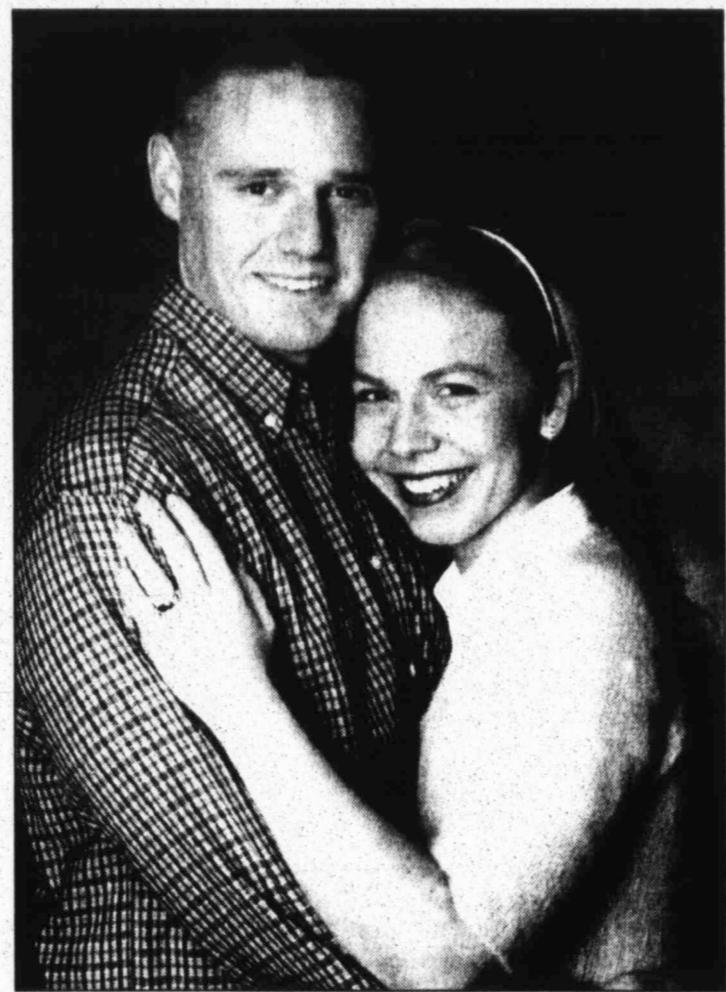
Mireya Angel Ontiveros

Ashley Ruiz and A.J. Ontiveros welcomed their daughter, Mireya angel Ontiveros at 3:28 a.m. Dec. 25, 2003, weighing six pounds, 9.7 ounces and measuring 19 inches long.

Her grandparents include Ruth Ontiveros and Sylvia Flores, Joel and Julia Ontiveros and Fernando Ruiz. Great-grandparents include Magalena Lopez and Frances Enriquez.

Luciana Dominga Salazar

David and Felipa Salazar welcomed their daughter, Luciana Dominga Salazar at 2:12 p.m. Dec. 23, 2003, weighing seven pounds and 12 1/2 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Grandparents include Margie Munoz of Midland and Rodrigo and Elva Chavera of Big Spring.



Jenny Becker and Justin Williams

Becker and Williams

Jenny Becker and Justin Williams of Weisbaden, Germany, will be married at 3 p.m. Jan. 31, 2004, in St. Petrus Church in Salzgitter-Lichtenberg, Germany.

The bride-elect is the daughter of Burkhard and Sieglinda Becker of Hochheim, Germany. She is the granddaughter of Franz and Ilse Kunze and Werner and Irmgard Becker of Salzgitter. Miss Becker is a technical school graduate with degrees in office communications and English. She works for Geodis Logistics GmbH.

The prospective groom is the son of Landon and Cindy Sturdvant of Big Spring and the grandson of W.A. and Judy Bynum of Big Spring and Tom and Deanna Hartford of Biloxi, Miss. He is a graduate of Big Spring High School and serves with the Signal Corps of the United States Army.

Trendy shoe styles are flexibly trendy

Are you in step with the latest footwear styles?

The fashion magazines are full of stories about this or that shoe being all the rage this season.

Alas, some of the trendiest among them, from names like Prada and Gucci, will set you back as much as \$400.

Smart shoppers know how to get the same style footwear for a lot less money.

For women, the updated Mary Jane is popular, and offers the effortless ease of a mule, flexible and lightweight.

For men, there's an interpretation of the bowling shoe with rugged soles.

Popular options for youngsters include trendy updated mountain boots for boys and fashion boots for girls.

JACK & JILL DAYCARE
Open 7 days a week 5 am-Midnight
Birth to 12 years old
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802555

SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER

FREE PREGNANCY TESTING

Available Daily from 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
No Appointment Necessary

LABOR & DELIVERY DEPARTMENT (2nd Floor)

Scenic Mountain Medical Center

Our dedicated and customer friendly staff can confirm your pregnancy while you wait. They can also provide you with information regarding Prenatal Care, Childbirth Education, Understanding Labor and Delivery and even make your first appointment with a competent, local OB/GYN physician.

SCENIC MOUNTAIN MEDICAL CENTER

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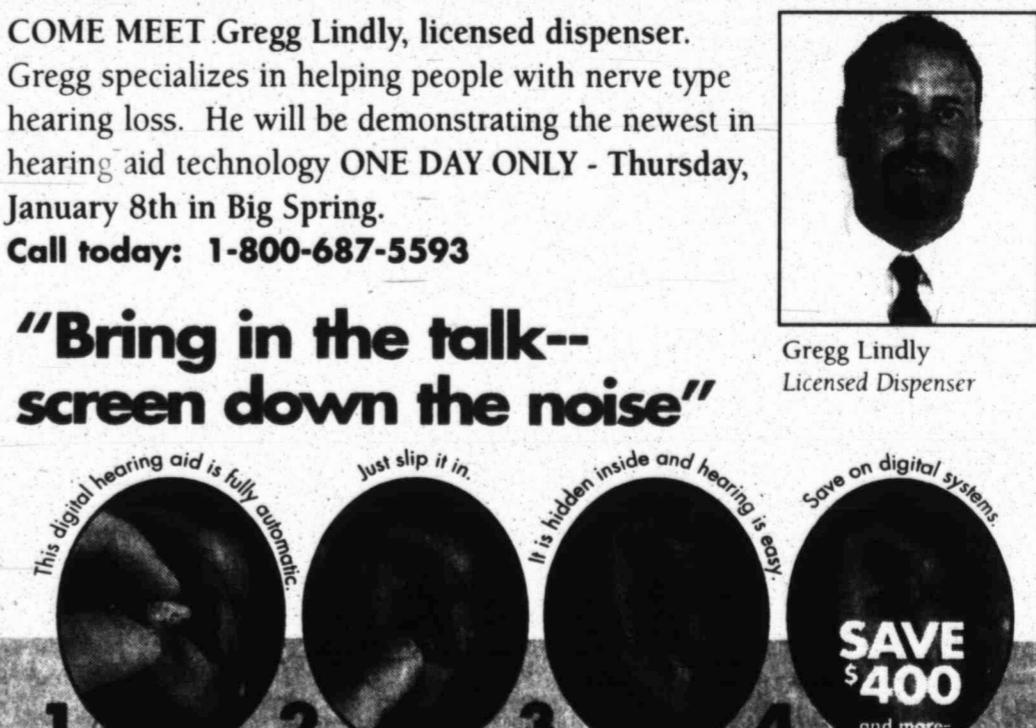
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BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE

BIG SPRING HERALD

4B
Weekend Edition, January 3-4, 2004

Do you have an interesting item for the Business and Agriculture pages? Call John Moseley, 263-7331, Ext. 230, or leave a voice mail.

New Chick-Fil-A ad campaign put on hold



ATLANTA (AP) — Chick-fil-A is postponing its newest ad campaign featuring cute cows urging people to eat chicken instead of beef to avoid appearing insensitive to concerns about the nation's first confirmed case of mad cow disease.

The Atlanta-based chain had planned to unveil new in-store and direct-mail advertising this month.

The company also plans to examine existing advertising, including a billboard along Interstate 85 in Atlanta in which a cow with eyes in a vertigo swirl tries to hypnotize motorists to eat chicken.

"It's not the intention of Chick-fil-A to make light or take advantage of any food health crisis," spokesman Jerry Johnston said. "We are voluntarily withdrawing

or delaying our advertising. We don't want people to perceive that we are taking advantage of what is happening in any way."

Laura Ries, president of Ries & Ries marketing consultants, said holding off the campaign is a smart idea.

"There is no need to throw salt on a wound, so to speak," she said. "You always want to lie low in these situations."

The campaign — with cows as company mascots urging customers to "Eat Mor Chikin" — is in its ninth year. Stores are continuing with the current campaign, which includes its cow superheroes calendar, Johnston said.

Chick-fil-A will monitor the U.S. investigation to determine what to do about the postponed advertising, he said.

Asian consumers bought what Americans don't eat

By ANDREW KRAMER

Associated Press Writer

PORLAND, Ore. — Oregon cattleman Mike Partlow built a business selling beef products that Americans don't eat, from hooves to femur bones to stomach lining, all prized by Asian chefs.

Korean cooks slice steamed hooves into wafers for a meaty, gelatinous soup. Bits of large intestine go on the grill in Japan.

But after the discovery of mad cow disease in an American

cow last week, this \$600 million market — and Partlow's business selling so-called variety meats — has vanished, and won't return until export markets reopen.

America had been the world's largest exporter of these products before 36 countries banned U.S. beef imports last week. Many of the shipments went through West Coast ports, with the Port of Portland handling about 61,000 tons of variety meat in 2002.

The value of specialty products for Asia had added about

\$75 to the value of each slaughtered American cow, economists said.

Variety meats are loosely classified as non-muscle parts, such as brain, oxtail, tendon, heart, liver and tripe.

The collapse of this market is among the steepest examples of the economic blow mad cow disease has delivered to the American beef industry.

The business had grown quickly over the past decade after market liberalization in Asia, and had come to round out the mix of products carved

from each slaughtered steer, Partlow said.

Now that the market has "vanished," Partlow said some parts will likely be rendered for raw protein for animal feed and other products until the export market reopens.

Twenty-five percent of Partlow's mostly export beef business had been in variety meats.

The former rancher said his business has been devastated, with containers stalled in warehouses in the Midwest and in Asian ports. He said he lost

more than \$1 million, although the blow was cushioned by hedging on the futures market.

Some specialty cuts, such as thinly sliced tenderloin for Japanese hot pot, can be ground into hamburger and resold, Partlow said.

Other items, such as beef intestine, are a harder sell on American supermarket shelves.

American producers had come to rely on selling these bits overseas, said Dalton Hobbs, marketing director with

See DISEASE, Page 5B



Ambassadors and Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce representatives recently held a ribbon cutting at Western National Bank, 607 Scurry. Pictured, in random order are, Scott Bolton (with scissors), vice president managing executive (with scissors); Kandi Cline, branch manager; Heather Rutledge, lending assistant; Elsie Gafford New, accounts representative; Melanie Barrera and Monica Alvarado, lobby tellers; Leonor Rios, drive tellers; Jack Wood, CEO; Ambassadors Clarence Hartsfield and Sherry Wegner; and chamber members Terry McDaniel, Raul Marquez and Debby ValVerde.

Jobless claims lowest of Bush tenure

By JEANNINE AVERSA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New claims for jobless benefits fell last week to the lowest level in nearly three years, a sign that America's businesses are feeling more confident that the economic recovery is genuine.

The Labor Department reported Wednesday that new applications filed for unemployment insurance dropped by a seasonally adjusted 15,000 to 339,000 for the week ending Dec. 27. Last week's drop marked the third week in a row that claims went down and left claims at their lowest level since Jan. 20, 2001 — President Bush's inauguration day.

The latest snapshot of the labor market suggested that businesses may be feeling less inclined to hand out pink slips to workers as the economy shows signs of gaining traction.

"There is clearly reason for optimism that we are getting on a significant job-generation track," said Ken Mayland, president of ClearView Economics.

On Wall Street, stocks were mixed. The Dow Jones industrials were up about 7 points, while the Nasdaq was down around 8 points in morning trading.

The report was better than economists were expecting. They were forecasting a smaller decline that would have pushed claims down to a level of around 350,000.

Claims have been below 400,000

for 13 consecutive weeks, something economists view as a sign that the fragile labor market may be turning a crucial corner.

The more stable four-week moving average of claims, which smooths out week to week fluctuations, decreased last week by 6,500 to 355,750, the lowest level since Feb. 10, 2001.

New claims hit a high this year of 459,000 in the middle of April and have slowly declined, a development cited by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and

Claims have been below 400,000 for 13 consecutive weeks, something economists view as a sign that the fragile labor market may be turning a crucial corner.

other economists who say the pace of layoffs is stabilizing.

The labor market has displayed other signs of improvement in recent months. The nation's unemployment rate currently stands at 5.9 percent — down from a high this summer of 6.4 percent.

But job growth has been slow.

Since Bush took office, the economy has lost 2.3 million jobs, a development that Democrats hope to use against the president as he seeks re-election in 2004. The Bush

administration contends that stronger economic growth will eventually lead to more meaningful job creation on a sustained basis.

The uncertain job climate is on Americans' minds.

Consumer confidence dipped in December amid anxiety about the job market, the Conference Board reported. The board's consumer confidence index slipped to 91.3 in December, following a surge in November to a revised figure of 92.5, its highest level in more than a year.

Economists believe the labor market will be the last part of the economy to recover even as the economy expands solidly.

The economy grew at a breakneck 8.2 percent annual rate in the third quarter, the best performance in nearly two decades. Analysts believe the economy slowed to a rate in the range of around 4 percent or 5 percent in the current quarter, which would still mark a solid showing.

Wednesday's report also showed that the number of unemployed people collecting jobless benefits for more than a week rose by 81,000 to 3.3 million for the week ending Dec. 20, the most recent period for which that information is available. This suggests that jobs are still hard to find for some workers.

Economists believe that as companies' profits improve they will

See JOBLESS, Page 5B

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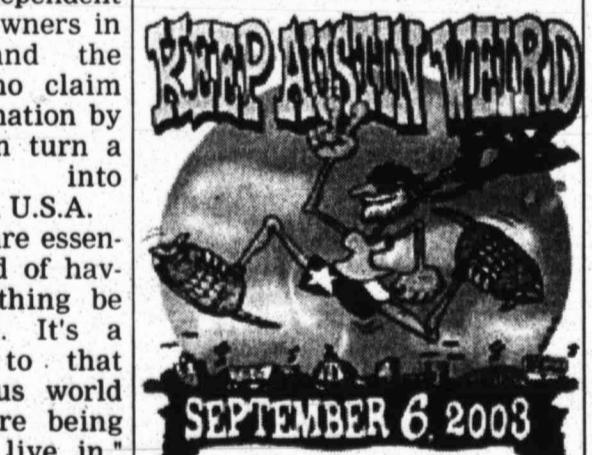
Economists believe that as companies' profits improve they will

administered more than 200 members. It has a Web site and a directory promoting local businesses. The alliance organizes an annual "Austin Unchained" shopping day to urge consumers to buy locally. It also has gotten involved in efforts to prevent construction of so-called "big box" chain stores in environmentally sensitive areas.

"Certainly the chains have their place. I'm not anti-chain. I'm just pro-independent," said John T. Kunz, owner and president of the independent Waterloo Records in Austin.

Waterloo Records opened in 1982 and is closely connected to

See WEIRD, Page 5B



Free movement works to counter chain domination

By KELLEY SHANNON

Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN — Shelves of books by Texas writers. Lots of CDs by local musicians. A "Keep Austin Weird" T-shirt selection.

It's not the type of merchandise you typically find in a national chain store. And a growing force of Texas independent business owners wants to make sure you know it.

Adventurous. Unique. Weird, if you will.

Those are the buzz words of a movement among independent business owners in Austin and the nation who claim that domination by chains can turn a town into Anywhere, U.S.A.

"People are essentially tired of having everything be the same. It's a reaction to that homogenous world that they're being forced to live in," said Steve Bercu, co-owner of BookPeople, an independently owned Austin book store.

A strong local business presence keeps more money flowing into a city's economy and promotes the culture of a region, independents say.

In Austin, Bercu and Rebecca Melancon, publisher of the local magazine "The Good Life," founded the Austin Independent Business Alliance after Bercu took note of a similar coalition forming in Boulder, Colo., about four years ago.

"It has been incredibly successful, just remarkably so," Melancon said. "It started with Steve and I and a couple of other people just calling businesses we knew."

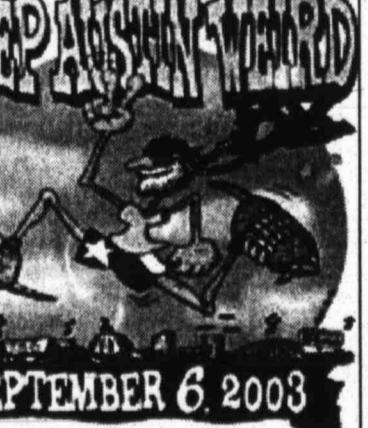
The American Independent Business

Alliance, based in Bozeman, Mont., is pushing the independent idea nationally. Independent business coalitions have organized in Phoenix, St. Louis, Albuquerque, N.M., and other cities.

"This is the moment. It's happening all over the country," Bercu said.

Even in Dallas, sometimes identified with sprawling suburbs and big chains, one developer is trying to build a shopping center for independent stores, Bercu said.

The Austin group has



assisted more than 200

members. It has a Web site and a directory promoting local businesses. The alliance organizes an annual "Austin Unchained" shopping day to urge consumers to buy locally. It also has gotten involved in efforts to prevent construction of so-called "big box" chain stores in environmentally sensitive areas.

"Certainly the chains have their place. I'm not anti-chain. I'm just pro-independent," said John T. Kunz, owner and president of the independent Waterloo Records in Austin.

Waterloo Records opened in 1982 and is closely connected to

See WEIRD, Page 5B

BIG SPRING Weekend E

PUBLIC

Hot Checks/W

The addressee

addresses. If the

list, please call 2

Castellano, Ea

Apt. 30, Big Spr

Castillo, Dane

Spring

Duke, Jon E.,

Garvin, Darw

Ison, Andrew S

Spring

Mesa, Isaac, 4

Mills, Cody Ali

Road/3202 Aub

Moore, Alicia,

Nabors, Jessie

Spring

Pate, Jackie

Hill, MD.

Perez, Daniel,

Spring

Prado, David I

Big Spring

Ramey, Jeann

B/17801 FM 22C

Renteria, Tina,

Spring

Requejo, Erne

Spring

Rios, Salome,

Spring

Stroble, Becky

Taylor, Timoth

Wilkins, Meliss

Midland

Williams, Tony

Anderson Road,

Yanez, Eva C

Mesquite, Big Sp

District Court F

Ricky Martin P

divorce.

Irene Carpent

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Apt. 30, Big Spring

Castillo, Danelle, 1804 E. 11th Place, Big Spring

Duke, Jon E., 10705 Co. Road 52, Shallowater

Garvin, Darwin, 4500 Avenue U, Snyder

Ison, Andrew Sebastian, 2627 Fairchild, Big Spring

Mesa, Isaac, 4013 Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls

Mills, Cody Alissa Dodson, 112 Hooser

Road/302 Auburn, Big Spring

Moore, Alicia, 1205 Michigan, Midland

Nabors, Jessica, 1201 Ridgeroad Dr., Big Spring

Pate, Jacque T., 5103 Woodland Blvd., Oxon Hill, MD.

Perez, Daniel, 709 N.W. Fifth Street, Big Spring

Prado, David Miranda, 1207 Johnson Street, Big Spring

Ramey, Jeannetta Carol Newsom, 203 Avenue B/17801 FM 2203, Ackery

Renteria, Tina, 4200 W. Highway 80, Big Spring

Requejo, Ernesto, 203 Colorado Street, Big Spring

Rios, Salome Adolph, 2511 Albrook, Big Spring

Stroble, Becky Sue, 2402 Alabama, Big Spring

Taylor, Timothy, 1019 Ridgeroad, Big Spring

Wilkins, Melissa, 6110 S. Farm Road 1788, Midland

Williams, Tonya Marie Bridge, 3111 S. Anderson Road, Big Spring

Yanez, Eva Carrasco, 1408 Oriole/1616 Mesquite, Big Spring

District Court Filings:

Ricky Martin Pitts vs. Brenda Yena Pitts, divorce.

Irene Carpenter vs. Rudy Allen Carpenter Sr., divorce.

Carla Jean Gressett vs. Orval Wayne Gressett, divorce.

Ava Marie Hilburn vs. Michael Dewayne Hilburn, divorce.

Steve W. Garter vs. Robert J. Jarvis, accounts, notes and contracts.

Citibank (South Dakota) N.A. vs. David R. Mahaffey, accounts, notes and contracts.

County Court Rulings:

Judgment and Sentence: Cameron Seago, evading arrest or detention, \$500 fine, \$310.25 court costs, 60 days in jail.

Judgment and Sentence: Cameron Seago, criminal trespass/habitation, \$500 fine, \$310.25 court costs, 60 days in jail.

Probated Judgment: Billy Raye Key, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, 12 months probation).

Judgment and Sentence: Patrick Rios, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 30 days in jail.

Probated Judgment: Thomas Eason, driving while intoxicated, \$1,500 fine, \$326 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, six months probation).

Probated Judgment: Johnny C. Coley, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, six months probation).

Probated Judgment: Javier Dejesus, driving while intoxicated-second offense, \$2,500 fine, \$276 court costs, 365 days in jail (jail time suspended, 24 months probation).

Probated Judgment: Juan J. Olivarez, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, 12 months probation).

Probated Judgment: Marty Lane Nixon, possession of marijuana less than two ounces, \$500 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, 12 months probation).

Probated Judgment: Kimberly M. Bretz, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, six months probation).

Probated Judgment: Chad Halbert Pederson, 28, and Traci Darlene Myrick, 33, both of Big Spring.

Richard Sabino Gomez, 29, Linda Nicole Rodriguez, 23, both of Big Spring.

Jerry Dale Huit, 36, and Elizabeth Suzanne Nock, 27, both of Big Spring.

Jerry Dwayne Bullard, 31, of Coahoma, and Teresa Varela Minjarez, 21, of Pecos.

Chester McKinney, 33, and Peggy Cervantes Hilario, 23, both of Big Spring.

Gary Neal Shook, 25, of Lamesa, and Sarah Jane McIntire, 22, of Big Spring.

months probation).

Probated Judgment: Luis S. Villa, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, six months probation).

Probated Judgment: Victor Zapata, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 180 days in jail (jail time suspended, six months probation).

Judgment and Sentence: Albert Self, assault, \$500 fine, \$261 court costs, 90 days in jail.

Judgment and Sentence: Ben Garza Jr., failure to identify as a fugitive from justice-intentionally giving false information, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 30 days in jail.

Judgment and Sentence: Michael Ray Hernandez Jr., possession of marijuana less than two ounces, \$500 fine, \$261 court costs, 60 days in jail.

Judgment and Sentence: Tommy W. Campbell, driving while license suspended, \$250 fine, \$261 court costs, 30 days in jail.

Marriage Licenses:

Victor Raymond Yanez, 19, and Rhett Louise Alvarado, 19, both of Midland.

Jacob Ryan Braxton, 19, and Bena Ann-Marie Stallings, 20, both of Big Spring.

Lorenzo Fabian Ontiveros, 43, and Cathy Sutton, 48, both of Big Spring.

J.W. Heidelberg Jr., 61, of Stanton, and Eva Hutton Ditto, 72, of Big Spring.

Oscar Hernandez, 43, of Big Spring, and Irene Jiminez Hinojosa, 38, of San Angelo.

Chad Halbert Pederson, 28, and Traci Darlene Myrick, 33, both of Big Spring.

Richard Sabino Gomez, 29, Linda Nicole Rodriguez, 23, both of Big Spring.

Jerry Dale Huit, 36, and Elizabeth Suzanne Nock, 27, both of Big Spring.

Jerry Dwayne Bullard, 31, of Coahoma, and Teresa Varela Minjarez, 21, of Pecos.

Chester McKinney, 33, and Peggy Cervantes Hilario, 23, both of Big Spring.

Gary Neal Shook, 25, of Lamesa, and Sarah Jane McIntire, 22, of Big Spring.

Warranty Deed:

Grantor: Steven D. Fox

Grantee: Annie L. Fox

Property: Lot 13, Block 2, LaLoma Addition

Date filed: Dec. 22, 2003

Grantor: Ray McMurray, executor of the estate of Clara Rosalee McMurray

Grantee: Edmund McMurray

Property: Piece of land out of the NW/4 of Section 33, Block 32, T-1-N, T&P RR Co. Survey.

Date filed: Dec. 23, 2003

Grantor: Michael D. Burrow and Shelley A. Burrow

Grantee: Mario Salazar and Malinda Salazar

Property: Lot 3, Block 9, Saunders Addition

Date filed: Dec. 23, 2003

Grantor: Samuel R. Munoz and Sally M. Munoz

Grantee: Ray Saldivar Moron

Property: A tract out of Section 22, Block 32, T-1-N, T&P RR Co. Survey

Date filed: Dec. 24, 2003

Warranty Deed with Vendor's Lien:

Grantor: Gene Campbell and Mary Jane Campbell

Grantee: Vickie Carter

Property: Lots 3 and 4, subdivision C of Block 19, Fairview Heights Addition

Date filed: Dec. 22, 2003

Grantor: Edward Eugene Jones and Dorothy R. Derr Jones

Grantee: Tony Juarez and Francisca L. Megallanes

Property: Lots 4 and 5, Block 1, Hayden Addition

Date filed: Dec. 23, 2003

Grantor: Annabel Barker and Delynda Barker Reed

Grantee: First Franklin Financial Corp.

Property: Lot 7, Block 7, Edwards Heights Addition

Date filed: Dec. 23, 2003

South Asian trade pact agreement reached Friday

By MUNIR AHMAD

The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The impoverished nations of South Asia agreed Friday on the framework for a free trade zone that would encompass one-fifth of the world's population, a step that could deepen the improving relations between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan.

The broad framework of the accord, which would start tearing down tariffs by Jan. 1, 2006, was reached during talks in Islamabad by foreign ministers

preparing for the first summit in two years of the leaders of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Bhutan — home to hundreds of millions of the world's poorest people.

"We must set aside all our suspicions of each other whenever they exist and switch on the engine of South Asian growth in order to travel on the road to prosperity," said Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha.

The free trade agreement would allow the harmonization

of tariffs and the free flow of goods and services, and the establishment of a regional development bank to promote cooperation among central banks, Sinha said.

Still, with poverty endemic and a history of internal conflicts and regional squabbling that goes back centuries, such an accord faces serious challenges.

While it may not produce short-term benefits to South Asia's residents, the agreement could eventually bring more jobs in a region with high

unemployment.

National leaders will review the accord when they meet Sunday through Tuesday in the Pakistani capital, where security is extraordinarily tight in the wake of two assassination attempts last month against President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

The summit of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the first since a meeting in Nepal in January 2002. That gathering took place amid deep acrimony a month after an attack on

India's Parliament that New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-backed Islamic militants. Pakistan denied the allegations.

Last year's summit was canceled due to lingering tensions. The two countries have made concerted efforts since April to improve relations, observing a cease-fire in the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir and restoring full diplomatic relations. A restoration of transportation links was capped by the resumption of commercial air service Thursday.

DISEASE

Continued from Page 4B

the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

"It was an extremely important part of the beef and cattle industry in the United States, and it's hard to find alternatives," Hobbs said.

"There are only so many ethnic stores in this country," to sell such items, he said.

The largest export market for variety meats was Mexico, followed by Japan and Korea, said Lynn Heinze, vice president of the Denver-based U.S. Meat Export Federation.

The United States exported 405 tons of variety meat in 2002, mostly from West Coast ports,

at a total value of \$618.4 million.

The Asian market, critical for West Coast beef traders, hardly existed 15 years ago, Partlow said.

West Coast cattlemen began exporting to Japan soon after World War II, but the trade was lackluster and controlled by a Japanese government monopoly, the Livestock Import

Production Corporation, Partlow said.

Prodiced by the World Trade Organization, Japan abolished the monopoly in 1991. That opened the market for American ranchers, who quickly shipped beef parts unwanted at home, along with cuts popular in both countries, such as steaks. Variety meats account for about 20 percent of the beef

market in Asia.

Some beef parts jumped dramatically in price.

Intestine, for example, sells for 20 cents a pound in the United States, but moves briskly in Asian markets at prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$2.75, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

JOBLESS

Continued from Page 4B

feel even more comfortable about ramping up investment and hiring new people, two crucial ingredients to the recovery's staying power.

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