





# Lifestyles

The Hereford Brand--Thursday, December 29, 1994--Page 3

## 'Christmas Legacy' is topic of Pioneer Study Club meet

Our Christmas Legacy was the theme for the December meeting of the Pioneer Study Club of Hereford at its annual Christmas tea in the home of Mary Panciera. Catherine Gripp and Fern Sigle were co-hostesses.

A brief business meeting was presided over by Vice-President Gripp in the absence of Mary Jane Burrus, President.

The meeting opened with the pledges to the flags of the United States and Texas and the Collect for Clubwomen in unison.

Shirley Brown and Joy Dones were welcomed as new members of the club.

## HHS student in Who's Who

Michael William Power Jr. of Hereford has been selected for publication in the annual edition of Who's Who Among American High School Students.

Power is the son of Michael and Priscilla Power. Power is a senior at HHS and participates in Key Club, National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Nazarene church youth group. He is also a member of the varsity basketball team.

Power will attend Texas Tech University in the fall of 1995.

Since only five percent of students from the nation's high schools are recognized by the publication each year, it is an high honor to be selected.

Power will be eligible to compete for one of 125 \$1,000 scholarships, which will be awarded to this year's honorees.

## Names in the news

NEW YORK (AP)--A last-minute addition to President Clinton's 1994 problems: He's no longer the "Person of the Year" in the Harris Poll.

Louis Harris and Associates asked 1,250 U.S. adults this month what man or woman they would choose as their person of the year. The top answer was a friend or relative, the polling company reported Wednesday.

Clinton, who was the No. 1 choice in 1993, dropped to second place. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was second last year, fell to third. Rush Limbaugh moved up a notch to No. 4 and Ross Perot fell from fourth to 10th.

George Bush, Boris Yeltsin, Colin Powell and Michael Jordan dropped out of the Top 10, which this year included Jimmy Carter, Sen. Bob Dole, Mother Teresa, Rep. Newt Gingrich and the Rev. Billy Graham, in that order.

LOS ANGELES (AP)--A overzealous Madonna fan has been sentenced to six months in jail for a second charge of trespassing at the singer's Hollywood Hills home.

Robert J. Wasserburger, 28, pleaded no contest Wednesday. He was found on Madonna's property Dec. 12 after ringing the bell at her gate 30 times and claiming to be her brother and a police officer, said Ted Goldstein, a spokesman for the City Attorney's Office.

In October, Wasserburger was sentenced to 30 days in jail for trespassing and ordered to keep at least 100 yards away from Madonna's property.

The Federation Report was given by Willie Wimberley. She spoke of the importance of Federation and the accomplishments it has made through the years. Pioneer Study Club has been federated for eighty-five years. She listed challenges for the year ahead and closed her talk with a prayer.

Rosemary Thomas reported that this club is contributing 205 Christmas cards, 15 all occasion cards and stamps to be used by the veterans at the VA Hospital in Amarillo.

Panciera introduced the program for the day. Each member described her most memorable Christmas. Some remembered receiving their first dolls, some programs at churches and schools, some traditions of their families, and some their Christmas stockings.

Refreshments of red velvet punch, cookies and candies brought by the members for the tea table, and gift boxes for friends and shut-ins were served to Brown, Nell Culpepper, Dones, Maria Escamilla, Oleta Hoffman, Gladys Miller, Thomas, Wimberley and the hostesses.

## Former Hereford man graduates from FBI Academy

Jerry W. Kendrick of Arlington, a former Hereford resident, recently graduated from the FBI National Academy Program at Quantico, Va.

Kendrick is currently serving as commander of the Criminal Investigation Division at Arlington Police Department. He graduated from Hereford High School in 1968.

The FBI Academy is an 11-week school offered to selected senior police officers. Selection for this school is considered an honor in the law enforcement field, as the training is unequalled.

The recent graduating class included 258 officers, men and women, from 48 states, 24 countries, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, four military organizations and three federal civilian organizations.

On the average, these officers have 16 years of law enforcement experience. The academy includes advanced investigative, management and fitness training for selected officers.

## Ann Landers

DEAR ANN LANDERS: My husband and I divorced 21 months ago. During our marriage he was verbally abusive and did not support me or our two children. I had to go to work because "Jimmy's" paycheck never seemed to make it home. On a recent holiday, Jimmy decided to take the two kids up north for a four-day vacation. They ended up at my brother's house. My brother and his wife welcomed them with open arms. There happened to be another house guest there at the same time. She was the wife of my brother's best friend. This was totally unplanned, they said.

When the kids came back home, they told me their dad was drunk the entire weekend and that he and the lady house guest did a lot of hugging and hand-holding. (Our older child made it clear that they were together day and night.)

I am outraged that my brother permitted this to go on in his home in the presence of my children. I am also disgusted with his wife for not intervening.

My brother does not understand why I am so upset. Will you explain the facts of life to these idiots?--Mad as Hell in Chicago

DEAR CHICAGO: Apparently, since you and Jimmy are divorced, your brother and his wife didn't feel it was necessary to police the action. I agree, however, that they did not use good judgment.

Since the female guest was the wife of your brother's best friend, he should have instructed them to cool it while under his roof.

You give me no clue as to the ages of the children, but it is apparent they are old enough to know something was cooking with their dad and the married woman.

DEAR ANN LANDERS: This is for readers who get cramps in their

legs. I used to have leg cramps at night so darned bad they almost killed me.

Several years ago, an older man told me to breathe into a paper bag when my legs started to cramp. It worked. Once, when I didn't have a paper bag, I put the palm of my hand over my mouth fairly snugly and breathed into it fast and hard. That worked, too.

The trick is in the breathing. Remember, you have to breathe rapidly to catch some of the air already exhaled. If the cramps start again, change position and repeat.

The cramps usually come in six-to-eight-second intervals. Keep up this routine until they stop.

This has worked for me for years, and I wanted to pass it on for others. I am Herschel Bradburn, age 92, and you can use my name if you want to.--Fresno

DEAR HERSHEL: Thanks for the tip. When your letter appears, I'll bet you will hear from a lot of friends and relatives in Fresno.

DEAR ANN LANDERS: The letter about the 14-year-old lad who couldn't wake up, even with two alarm clocks, moved me straight to my typewriter.

I had both a son and a husband who could not wake up in the morning. It grieves me to remember how I used to throw ice water on my teenager to get him to school on time. I now know that it was not his refusal to cooperate but a metabolic problem. I learned that giving my husband and my son a glass of orange juice and then waiting 15 minutes for them to get up was the solution. Please pass it on.--Wiser in Colorado

DEAR COLORADO: Consider it done, and thank you.

What's the truth about pot, cocaine, LSD, PCP, crack, speed and downer? "The Lowdown on Dope" has up-to-the-minute information on drugs. Send a self-addressed, long, business-size envelope and a check or money order for \$3.65 (this includes postage and handling) to: Lowdown, c/o Ann Landers, P.O. Box 11562, Chicago, Ill. 60611-5062.

## Local couple helps C.O.P.S. feed holiday meal to lawmen

Citizens for C.O.P.S. (Concerns for Police Survivors) furnished a meal for area law enforcement officers at the Amarillo DPS office between noon and 3 a.m. on Christmas Eve.

Don and Carolyn Waters, local C.O.P.S. members, helped host the activity. Former Hereford resident Alan Mongold, a Randall County sheriff's officer, and his wife, Laurie, also helped on the project.

Mongold is presently serving as president of the C.O.P.S. organization. DPS Trooper Hector Dominguez, also a former Hereford resident, was one of the officers who enjoyed the Christmas Eve meal.

Approximately 75 DPS, city patrolmen and county officers responded to the invitation to stop by for a meal.

Preparation is underway for the

Buffalo Bill starred in the first western ever made.

10th annual Memorial Service which honors Texas law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. It will be held in May.

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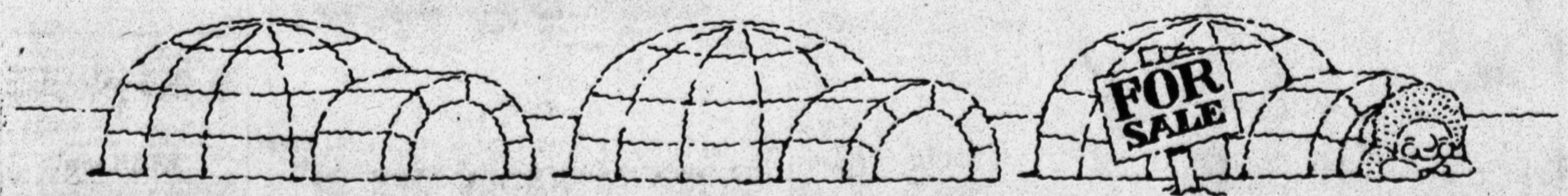
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# Sports

## Herd falls in final seconds; girls dispatch Littlefield JV

The Hereford boys basketball team lost the first game of the Canyon Rotary Holiday Tournament Wednesday, falling 69-68 to Lovington, N.M.

"They scored with seven seconds left to take the lead, and we missed a shot and a tip-in at the end," Hereford coach Randy Dean said.

In the Wildcat Holiday Classic in Littlefield, the Hereford girls' team won 71-16 over the Littlefield junior varsity team, which was in the bracket because another team could not be found.

Dean praised Lovington's team, but said Hereford could have won with a better performance from the free throw line.

"Lovington's good," he said. "They've got some big kids—I mean 6-foot-5 and muscular—and they've got some quickness. We played pretty well, plain and simple, but the difference was free throws. We missed crucial free throws in the final minutes of the game. If we'd made those, we would have had a chance to put the game away."

Dean characterized the game as a "game of runs." Hereford led 18-9 after one quarter, Lovington came back in the second quarter to take the lead, then Hereford took it back with another run, he said. Hereford led 32-30 at halftime and the game was tied 49-49 at the end of the third quarter.

Hereford fell to 9-6. Michael Brown led the Herd with 28 points and Isaac Walker added 18. Benton Buckley and Todd Dudley each scored seven points, Michael High had six and Michael Power scored two.

Hereford had to sit and wait an hour and a half because the time of the game was changed to 4:30 p.m. from 3, and Dean was not notified.

The Herd was to play Tulia, a 62-47 loser to Clarendon at 3 p.m. Thursday. In Littlefield, the Lady Whitefaces dealt with a bad situation.

"If you don't beat 'em bad, the kids are down about it, and if you beat 'em too bad, you look bad," coach Eddie Fortenbery said. "We did what we had to do."

Hereford was to play Hart, a 67-34 winner over Grady, N.M., at 3:30 p.m. Thursday.

Julie Ramplly led Hereford with 16 points and seven steals. Danielle Cornelius added 11 points, Tarabeth Holmes scored eight, and Katie Betzen, Heather Hodges and Mindi Davis each scored nine points.

## Neck injury ends Sharpe's season

By ARNIE STAPLETON  
AP Sports Writer  
GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) - Opponents and teammates alike are praying for Sterling Sharpe's recovery from a neck impairment that has cut short his season and possibly his career.

Sharpe needs surgery to fuse the top two vertebrae in his neck, team physician Patrick McKenzie said Wednesday after coach Mike Holmgren, quiet and downcast, stated simply: "Sterling's season is over."

So, too might be Sharpe's magnificent but brief career that includes 595 receptions for 8,134 yards and 65 touchdowns. He had 94 catches for 1,119 yards and a team-record 18 touchdowns this season.

"I consider Sterling a friend of mine. I was real sorry to hear that," said wide receiver Brett Perriman, whose Detroit Lions visit the Packers on Saturday in the first playoff game at Lambeau Field since Jan. 8, 1983.

"My prayers go out to Sterling," Lions coach Wayne Fontes said. "I think he's one of the great ones in the NFL. I'm pulling for him to get back

as soon as he can."

"At least now we know what the problem was," Holmgren said. "We feel we can fix it and we'll see where it takes us after that."

Sharpe's 314 receptions in the last three seasons is unmatched. He is the first player in the 75-year history of the NFL to post consecutive 100-reception seasons.

A seventh-year pro out of South Carolina, he is a five-time Pro Bowl selection, and is a backup on this year's NFC squad.

Sharpe meant so much to the Packers that when he walked out on the eve of the season opener demanding a bigger contract, general manager Ron Wolf quickly discarded his \$15.5 million deal and restructured it to ensure that Sharpe would be the NFL's highest-paid receiver from 1995 through 2000.

The walkout lasted half a day.

Then, Sharpe caught 13 TDs in the final six games of the season. He and quarterback Brett Favre teamed to make the Packers one of the league's most feared offenses.

But Sharpe sustained "stinger" nerve injuries in each of the last two

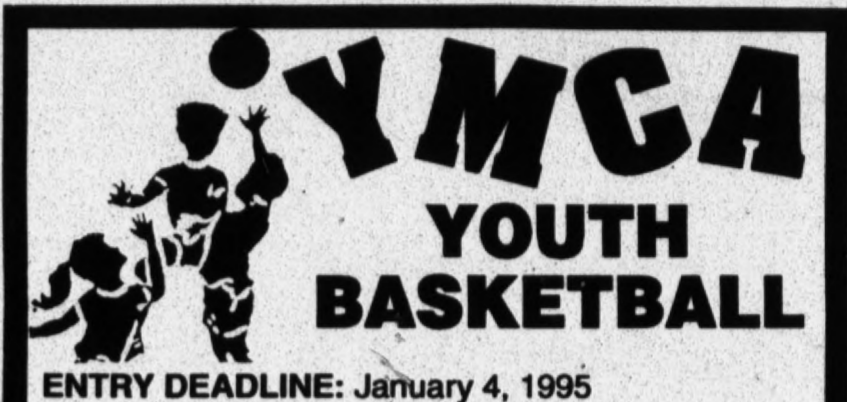
games, sinking to the turf in excruciating pain with numbness and then tingling in his limbs.

Trainer Pepper Burris said the injuries resulted from unusual looseness between the top two vertebrae in Sharpe's neck that move

and pinch his spinal cord when his

neck is tweaked. The condition was gradual and announced itself Dec. 18, when his head snapped back while he was blocking Atlanta safety Brad Edwards.

Sharpe must undergo surgery to fuse the two vertebrae, McKenzie said.



ENTRY DEADLINE: January 4, 1995

**THE LEAGUE:** The YMCA League is designed for boys and girls ages 13 and under. All girls and boys are eligible to play regardless of athletic ability. Teams are coached by adult volunteers. Every game is supervised and referees are provided. The league specializes in wholesome competition while teaching the fundamentals of team play and good sportsmanship. Every girl and boy plays in every game. We will have three divisions: 8 & under, 10 & under and 13 & under. The teams will be drawn at the YMCA office. **PLEASE DO NOT REQUEST PLAYERS TO BE ON CERTAIN TEAMS!**

**DATES:** Teams play and practice once a week after the season starts. Practice starts the week of January 9th (depending on availability of gyms) and games begin Saturday, Jan. 21st. \*Coaches will be notified of game location and date of Coaches Meeting.

**LEAGUE FEE & ELIGIBILITY:** League fee will be \$18. Additional children in same family \$15 each. All participants must be YMCA members. Memberships for youth are \$25 a year. (Partial memberships are available.)

**\*\*Entry Fee Must Accompany Registration Form!**

**AGE DIVISIONS:** • 8 & Under • 10 & under • 13 & Under  
Division determined by age of participant on September 1st, 1995. **PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED**

## Virginia shuts down TCU on muddy field

By MIKE COCHRAN  
Associated Press Writer  
SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) - Virginia buried its demons in the rain, mud and cold of the Independence Bowl, and coach George Welsh and his 18th-ranked Cavaliers are delighted.

"It's great to finally get that bowl losing streak off our backs," Welsh said Wednesday night after the Cavaliers used their powerhouse defense and a balanced offense to ambush Texas Christian 20-10.

"We had a sense of urgency," Welsh said, in part because of a frustrating string of four bowl losses, but also because of a season-ending 30-27 loss to North Carolina State.

Cavaliers wound up 9-3, the Southwest Conference co-champion Frogs 7-5.

Virginia end Mike Frederick, voted the outstanding defensive player of the game, said the victory cured a world of intangible ills.

"It kept coming up all year," he said. "First, we weren't beating anyone, then we couldn't win in November, then we couldn't win a bowl game. But we just stuck to believing in ourselves."

Quarterback Mike Groh hit wide receiver Tyrone Davis with a pivotal 37-yard touchdown pass in the third period, and the Cavaliers pounded the Horned Frogs with the running of

(See TCU, Page 5)

## OU focusing on BYU

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) - Oklahoma coach Gary Gibbs, whose six-year career ends tonight after a Copper Bowl matchup with No. 22 Brigham Young, thinks too much is being made of his departure.

"It's not a big deal. Our focus is BYU," Gibbs said. "My focus is to try to allow these guys to go out on top against BYU, to have success."

Asked if Gibbs' resignation under fire was providing added incentive for the Sooners (6-5), Oklahoma receiver Albert Hall said, "Coach has always told us to go out and play for ourselves, and he will take care of his part."

The game offers a stark contrast in quarterbacking as well as coaching situations.

The Sooners will be playing with reserve quarterback Terence Brown, who has completed one pass this season and has attempted nine passes in his career. He's starting in place of Garrick McGee, recovering from viral-caused spinal meningitis.

On the other hand, BYU (9-3) features an offense directed by junior quarterback John Walsh, who has passed for 3,712 yards and 29 touchdowns this season and 8,390 yards during his career.

## Dallas has NFL's top defense

IRVING, Texas (AP) - New York Giants quarterback Dave Brown took the knee on the last two snaps of Saturday's victory over the Dallas Cowboys. The Cowboys thank him. They won the NFL defensive title by 13 yards over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Dallas allowed a total of 4,313 yards, which averaged out to 269.6 yards per game. The Cowboys permitted 97.6 yards per game rushing and 172 yards passing.

The game offers a stark contrast in quarterbacking as well as coaching situations.

The Cowboys were the best in the NFL at defending the pass. The 172 yards average beat out Pittsburgh's 179.6 yards per game.

Dallas allowed only 248 points, third behind Cleveland and Pittsburgh. The Browns were the best, permitting only 204 points.

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Need some furniture? Hereford's furniture stores offer a wide selection, and they invite you to shop through ads in The Brand. For best buys in furniture, look to The Brand!

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP)—Tim Allen delivered on his own private Santa clause.

The actor's stepfather asked him to provide a van for a program that provides meals and transportation for the elderly and the disabled in the Pontiac area.

The star of "Home Improvement" and the movie "The Santa Clause" turned over the 1995 Ford Econoline on Tuesday to the Lighthouse of Oakland County's Caregiver program.

Allen's stepfather, William Bones, is a volunteer driver for the program.

"I heard they needed a van and I have some contacts with Ford, so I made a call and they will provide it for the first year and I'll buy it back and take care of it after that," said Allen, an Oakland County native.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—At 15, Myiesha Morris is too young to remember Isaac Hayes from his Hot Buttered Soul period or his "Theme from Shaft" days.

But she and other members of the children's choir Watoto de Afrika (Children of Africa) recognized an opportunity when they were invited to sing on Hayes' new album.

Hayes, a '70s icon with his shaved head, African clothes and deep voice, was the guest of honor when the choir sang at a Christmas event at the Peabody Hotel.

"I saw talent up there," Hayes said. "And I saw the spirit of the whole thing. They were doing things with lots of energy."

The children joined Hayes on Tuesday for a 90-minute session on a version of Sting's environmental song "Fragile."

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Month	Price	Change	High	Low	Open	Settle
Jan	72.10	0.00	72.10	72.10	72.10	72.10
Feb	71.50	0.00	71.50	71.50	71.50	71.50
Mar	70.50	0.00	70.50	70.50	70.50	70.50
Apr	69.50	0.00	69.50	69.50	69.50	69.50
May	68.50	0.00	68.50	68.50	68.50	68.50
Jun	67.50	0.00	67.50	67.50	67.50	67.50
Jul	66.50	0.00	66.50	66.50	66.50	66.50
Aug	65.50	0.00	65.50	65.50	65.50	65.50
Sep	64.50	0.00	64.50	64.50	64.50	64.50
Oct	63.50	0.00	63.50	63.50	63.50	63.50
Nov	62.50	0.00	62.50	62.50	62.50	62.50
Dec	61.50	0.00	61.50	61.50	61.50	61.50

### GRAIN FUTURES

Month	Price	Change	High	Low	Open	Settle
Jan	2.10	0.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10
Feb	2.05	0.00	2.05	2.05	2.05	2.05
Mar	1.95	0.00	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95
Apr	1.85	0.00	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85
May	1.75	0.00	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Jun	1.65	0.00	1.65	1.65	1.65	1.65
Jul	1.55	0.00	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55
Aug	1.45	0.00	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45
Sep	1.35	0.00	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
Oct	1.25	0.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
Nov	1.15	0.00	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15
Dec	1.05	0.00	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05

### METAL FUTURES

Month	Price	Change	High	Low	Open	Settle
Jan	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Feb	1.05	0.00	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05
Mar	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Apr	0.95	0.00	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95
May	0.90	0.00	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Jun	0.85	0.00	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85
Jul	0.80	0.00	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80
Aug	0.75	0.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Sep	0.70	0.00	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Oct	0.65	0.00	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Nov	0.60	0.00	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Dec	0.55	0.00	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55

### FUTURES OPTIONS

Month	Price	Change	High	Low	Open	Settle
Jan	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Feb	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Mar	0.06	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Apr	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
May	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Jun	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Jul	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aug	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sep	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dec	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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# City judge dispenses justice with levity

## Traffic court in Houston hears defendants' side of issue

By JENNIFER LENHART  
Houston Chronicle  
HOUSTON - Getting ticketed for speeding or running a red light is bad enough, but then there is the day in traffic court.

The mere idea of it summons an unpleasant image: getting up early, making your way downtown during rush hour and arriving at the decrepit Houston Municipal Courts building, only to wile away hard hours on a wooden bench.

The experience gets even worse when, periodically, a clerk stands at the front of the courtroom and calls off long lists of names, 60 or 70 at a time.

At the bench sits Judge Sam Alfano, a thickly built man with dark brown hair and hands like bear paws. In his black robe, he looks much like any other judge.

It's his disarming habit of joking with people in court that is totally unexpected. The defendants are not prepared for Alfano's displays of levity, his exchanges of cordiality.

"I'm not the kind of face that looks comforting," Alfano reflected, in a typical moment of self-analysis. "Unless I smile a lot."

The effect is to make a formal situation a little less formal. People react with relief.

"Judge, I have absolutely no idea

what I'm doing," a defendant said in Alfano's Municipal Court No. 2 last Tuesday as she prepared to enter a no-contest plea to a charge of driving without proof of insurance.

She stood before Alfano, 54, the highest-rated and longest continuously serving judge in the municipal courts. He hears cases involving traffic and insurance violations and other Class C misdemeanors, including assault and family violence offenses.

The woman, who had a traffic citation, was making her second appearance in his court in a case that began with an automobile accident in March.

Tense as she was, she seemed to calm down in the course of her conversation with Alfano.

For 16 years, Alfano has been doing this. He's been explaining defendants' cases to them in a straightforward style that is easily understood by the 100 to 200 people who pass through his court on a typical day.

He leaned down on the bench to get as close to the woman as possible.

"Look," he said, "I know you're dying to tell your side of the story, but wait. A no-contest plea, that's kind of final. I just want to make sure

you understand what you're doing."

And then he gave his civics lesson. A day in court should be something everyone can understand, he seemed to imply. No one wants to come back, and if they grasp what happened to them in court, maybe they never will.

"He epitomizes what one would think the people's court should be," said Judge Sylvia Garcia, presiding justice of the municipal courts and a longtime Alfano colleague.

"Everyone's heard about their day in court. Certainly when you come to Judge Alfano's court, that's exactly what you get. He does a really good job of making people feel they can be part of the process even if they aren't represented by an attorney. It makes people feel more comfortable with the criminal justice system."

More than 1.4 million cases move through the city's 11 municipal courts annually. About 116,000 are placed on the dockets every month. Alfano estimated that about a third of the defendants fail to show up for their scheduled day in his court.

One recent Tuesday his docket had 165 cases, 149 of which were set for 8 a.m.

All day long, people walk nervously up to the bench, eager to tell their side of the story, not realizing that soon the Alfano civics lesson will begin.

"People ask me, how can you talk to so many people every day for 16 years?" Alfano said. "It's different in these courts. You really feel like you're doing something."

After the first few hectic hours of a typical day, Alfano usually breaks for 10 minutes in his large, sparsely furnished office overlooking the Houston Police Department's supply building and a nearby church.

He opens a desk drawer, pulls out a box of chocolates. "Want one?" he asks when a visitor stops by.

Then he pulls open a file cabinet and produces a bag of cinnamon hard candies. "Like one?" he asks, popping one into his mouth.

The candy stashes in Alfano's desk are legendary around the courthouse.

"You can always find candy in Sam's office," said Ronald Beylotte, chief prosecutor. "Most of the lawyers know where it is and go help themselves without even having to ask."

Alfano talks nonstop with prosecutors, defense attorneys, secretaries and clerks, or anyone else who drops by his office to see him, now and then consulting frayed legal books when niggling questions perplex him.

He reflects on the state of the average defendant in his courtroom.

Most people, like the woman Alfano talked to, are agitated and nervous, he said. Some are defiant. Most expect an unpleasant experience.

Many people don't understand what is going on, let alone how much it will cost them if they lose their case, beginning with court fees of around \$40, plus fines. In some cases the outcome affects the cost of automobile insurance for years in the future. Many people lose because they appear in court without a lawyer and try to represent themselves.

"That's the thing about being a judge in municipal court," Alfano said. "The people that come in are charged with crimes, but they don't know it half the time because half the cases are traffic tickets."

"These people are generally not criminals," he said. "But they're thrown into the criminal system, and you've got to take more time with them. You've got to talk to them. You've got to let them talk to you."

The woman who wanted to plead no contest claimed she had purchased an insurance policy one morning and

had a traffic accident later that day, but the policy was not stamped with the hour of purchase. A woman who was in another vehicle involved in the accident said the insurance was purchased afterward.

After talking to Alfano, the woman decided to hire a lawyer, reset her court date and have the jury trial to which she is entitled. Jury trials are held in three of Houston's 14 municipal courts.

"I wanted her to understand the consequences of what she was doing," Alfano said about the case. "I was afraid she didn't understand and she was acting out of confusion and duress rather than making a voluntary plea."

The judge said he never had a grand plan for his career. Born to a Sicilian immigrant father and a mother whose family came to the United States from Italy a few years before she was born, Alfano said he grew up worrying about his family more than his education.

He attended St. Thomas High School in Houston and worked in his parents' grocery store in the area around Washington at Shepherd, then known as Cottage Grove. After graduating from high school in 1958, he enrolled at Lamar State College of Technology, now Lamar University, in Beaumont.

Guitar was his avocation. While a college student, Alfano played in a rock 'n' roll band called The Gigolos.

"Academics was not a big thing in our lives," he said. "Just getting by and eating was a big thing."

He was a good-looking, popular guy, recalled high school-era friend Harry Pratorius, who often went on double-dates with Alfano.

"Back then, we'd all go to

Prince's drive-in, and he knew almost everybody there," said Pratorius, 56, a 14-year employee of Randall's Food Markets. "He was young and handsome, a nice-looking man. We went to a lot of parties."

At about this time, Alfano's father became a bail bondsman. The young Alfano, who hadn't settled on a career path, was exposed to the courthouse and a whole new range of career possibilities.

He decided to become an attorney and enrolled in South Texas College of Law. After receiving his law degree in 1966, Alfano worked in private practice for 13 years.

In 1979, then-Mayor Jim McConn appointed Alfano to the municipal courts. He has been retained by every mayor and City Council since.

Along the way, he and his wife, Jere Sue, a school teacher, raised two children: Victor, now 32, and Kelley, 25.

Alfano developed his distinctive courtroom style and has become almost famous among city employees.

"Listen to him," Houston police officer Randall Cedeno said while waiting to testify on a recent November day. "He gets right on their level. He's on a bench above them but he always gets on their level."

Most people at the municipal courthouse cannot imagine what the place will be like when Alfano retires - an eventuality he is not even considering at the moment.

"He's an absolutely irreplaceable person around here," Chief Clerk Larry Miller said. "I shudder to even think of his retirement."

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# Cost of cleaner gas eventually will show up at consumer pump

ELIZABETH, N.J. (AP)—It may not cost more yet, but the cleaner-burning gasoline that becomes the only fuel for 50 million American motorists next week will eventually cost more, dealers and refiners say.

Environmental officials tried Wednesday to allay consumer concerns of 11-cent to 20-cent per gallon boosts by noting that the reformulated fuel has been sold for most of December without much increase.

But they acknowledge higher production costs will be reflected at the pumps—eventually.

And the American Automobile Association and a group of New Jersey station owners noted that prices in the 17 states where the

reformulated gasoline is being sold haven't dropped as they normally do in winter.

Standing beside the pumps at an Exxon station near the New Jersey Turnpike, Jeanne M. Fox, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's administrator for New Jersey and New York, said prices haven't changed much, and certainly not as much as some had foreseen.

"So all the talk about hikes in the price of gas was just that—talk—much of it coming from special interest groups looking for the chance to increase their profits and blame somebody else, that being the government," Fox said.

The EPA, AAA and gasoline refiners agree the reformulated

gasoline is the most cost-effective way of reducing pollution and smog.

The EPA predicts an increase of 3 cents to 5 cents a gallon. State retailers believe they will have to pass along to customers a 5 cent to 8 cent increase in their costs from refiners; refiners won't say.

The new fuel also cuts mileage up to 3 percent. That's on top of the normal drop in automobile performance in colder weather.

Federal law mandates the new gasoline be sold in urban areas with significant smog problems, including most of the Northeast and mid-Atlantic region, from parts of Virginia to southern Maine.

Most of New Jersey was included.

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