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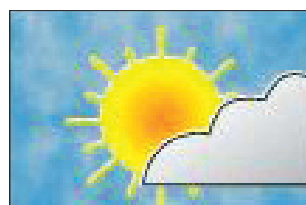
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FRIDAY

DECEMBER 26, 2008



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Don't dump that tree — recycle

City offers residents a 'green' option in disposing Christmas trees

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

While the Christmas season is a time for friends, family and plenty of holiday cheer, many area residents will face the same perplexing problem when the gift wrap settles — what to do with their Christmas tree.

Luckily, the city of Big Spring will once again be stepping into the picture with its annual Christmas tree recycling program, giving area residents a chance to

turn a holiday problem into something beneficial for the environment.

“The tree recycling program is going to be operated mainly out of the City Compost Facility this year,” said Kenny Davis, code enforcement director for the city. “If people want to leave their trees at the old Wal-Mart parking lot like they have in years past, we’ll be glad to pick them up. However, we won’t be able to have a container out there to collect

them, since we have all of our containers out right now.”

Davis said the seasonal effort is two-fold.

“The compost facility will grind the trees up to be used in the compost,” he said. “That way we’re recycling them and not just throwing them in the landfill. The other reason we do this is to keep people from putting the trees in their dumpsters. When people put them in their dumpsters they get stuck and cause a serious problem for us.”

For those that choose to dispose of their trees in dumpsters, Davis said the results could get serious — and expensive.

“If someone puts their tree in a dumpster or next to the dumpster, we won’t pick it up,” he said. “We’ll simply notify code enforcement and let them handle it.”

Davis said dropping your tree off is free of charge, and there are only a few, simple guidelines to follow.

“We need people to make

sure all of the lights and ornaments are off the tree,” he explained. “We also can’t take it if it’s still wrapped in plastic or anything like that. You also need to make sure the tree stand has been taken off. Once they drop it off, we’ll take it from there.”

For more information, contact Davis at 264-2505.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@big-springherald.com



AP file photo

President-elect Barack Obama speaks at a news conference in Chicago. Obama will inherit two wars and the worst economic conditions in three generations when he takes the oath of office on Jan. 20.

For Obama, huge challenges vs. big assets

By **CHARLES BABINGTON**
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Barack Obama will inherit two wars and the worst economic conditions in three generations when he takes the oath of office on Jan. 20. Ironically, that challenge might be a blessing for the president-elect — unemployment is so high and consumer confidences so low that even modest improvements will let him claim progress.

Obama also brings extraordinary assets to the task.

The president-elect enjoys high approval ratings, well-regarded Cabinet appointees and a smooth-running transition operation that grew almost seamlessly from his successful campaign team. Fellow Democrats will hold solid House and Senate majorities to help move his agenda through Congress.

But political veterans and presidential scholars

say Obama can't waste time. He must decide which major issues to tackle in his first 100 days in office, when his political capital will be at its peak. His powers and popularity might wane as he looks to end the Iraq war and enact repairs to an economic system that has ravaged jobs, home ownership, retirement accounts and Americans' optimism.

“His goal is to strike a sustainable balance between the politics of sequencing and the politics of urgency,” said William Galston, a domestic policy assistant in President Bill Clinton's administration. He said Obama must determine “what are the risks of overreaching versus underreaching.”

So far, Obama has given few hints about which goals might have to wait. Asked recently about

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Man in Santa suit kills 8, self on Christmas Eve

By **CHRISTINA HOAG**

Associated Press Writer

COVINA, Calif. — The bloodbath began when an 8-year-old girl attending a Christmas Eve party answered a knock at the door. A man dressed as Santa and carrying what appeared to be a present pulled out a handgun and shot her in the face, then began shooting indiscriminately as partygoers tried to flee.

By the time it was over, at least eight people at the party were dead

and the house was torched. The gunman killed himself hours after exacting revenge against his ex-wife by going on a massacre at his former in-laws' home.

Bruce Pardo's ex-wife and her parents were believed to be among the dead. At daybreak Friday, investigators planned to resume searching what was left of their two-story home on a cul-de-sac in a quiet Covina neighborhood 25 miles east of Los Angeles.

Pardo, 45, had no criminal record and no history of violence, accord-

ing to police, but he was angry following last week's settlement of his divorce after a marriage that lasted barely a year.

“It was not an amicable divorce,” police Lt. Pat Buchanan said.

Investigators seeking further information about Pardo's motives have begun searching his home in the suburban Los Angeles community of Montrose.

Police said he showed up at his

See **SLAYINGS**, page 3A

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Star power

Soap opera provided best and worst of 2008 Dallas Cowboys

By JAIME ARON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING — Stars, stars, stars. Everywhere you look, the Dallas Cowboys are all about the stars.

There's the logo on their helmets and the giant one in the middle of their home turf. Another made of diamonds that can always be found on the lapel of team owner Jerry Jones.

And, of course, they are all over the roster.

There's Tony Romo, the quarterback with the aw-shucks demeanor and starlet girlfriend.

There's Terrell Owens playing the star-crossed role of "T.O." — sometimes the hero, sometimes the villain, always the center of attention.

There's the player who headlines "Pacman," making more headlines for a bathroom brawl and a neck injury than for anything he's done at cornerback.

But the stars haven't exactly aligned for the Cowboys this season.

Despite returning 13 Pro Bowlers from last year's 13-win club, Dallas has reached the finale of an up-and-down season needing to win Sunday in Philadelphia just to make the playoffs.

Lose and they will have gone as far as Detroit. That might sound like a cheap shot, except it comes from receiver Roy Williams, the latest star added to the Cowboys' galaxy. He arrived in October from the woeful, winless Lions and was counting on making the playoffs for the first time in his career, but now he's bracing for his usual long off-season.

"(Teammates) joke about me with the 0-16 Detroit thing and I just told them, 'If we don't win this game, we're all in the same boat. We both are going to be watching the same playoff game next week,'" Williams said. "They all understood that. That put it in perspective."

So does this: The Cowboys need four straight wins to make the Super Bowl, five in a row to win it all. Their longest winning streak so far is three games.

That's not to say it can't be done. Just look at the surge the New York Giants had last postseason.

See **COWBOYS**, Page 2B

Cowboys re-sign Colombo through 2012

By JAIME ARON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING — The Dallas Cowboys have given right tackle Marc Colombo a four-year contract extension, guaranteeing that nearly all of Tony Romo's blockers will be together through 2012.

Colombo's deal was agreed to weeks ago, but wasn't finalized until Wednesday because of some technicalities. It's worth \$22 million, with \$11.5 million guaranteed.

"We had a couple of road bumps with some of the new rules," Colombo said Thursday. "We worked through it. It is a relief to have this finished. Now I can focus completely on football."

The Cowboys (9-6) play Sunday in

Philadelphia, a game they must win to make the playoffs. It also will be Colombo's 48th straight start since former coach Bill Parcells gave him a chance to revive his career.

Colombo was a first-round pick by Chicago in 2002, but hurt his knee and never lived up to expectations. He was cut in 2005, then signed by Dallas. Parcells gave him the rest of the season off to rehabilitate the knee so he could come back strong in '06. He made the starting lineup and hasn't come out since.

"I love being a Dallas Cowboy," said Colombo, who would've been a free agent after this season. "This is where I got my second chance and I just love being part of this team, being part of this offensive line. We're all connected together and we're here for a little

bit, so it's a big deal for me."

Left guard Kyle Kosier is signed through 2010, but everyone else on the line is signed for several more years. Colombo and center Andrew Fozzell Adams and Leonard Davis are through '13.

Coach Wade Phillips praised Colombo for consistently grading out near the top of the line, and for his toughness. He said Colombo also is a leader in the classroom.

"He's a guy that helps everybody else as far as keeping their focus and keeping their concentration," Phillips said. "As far as the cohesiveness of the offensive line, he's a strong leader in that area. All of those things combined makes him great to have him back."



AP photo/Don Ryan
Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki, right, drives on Portland Trail Blazers forward LaMarcus Aldridge during the second half of their NBA game in Portland, Ore., Thursday. Nowitzki scored 30 points to lead the Mavericks in their 102-94 win over the Blazers.

Dirk leads Mavs past Blazers

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The veteran Dallas Mavericks gave the Portland Trail Blazers a lesson in toughness and discipline.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 24 of his 30 points in the first half, and Jason Terry had 19 to help surging Dallas beat the Blazers 102-94 on Thursday night.

Nowitzki was 12-of-18 from the field and scored on power moves and jumpers despite playing the second half in foul trouble. Josh Howard added 15 points for Dallas, 15-4 in its last 19 games after opening 2-7.

The Mavericks kept their poise after a near-meltdown in the third quarter when they had four technical fouls and Howard was called for a flagrant foul and later ejected.

"You know what? We fought," coach Rick Carlisle said. "We fought the whole game. There were some calls we didn't agree with and we may have lost our pride a little bit, but it was really about the fight tonight."

Portland's Brandon Roy had 22 points, but went scoreless in the fourth quarter. Steve Blake added 14 points and seven assists, Travis Outlaw and Rudy Fernandez had 13 points each, and LaMarcus Aldridge finished with 12.

The Trail Blazers had won 13 straight Christmas games.

The Mavericks closed the game with a 12-2 run, while Roy went 0-for-3 in the final 3:33 for Portland.

Portland shot 55 percent and Dallas 58 percent in the first half. Portland led 10-2, but Nowitzki scored 12 of Dallas' next 14

See **MAVS**, Page 2B

Kobe, Lakers win Finals rematch vs. Celtics, 92-83

By JOHN NADEL

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — For the Los Angeles Lakers, it was a bit of payback.

But in the big picture, little more.

Kobe Bryant had 27 points, nine rebounds and five assists, Pau Gasol scored seven of his 20 points in the final 3 minutes, and the Lakers beat Boston 92-83 on Thursday, snapping the Celtics' franchise-record winning streak at 19.

"It was a good measuring stick to show how much we have progressed since the finals," Bryant said. "They are a team that has been playing so well. But at the same time, they did win 19 in a row, so they were due."

The game was the first between the teams since the Celtics' 131-92 victory in Game 6 of the finals last June gave them their first title in 22 years and a league-high 17th.

"We definitely wanted to do well against a team that is doing great," Lakers forward Lamar Odom said. "We won't get them back until we can beat them in a series."

In other NBA games Thursday, it was: Cleveland 93, Washington 89; San Antonio 91, Phoenix 90; Orlando 88, New Orleans 68; and Dallas 102, Portland 94.

The victory was the 1,000th for Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson. The 63-year-old Jackson, the sixth NBA coach to reach the mark, is 1,000-423 in 17-plus seasons with Chicago and the Lakers. Pat Riley was the previous fastest to 1,000, doing it in 1,434 games.

"I can guarantee you that I won't win 1,000 games because I won't be around that long," Celtics coach Doc Rivers said. "It's just an amazing number."

The Celtics entered with a 27-2 record — the best ever start by a two-loss team. They

were in position to make it 28-2 when Kevin Garnett dunked off a feed from Rajon Rondo to put them ahead 81-79 with 3:57 left. But the Lakers finished with a 13-2 run.

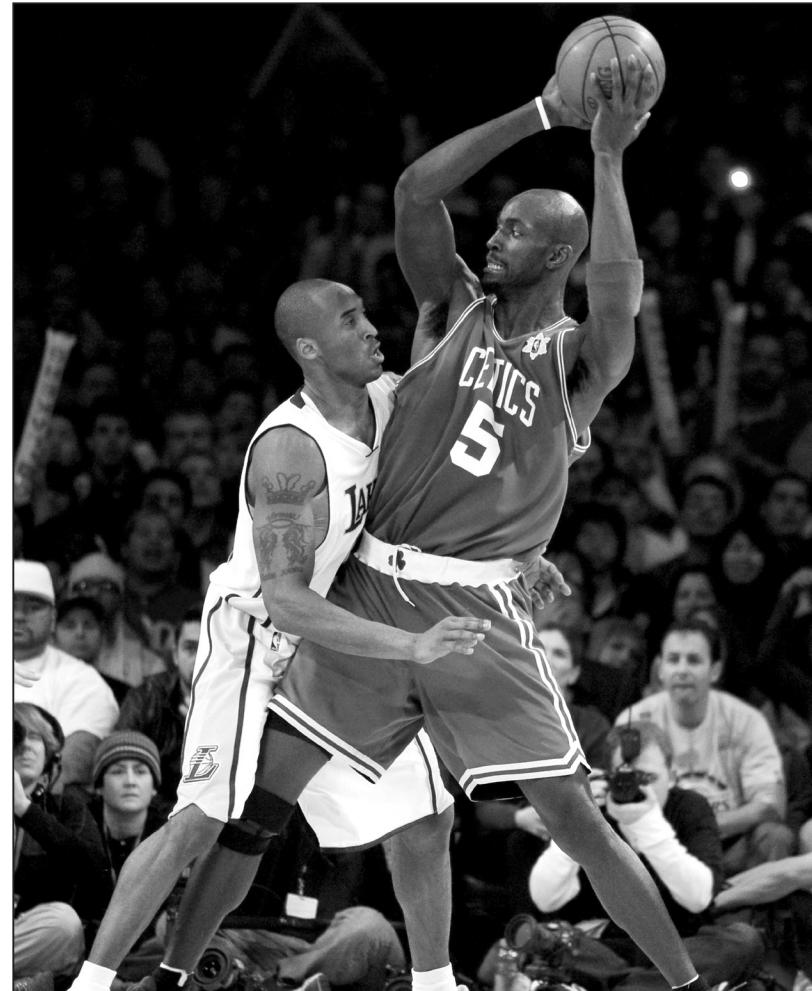
The Lakers outscored the Celtics 21-16 in the fourth quarter. Boston shot 8-of-19 and was 0-for-7 on 3-pointers in the final period.

"I'm really happy with Pau," Jackson said. "He stepped up in that fourth quarter and we really needed him."

Lamar Odom had 10 points and seven rebounds, and Sasha Vujacic also scored 10 points for the Lakers (24-5), who won their 12th straight game at home, where they're 15-1. Andrew Bynum had nine points and seven rebounds.

"They played great, give them credit," Rivers said. "For a team that has been

See **NBA**, Page 2B



AP photo/Jeff Lewis
Boston Celtics forward Kevin Garnett looks to pass the ball while being guarded by Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant during the second half of an NBA game on Thursday in Los Angeles. The Lakers won 92-83.

PIGSKIN PREDICTIONS

This week's games



Jonathan Hull



Jeff Lane



Robert Smith



Troy Hyde



Brandon Hallford



Art Barrera



Tim Knox

Cowboys at Eagles
Bears at Texans
Rams at Falcons
Patriots at Bills
Chiefs at Bengals
Lions at Packers
Titans at Colts
Giants at Vikings
Panthers at Saints
Dolphins at Jets
Browns at Steelers
Raiders at Buccaneers
Jaguars at Ravens
Redskins at 49ers
Seahawks at Cardinals
Broncos at Chargers

Cowboys
Texans
Falcons
Patriots
Bengals
Packers
Titans
Vikings
Panthers
Jets
Steelers
Bucs
Ravens
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Bucs
Ravens
Redskins
Cardinals
Broncos

Last week	11-9 .550	9-11 .450	12-8 .600	11-9 .550	10-10 .500	11-9 .550	11-9 .550
To date	263-146 .643	286-123 .699	272-137 .665	272-137 .665	264-145 .645	260-149 .636	258-151 .631

MAVS

Continued from Page 1B

points and the Mavericks opened up a nine-point lead. Dallas' first-half advantage crested at 10 at 51-41. Fernandez hit a 3-pointer and Blake had seven points for Portland, and the Mavs led 59-55 at the break.

Nowitzki picked up his fourth foul early in the third and left the game, picking up a technical foul for arguing with official Bob Delaney on the way out. With

Nowitzki out, Portland took a 67-66 lead on a 12-foot jumper by LaMarcus Aldridge.

"I don't think anybody panicked, even with all the Ts," said Jason Kidd, who had six points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for Dallas. "We kept plugging away, keeping it close down the stretch to see if we could get a win on the road."

Howard sent 7-foot-1 Joel Przybilla sprawling to the floor, then was hit with a technical for jawing with Przybilla and got the second technical seconds later. Portland took an 80-77 lead into the final period.

The Blazers' hopes were quickly diminished, though. Terry hit a 3 for Dallas, and Brandon Bass scored twice to put the Mavericks up by seven.

"They didn't let up," Roy said. "We thought we had them down and they weren't down. Coach (Nate McMillan) said they outthustled us, and you can't dispute that."

The Blazers lost a share of the Northwest Division lead, which they shared with Denver after splitting a home-and-home-series with the Nuggets early in the week.

NBA

Continued from Page 1B

phenomenal down a stretch of games, I didn't think we were very good tonight."

Garnett shot 11-of-14 in leading the Celtics with 22 points and nine rebounds. Paul Pierce had 20 points and 10 rebounds, but was scoreless in the fourth quarter. Ray Allen scored 14 points, but went 2-of-11 after making his first three shots.

Gasol made all three of his shots and all three of his free throws in the fourth quarter for nine of his team's 21 points.

COWBOYS

Continued from Page 1B

Dallas certainly has the talent to pull it off, or else it wouldn't even be this close to the postseason after all the injuries and infighting.

In fact, the Cowboys have played their best in games they absolutely had to win to keep their playoff hopes alive.

They knocked off Tampa Bay without Romo, and that would be the difference in a tiebreaker with the Buccaneers. They won at Washington in Romo's return, avoiding a dip to

5-5. They bounced back from a blown late lead in Pittsburgh and a week of tabloidesque drama to beat the Giants.

A loss to Baltimore last Saturday night was supposed to hurt the Cowboys' chances, but the right combination of results Sunday kept a playoff seat warm for them. Win and they're in, no scoreboard-watching necessary.

Still, the question remains: Even if they get it together against the Eagles, can they keep it together through February?

"It'll be fun to see how this thing shapes out," Romo said.

If the Cowboys don't reach the NFC championship, they'll be branded underachievers.

If they get that far, or all the way to Tampa, the struggles of the last few months will go down as character-building; the adversity that could've torn them apart instead made them stronger.

"Here's an easy analogy: Joe Montana wasn't Joe Montana before he won a Super Bowl," Romo said. "Everybody probably questioned them at that time, 'Do they have the quarterback to go win a Super Bowl?' I mean, the Giants, their coach was fired at this point last year, maybe. Eli (Manning) wasn't a great leader, I heard. It is what it is until you win."

"So, this team, we don't have anything that you need to win the Super Bowl — until you win. Then you have everything. The only thing that can solve that is to go off and win. To win

this week and to get in this thing and go do it. It's a cliché thing, but it just comes down to doing it. Just win the game and that will answer all these questions."

With time running out, all is still not right.

Owens stood at his locker Wednesday wearing a T-shirt that read "iBelieve" on front and "Destination Tampa 2009" on the back, then talked about the team's passing woes. That could be interpreted as code for his numbers being way down.

"We just go out there and just play," Owens said. "At this point, late in the season — I mean, this is Week 17 — you would think at some point we would have an identity. But we're still at Week 17 trying to find that."

Owens started to make a point about different people taking a starring role each week, then stopped, laughed sarcastically and said, "Well, I haven't had any games where I've had a bunch of catches."

Reminded about his 213-yard performance against San Francisco, Owens shot back that he had only seven catches that day, practically spitting out the number with disgust.

But when a question seemed to infer that the Cowboys are done, Owens really got fired up.

"That's not our mind-set right now," he said. "Our mind-set is going to Philly and winning the game. ... We're not going up there focusing on what if. We're going up there to win."

2008

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News in brief

Texas leaves \$1B in fines, fees uncollected for 2 consecutive years

AUSTIN (AP) — Some Texas agencies left as much as \$1 billion in uncollected fees, fines and penalties for fiscal years 2006, 2007, according to a survey from the Legislative Budget Board provided to the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

More than 95 cents of every dollar left uncollected was lost by publicly funded colleges and universities and public safety/criminal justice institutions, the annual LBB survey said.

A significant portion

of the state's \$167.8 billion budget for 2008-09 biennium is driven by fees, which allow local government to keep taxes down. For \$1 billion, the state could fund five of its Top 15 funded agencies, or Jerry Jones could build another football stadium in Arlington.

"If agencies are not collecting fees, what that means for taxpayers is that they will have to pick up the slack," said Michael Sullivan, president of the non-profit Texans for Fiscal Responsibility. "A billion dollars represents all sorts of public services. It's a significant number, not just the quarters you find in

your couch.

Some of the losses are typical for agencies that provide services before payment is rendered or that depend on people to pay fines for moving violations.

But some of the lost revenue comes from unlikely sources.

Family of former trooper issues sympathy statement

DALLAS (AP) — The family of a former Utah state trooper suspected in a deadly shooting spree on Dallas-area roadways said in a statement of sympathy Thursday that "it's hard to imagine" the son they

knew being involved.

"Our hearts are heavy and our thoughts and prayers go out to those who have lost a loved one in the incidents that may be related," the family of Brian Smith said in a statement.

The statement was sent by e-mail to several media outlets and published Thursday on *The Salt Lake Tribune's* Web site. The e-mail credits Smith's father, Benton Smith, of Preston, Idaho, with drafting the statement.

Authorities suspect Smith as the gunman in a series of shootings on a Dallas interstate and a street in suburban Garland on Monday that left two dead. A third

person was injured.

Smith died Wednesday at Parkland Hospital in Dallas after being removed from life-support. He suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head during a standoff with police on Tuesday.

Southern Okla. casino evacuated after bomb threat

THACKERVILLE, Okla. (AP) — Authorities say they didn't find any explosives in the WinStar World Casino near the Oklahoma-Texas state line after someone called in a bomb threat.

Sgt. Robby Williams

of the Chickasaw Nation Lighthouse Police says employees and patrons were allowed back inside early Friday morning. The casino is again operating as usual.

Bomb dogs were brought in to scour the premises. No other buildings were evacuated.

The casino employs more than 2,400 full- and part-time workers and was working on an expansion to become Oklahoma's largest casino, according to its Web site.

SLAYINGS

Continued from page 1A

former in-laws' home around 11:30 p.m. Wednesday for their annual Christmas party.

The gift-wrapped box Pardo was carrying actually contained a pressurized homemade device he used to spray a liquid that quickly sent the house up in flames. Police said Pardo had recently worked in the aerospace industry.

David Salgado, a neighbor, said he saw the 8-year-old victim being escorted to an ambulance by four SWAT team members as flames up to 40 feet high consumed the house.

"It was really ugly," Salgado said.

Another neighbor, Jan Gregory, said she saw

a teenage boy flee the home, screaming "They shot my family!"

A 16-year-old girl was shot in the back, and a 20-year-old woman broke her ankle when she escaped by jumping from a second-story window.

Those two, and the 8-year-old, remained hospitalized. All were expected to recover.

When the fire was extinguished early Thursday, officers found three charred bodies in the living room area.

"They were met with a scene that was just indescribable," police Chief Kim Raney said. Investigators found five more bodies amid the ashes later in the day and planned to return Friday to continue looking.

None of the dead or missing has been identified. Authorities were

unable to immediately determine whether the victims were killed by the flames or the gunfire.

Following the shootings, Pardo quickly got out of the Santa suit and drove off, witnesses told police. He went to his brother's home about 25 miles away in the Sylmar area of Los Angeles. No one was home, so Pardo let himself in, police said.

Police were called to the home early Thursday, and officers found Pardo dead of a single bullet to the head. Two handguns were found at the scene, and two more were discovered in the wreckage of his former in-laws' house.

A car that Pardo apparently parked near his brother's home exploded Thursday evening and more ammunition was

found in it, Los Angeles police Sgt. Francisco Wheeling said. She had no immediate details on what set off the explosion. No one was hurt.

Pardo's next-door neighbor, who did not want her name published to protect her privacy, said he moved in more than a year ago with a woman and a child.

She said they kept mostly to themselves and the woman later moved out with the child.

Pardo was often seen walking a dog around the neighborhood and working on his lawn, the neighbor said.

He also served regularly as an usher at evening Mass at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Montrose, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Jan Detanna, the head

usher at the church, was stunned when told about the violence.

"I'm just — this is shocking," Detanna told the Times. "He was the nicest guy you could imagine. Always a pleasure to talk to, always a big smile."

Bong Garcia, another of Pardo's next-door neighbors, told the Times he saw Pardo between 9 and 10 p.m. Christmas Eve and spoke briefly to him. Pardo told him he was on his way to a Christmas party, Garcia said.

OBAMA

Continued from page 1A

tougher regulations on auto emissions and reinstating an offshore drilling ban, for example, he said his advisers will review them "in the weeks to come." And earlier this month, he told reporters he had not decided "how we're going to deal with the rollback of the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans."

Presidential historians say Obama will have to set priorities soon, even if he does it discreetly in hopes of avoiding confrontations with key constituency groups. On overhauling health care, for example, Princeton historian Fred I. Greenstein said Obama might create study groups and commissions that will push it to the back burner without leaving the impression it's being ignored.

Greenstein, who has written several books on the presidency, said he gives Obama high marks for running his transition with the same brand of assertive self-confidence he showed during the campaign. The transition has been characterized, he said, by "a very strong sense of maintaining control and professing to be waiting in the wings but filling up all the presidential space, and doing things in textbook order."

Obama's first high-stakes policy choices will involve a costly stimulus plan, which might be ready for his

signature within days of his taking office. His aides are working with congressional leaders on a package that could spend \$850 billion over two years, much of it on infrastructure, schools and other construction-heavy projects.

He must pick winners and losers from scores of interest groups scrambling for a piece of the stimulus pie. Some want billions of dollars for energy programs, including ethanol pipelines, nuclear power plants and "green" projects that use renewable fuels. Others want mass transit help, cell telephone towers, travel and tourism marketing, and countless tax breaks.

"The fiscal stimulus bill gives him a tremendous opportunity to work with Congress quickly to produce a very significant piece of legislation" that helps the economy and "makes a down payment on some policies central to his agenda," said Thomas E. Mann, a government scholar at the Brookings Institution.

Meanwhile, Mann said, Obama also can launch discussions of how to revise energy and health care policies "without setting specific dates for completion."

Issues that cannot wait, however, include the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Obama has repeatedly said he wants to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq within 16 months, although he has left himself some wiggle room. Top military leaders advocate a

somewhat slower schedule, and the new president will have to resolve the matter.

Obama wants to increase the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, which might draw more public attention and controversy if the economic news were not so dominant.

For now, at least, Obama enjoys strong public support. Political insiders say his Cabinet picks are savvy and substantial.

A recent AP-GfK poll found that nearly three in four Americans approve of how Obama has handled the transition. That's about the same level of support his two immediate predecessors enjoyed.

But there is no guarantee that Obama's actions will reverse the dramatic drops in employment and the stock market, or the crises in the financial and automaking sectors. With billions of taxpayer dollars pouring in, Americans may want results soon, and the new president's popularity could rapidly diminish if they don't materialize.

"I find it hard to believe that, no matter how skillful he is, he can sustain this level of hope and support," said Galston, the former Clinton aide. "To govern is to choose," he said, and every time a president chooses, some groups are disappointed.

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

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.

Ron Midkiff
Publisher

John A. Moseley
Managing Editor

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News Editor

OTHER VIEWS

Bailout falls short on oversight — and results

It's been 80 long days since Congress authorized the Wall Street bailout, and it's time for taxpayers to assess what they have to show for their \$700 billion investment.

Here's what we know: About half of the money has been spent. But no one seems to know who got the majority of it or what's being done with it. Asking questions is all the more important because the cash doesn't seem to be doing much good.

One final piece of Christmas cheer: While very few American workers lucky enough to still have jobs will be getting a bonus this year, indications are that many of the Wall Street bankers who caused this mess will be getting their usual millions. So much for congressional oversight.

Now Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson says the Bush administration's proposed \$17 billion in loans to the auto industry will deplete the \$350 billion Congress has released so far, so he wants the remaining money to be made available. No way. Not a single additional dollar should be authorized until it's certain that the money is going toward its intended goals - unclogging the credit market and stabilizing the economy.

It isn't only Democrats fretting over how Paulson has spent the money. Republicans in the Senate and House are calling for a full accounting. So far, he has refused. Congress' investigative arm, the Government Accountability Office, has further criticized Paulson, saying the Treasury Department needs more transparency and hasn't shown that the money is being used to benefit taxpayers rather than to protect CEOs' compensation.

The Treasury Department has acknowledged that about \$100 billion went to American International Group and Citigroup to help keep them in business. The rest, in theory, went to bolster various U.S. banks. There is widespread speculation that the banks are hoarding the money, using it to buy up healthy banks and taking full advantage of a Bush administration loophole that is letting CEOs use the money for compensation.

Congress has to get the facts and make sure any further allocations are used to help Main Street rather than Wall Street. Institutions that receive federal help have to pass it on in the form of credit to help small and large businesses stay viable and keep people employed.

On its own, the loan package the administration announced Friday to tide over the auto industry is a good plan, perhaps even better than the more elaborate bailout congressional leaders tried to push through. It will buy General Motors and Chrysler time to reorganize and show that they can return to profitability, essentially postponing a decision on further help until the Obama administration takes over. That's fair.

There's not much left in the toolbox to combat this economic crisis. Interest rates can't go much lower, yet the unemployment rate continues to climb. There is still too little confidence in the American economy. Making sure that the Wall Street bailout money is used wisely in the months ahead will help to restore that confidence. Congress failed to get proper assurances the first time around, and it can't make the same mistake again.

THE SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

Students see the possibilities

The world has bigger problems than the media's current miseries, so you may have missed these reports from two days last week: Macmillan Publishing eliminating 64 jobs, New York magazine announcing its first layoffs, top-level execs getting the ax at CBS, a 10 percent staff reduction at the New York financial news-weekly *The Deal*, Crain Communications dumping 6 percent of its workforce, a pay freeze at *The New York Times*, eco-themed magazines succumbing to slumping advertising, National Public Radio laying off 64 staffers, Detroit's two dailies cutting home delivery to three days a week.

Now, I know what you're thinking: Say, if only I were a youngster just starting out. I'd sure be giving serious thought to a rewarding career in the media!

College students are renowned for that kind of shrewd logic. So it's no surprise to learn that the latest survey of university journalism and mass communications programs indicates that after a modest leveling off in 2006, enrollments have resumed their hearty rise. (Earlier this decade enrollments at the country's 400-some programs were increasing by 4 percent a year for undergraduates and 5 percent for post-graduates.)

"I don't think students see the field as narrowly as we do," explains Lee Becker, the University of Georgia professor who heads the annual enrollments survey, which will be released this month. "They're not as focused on turmoil in the industry."

Instead, they view the society as deeply involved with journal-

ism and mass communications. "That's just not going to go away," he says. "There will still be journalism and public relations jobs and positions in advertising."

Still, as Becker agrees, it's also true that studying journalism doesn't necessarily reflect a career choice, any more than majoring in English commits a student to becoming a poet. Some students simply want to develop expressive skills and proficiency with advanced communications tools.

But many are heading into the media. In the program where I teach - embedded in a selective, Southern liberal arts college - some four out of five majors do go into media jobs, perhaps one in three joining the beleaguered world of journalism.

How crazy is that?

To be sure, journalism has never been an especially rational career choice. It's like theater. Both have always been best left to people with unruly passions who couldn't imagine themselves doing anything else.

That said, and even though most of my post-Watergate newsroom generation has been shooed into premature retirement and virtually none of the media companies I worked for still exist, it's just possible that there has never been a better time to jump into the media.

The richness, velocity and imaginative reach of the change today's media are undergoing is breathtaking. Entire industries are emerging to populate such technologies as Facebook, iPhone and Blackberry with services, interactive opportunities and smart informational feeds. Traditional media are ferreting out expansion options: BET, having opened up in the Caribbean and Britain, will be operating in 29 countries of Africa. Variety, the entertainment industry newspaper, last week described two new websites gearing up to

deliver smart coverage of the TV, movie and music business; one will also enable subscribers to set up their evenings out.

The furious pace of innovation affects technology, revenue, content options, public service - a huge range of media opportunity.

True, journalism is a tougher nut, partly because news is perishable and doesn't lend itself to multiple resale, which is how new media enable other content creators to cash in on the ricochet across exhibition windows. But even for journalism, a heads-up new company like Politico, which started life as a stand-alone originator of top-tier political news, has moved into the syndication business and is selling its feeds to established distribution outlets like newspaper websites - which, by the way, dominate online news. A brand-new startup called GlobalPost has assembled a network of 70 correspondents in 52 countries to fill the vacuum in foreign news.

Big, vexing problems remain in creating a durable business model to enable journalism to prosper without the lavish advertising support it has depended on for the past century and a half.

But the new media's offerings of fresh information and topical commentary have energized vast new audiences of people who want to hear, to be heard, to be fiercely engaged - and that's just the terrain on which journalism thrives.

So maybe these students know more than we think.

Edward Wasserman is Knight professor of journalism ethics at Washington and Lee University. He wrote this column for The Miami Herald. Readers may write to him at: The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla. 33132, or e-mail him at edward_wasserman@hotmail.com.

A cure for medicine's ills

"It can't be done," said one consultant. "You're crazy," said another.

Such was the feedback from the management gurus I went to when I was gathering information on how to open *The Village Doctor*. No one believed it could succeed in today's toxic medical reimbursement environment.

But after 15 years of management magazines telling me how to fit in the one extra patient a day, I finally read something that made sense.

Dr. Gordon Moore, an innovative physician from New York, was using technology to streamline processes and cut overhead, allowing him to see fewer patients per day while generating the same net revenue.

And by seeing fewer patients a day, he spent more time with each one, improving their satisfaction but also improving his professional satisfaction.

In other words, by shifting the focus from the doctor-patient encounter to the doctor-patient relationship, everybody won.

In 2003, armed with this theory, I began the experiment of *The Village Doctor*.

(I bring up my practice to show a way to move forward in primary care and to encourage other doctors to consider a similar approach. This practice design is not for everyone and does not represent the only way to provide great care. But it shows that things can change: Doctors can have the freedom to assess how to deliver the kind of care they long to deliver, and patients can expect to receive the kind of care they long to receive.)

I found and renovated a small home in my neighborhood with the intent of inserting the physi-

cian back into the community. I hired a wonderful nurse who does all the office receptionist and nursing duties. I purchased a robust electronic health record system that not only organizes all the information in the office, but also allows me to do my own billing.

Minimizing costs associated with rent and employees reduced my overhead to only a fraction of a traditional office. Although I receive the same insurance reimbursements and co-pays as most medical practices, by breaking free of the other financial shackles, I was able to jump off the treadmill of seeing 30 to 40 patients a day (I average 12 to 15) and spend more time with each patient.

I almost always can see established patients the same day they call, and I rarely have an office wait longer than 10 minutes. My patients can call me, and I can call them back. I am even able to offer home visits to homebound patients in my community. Studies of my patients confirm their satisfaction with a majority of them stating they receive "perfect care."

But just as important, because I am not constantly overwhelmed, I have the breathing room to analyze the care I deliver and the flexibility to implement changes to improve it. I am able to make a good living, spend more time with my family, and still have the time to go to meetings in the community to try to improve local health, and the time to work in national collaborative studies to try to improve primary care as a whole. I feel in control and happy.

And I am not alone. What started as a fringe idea has now become the Ideal Medical Practices movement. Even as primary care has begun to show signs of constriction, the number of IMPs opening has continued to explode (www.impm.com).

There is a very active online

community where physicians share ideas and information on how to make these practices work. There is a formal curriculum offered where practices can begin to understand how to implement change and improve quality. There is even an annual meeting where we get together and challenge each other to take the next step to continuously improve what we do.

We are driven by the love of medicine and the desire to provide superior care to our patients, and we believe if we can prove the cost savings from delivering better care, we can begin to shape the change in reimbursement necessary to encourage and allow other like-minded physicians to follow.

Both doctors and patients fear that primary care is entering its twilight years. As expenses continue to soar and reimbursement continues to stagnate, the treadmill of patients the physician has to see will grow to an unsustainable level.

And as the pile of administrative paperwork continues to force its way between doctors and patients, the resulting frustrations sour anyone on choosing this noble profession as a career.

What can be done to save it? The answer is simple. We must refocus on the most important thing - our relationship with our patients - and fight as hard as we can to never lose that focus again.

Dr. John Brady owns and operates an independent solo practice, The Village Doctor, in the Hilton Village section of Newport News, Va. He is an assistant professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School, a faculty member in the Ideal Medical Practices movement, president of HealthConnector, and was honored as the 2008 Virginia Family Physician of the Year.



EDWARD WASSERMAN



DR. JOHN BRADY

► Church News

Birdwell Lane Baptist Church

Sunday worship services are at 10:55 a.m. and 5 p.m. Children's church is during Sunday morning worship for ages 4-12. If you would like to visit, come by 1512 Birdwell lane and if you need a ride call 264-9924 or 267-7157.

A nursery is provided. Midweek service is at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

This Sunday evening service will be at Canterbury South at 4 p.m. Come worship with the retired of the community and lift them up.

Our night watch service will be Wednesday from 8 p.m. until midnight with preaching, singing, blackeye pea fellowship, games and we will pray in the new year.

We wish everyone a very blessed new year. For further information, call 267-7157 or 267-8214.

First Presbyterian Church, Coahoma

The friendly folks at First Presbyterian Church, Coahoma invite anyone to come and worship with us. We meet at 11 a.m. Sunday to share the scriptures, sing, pray and worship, led by Commissioned Lay Pastor Tom Koger.

The Christmas Eve worship service Dec. 24 was a special time of worship to welcome Christmas

Day.

The lectionary for the First Sunday after Christmas is Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2:22-40.

First Presbyterian Church, Big Spring

Wednesday activities for next week will be Bible study at 5:17 p.m., but there will be no youth group or choir practice.

The performance of "Remembering" in the chapel, followed by a chili supper, featuring Max Green's infamous chili, was a memorable Advent experience for all those who participated and watched last Sunday evening.

Dec. 24, we had our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. "God's Sign of Peace," by Eugene Butler and "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly," a Polish carol, were the choir's offering for the service. The Rev. Bronaugh chose for the sermon topic "The Birth," based on Luke 2:7.

The lectionary for the First Sunday after Christmas is Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40. The choir will offer "See Amid the Winter Snow," by John Goss and "Shout the Glad Tidings," by Paul Lindsey Thomas. Rev. Bronaugh's sermon, "The Message," is based on Isaiah 61:10-11.

All of us at First Presbyterian Church wish for everyone, especially in these trying times, a blessed new year.

First United Methodist Church

Christmas day has come and gone, however for those who were part of this miracle in Bethlehem many questions remain. In both of our services of worship this Sunday Marshall van Pelt, Justin Ypina and Tanner Churchwell portray the shepherds and their prospective of the blessed event. Services are at 8:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. with Sunday school classes for all ages in between at 9:45.

It is the sincere prayer of our pastor, staff and congregation that this continues to be a joyous and blessed season for you and your family. If you are looking for a church home in the new year we hope you will come and visit with us.

And to usher in 2009 the Senior Adult Ministry, better known as SAM, invites the congregation to a scrumptious breakfast buffet at 9:30 a.m. Jan. 1, in Garrett Hall. Bring the family and your appetite for breakfast with all the fixins, including those blackeyed peas for good luck.

It's all happening at Fourth and Scurry, First United Methodist Church, where families grow in Christ.

It's the day after Christmas

This is the day after Christmas and all through the house, Lay crumpled up paper, and a fat little mouse.

The stockings that hung by the chimney with care

Were now limp and sagging from the goodies once there.

The children were playing their new video game

As Mom secretly stepped on her new scale in shame.

Dad sat in dismay as he scratched at his head.

The budget was blown — no shattered — and dead.

Soon the jolly old mail man would bring in his sack

Enough bills to their door to break his poor back.

"It's Visa, it's Discover, it's

Mastercard, too.

Hey, what's this new one? I haven't a clue."

"But the gentleman said it was zero percent

As long as I paid it instead of the rent."

So I maxed out the card on those thingamabobs

And pray that I'll soon find a couple of jobs.

One thing is certain, as sure as I stand

This year Christmas got a little out of hand.

Dad asks, "Was it worth it?" And this I can say,

"The kids were so quiet for at least part of the day."

I hope you had a Merry Christmas.

God bless.

Composed by Jerrie Stocks and her daughter, June George



JERRIE STOCKS

Hurricanes, economy hurt Texas churches

HOUSTON (AP) — Some religious centers are closing their doors, while others are laying off staff as a result of the struggling economy coupled with the devastation of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike.

The centers have responded by eliminating unfilled positions, recruiting volunteers to take on paid positions, reducing hours of operation to save energy costs and postponing building construction.

St. John's Methodist Church in Houston employs 40 people and will see a 20 percent staff reduction between Christmas and New Year's Day, the Rev. Rudy Rasmus said.

Philanthropic gifts at St. John's are down 30 percent, Rasmus said. He's having to cut services and budgets at the same time some are searching for spiritual anchors.

"It's hard to hear that kind of news and feel holiday cheer," Rasmus told the Houston Chronicle.

The Rev. Ken Gurley of First Church in Pearland said his congregation has helped to pay mortgages for three other Pentecostal churches.

"The combined effects of Katrina, Rita and then Ike have really stretched church resources to the max," Gurley said. "In all of these crises, churches

literally emptied their pockets."

Several Evangelical Lutheran churches in Galveston and Houston were struggling even before Hurricane Ike, which blasted ashore near Galveston on Sept. 13 flattening buildings and killing at least 37 people in Texas.

The Park Place Lutheran Church of Houston closed in November 2007, and a for sale sign was planted in the front lawn. Financial problems contributed to the decision to close, said Bishop Mike Rinehart of the Texas-Gulf Coast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The property was recently sold.

At the Hare Krishna temple, a drop in donations, not attendance, has temporarily stopped construction on a new building.

Hansa Medley, the temple's outreach

director, said donations are down \$200,000 — or about 22 percent from November 2007 to November 2008. She's hoping construction will resume in February.

George Barna, founder of a research firm that studies Americans' religious habits and behavior, published a bleak report earlier this month about the impact of the economic downturn on churches. The Barna Group found that one out of five households had decreased its giving to churches or other religious centers. And among that group, 22 percent had stopped giving altogether.

Still, some religious leaders are hopeful December will again be a good month for contributions. Barna estimates that as much as one-third of a church's annual revenue comes at the end of the year.

Forget regrets; it's time to look forward

It's time — time to pick up all those plastic Santas that have fainted on lawns and inflatable snowmen that have melted in front yards all over town.

It's time to throw away all the torn wrapping paper and sort through the bows worth saving and those to be tossed in the trash. It's time to shake the last bit of candy out the stockings and pack them away. It's time to take down the lights and bring the wreaths inside. It's time to dismantle Christmas trees and stuff the decorations back into the closets for another year.

It's also time to polish off the last of the Christmas fudge and resolve to start a new diet tomorrow or the next day. It's time to start walking again and get back to aerobics classes. It's time to dust off exercise bikes and see whether the wheels still turn or if they have frozen up from lack of use.

It's time to lift weights and see how much heavier they got during the holidays. It's time to take the bathroom scales out of hiding and face reality. It's the time of the year to buy new weekly planners and add more folders to those crowded file cabinets. It's time to rip up expired coupons and shred no-longer-needed receipts. It's time to read Christmas cards

et for another year.

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Whether we're glad that 2008 is finally over or wish that it could have lasted another month, the appointed time has come. It's time to forget regrets and look toward the future. It's time to welcome a new year.

one last time and make changes in address books. It's time to delete email forwards and clean out inboxes. It's time to pay bills and make budgets. It's time to hang up new calendars and start writing 2009 on checks.

King Solomon, whom many believe was the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, was known for his wisdom. He observed: "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven — (Ecclesiastes 3: 1 NASB).

Whether we're glad that 2008 is finally over or wish that it could have lasted another month, the appointed time has come. It's time to forget regrets and look toward the future. It's time to welcome a new year.



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BY HOLIDAY MATHIS
When the warrior planet Mars marches his army into the power-playing realm of Capricorn he becomes a strategic combatant. It's a cool, calculating placement that bodes well for long-range missions. Don't rush. Commanding people are patient people. Think like a chess player -- make an opening move with the endgame in mind.



HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Connectivity is lacking in the life of a loved one and you can help. You are empowered to get this person networking with his or her peers. A nearby senior citizens center, play park or gym could be instrumental in this effort.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are called to an audition. It looks like this one might just be the one you win. Keep trying. You are perfect for this role. Whatever happened in the past, stay optimistic about the future.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Fulfillment is the theme. Is it marriage you want, a long-term business contract, perhaps? Be very careful in all dealings. Whatever you conjure up is likely to come to fruition. Tonight, remain sober of thought.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Take action. Shake it up. Go ahead and turn over that rock. There is

nothing too scary to be found there -- only the sign you needed that it's time to move on. Facing the truth ultimately brings happiness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A long-awaited journey will finally commence. Whether your initial step is finding a travel guide or reserving tickets, you embark. It's best not to over-think. Go forward as though it will all work out.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Life seems to center around food. It's a metaphor for every kind of nourishment. Magic is the main ingredient in the appetizer, main course and dessert. Devour and delight. Yours is an abundant and tasteful existence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your pedigree helps out. Strings are pulled in favor of you. Someone could even repay an old debt to your family by helping you along. Enjoy all the help you get, for next time it may not be that easy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Delve into the realm of great wealth. Your reward is not in the same place where you found it yesterday. The treasure that awaits your attention is on a new road. Find that road by finally trusting your instincts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have taken on more than your share and have succeeded. But it appears you will remain an unsung hero for a small amount of time. When the singing starts it will be your praises that echo through the choir.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You feel you have to be everything to everyone, which is usually a bad idea. However, you might have some luck in the endeavor now. Share your knowledge and your bread with all who ask. Tomorrow you will be sharing in their rewards.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Mutual satisfaction is on the docket. Find the most likely way to bring about fulfillment in all your business dealings. When in doubt about whether you should first give or receive, be the giver.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You long ago learned that everything is not about you, though today it's a little harder not to take things personally. Find your center amidst the gale-force winds and wait out this current storm. The air is cleared tonight.

WEEKEND LOVE FORECAST: **ARIES:** You're only interested in those who can keep up with your fast pace. **TAURUS:** You enjoy those who push you to take on greater challenges than you would if left to your own devices. **GEMINI:** The romantic prize goes to the one who displays the most patience. **CANCER:** Don't let external forces keep you from pulling off a romantic move. **LEO:** Your commonsense approach is sexy to someone who is equally pragmatic. **VIRGO:** You are able to help someone you adore out of a minor mess. **LIBRA:** After the events of

tonight, you'll realize anew what and whom you really want in your life. **SCORPIO:** The people you meet are incredibly lovely, attractive and able to spark your imagination. **SAGITTARIUS:** Someone with a soft touch will reestablish your faith in humanity. **CAPRICORN:** Economic factors do not have to get in the way of romance and, in fact, you show love more imaginatively when your resources are limited. **AQUARIUS:** Reacting to the unpredictable moods of your loved ones will heighten your emotions and keep you intellectually on point. **PISCES:** Developments in another corner of the world affect a key relationship.

COUPLE OF THE WEEKEND: Aries and Capricorn are both affected by the march of Mars through Capricorn. Aries

is always guided by the warrior planet, and Capricorn feels his force acutely all next month. Under other circumstances these two might have a slow and friendly courtship, but right now these two signs will passionately converge, figuring out straight away what it takes to get under the other person's skin.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: I am a 34-year-old woman and met "Marc" a year ago. Marc is 45 and divorced with three kids. We hit it off from the start and have been going strong for 10 months. Marc is a terrific guy who treats me well and is a wonderful father to his children. I love him deeply and want to spend my life with him.

The problem is, I want to have a baby. I love Marc's kids and would treat them as my own, but they live with their mother and we see them only every other weekend and on certain holidays. I want to be a full-time mom, but Marc doesn't want any more kids and even had a vasectomy to make sure. I asked him about reversing the vasectomy, but he isn't interested.

I was diagnosed with a fertility problem several years ago and was told I would have difficulty getting pregnant. The doctor said adoption would be the best choice, but Marc doesn't want to raise another child. Kids are expensive and he already pays quite a bit in child support. But I have wanted to be a mother since I can remember and cannot imagine being content otherwise.

I've never met a man I've cared about more than Marc, and now my desire to raise a child with him is even greater. But I know marrying him means I won't have a child of my own, adopted or otherwise. I don't know what to do. -- Perplexed

Dear Perplexed: This is a deal-breaker. While many women find fulfillment in mothering other people's children through teaching, volunteering, babysitting, etc., we cannot promise this will work for you. If you believe you will be increasingly resentful of Marc's unwillingness to raise a child, you must break it off. Sorry.

Dear Annie: I would like to say a few words about Christmas newsletters. I got one yesterday, and it depressed me so much that I cried most of the afternoon.

Please, people, try to be a bit more sensitive when you write up these glowing reports of all the wonderful things you have accomplished during the year. Not all of us are as fortunate as you. The holidays only remind us of everything we have lost.

All it takes is a downturn like a lost job, an injury, serious illness, natural disaster or a death to end everything you are bragging about. There are no guarantees in life. You can lose everything in the blink of an eye. My husband died four



**KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR**

years ago, leaving me with nothing. Since then I have endured the death of my mother and a dear friend, the loss of a job, and the near death of my daughter and grandson in childbirth. I work two jobs just to be able to heat my house and buy food. I have a college education, but never expected to support myself at this age. In the future, I would appreciate it if you would cut me from the mailing list. Send my copy of your newsletter to one of the fancy friends you are trying to impress. It does not impress me. Be happy, but please don't rub everyone else's nose in it. -- K.

Dear K.: Many people love Christmas newsletters because it gives them an opportunity to catch up on news of family and friends. But when a newsletter is simply a brag sheet, no one enjoys reading it. We hope our readers will remember to temper their enthusiasm with thoughtfulness.

Dear Annie: "Embarrassed Daughter-in-Law" didn't like her mother-in-law's poor English. Years ago, when my son was little, we depended on an older neighbor to provide child care services. I cringed every time she spoke. But she gave our son loving, caring attention. It was not my job to correct her, nor would I dare insult her. Values like integrity, honesty and fairness are worth far more than the correctness of her English. -- Dis Ol' Cajun in Easton, Md.

Dear Easton: We couldn't have said it better.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 118190, Chicago, IL 60611. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.
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BIG SPRING HERALD

710 Scurry • PO Box 1431 • Big Spring, TX 79721 • (432) 263-7331 • Fax 432-264-7205

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____ Date Taken: _____

CLASSIFIED AD

Write one word on each line:

Up to 25 words: __ Sunday Only \$19.75 __ One weekday only \$12.75 __ Two Consecutive Days \$17.50
__ Three Consecutive days \$22.00 __ Four Consecutive Days \$25.50 __ Five Consecutive Days \$28.25
__ Six Consecutive Days \$30.75 __ Two weeks \$56.65 __ Three Weeks \$71.65 __ Four weeks \$85.65
__ Garage Sales (3 days) \$17.00
Each add'l word 20-cents per word per day. Add \$1 for Wednesday (TMC)

Enhancements Price per word for entire run: __ Bolding \$1.00 __ Centering \$1.00 __ Italics \$1.00
Price for entire run: __ Blind Box \$12 __ Photo \$4.00 __ Graphics \$1.00 __ Logos \$1.00

Prices include placement on internet at www.bigspringherald.com

Start Date _____ Classification: _____

<p>DEADLINES: 12 noon Fri. for Sunday; 4:15 Fri. for Monday; 12 noon Mon. for Tues; 12 noon Tues. for Wed.; 12 noon Wed. for Thurs.; 12 noon Thurs. for Fri.</p>	<p>CLASSIFICATIONS: Announcements; Business Opportunity; Cemetery Lots; Financial; Garage Sales; Help Wanted; Instruction; Items for Sale; Jobs Wanted; Lost and Found; Miscellaneous.; Mobile Homes; National Ads; On the Farm; Pets; Public Notice; Real Estate for Rent; Real Estate for Sale; Services Offered; Vehicles; Legals</p>
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Enclosed is \$ _____
 Cash Money Order Check Credit Card# _____
 Exp. Date _____ Vcode# _____

Salesperson: _____

Are you a subscriber: __ Yes __ No

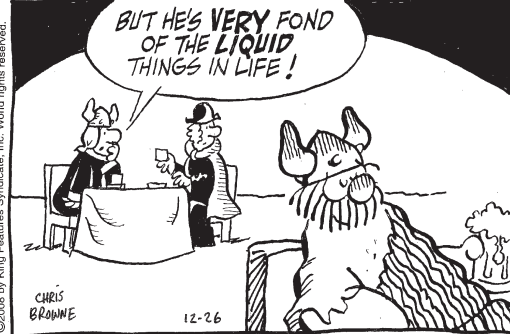


Table with 27 columns (channels) and 13 rows (time slots) listing TV programs and their details.

DENNIS THE MENACE

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

HAGAR



'Santa was nice to you, Dad. Everything he brought me was already put together.'

'Daddy! Somebody left a gift for you here under the mistletoe!'

BLONDIE



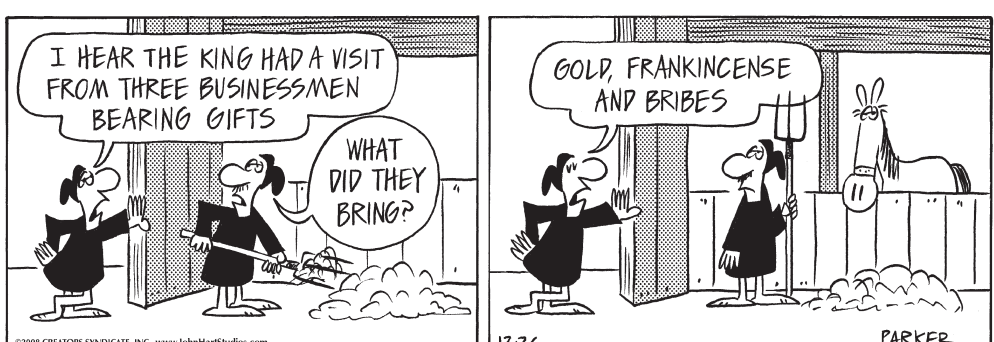
BC



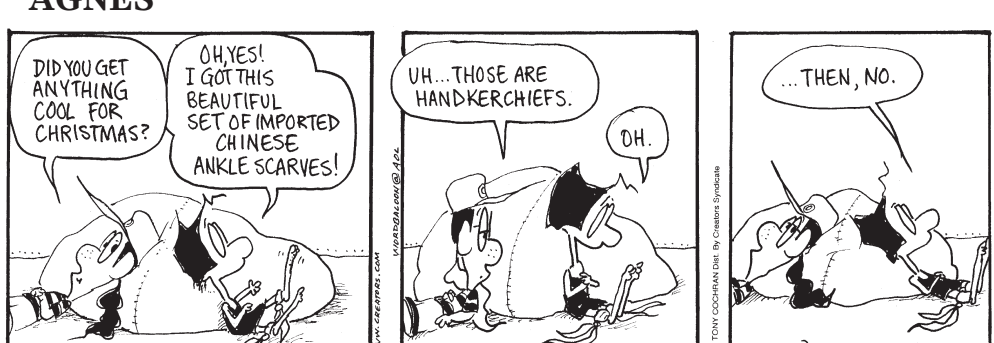
This Date In History

Today is Friday, Dec. 26, the 361st day of 2008... In 1917, during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation authorizing the government to take over operation of the nation's railroads...

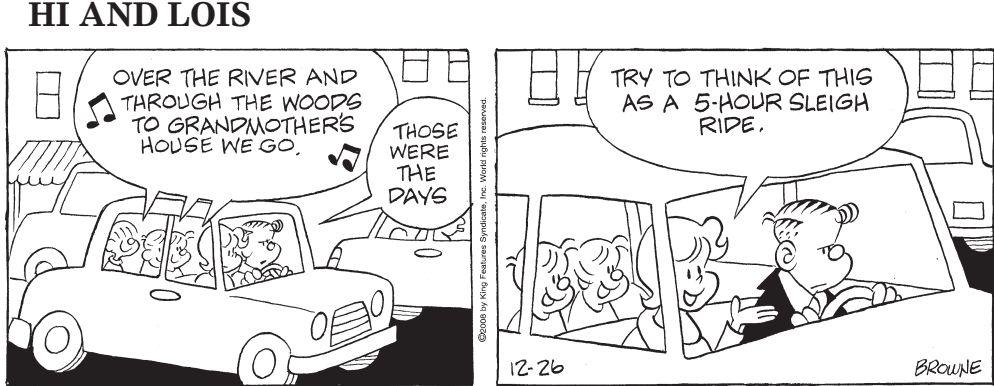
WIZARD OF ID



AGNES



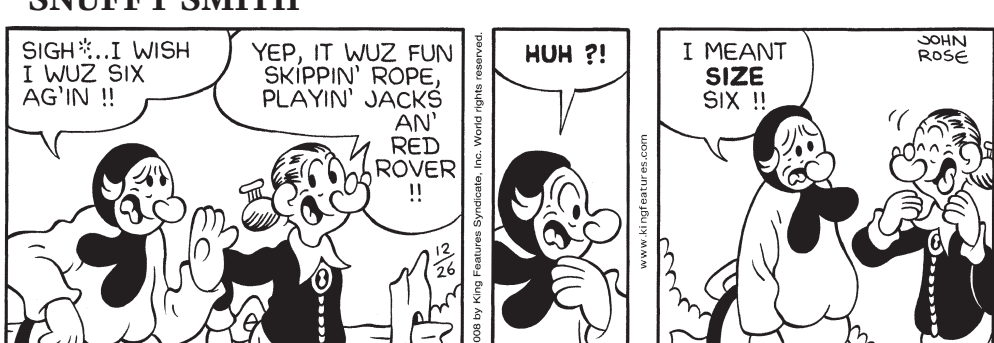
HI AND LOIS



THE OTHER COAST



SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



FLARE GAME

Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

Newsday Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid and clues including: 1 Presidential monogram, 4 'Raw' material, 8 Realm, 14 Aussie runner, 15 Draft orders, 16 Crowded, and then some, 17 Things that flare, 19 Lawrence portrayer, 20 Player, 21 Cain's nephew, 23 Vietnam Memorial designer, 24 Things that flare, 28 Without foundation, 31 'Vamoose!', 32 'What Happens in Vegas' costar, 33 Bit of warning, 35 Plot device, 39 MI neighbor, 40 Things that flare, 42 Pair, 43 Not very respectful, 45 Conclusion preceder, 46 Like Oberlin, since 1833, 47 Petty clash, 49 First name in TV talk, 51 Things that flare, 55 Family room, 56 Indy legend, 57 The Southern states, 61 Ersatz bookmark, 63 Things that flare, 66 Loosen, in a way, 67 Verdi opera villain, 9 Random criticism, 10 SHO alternative, 11 Town in Campania, 12 Museum piece, 13 Heavenly places, 18 Hitchcock film of '69, 22 Savings, 25 Pick on, 26 Distance driven, 27 ERA supporter, 28 Vows, 29 Singer Simone, 30 Winery inventory, 34 'Fresh Air' home, 36 Teen fave, 37 Took action against, 38 List heading, 40 Composing-room concern, 41 Old World deer, 44 ID since 1936, 46 Sharp rival, 48 Darling, 50 In great demand, 51 Make sense, 52 Three-time director of Eastwood, 53 Fireplace, 54 Dot-com commerce, 58 Inside view, 59 Memo heading, 60 Baseball 'Tonight' ainer, 62 'The Bells' monogram, 64 Much of 'Deck the Halls', 65 Woods grp.

Answer to previous puzzle grid containing words like ALITO, HOED, SWAP, RAMEN, EURO, ORZO, COMMERCIAL, BREAK, UPSET, TATTLE, VIN, BOMB, LACER, CRIMP, ROALD, HAS, RAZORS, DROSS, SEVENTENSPLIT, EMAIL, TOUGHS, TDS, OGLS, TENOR, HEIGL, TRES, ORO, RAGLAN, RULER, ARMORED, DIVISION, STAB, REEF, MANNA, HOSE, OWNS, BUGSY.