

The Times-News

Twin Falls, Idaho/99th year, No. 357

Wednesday, December 22, 2004

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50 cents

GOOD MORNING

WEATHER

Today: Chilly, partly cloudy and mainly dry. High 30, low 12.
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MAGIC VALLEY



Brighter days ahead: Students mark coming of the solstice.

Page B1

MONEY

Making the move: Minico's economic development director relocates his office.

Page E1

FOOD & HOME



One more time: Holiday leftovers don't have to be dull.

Page C1

SPORTS

Rivalry renewed: TFHS took on Minico in girls hoops on Tuesday.

Page D1

OPINION

Late fine fracas: County's pursuit-of-late-fines may need to be revised, today's editorial says.

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COMING UP



Chukar limits

Game bird numbers hold strong in southern Idaho this season.

Thursday In The Times-News

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U.S. base attack kills 22



A cloud of smoke covers a dining area after an apparent insurgent mortar attack on forward operating base Marez near Mosul, Iraq, on Tuesday. At least 22 people were killed and 66 wounded Tuesday in an attack on the U.S. and Iraqi base, a Pentagon official said.

Strike ranks most deadly since start of Iraq war

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A 122 mm rocket slammed into a mess tent Tuesday at a military base near the northern city of Mosul, ripping through the ceiling and spraying shrapnel as U.S. soldiers sat down to lunch. Officials said 22 people were killed in the deadliest single attack against Americans in Iraq since the start of the war.

The dead included 20 Americans — 15 servicemembers and five civilian contractors, — and two Iraqi soldiers. Sixty-six people were wounded, including 42 U.S. troops, Capt. Brian Lucas, a military spokesman in Baghdad, said early Wednesday.

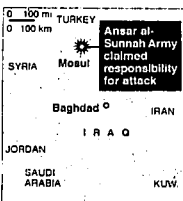
Hillburton Co., a Houston-based company whose subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root supplies food service and other support activities for U.S. troops in Mosul, said seven of its workers were killed. Hillburton did not give the nationalities of the dead but they apparently included the five American civilians. The two other deaths, if correct, would bring the overall toll to 24. Inside the tent, U.S. soldiers

reacted quickly. With people screaming and thick smoke billowing, soldiers turned their lunch tables upside down, placed the wounded on them and gently carried them into the parking lot, said Jeremy Redmond, a reporter for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch embedded with the troops in Mosul.

A radical Sunni Muslim group, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army, claimed responsibility for the attack — the latest in a week of deadly strikes across Iraq that highlighted the unwavering power of the insurgents in the run-up to the Jan. 30 national elections.

President Bush said the explosion should not derail the elections and that he hoped relatives of those killed know that their loved ones died in "a vital mission for peace."

"I'm confident democracy will prevail in Iraq," he said. Portland (Maine) Press Herald photographer Gregory Rice, who was sleeping about a quarter-mile from the mess hall when he was awakened by the loud explosion, said he rushed to the scene, where a soldier



SOURCE: ESRI

told him "he heard a whoosh, he looked up and saw a fireball halfway between the ceiling and the floor."

The attack at Forward Operating Base Marez came hours after British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a surprise visit to Baghdad and spoke of "a battle between democracy and terrorism."

"White House spokesman Scott McClellan, responding to a question about how Iraqis will be able to safely get to some 9,000 polling places if U.S. troops can't secure their own bases, said there was "security Please see IRAQ, Page A2

116th 100 miles away from blast

Local soldiers with the 116th Brigade Combat Team were nowhere near Mosul when an explosion killed at least 20 people, 19 of them soldiers, and injured at least 60.

"There is no indication any soldiers from the 116th were involved," said Lt. Col. Tim Marsano, a public affairs officer for the 116th stationed in Boise. "The majority of our soldiers are located south of there."

Soldiers with the 116th recently arrived at forward operating bases in and around Kirkuk, which is about 100 miles south of Mosul. For stories about their activities, see page B-1.

It was unknown Tuesday whether any Idaho soldiers from other units were killed in the insurgent attack on the military base near Mosul. Marsano said families would first have to be notified and it would be at least two days before the Pentagon would release any names.

Accident claims 8-year-old

By Rebecca Meaney Times-News writer

BUHL — A girl was killed after being struck by a car Tuesday morning. The 8-year-old was on her way to the bus stop on the last day of school before Christmas vacation.

At about 7:30 a.m., Ciera Livia of Buhl was crossing U.S. Highway 30 when she ran into the path of an oncoming vehicle, according to the Twin Falls County Sheriff's Department. Donald Rice, 61, of Buhl was driving westbound in a 1993 Toyota Paseo west of Buhl when he struck the third-grader.

Ciera was flown to Magic Valley Regional Medical Center where she was pronounced dead.

No citations were issued at the scene, said Nancy Howell, spokeswoman for the sheriff.

The accident remained under investigation Tuesday evening.

Cindy Peterson, president of Popplevelt Parent-Teacher Network, has set up a fund at Farmers National Bank for Ciera's family. Donations may be made at any branch.

"We just thought we needed to do something for the family," Peterson said. "We wanted to help. You have to go through it at any time of year. It's so hard, especially around Christmas."

The school organization has given the family a gift certificate to a local grocery store. Other donations to the family will help defray expenses related to the accident.

"It's expensive to put a funeral together," Peterson said. "We just want to do whatever we can do to help."

Grief counselors were on hand at the school Tuesday. Children will not return to school until after the Christmas break.

Anyone who has questions or wants to help the Livia family may call Peterson at 543-4678.

Want to help?

- Donations to the family of accident victim Ciera Livia can be made at any Farmers National Bank.
- 914 Main St., Buhl
 - 890 Shoshone St. E., Twin Falls
 - 1097 Blue Lakes Blvd., Jerome
 - 144 S. Lincoln, Nemo
 - 160 S. Idaho St., Wendell

THE BIRDS CONVERGE

Countless crows roost in downtown trees

By Julie Pence Times-News writer

TWIN FALLS — As dusk descends upon downtown Twin Falls each day, so do the crows — thousands of them.

It's a real-life Alfred Hitchcock movie, the rerun of which begins at about 5:30 and goes into late evening. By midnight the trees in the parking lots along Second Avenue West look like solid black balls, said Karla Williams, downtown business district director.

"They even make that clikking sound," said Magic Valley Bank employee Kay Gabric, alluding to the scene from "The Birds" in her actress Tippi Hedren barricades herself in her home while outside the sky becomes ominously black before birds begin slumming into the house with full force.

It's been about a month since downtown workers began coping with their own bird-blackened sky. In the past two years, girdles have begun manshuffling flocks to bring to some order back to downtown. It's none too soon for people who are downtown every day. People who have been downtown for decades say they've never seen anything quite like this.

Susan Bench, who also works at Magic Valley Bank, said getting to her car after work is an adventure.

"I was standing under the awning last night

Please see BIRDS, Page A2

Most mad cow reforms remain unfulfilled in U.S.

The Associated Press

WICHITA, Kansas — After the first U.S. case of mad cow disease was discovered, government regulators and industry officials worked quickly to reassure consumers it was safe to eat a steak. A year later, you'd never guess there was any concern at all — Americans' appetite for beef has remained strong.

But consumer advocates say there's a problem with that lack of reaction from the public — it might have diminished the im-

pact of the mad cow case on improving food safety. Aside from several steps taken shortly after a single cow in Washington state was found infected with the disease, reforms that were promised remain unfulfilled.

"Federal regulators, trying to reassure U.S. consumers, promised to strengthen the country's food safety rules. For the most part, it didn't happen," said Caroline Smith DeWaal, director of food safety for the Center of Science in the Public Interest.

Please see COW, Page A2

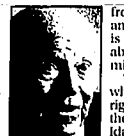
Idaho gains governor's mansion

Simplot donates \$2.8M property

The Associated Press

BOISE — Potato magnate J.R. Simplot and his wife, Esther, have given their famous hilltop home in Boise to the state of Idaho for use as Idaho's next governor's mansion.

The 7,400-square-foot home dominates the neighborhood skyline and encompasses 36 acres of rolling green hills below the pine-covered mountains of the Boise National Forest. The property, an outright gift



J.R. Simplot donated the hill, I built this (house), with this flag, and I love it. The 95-year-old Simplot said Tuesday, speaking from his brick driveway in below-freezing temperatures. "I think the word of Idaho, and I'm pleased to let somebody have it like the governor. As gov-

ernor's go and come, they'll enjoy it, I hope. They won't have any trouble from me, that's for sure," Simplot said, to the crowd of family members, guests and lawmakers assembled for the announcement.

The signature feature of the home is the 40-foot by 30-foot American flag that flies on a pole at least 80 feet high.

Kempthorne said the gift of the property came with only one condition — that a flag of that size must always be flown over the home.

"That's a promise we will be proud to make and keep," the governor told the Simplots and others gathered at the mansion's announcement.

TWIN FALLS FORECAST

Today: Partly cloudy and mainly dry. High 28 to 30.

Tonight: Partly cloudy and mainly dry. Low 18 to 21.

Tomorrow: Mostly clear, but very cool with thinning clouds.

BURLEY/RUPERT FORECAST

Today: Partly cloudy and dry. Highs from 26 to 29.

Tonight: Partly cloudy with a few clouds. Low 18 to 21.

Tomorrow: Mostly clear, but very cool with thinning clouds.

IDAHO'S FORECAST

SUN VALLEY, SURROUNDING MTS. Cloudy and cold with a slight chance of a few flurries.

BOISE Today Highs 14 to 27. Tonight's Lows -14 to -4.

NORTHERN UTAH Today Highs/Lows 29 to 57 / 12 to 19.

Mountain Home Today Highs/Lows 24 to 31.

Weather key: sun, sunn, part cloudy, cld, mostly cloudy, cldy, flurries, drizzle, rain, snow, showers, A, wind.

TWIN FALLS FIVE-DAY FORECAST

Table with 7 columns: Today, Tonight, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Yesterday's Weather. Includes weather icons and temperature forecasts.

ALMANAC - TWIN FALLS

Table with 4 columns: Temperature, Precipitation, Humidity, Barometric Pressure. Includes sunrise and sunset times.

MOON PHASES

Table with 2 columns: Dec 26, Jan 3. Includes moon phase names and times.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Tomorrow. Lists regional cities and their forecasts.

NATIONAL FORECAST

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Tomorrow. Lists national cities and their forecasts.

WORLD FORECAST

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Tomorrow. Lists world cities and their forecasts.



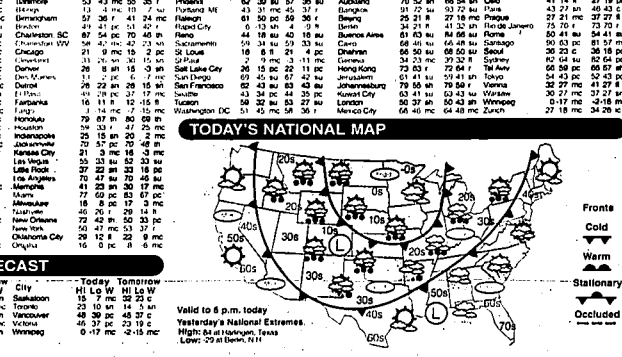
Yesterday's State Extremes: 41 at Lewiston. Low: 9 at Stanley.

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CANADIAN FORECAST

Table with 3 columns: City, Today, Tomorrow. Lists Canadian cities and their forecasts.

TODAY'S NATIONAL MAP



The Times-News

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Crows' adaptability presents puzzling problem

By Julie Pence. Twin Falls writer.

TWIN FALLS — Crow season is open until the end of January, but that doesn't do much for...

said Gary Hompland, a regional conservation officer for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

they've landed forever. "They're one of the hardest birds to get rid of," Hompland said.

sociate with other crows when it is small, particularly with its immediate family, it might never be accepted into "crow society."

said, but it takes a mosquito to spread the disease, and they aren't around during winter.

Birds

Continued from A1. "I'm writing to you by air, and I could hear the bird splats," she said.

paid too by sending clapping their hands, blowing horns and setting off car alarms.

streets supervisor Bob Hildreth said. "You have to wait until it quits freezing," Hildreth said.

last weekend, they were wearing face masks while they searched and scrubbed.

other nearby businesses, they've moved eastward one block.

Cow

Continued from A1. "Consumers didn't react very much, so they don't feel the need to take action, and I think that is unfortunate," Smith DeWald said.

form encephalopathy, or BSE; — was expanded to include more than 221,000 animals.

Iraq

Continued from A1. "There is a level of vulnerability when you go in there and you don't feel like there's a hard roof over your head," Hastings told CNN.

mitz said was supposed to have been ready for Christmas. "There is a level of vulnerability when you go in there and you don't feel like there's a hard roof over your head," Hastings told CNN.

female soldier cried as a friend hugged her. "A huge hole was blown in the roof of the tent, and puddles of blood, lunch trays and overturned tables and chairs covered the floor, Redmon reported.

CORRECTION

Employee hearings aren't open to the general public. A story Tuesday about the suspension of a Rupert city employee contained incorrect information about city policy.

The Times-News NEW Information Line 735-3350. Lottery and Weather Information are just a phone call away!

Tax plan may call for small changes

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush's campaign to make the tax code simpler, fairer and more pro-growth is likely to involve incremental changes to the current system rather than a sweeping effort to scrap the venerable income tax for a radically new approach, such as a national sales tax.

But the changes Bush will propose are still expected to generate huge opposition, especially if he suggests scrapping favored tax breaks such as the deduction for state income tax payments.

Tax experts in close contact with the administration say signs are pointing toward a plan that will seek to improve the income tax code, rather than replace it with a single-rate flat

tax with no deductions, a national sales tax or Value Added Tax, all ideas that gained prominence among conservative Republicans in the 1990s.

"Our members think the current tax code is way too complicated, but given the realities of the budget deficit and the embedded interests in the current tax code, it is very hard to make major changes," said Dan Danner, senior vice president for public policy at the 600,000-member National Federation of Independent Business. His group campaigned in the early 1990s to "Sunset the Code" and replace it, with simpler tax system.

For its part, the administration insists that no decisions have been made on details of a

tax overhaul.

"The president has said he wants to look at all the options that would make the code fairer, less complex and more growth-oriented," Treasury Secretary John Snow said in an interview.

But tax analysts noted the administration did not showcase any radical tax reforms at last week's two-day White House economic conference, preferring instead to review incremental changes.

Analysts seeking insight into Bush's thinking have seized on a November 2002 Internal Treasury Department memo by Pamela Olson, then assistant treasury secretary for tax policy. Her fifth option, described as the "least radical," could serve as a blueprint for Bush's tax re-

form push, analysts say.

While retaining the current income tax system, this option would eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax, which was designed to make sure the rich paid their fair share of taxes but is now ensnaring more middle-income taxpayers. The proposal also would significantly expand opportunities for people to set up savings accounts where their investment earnings would be tax-free, something the administration has been pushing for two years.

Eliminating the AMT, which covered 3 million mostly wealthy taxpayers in 2004 but will raise the taxes of 23 million taxpayers by 2008, would cost the government an estimated \$600 billion over 10 years.

Study finds drop in teen drug use

Inhalants rise in popularity, however

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fewer teenagers are smoking cigarettes or using illegal drugs, but a survey released Tuesday shows a troubling increase in the use of inhalants by younger adolescents.

The striking rate among younger teens is half what it was in the mid-1990s, and drug use by that group is down by one-third, according to the University of Michigan study, done for the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Less dramatic strides have been made among older teens.

Health experts and government officials called the annual survey of eighth, 10th and 12th graders a sign of continued progress in the effort to reduce youth drug use and said further declines would come only with sustained public education campaign about the consequences of drug abuse.

Overall, illicit drug use among teens declined by 7 percent over the past year, and 17 percent over the last four years. There are now 600,000 fewer teens using drugs than there were in 2001.

"These are sustained, broad

and deep declines," national drug policy director John Walters said at a news conference. "The challenge before us is to follow through."

Altogether, gains in 2004 over 2003 were modest. Researchers are troubled by increases — especially among eighth graders — in the use of inhalants such as glue and aerosols, and a rise in the use of the pain-control narcotic OxyContin. Use of most other drugs declined or held steady.

Health officials said they are concerned that use of inhalants, which are easily accessible to children, may rebound unless children are warned about the grave dangers they pose. Inhalant use had been declining since 1995, when the Partnership for a Drug-Free America launched an anti-inhalant media campaign.

"Research has found that even a single session of repeated inhalant abuse can disrupt heart rhythms and cause death from cardiac arrest or lower oxygen levels enough to cause suffocation," said Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Sixth Potter book arrives this summer

News gives readers a reason to celebrate

NEW YORK (AP) — Get ready for publishing's ultimate blockbuster sequel: Harry Potter V.

Setting the stage for another round of midnight bookstore parties and marathon readings into the morning, the penultimate novel in J.K. Rowling's mega-selling series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" will go on sale at 12:01 a.m. on July 16 in the United States, Britain and four other countries.

publishers said Tuesday.

"I know you all expected this to happen on Christmas Day, but I was sure that those of you who celebrate Christmas have better things to do on the day itself than fight your way into my study," the British author wrote in a message posted on her Web site, "whereas those of you who DON'T celebrate Christmas would definitely prefer not to wait until the 25th."

Rowling, 39, noted that while she is pregnant with her third child, she has had the time "needed to tinker with the manuscript to my satisfaction and I am so happy to share it with you with the end result. I only hope you feel it was worth the wait when you finally read it."

The book will also be published July 16 in Canada.



Fans of the Harry Potter books, from left, Jennifer Sanett, 23, Stephanie Dennis, 13, Calli O'Connor, 11, Lindsey Michel, 13, and Meghan Sanett, 10, look at their copies of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire immediately after buying it at the Barnes and Noble in Calabasas, Calif., July 7, 2000. The sixth novel in J.K. Rowling's blockbuster Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," will go on sale in Britain and the United States on July 16, 2005, publishers said Tuesday.

Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. With the previous works available in 62 languages, many, many other countries are sure to follow.

"Katie Covington has written a brilliant story that will dazzle her fans in a marvelous book that takes the series to yet greater heights," said a joint announcement by Nigel Newton, chief executive of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc in England, and Barbara Marcus, president of Scholastic Children's Books in the United States.

The 2005 publishing date means the world will be spared the seemingly interminable three-year wait between Potter IV, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," and Potter V, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," which came out in summer 2003.

"The news should be celebrated by Rowling's millions of fans and by the struggling publishing industry. Competition for sales began almost immediately, with Amazon.com and the superstore chains Barnes & Noble, Inc. and Borders Group, Inc. announcing 40 percent discounts on the book's \$29.99 suggested retail price. By Tuesday, "Half-Blood Prince" was already No. 1 on Barnes & Noble.com's best seller list and was in the top 10 on Amazon.com.

"Sales from the last Harry Potter book grossed as much as a major Hollywood movie in its

first week of release," Steve Riggio, chief executive officer of Barnes & Noble, Inc., said in a statement Tuesday.

"We expect this next book in the series to make publishing history once again. We've already collected 500,000 e-mail requests from our customers wanting to be notified of the date of the next book so this announcement is very welcome news for readers everywhere."

The retail price is the same as for Potter V, even though Rowling has strongly hinted she will not approach the industrial-sized 870 pages of "Order of the Phoenix." In an earlier message on her web site, she stated, "According to the plan for book six, it will be quite a bit shorter than 'Order of the Phoenix.' I am not going to swear on my children's lives that that is going to be the case, but I am 99% certain of it."

About 260 million copies of the fantasy series, which debuted in 1997, have sold worldwide, and "Order of the Phoenix" sold an astonishing 5 million copies in the U.S. within 24 hours of publication, generating as much money as the top Hollywood release of that weekend, "The Hulk."

Sales have remained phenomenal even as Rowling's books have grown longer and darker, reflecting the boy wizard's maturation into adolescence. The first three Potter books have been made into hit movies and inspired countless Potter paraphernalia, including candy, cakes, capes and toys.



J.K. Rowling

Lottery jackpot winner's granddaughter found dead

SCOTT DEPOT, W.Va. (AP) — The 17-year-old granddaughter of the nation's largest lottery winner was found dead near her boyfriend's home, her body wrapped in a sheet and plastic tarp.

Brandi Bragg, who lived in the nearby town of Hurricane, was last seen alive Dec. 4. She was reported missing five days later by Jack Whitaker, who won a \$314.9 million jackpot on Christmas Day 2002 but has battled legal and other problems since then.

The cause of death was under investigation. Authorities said there were no obvious signs of violence.

An autopsy was planned for Tuesday, and police said Tuesday morning there was nothing new to report.

Bragg's body was found Monday behind a junked van several hundred feet from the home of Steve Crosier, whose son Brandon was Bragg's boyfriend, said Trooper S.E. Wolfe.

A preliminary investigation indicated that Bragg may have died in the Crosier's house and her body was later moved.

Wolfe said Monday's discovery was based on interviews with Brandon Crosier and others. "We are focused on him but I wouldn't call him a suspect yet," he said.

Photo may show victim with suspect

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Bobbie Jo Stinnett and the woman accused of strangling her and cutting her baby from her womb were photographed together at a dog show months before last week's attack, a woman who attended the show said.

Stinnett, 23, was eight months pregnant when she was strangled.

Thursday at the home in Skidmore, Mo., where she and her husband, a 26-year-old veterinarian, were raising their son.

Investigators used tips from other art terrier enthusiasts and data from Stinnett's computer before arresting Lisa M. Montgomery, 36, on Friday. Montgomery, 36, who claimed to have given birth to a girl the previous day, is charged with kidnapping resulting in death.

A photo gallery on Stinnett's own Web site, <http://www.imagineevent.com/happyhaven/>, includes pictures labeled as being from an April 2004 dog show in Abilene, Kan. One of the photos shows seven people holding art terriers. Stinnett is at the right with a purple ribbon, and a woman who resembles Montgomery is at the left. There is no caption identifying the people.

But dog trainer Nancy Strull, of Omaha, Neb., said Thursday she was at the dog show. She said both Montgomery and Stinnett, as well as Stinnett's husband, Zeb, and one of Montgomery's daughters, are among the seven people in the picture.

Study: Death doesn't wait for holidays to pass

CHICAGO (AP) — Death takes no holiday, according to a study that shows the widely held notion that dying people can somehow hold on until after Christmas or other important events in their lives.

Donn Young, a biostatistician at Ohio State University's Comprehensive Cancer Center who studied more than 300,000 cancer patients, said the supposed phenomenon is mostly based on wishful thinking and selective memories.

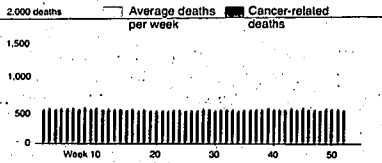
"The mind does play a role in illness," he said. "But the idea that death is something that an individual patient can control by sheer force of will — just from looking at the data, this doesn't appear to be so."

Some doctors and nurses who work with gravely ill people are not convinced by the findings, arguing that the statistics do not tell the human side of the story.

Young and statistician Erin Hrade looked at Ohio death certificates for people who died of cancer from 1989 to 2000 and

The dying cannot postpone death

A review of 1.3 million death certificates in Ohio from 1989 to 2000 failed to confirm previous reports that dying people can intentionally postpone death to survive personally significant events.



SOURCE: Journal of the American Medical Association AP

analyzed how many deaths occurred before and after three dates — Christmas, Thanksgiving and the person's birthday.

"If there was an effect, you'd see a dip before ... and an increase after," Young said. But there was no dip, and no significant difference in the proportion of cancer patients dying before an event and those dying after.

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Christmas Eve Closings

The lobbies of First Federal branch offices will be closed on Friday, December 24, 2004 for the Christmas holiday weekend.

To serve our customers, drive-ins will be open until 2:00 pm.

We will resume normal business hours on Monday, December 27.

From all of us at First Federal...Merry Christmas!

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WORLD

Thieves get away with \$39 million

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — In one of the world's biggest robberies, thieves took the families of two top bankers hostage and forced the buses to help them steal more than \$39 million from the vaults of a Belfast bank's main office, authorities said Tuesday.

Experts said Monday's raid on the Northern Bank cash center was the biggest robbery since 1987, when thieves made off with about \$65 million in cash and other valuables from the Knightsbridge Safe Deposit Center in west London.

The tactics in Belfast — particularly the use of hostages taking as a ploy to infiltrate a high-security target — suggested a level of sophistication and experience most commonly found within Northern Ireland's rival outlawed groups, particularly the Irish Republican Army.

"This isn't a gang of Belfast criminals who just got together. It's more than that. This looks like a military operation with obvious connections," said John O'Connor, a former commander of Scotland Yard's elite detective unit in London. Assistant Chief Constable



A security guard carries a strongbox out of the Belfast headquarters of Northern Bank on Tuesday in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Thieves stole more than \$39 million from the Belfast headquarters of the bank, making the heist the biggest robbery in Northern Ireland history.

Sam Kinkaid, the police officer leading the investigation, said his detectives didn't yet know whether a particular group was responsible for what he called a "clearly well organized" raid.

In the neighboring Irish Republic, Justice Minister Michael

McDonnell said peace-making efforts could be hurt if police linked the raid to the IRA, which is known to have robbed banks in the past in finance operations.

"The IRA has observed a truce since 1997 but remains active,

Just the facts

THE ROBBERY: Gang takes the families of two bank executives hostage and forces the bosses to help them steal more than \$39 million from Northern Bank in Belfast.

THE PLAN: Tactics — particularly hostage-taking — suggested a level of sophistication most commonly found within Northern Ireland's outlawed groups, particularly the Irish Republican Army.

LAST BIG HEIST: In 1987, thieves made off with about \$65 million in cash and valuables from the Knightsbridge Safe Deposit Center in London.

— The Associated Press

Putin says he could work with Yushchenko presidency

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin, who openly backed Viktor Yushchenko's rival for president of the Ukraine, said Tuesday he could work with an administration headed by the pro-Western candidate.

"We have worked with him already and the cooperation was not bad," Putin said during a visit to Germany. "If he wins, I don't see any problems."

Yushchenko was prime minister from 1999 to 2001, and before that he headed the Central Bank for six years.

Putin irritated the West by quickly congratulating Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, the Moscow-backed candidate, after last month's presidential runoff against Yushchenko, only to see his purported victory canceled because of vote-rigging. A new runoff will take place Sunday.

In eastern Ukraine, a pro-Yushchenko convoy of about 50 vehicles — dubbed the "friendship journey" — was turned back by supporters of Yanukovich after it reached the outskirts of Donetsk, a city that is the prime minister's base.

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Residents celebrate Stalin's 125th birthday

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Dozens of residents of Josef Stalin's hometown celebrated the 125th anniversary of his birth Tuesday, singing, dancing and drinking champagne toasts to the late Soviet dictator.



Josef Stalin

was work," Dzhugashvili told reporters. Considered a brutal tyrant for political purges, in which more than 10 million are believed to have died and for forced collectivization that wiped out the peasantry, Stalin continues to be admired in the former Soviet Union — even by many non-Communists — for leading the country to victory in World War II and pulling it into the industrial age.

He died in 1953. In Russia, hundreds of people laid flowers and a wreath at a granite bust of Stalin just off of Red Square, along the Kremlin's walls.

"In the years after the war, Stalin managed to mobilize the economy and resurrected 1,700 towns, to rid the country of rationing and turn the country into nuclear power that for 50 years was a reliable shield," Communist Party leader Genady Zyuganov said.

Godzilla may fade from screen

The Washington Post

(TOKYO) — Could Tokyo finally be safe?

Godzilla, the movie monster that terrorized the city in a series of films over 50 years, is set to stamp off into the sunset for what may be the last time. After the release this month of "Godzilla: Final Wars," Toho Pictures has decided to mothball the great green one, uncertain when, if ever, it'll return to the big screen.

Japan's largest film star has disappeared before — going into hibernation for a decade in the mid-1970s, only to come back with a vengeance after a grass-roots movement by fans nudged Toho into reviving the celebrity city smasher. But after

28 films over a half-century, even Godzilla's makers concede that one of the longest-running film franchises in history appears to be losing steam.

In recent years, the aging lizard's movies have drawn about half the audiences they used to, barely covering production costs. Even the big-budget Hollywood version of "Godzilla" in 1998 was a monstrous box office bomb.

"The clichés for kids are more varied now and they are watching the cuter monsters, like the ones from "Pokemon," lamented Toho Pictures President Shogo Tomiyama. "If Godzilla does come back, it will be in the hands of another generation of movie directors."



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West attracts urban escapees

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nevada, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah and other states blessed with wide open spaces are seeing steady population growth as increasingly cramped Americans look for ways to spread out.

The Census Bureau's annual population estimates showed that the United States added another 3 million people in the last year for an overall population of just under 294 million. The top 10 list of fastest-growing states was dominated by those in the West and South, with Nevada leading the way for the 18th consecutive year.

While favorable weather and jobs continue to be primary lures, people also are looking for places that offer space, affordability and the great outdoors. They have placed Idaho fourth on the list of fastest-growing states. Utah was seventh and New Mexico tenth.

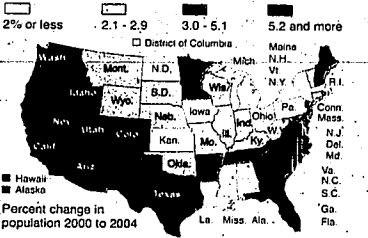
Robert Lang, a demographer with the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, said those states are appealing to people who want to escape the urban sprawl of big cities like Los Angeles and Denver.

"This is part of a long diffusion of population of the country because of the interstate, airports and the Internet," Lang said. "We use the whole country now."

Fern Bull, 74, moved from Colorado to Layton, Utah, about 25 miles north of Salt Lake City, to

West and South lead in population growth

The Census Bureau's annual population estimates showed the fastest-growing states were dominated by those in the West and South.



SOURCE: Census Bureau

be near her two young granddaughters. In the five years since arriving, a Wal-Mart, a small shopping mall and two new fast-food restaurants have been built on once-empty parcels of land near her home, she said.

Utah's population is 2.4 million, up 1.6 percent over the past year and up 7 percent since 2000. Bull, who is involved in a social group that welcomes new residents, said local officials are trying to keep infrastructure on a pace with the influx.

"We're just trying to get highways and transportation," she

said. "As more people keep moving in, we need more."

Idaho's population rose 2 percent over the last year to nearly 1.4 million. There is growth around the capital of Boise and in Kootenai County in northern Idaho. That is where the shoreline of Lake Coeur d'Alene has been increasingly fenced by million-dollar homes, and subdivisions are climbing higher up the county's hillsides, said Rand Wichman, the county's planning and zoning director.

"We're struggling to keep the infrastructure up with the

growth, and schools and roads and all those kinds of things are perpetually behind the curve," he said. "The question is how long we can keep this a great place to live before the pressure overwhelms us."

Nevada, spurred in large part by the sprawling growth around Las Vegas, grew by 4.1 percent to 2.3 million people.

Retired utility worker Lloyd Wittell, 58, moved from the Los Angeles area to North Las Vegas last year. "Your money goes a little further here," he said. "A nice house in Southern California can be a nicer home in southern Nevada."

Arizona had the second-largest growth, up 3 percent to 5.7 million, while Florida was third with a 2.3 percent increase to 17.4 million. Georgia, Texas, Delaware and North Carolina also were in the top 10.

Massachusetts was the only state that had a population decline — albeit down a slight 3,800 people, or 0.1 percent, to 6.41 million. Demographers speculated it could have been caused by an exodus of people leaving to escape rising costs in the Boston area.

The bureau estimated North Dakota gained population for the first time since at least 2000. Also, Frey said, with low housing prices and warm climates, don't expect the popularity of Arizona or Nevada to wane soon.

Aquifer probably contaminated by fuel

COILUR D'ALENE (AP) — Fuel spilled from a broken pipe at a railroad depot has seeped into the region's water supply, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality officials said.

Though little is known about the extent of the leak, site remediation manager Marc Kalbaugh said he believes water from the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Aquifer remains safe to drink.

"Based on the information I have, I don't think there's a risk," he said.

The diesel fuel and motor oil spilled at Hauser Mainline Fueling Facility, which was built atop the water supply for Spokane and Kootenai counties. The break in the pipe was found Dec. 10, but officials with Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. said they believe it had been

leaking since the depot opened Sept. 1.

Kalbaugh based his assessment on field observations, but he stressed that little is known about the true extent of the leak.

"We don't have any hard and fast data in our hands right now," he said.

Officials have drilled nine soil test sites and four wells to assess the spill. Gus Melonas, spokesman for railway company, said officials were able to smell petroleum at the groundwater interface of one soil sample.

Local leaders are pushing for more information from the railroad and Department of Environmental Quality.

Despite prodding, both the state and the railroad initially refused to share preliminary results from soil and water sampling.

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Work ends at Indian burial site

SEATTLE (AP) — The state on Tuesday ended all work at the Hood Canal bridge construction yard in Port Angeles where hundreds of Indian remains have been discovered at the site of a centuries-old village.

In a written statement, the state Department of Transportation said it would look for a new site for making bridge pontoons and anchors needed to rebuild much of the existing floating bridge across Hood Canal, 50 miles away.

The state already has spent \$58 million on a project initially slated to cost \$283 million to widen and improve the bridge, the major link between the Olympic Peninsula and the Puget Sound region. Transportation department spokeswoman Linda Mullen said the costs will climb higher, although it's not yet clear how much more will have to be spent to move the project elsewhere.

Mullen said the state simply couldn't find a way to get the bridge rebuilt in a reasonable time and without huge overruns while respecting the needs of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe to find and honor their ancestors.

"I think the sheer scale and uncertainty of what is in the ground pointed us in the direction of leaving," she said.

Bush increases

Hispanic support

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush made increasing his support among Hispanic voters a leading goal in 2004 and he apparently achieved that aim largely because of gains among Hispanic men, a tracking poll suggests.

Hispanics are the nation's fastest growing minority group, though they made up only 8 percent of the overall vote nationally. They are a key voter group in swing states like Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Florida and Nevada.

Democrat John Kerry hoped to win enough support from Hispanics to win in a couple of those states, but Bush swept all five.

The National Annenberg Election Survey found Bush's overall support among Hispanics was 35 percent in 2000, but grew to 41 percent in 2004. Exit polls of voters indicated a similar shift.

Bush's stronger performance with Hispanics helped him fend off Kerry in several states, but especially in New Mexico where Bush narrowly won this time. Democrat Al Gore won New Mexico in 2000.

The Annenberg study found Bush's support among Hispanic men nationally grew from 34 percent in 2000 to 46 percent this year.

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MORNING BREAK

Follow up-on details, Cancer; Capricorn can't ignore business duties

IF DECEMBER 22 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY... Plan ahead and take care of loose ends in 2005 as you may have some temporary setbacks in the early summer. It pays to have some extra pennies squirreled away in case of unexpected expenses and to vigilantly look after the affairs of your significant others as well. All your most important desires and goals will flourish in August and September, however, so keep this in mind when planning vacations or romantic getaways. Capricorn's aim could hit its mark here as an existing family unit could receive an uplifting boost.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Others seem to be coming around to your way of thinking and are likely to agree with whatever proposals you before them. Go ahead and gather allies but wait to put

HOROSCOPE
Jeraldine Saunders

new business strategies into motion until after the New Year.

TARUS (April 20-May 20): There is plenty of time left to finish last minute shopping and prepare for holiday events. You might find your popularity peaking in the next few days, so prepare for a barrage of visits and friendly enemies.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Decisions seem easier to make with Mercury heading forward again. Significant others may be concentrating on fun and games instead of business. Let someone else take the lead in making holiday plans.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Generosity is your middle name today but don't forget to put those checks in the mail to pay the bills or get so caught up in exciting happenings that you neglect regular routine. Follow up on the minor details.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You have a knack of being friendly and charming without being overly familiar. It is easy to keep members of the opposite sex at arm's length now, so arrange important meetings where neutrality is a valuable commodity.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Certain ideas lingering in the back of your mind may have recently taken a turn toward a different direction. With Mercury now out of retrograde, it is a bit easier to deal with paperwork and to finalize decisions.

LIRTA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "The more

the merrier" might be your motto. You are eager to demonstrate friendliness with people from varied walks of life. Indulge your passion for entertainments and pleasure socialize to your heart's content.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The love of your life may prefer to mingle with friends rather than sit by the fire holding your hand. Leave the door open and warmer struggles will be yours when that special someone returns to the coast.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A restless need for excitement might have you in search of holiday thrills and you are likely to find a new partner who shares your views. Short-term friendships and romances can blossom under these stars.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It is easy to let social affairs disrupt your normal spending habits. Don't neglect obligations to partners or ignore business duties to the general public. Be kind and pleasant to everyone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your magnetic personality will be in full bloom today and tomorrow, so don't be bashful about accepting invitations that pour in. Be sure to appear where the latest crowds are gathering and bask in the limelight.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Today and tomorrow it might be best to concentrate on making the rounds and touching base with your network of friends. Pull in favors while people are in a generous mood. In the game of life you may be picked as "it."

Americans drink more diet soda

The Associated Press

Still think the cola wars are about Coke vs. Pepsi?

These days the carbonated beverage battleground is diet vs. regular, and it's looking increasingly as though the lightweight could flatten its full-calorie cousin.

Through the highly competitive \$64 billion soft drink industry still is dominated by regular soda, sales of diet are surging and some industry analysts say low-cal eventually could take the lead.

That's because while regular soda sales have sagged, diet's share of the market has grown steadily since the mid-1990s. Bottled water, tea, sports and fruit drinks also are further siphoning regular soda sales.

In an obese nation obsessed with calories and carbs, it probably shouldn't come as a surprise that people are switching to diet. And beverage companies are rushing to give them more choices.

In many ways the soft drink industry is better prepared than most others to capitalize on America's perpetual diet.

"There's no such thing as a no-calorie hamburger. There's no such thing as a no-calorie doughnut," said John Sicher, editor of Beverage Digest. "But the soft drink industry already has these low-cal, powerful brands" of diet drinks.

Last year, regular soda accounted for nearly 73 percent of sales, but that was down nearly 2 percent from the year before, Sicher said. Meanwhile, diet was up more than 6 percent from 2002.

Sicher thinks that trend will continue and even accelerate enough that in a decade diet could outsell regular. He also says diet sales will spur overall growth in the industry, which slumped at less than 1 percent last year.

In fact, John Craven, editor of the online beverage industry newsletter Bevnet.com, says soft drink consumption was down nearly 3 percent last year. If not for the growth in diet soda, that would have been closer to 10 percent.

Coca-Cola Co. spokesman Scott Williamson said Sicher makes sense because sales trends continue as they have. And last week Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc., the world's largest bottler, told analysts that the diet category is one of the company's best chances for growth.

So what's behind diet's strong performance? Calorie consciousness is a huge — and obvious — part of it. Prompted by a growing awareness of their growing waists, more people want low- and no-calorie soft drinks, said Sicher, who has followed the industry for 10 years.

That awareness also extends to retailers, who have to attract diet's business by giving more — and more prominent — space to low-cal beverages, said Dan Dillon, vice president of marketing for Coke's diet sodas.

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Site of Jesus' first miracle found, archeologists believe

CANA, Israel (AP) — Among the ruins of ancient olive trees, archeologists have found pieces of large stone jars of the type the Gospel says Jesus used when he turned water into wine at a Jewish wedding in the Galilee village of Cana.

They believe these could have been the same kind of vessels the Bible says Jesus used in his first miracle, and that the site where they were found could be the location of biblical Cana. But Bible scholars caution it'll be hard to obtain conclusive proof — especially since experts disagree on exactly where Cana was located.



The Wedding Churches, foreground, named after the wedding where Jesus performed his first miracle in the Book of John, sit alongside a mosque in the Arab town of Cana in northern Israel on Monday.

Christian theologians attach great significance to the water-to-wine miracle at Cana. The act was not only Jesus' first miracle, but it also came at a crucial point in the early days of his public ministry — when his reputation was growing, he had just selected his disciples and was under pressure to demonstrate his divinity.

The shards were found during a salvage dig in modern-day Cana, between Nazareth and Capernaum. Israeli archaeologist Yardena Alexander believes the Arab town was built near the ancient village. The jar pieces date to the Roman period, when Jesus traveled in the Galilee.

"All indications from the archeological excavations suggest that the site of the wedding was (modern-day) Cana, the site that we have been investigating," said Alexander, as she cleaned the site of mud

from winter rains.

However, American archeologists excavating a rival site several miles to the north have also found pieces of stone jars from the time of Jesus, and believe they have found biblical Cana.

Another expert, archeologist Shimon Gibson, cast doubt on the find at modern Cana. Since such vessels are not rare and it would be impossible to link a particular set of vessels to the miracle.

"Just the existence of stone vessels is not enough to prove that this is a biblical site," and more excavations are needed, he said.

Based on the shards, Alexander believes the vessels found at her site were 12 to 16 inches in diameter — or large enough to

be the same type of jars described in the Gospel of John.

Other evidence that might link the site to the biblical account includes the presence of a Jewish ritual bath at the house, which shows it was a Jewish community. Locally produced pottery was used at the simple house, showing it could have been from the poor village described in the Scriptures.

Stephen Pfann, a Bible scholar in Jerusalem, said that while the American dig has generally been accepted by scholars as the true site, the shards found in modern-day Cana raise new questions.

"I think there is ample evidence that both sites are from the first century, and we need more information to correctly identify either site," Pfann said.

World Bank head calls for reforms, lifting Israeli travel restrictions

JERUSALEM (AP) — The president of the World Bank pushed Tuesday for Palestinian economic reforms and the lifting of Israeli travel restrictions in the West Bank in exchange for an additional \$500 million in desperately needed aid to the Palestinians.

The visit by James Wolfensohn, his first since the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence in 2000, came as British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived in Jerusalem for talks Wednesday with Israeli and Palestinian officials.

Blair was the most senior in a stream of international officials

traveling here in recent weeks to bolster new peace efforts following the death of Yasser Arafat last month. The diplomats also hoped to build on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to pull out of the Gaza Strip next year.

Britain is proposing a Mideast conference to promote peace prospects. However, no date has been set, and Israel has said it will not attend.

Palestinians want the conference to deal with the toughest issues outstanding with Israel, issues that have strangled previous peace efforts: Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements,

the border and Jerusalem.

Israel believes the conference should deal with Palestinian administrative reforms that would allow for transparency and for clear command over security forces to enable a crackdown on militant groups responsible for attacks against Israel.

The World Bank has said the withdrawal from Gaza must be accompanied by Israeli moves to dismantle roadblocks and lift travel restrictions in the West Bank and Palestinian steps to reform their bureaucracy and end violence. Only then would there be any hope of restructuring the Palestinian economy.

Militants release hostages

PARIS (AP) — Joy swept France with the release Tuesday in Iraq of two French reporters held hostage for four months. The government said Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot should be home for Christmas.

France's upper house of parliament applauded with applause when Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin told the senators the militant Islamic Army in Iraq had freed the reporters.

"It's the best Christmas present we could get," said Chesnot's brother. Thierry, adding that the two men were in good health.

"Until now, our life was murky. I didn't stop crying — and my husband, too," Malbrunot's mother, Audrey, told The Associated Press. "I am really happy," she added, sobbing.

Iraq tribunal pledges fair trial for Saddam

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A special Iraqi tribunal investigating Saddam Hussein and his 11 henchmen on Tuesday promised free and fair trials for the former regime members, rejecting accusations that the proceeding so far have not been transparent.

"The Iraqi special tribunal was to ensure that it is an Iraqi independent court and that it has its integrity, neutrality and transparency," the tribunal said in a statement received by The Associated Press.

"The trial process (will) serve the truth and achieve justice for Iraqi people," it added.

Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi surprised many by announcing the trials of several of Saddam's former regime members would begin sooner than had been expected, although no date was ever set. Then, a judge made similarly unexpected news — announcing without notice last Saturday that two high-profile defendants had already been interrogated.

"The investigation has been done in the presence of an Iraqi (lawyer) who has been chosen by the accused themselves," the tribunal said. "The accused were very cooperative during the investigation session and they may appear again according to the investigation needs."

"The tribunal did not say when Saddam's trial will start.

"For the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the investigation procedures are continuing," the statement said.

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EDITORIAL

County's pursuit of fines may need to be tightened

We're grateful that jolly old St. Nick doesn't go back and check to see who's been naughty and nice with the sort of retroactive zeal being demonstrated by Twin Falls County.

The county is following up on a new state law that allows counties to contract with collection agencies to collect outstanding debts. It appears the county is pushing the law for all its worth, seeking unpaid fines going back to 1989.

County Clerk Kristina Glascock says the county has turned more than \$342,288 in fines over to collection agencies. So far \$28,266 has been paid back. But a major problem is that many residents claim they did pay their fines. Odds are, you disinctively remember paying a fine at the courthouse for breaking the law. It's not like paying the power bill.

It's important to be fair here. County officials remain confident in their computer records, which show no payment history. And obviously there are unpaid fines put there in the community. Officials wel-

come those who argue that they in fact did pay, to bring proof of payment and discuss the case.

But again, most people don't keep canceled checks or records going back 15 years. The Internal Revenue Service says records only need to be kept for seven years. Many banks counsel customers to follow the IRS time frame with personal checking information. And even the county's public defender keeps records for just 10 years.

So why, then, is the county expecting people to keep fine receipts and records that go beyond that?

We can't blame the county and Glascock for pursuing the funds that should have been paid. Every year the county is jilted by people who ignore citations and fines. That lost revenue ends up costing all county taxpayers in the long run.

But the county either needs to reassess the veracity of its computer archives, or be more realistic in pursuing fines from long ago.

Until then, don't throw away any receipts if they involve county government. You may end up regretting it come Christmas of 2019.

Take no offense at 'Merry Christmas'

Let me begin by saying, "Merry Christmas." And by the way, "Merry Christmas," did I mention, "Merry Christmas?"

Let's just say the "Merry Christmas" backlash has officially begun. After years of politically correct "Happy Holidays" and the annual assault on all things Christian in the public square, many Americans are declining to turn the other cheek.



KATHLEEN PARKER

The MC backlash isn't only for, by or about Christians. It is a quintessentially American revolt against absurdity, the inevitable result of narcissistic, nihilist attitudes pushing too far. By now the list of complaints, against Christmas and Christian symbols is familiar, from prohibitions against nativity scenes on public property to the banning of Christmas carols in public schools. The nation's Capitol doesn't even have a Christmas tree anymore; it's a "holiday tree."

Of course, certain religious expressions are fine. If a tribe of Aquilinus wants to hail rhino horns in frog saliva on the National Mall to honor their deity, we'd have a commemorative postage stamp ready by next December. But let a Christian mention the baby Jesus to a kindergarten class and the ACLU wants an exorcism.

"Merry Christmas" means different things to different people, obviously. To devout Christians, the greeting conveys a profound spiritual connection to the seminal event in Western civilization. To non-Christians, the words at worst evoke a season of music, decorations, shopping and gift giving at best, they bespeak a vacation day.

Absent religious content, Merry Christmas otherwise is a universal expression of our best stuff: charity, forgiveness, generosity and hope. What's to



complain about? Oh, you know, people acting goofy under mistletoe, those interminable Christmas carols. All those beautiful tacky trees and fat Santas. Salvation Army bell ringers collecting coins for the poor. Reindeer, snowmen, elves, nutcrackers, wreaths, colored lights, parades, happy children, parties. A regular nightmare if you're an Ebenezer.

Like perennially adolescent adults who rob teens of their right to rebellion, the anti-Christmas brigands have even taken the fun out of "Bah, humbug!" Who wants to be a curmudgeon when everybody's a Scrooge?

Clearly not Jews, an increasing number of whom are leading the charge to defend Christmas. In the past few days, two prominent Jewish commentators — Jeff Jacoby and Dennis Prager — have written columns defending the traditions and spirit of Christmas. Jacoby, a columnist for the Boston Globe, wrote that he finds the sights and sounds of Christmas reassuring: "They reaffirm the importance of the Judeo-Christian culture that has made America so exceptional... and such a safe and tolerant haven for a religious minority like mine."

Excuse me while I mumble,

"Amen." In a piece now circulating on the Internet, Irvin N. Graulich, a Jewish ethicist and child of Holocaust survivors, wrote for the Web site Israel Insider that public creches are beautiful sights that mean "people have gone to the trouble of sharing lovely visuals with all of America, expressing the beauty of their heritage and its spiritual message to humanity."

If not for the marketing of Christian holidays, Graulich wrote, "Chanukah would probably have gone the way of Shavuot, a more significant Jewish holiday which few Jews celebrate because there is no popular Christian holiday surrounding it."

This spirit of mutual respect and generosity is also finding expression among Muslims. Tawheed Aly, a lawyer in Melbourne, Australia, and member of the Islamic Council of Victoria, has written that he is more offended by efforts to restrain religious expression than he is by nativity scenes.

"This is where political correctness loses the plot," he wrote. "What purports to inspire tolerance instead inspires hostility and intolerance... Disrespect the Christianity in Christmas or, worse, doing away with it altogether helps no one. This is not multiculturalism."

It's anti-culturalism." Perhaps this yuletide backlash helps explain why I've been hearing "Merry Christmas" more in the past two weeks than I have the past 10 years. Suddenly everybody's saying it, and yes, I'm a perp. In Washington earlier this month, I made a point of saying "Merry Christmas" to everyone, including cab drivers who were more often than not Muslim or Hindu. Without exception, they smiled around, smiled and said, "Merry Christmas to you, too!"

In Washington earlier this month, I made a point of saying "Merry Christmas" to everyone, including cab drivers who were more often than not Muslim or Hindu. Without exception, they smiled around, smiled and said, "Merry Christmas to you, too!"

Christmas may not be for everyone, but the spirit of Christmas is a non-discriminating, equal-opportunity messenger of goodwill. So Merry Christmas, everybody, and don't smile.

Kathleen Parker, a syndicated columnist for the Orlando Sentinel, welcomes comments via e-mail at kparkerk@kparker.com.

More taxes for bereaved

While we're on the topic of county fees, Twin Falls County seems intent on re-defining the idea of "death tax."

This month Twin Falls County became the first in the state to require a new \$40 fee for coroner services, such as responding to a death scene, signing a death certificate, or examining a body before cremation.

Commissioners also approved a \$100 fee for "decendent removal," for those occasions when the coroner instead of a mortuary must pick up a body.

Taxpayers can understand how the coroner's workload has jumped in the past year with an additional 20 to 25 cases. But most will probably see the fees as a questionable charge.

The county wants additional revenue for the

coroner's \$97,000 annual budget, which feeds the strains of personnel, safety and training costs.

But it's hardly comforting to know that services most taxpayers assume are covered by their tax dollars will soon be mailed as a bill to the bereaved. It's also questionable whether the body removal fee will produce much of the desired revenue. The county has a number of morticians that have rarely, if ever, failed to do the job.

The most troubling sign, however, is adding fees to services that normally are paid for with tax dollars.

The commissioners took the right approach in assigning new fees for those who attend "moral reformation" therapy and anger management classes. After all, they use those services as a result of personal actions.

Divine laws run deep within the Constitution

Why do you suppose it is unlawful to kill, steal, lie, commit adultery, beat up your parents, etc.? To my knowledge, these laws are enacted in every country, city, state and territory, continent or village on earth. It seems to be the only thing that mankind has in common.

I don't believe an infant is born with a conscience, knowing the difference between right and wrong. That's why most young children tell "little white lies," cheat at checkers and often put shiny objects in their pockets that don't belong to them. Morals are a learned behavior.

A conscience is something to develop over time. But why? Why do all of us every person on earth — strive to be a "good" person? Even atheists want to be "good" people, but why? "To what end?"

"The answer has got to be the 'Ten Commandments.' Most children are introduced to them at an early age, so by the time they are old enough to rob a bank, they already know it's wrong without even reading the law.

I have you ever noticed our laws are remarkably akin to the Ten Commandments? Do you get it yet — can you imagine the chaos and anarchy of a world would suffer if we didn't have our God's laws? We would be no better than a pack of jackals.

And now the big shots on the "hill" think we can banish the Ten Commandments from

public places and not suffer the consequences. They have already thrown God out of the schools and now the kids are killing each other, except for parochial schools where the children are taught about God. There are efforts to remove "God" from the Pledge of Allegiance ongoing.

Our Constitution is saturated with references to God and now they want to kick him out of the room, too. That piece of paper is a sacred document dedicated to all Americans, and I don't believe it should ever be amended for any reason.

Our country was built by man's laws and God's laws and the two are compatible because they are one and the same. If you separate one from the other — throw one of them away — you weaken what's left immensely.

A country without God is a hopeless, dismal place. Unless, of course, the people on the "hill" decide to amend the Ten Commandments.

DALE NASH
Jerome

Don't let thieves drive you to outside pumps

Since the beginning of time, people have been paying for the wrongdoings of others. Our taxes pay to house and feed millions, drunk drivers, drug addicts and thieves. We pay higher prices for food and clothing due to theft, and we pay higher premiums on our insurance because of fraud.

Now we are joining other states in prepaying for fuel because of

drive-offs.

Did you know that convenience store clerks have been paying for drive-offs out of their own pockets for years?

Because of a few dishonest people, we all have to pay. It is not that retailers don't trust you, they do not intend to treat everyone as being dishonest. Convenience store clerks don't like money coming out of their paychecks because someone drove away with fuel.

Not to go into a store because of a sign on a door or you felt like you are being inconvenienced and to waste your time, money and fuel by driving into a different town so you don't have to walk one extra time into a store is foolish. You are letting the dishonest people win.

As for the person that wrote the letter that said he drives to Kimberly to get gas, did you throw a fit at Christmas because you did not receive the toy you really wanted? Do you think life revolves around you? Times change and again, it's time to adjust. As the commercial says, "we don't live in perfect." Oh! Only if we did.

KRIS LAMPO
Twin Falls

Traffic solutions start at the education level

At last! An article addressing one of my two pet peeves! That's the traffic law violators who make an almost unbelievable number of illegal left turns routinely.

The worst offender I witnessed had pulled into my

north-bound, left-turn lane at Caswell and, facing me, blocked my vehicle from the intersection while he waited for a chance to lurch across two lanes of oncoming traffic to pull into a fast-food outlet.

A close second for worst offender made a stop without any warning in the southbound on Bal Lakes during rush hour traffic. This woman held up traffic for blocks while she waited for a chance to turn left on the east side of the street. That's when I knew what it was like to experience road rage. I wanted to follow her into the parking lot and shake her until her teeth rattled but managed to keep my cool.

The Twin Falls Police Department may have a worthwhile approach to educating violators with a four-hour class in addition to stepped-up enforcement. However, those remedies would take place after the violation. I suggest including questions about crossing a double yellow line on the driver's license test. I don't believe that issue is emphasized at all. Also, to what extent is it discussed in a driver's education class?

Now if we would only pass an anti-noise ordinance, we would address my other pet peeve — those vehicles with speakers going full blast that pull up next to me at an intersection. If Kimberly has such an ordinance, why can't we have it?

BEVY PETERIT
Twin Falls

The Times-News

Brad Hurd... Publisher
Chris Steinbach... Editor
The members of the editorial board and writers of editorials are Brad Hurd, Chris Steinbach, Steve Crump and David Cooper.

LETTER

Drive off with gas? Expect to lose a license

There is another way of handling drivers who drive off at gas stations.

In Montana, they just take your license plate number and if you don't pay, then they take your driver's license away.

In the past week I have heard of several people who are driving to Kimberly or filling up in Jerome. They are going out of their way because

of the prepay.

What is hard for me to understand is why the city had to become involved? The owners of the gas stations have the power to order prepay at their own stations.

Were they afraid to go it alone. In fear that the other owners won't follow suit and do the same?

It is a real inconvenience to those of us regular customers!

CORENE BUHLER
Twin Falls

Doonesbury



By Garry Trudeau



Mallard Fillmore



By Bruce Tinsley



Doonesbury



Doonesbury



OPINION

The battle for female soldiers

Far more serious than the short-term consequences of some poorly armored vehicles in Iraq are the potential long-term consequences of putting female soldiers in ground combat units.

Critics of placing women in combat units say the Army is manipulating language in rules governing such placement to achieve a social objective that would substantially and significantly change the way America fights wars and possibly put all soldiers — men and women — at greater risk.



CAL THOMAS

What has raised concerns is a Nov. 29 briefing by a senior Army officer responsible for Army personnel issues at the Pentagon along with a civilian. The briefing by these two people was for Lt. Gen. James Campbell, director, Army Staff. It included a phrase, "The way ahead: rewrite/eliminate the Army collocation policy." Collocation is military-speak for deploying mixed-sex non-combat units alongside all-male fighting units. The official Army policy prohibits female soldiers in units specifically designated as combat units. But some Army officers think they see a loophole large enough to drive through their social agenda.

The linguistic questions revolve around a policy memorandum written on Jan. 13, 1994, by then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin. After "restricting" women from direct combat on the ground," Aspin wrote: "The Services may propose additional exceptions, together with the justification to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness)." (emphasis mine)

What the briefers at the Nov. 29 meeting suggested is that those who wish to place women in combat units alongside men may do so without authorization from the secretary of defense or the White House.

One of the slides used at the briefing suggested the Army under Department of Defense policy "may" include service restrictions based on collocation, cost and other factors, and the Army would have to notify the secretary of defense in order to add restrictions. It also said the policy is silent on dropping restrictions.

The language choice is significant. In Aspin's 1994 memo, the word "may" appears after the four restrictions on women in combat. The word "propose" follows "may." Aspin did not act unilaterally, as the Nov. 29 briefers apparently contended when



they claimed Army policy is "silent on dropping restrictions on women in combat." Adding weight to Aspin's memo is a July 28, 1994, letter from Aspin's successor, William Perry, who said he "approves" of the Army's "proposal."

With National Guard enlistments down and with orders to extend currently serving guardsmen and other service personnel beyond one year of duty in Iraq, there are some who apparently want to use the need for more personnel to ram through their social objective of placing women in combat.

For all of the reasons argued against such a policy in the past, including unit cohesion, increases in sexual harassment,

rape and pregnancy, and the social revulsion most feel about seeing women wounded or killed in combat (or tortured or beheaded by the enemy) not to mention that these are policies that should be set at the top and not by lower ranking military and civilian authorities — overturning restrictions on women in combat will weaken our

military and weaken its effectiveness in fighting and winning wars.

When Congress returns, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees should hold hearings on this issue and call the briefers and Lt. Gen. Campbell and any others who were at the briefing to testify about whether a change in the rule governing women in combat is being contemplated. If necessary, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should be asked whether he and the president plan to continue the policy approved during the Clinton administration, or whether they will permit the policy to be altered by people without the authority to do so.

There are enough challenges to our military at the moment. Changing such a significant policy banning women from direct combat, especially during a time of war and with no input from those who have the

power to set policy, is a bad idea that is not in the ultimate interest of women, men or the strength of our armed forces.

Cal Thomas is a nationally syndicated columnist and Fox News Channel commentator.

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Judge rejects motion to delay Jackson case; trial set for Jan. 31

SANTA MARIA, Calif. (AP) — A judge denied a defense bid to delay Michael Jackson's child molestation trial, saying it would be "a huge step backward" and clearing the way for the trial to begin next month as planned.

Judge Rodney S. Melville also refused to dismiss the case for what his defense lawyers had argued was "vindictive prosecution and outrageous government conduct."

Jackson's attorney Robert

Sanger had asked Melville to postpone the trial for three months, allowing attorneys time to sort through 14,000 pages of evidence filed by prosecutors. The request stalled at Monday's pre-trial hearing for Jackson, who was not required to attend.

Melville said a trial delay would be "a huge step backward... If I continued the case three months, we'll have 300 more search warrants and 40 more motions."

The trial was scheduled to

begin Jan. 31. Both sides estimated it could last four to five months.

Prosecutors had been expected to argue that they be allowed to present evidence during the trial of alleged wrongdoing in the entertainer's past. That matter, however, was rescheduled to be heard Jan. 12.

Jackson, 46, is charged with molesting a boy, conspiracy and administering an intoxicating agent, alcohol, to his alleged victim. He has pleaded not guilty.

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MAGIC VALLEY

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The Times-News
Wednesday, December 22, 2004
Section B

AROUND THE VALLEY

Audubon chapter seeks volunteers

HAGERMAN — The Christmas Bird Count, a special, sporting and competitive annual event — will be held on New Year's Day in the Hagerman area. The local Audubon Society Chapter is looking for regulars and new volunteers to help count the species of birds that either winter over in Magic Valley or are passing through on their way to southern climes.

The group will assemble at 8 a.m. Jan. 1 at the U.S. Highway 30 rest area west of the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area, chapter spokeswoman Sarah Harris said. Groups of volunteers will observe and count species of birds within 15 miles of Hagerman. Locations will include the Snake River, Billingsley Creek, Sand Springs, Ritter Island, Hagerman Fossil Beds and the wildlife management area.

Local volunteers will be among the more than 50,000 people who take part throughout the Americas this winter. The effort has collected more than 100 years' uninterrupted data on migrations, habitat and environmental threats to birds.

Harris said volunteers should be prepared for cold weather. They should wear boots appropriate for all terrain. Hot food, drinks and a mineral pool at Miracle Hot Springs await those who finish the day's compilation.

Volunteers may contact Harris at 734-2645 or at sharris@ca-blouen.net for information.

Newcomb joins Otter campaign in 2004

BURLEY — Idaho House Speaker Bruce Newcomb, R-Burley, has aligned himself with Congressman Jim Burchett, D-Otter, R-Idaho, who announced last week he will run for governor in 2006.

Newcomb will be a campaign manager, along with Congressman Mike Simpson, R-Idaho. Newcomb said Tuesday: "Butch is engaged. If you run into him anywhere, he'll always cheer you up and leave with you feeling better about everything."

Newcomb said he respects Otter's business sense and record in government. It's widely speculated that the 2006 Republican primary for governor will be between Otter and Gov. Jim Burchett, who lives in the Boise area. Newcomb said Otter will have an extra challenge in his campaign because he can only campaign in Idaho on the weekends while he is serving in Congress.

Bliss creates school facility committee

BLISS — After losing two bond issue elections, the Bliss School District plans new tactics to get input on its facility needs. The Bliss School Board decided this week to create a committee of about 15 community members to research how the district can meet the needs of its changing student population, said Laura Schoessler, the board's vice chairwoman. The district lost two bond issues to replace the approximately 75-year-old building. "Obviously, the full school bond is a no," Schoessler said. The district might be able to get more support for some kind of building improvement if the community were more involved in the research and decision-making, Schoessler said. Other possibilities include a kindergarten-to-grade-six building or a kindergarten-to-grade-eight building.

SEASONAL MEASUREMENT



O'Leary Junior High ninth-grader Jiancheng Wu uses his hands to measure how far the sun is from the horizon during an earth science class at the school Tuesday. Wu, along with other classmates, are mapping the movement of the sun throughout the year by taking the measurements at the same place and time of day.

Sun sinks, but brighter days lie ahead

By Karin Kowalski
Times-News writer

TWIN FALLS — Laura Corder's ninth-grade students took a break from studying volcanoes to ponder the sun's position in the sky Tuesday. Most of the students neglected to wear their coats to stand on the lawn at O'Leary Junior High School and sketch the sun as it made its southermost path across the sky. Winter was on their minds and in their shivers.

minutes of daylight. Corder's students track the sun's movements all year for their earth science class. They stand in the same spot and draw the sun's position on different days, to better understand how seasons change.

Chris Anderson, observatory manager at the Ilberet Center for Arts and Science, said the solstice is caused by the tilt of the earth's axis. When the northern hemisphere points the farthest away from the sun, days here are at their shortest.

Although the winter solstice marks the shortest day, it does not have the earliest sunset or the latest sunrise, Anderson said. Those two days occur near the solstice but not on it, because the earth's orbit is not exactly circular and the planet changes speed along its course. On Tuesday afternoon, some of Corder's students revealed in the cold. Others looked forward to summer days.

Soldiers from 116th get settled in Iraq

KIRKUK, Iraq — Soldiers with the 116th Brigade Combat Team "encountered" a different kind of traffic jam on their convoy from Kuwait to Iraq. "We ran into a multicolored herd of camels and it took 20 minutes to get them out of the way," said Spc. Bryann Anderson of Buhl.

It was a long 400-mile journey through the desert to forward operating bases in northern Iraq, but Idaho soldiers reached their destinations safely. "We were worried about hitting improvised explosive devices," Anderson told Capt. Monte Hilbert, deputy public affairs officer for the 116th. "The Iraqis were really excited to see us though, the little kids sitting by the sides of the road having fun, people inviting us in for meals. The Iraqi drivers and pedestrians halted really quick for us and got to the side of the road as we passed. I got from four to eight hours of sleep a night."

Hilbert sent *The Times-News* a firsthand account of the 116th's experiences on the three-day journey, quoting a number of Idaho soldiers. "The soldiers knew it would be a dangerous mission getting to the place they'll call home for at least a year. On the minds of convoy leaders were possible attacks by insurgents who have used improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms to attack coalition forces in the area. Recently, attacks by mobile suicide car bombers, known in the Army as "vehicle-borne IEDs," have been on the rise, so soldiers are instructed not to allow civilian vehicles to crowd and intermingle with the convoy. While told not to point weapons directly at civilians, soldiers retained that being well-

Photo courtesy of CAPT. MONTE HILBERT, 116th Brigade Combat Team

Spec. Sean Crandall, a soldier with the 116th Brigade Combat Team who hails from The Dalles, Ore., cleans and oils his M-50 "Ma Deuce" machine gun before his departure by convoy to Iraq Dec. 11.

Snowpack reports

on a comparison of basin snowpack, on this day, with a 30-year average. *An inch or less for the entire snow season, which peaks in May.

Watershed	% of Avg.*	% of norm.
Salmon	76%	26%
Big Wood	84%	28%
Little Wood	78%	25%
Big Lost	28%	9%
Little Lost	76%	27%
Henry Fork/Teton	83%	28%
Lipper Snake Basin	74%	26%
Castle	111%	33%
Salmon Falls	100%	32%

Views from the convoy
his tent pitched there was the most intense thing that happened. We weren't sure what he was up to. My main concern was in spotting potential enemies before they could engage us, Iraq was interesting. The south made a good impression, but further north it was apparent not everyone liked you."

Idahoans in Iraq
"When the flares started popping off, I got real excited. Our biggest concern was getting to the forward operations base alive. I guess the Great Spirit was watching out for us. It's hard to believe a country with so much oil could have a people who live the way they do. The Iraqi drivers got out of the way quick! It was impossible to believe the poverty these people live in. They pop a tent in the back of a truck and where they stop is where they live."

"I was driving a truck, and my five-ton trailer flipped over. It stopped the convoy, and a Marine company passed us. Twenty miles later, they hit an IED and took crossfire, then drove off the insurgents. We were worried while we pulled security around the flipped trailer. A guy came toward us, reaching into his clothes like someone drawing weapons, then pulled out two cartons of cigarettes and waved them at us. Fortunately, nobody overreacted."

Please see CONVOY, Page B3

Jerome youth gets stabbed

JEROME — A 14-year-old was stabbed Tuesday afternoon in the course of a fight with a 12-year-old, said Jerome Police Chief Dan Hall. Police were called about 3:05 p.m. to the 200 block of Third Avenue East where two boys were fighting after school.

The location is about two blocks east of Jerome Middle School. Jerome Middle School Principal Eric Anderson said the boy who was stabbed ran back to the school to seek help for the injury to his midsection.

Hall said the 14-year-old was taken to St. Benedict's Family Medical Center where he was treated and released. Anderson said he doesn't know whether the other boy was from his school. However, if a student did bring a weapon to the school, he would seek expulsion in line with the district's zero-tolerance policy for weapons. Anderson said the silver lining in the incident is that his student got to the school was a safe place to go for help.

Police had a juvenile suspect in custody in connection with the incident, Hall said Tuesday evening. "They were investigating it as a case of aggravated battery, although charges had yet to be filed. Police did not release any names.

Dog takes fudge from doorstep

BURLEY — Straight from the pages of Dr. Seuss classmate, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas," a dog absconded with a Burley man's holiday cheer. The dog with the apparent swag took earned its owner a citation when it snatched some fudge Friday from the man's doorstep.

Russell Smith, 79, went to his back door around noon to retrieve some fudge a friend had left attached to the door knob, according to a police report. But before Smith could get to the tasty holiday treat, the dog grabbed the bag of fudge and ran off, the report said. The dog, described only as black and white, then proceeded to eat at least some of the fudge and destroy the rest.

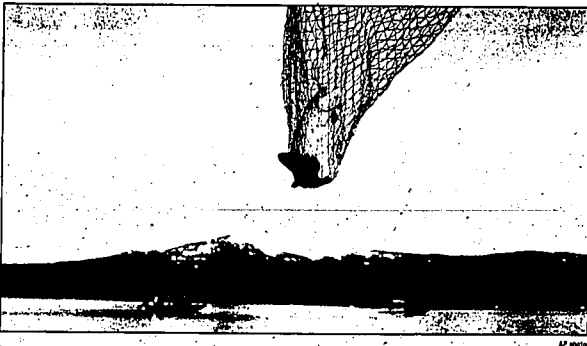
Russell told police that the dog belongs to his neighbor and that he had already contacted animal control. The animal control officer gave the dog's owner a warning, but Russell said he wanted her cited for allowing her dog to run free so he called the cops, the report said. Officers went to the neighbor's home and issued her a citation. Fines and court costs for dog-at-large citations typically cost violators a total of \$48.

Soldiers from 116th review Rumsfeld's visit

NEAR KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait — When U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Kuwait earlier this month, local Idahoans soldiers with the 116th Brigade Combat Team were sitting in the audience. "Our soldiers weren't afraid to ask some tough questions, and all that I interviewed the day after the event had nothing but good to say about the experience," said Capt. Monte Hilbert, deputy public affairs officer for the 116th. In a Thursday e-mail to *The Times-News*.

Please see RUMSFELD, Page B3

MAGIC VALLEY/WEST



A rainbow trout is netted at Diamond Lake, east of Roseburg, Ore., in this 2002 file photo. The U.S. Forest Service has approved a plan to draw down the mountain resort lake and poison small non-native fish that have triggered massive algae blooms and hurt trout fishing.

Forest Service will poison Oregon lake

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) — The U.S. Forest Service has approved a plan to draw down Diamond Lake and poison small non-native fish that have triggered massive algae blooms and hurt trout fishing.

work next summer on rebuilding an old canal to draw down the lake level, and starting to lower the water level by 8 feet in the fall or winter to concentrate the fish into a smaller pool.

Environmentalists have objected to the plan, preferring a long-term program of netting the lake every year rather than resorting to poison, but have yet to decide whether to formally appeal the Forest Service decision.

Bus drivers may carry cell phones on Hansen school routes

By Margaret Jones Times-News correspondent

HANSEN — Hansen school bus drivers may carry their cell phones on bus routes, the School Board decided.

are not allowed on the route. In other Hansen school news:

- Donated flag — The school will see a new hanging flag in the gymnasium soon. The School Board voted to accept the flag from Farmers National Bank. It will be displayed at games and other gym activities.

- New janitor — Trustees agreed to hire Koni Bourn as a part-time janitor for the elementary buildings.
- Book donation — Standley said Dell Inc. is buying 45 books to replace popular books that are worn out and to add new titles.
- Class is out — Christmas break will run from today until Jan. 3.

Man gets probation in break-in

The Times-News

TWIN FALLS — A Boise man will serve two years' supervised probation after being sentenced for a May incident near Murtaugh.

The District Magistrate Judge Randy Stoker gave Rodney Lee Anderson 180 days of jail for each of two counts — unlawful entry and malicious injury to property — to run consecutively.

in and complete a mental health program.

If Anderson doesn't violate probation, he won't have to serve jail time.

During a court trial Nov. 2, where Anderson refused representation and served as his own counsel, the court found the defendant guilty of the two charges. Anderson was found innocent of a misdemeanor charge of assault.

side demanding to be let in, the affidavit says. She told dispatchers she recognized the voice to be Anderson's.

While she was on the phone with dispatchers, she heard glass breaking, the affidavit says, then she heard someone banging on the door of the room he had locked himself in.

Upon arrival, sheriff's deputies, joined by Idaho State Police, surrounded the adjacent home, believing that Anderson might be inside. Seven members of the sheriff's crisis response team and a patrol dog entered the house but found only a dog inside.

DEATH NOTICES

Johnette Braga GOODING — Johnette Braga, 86, a long-time resident of Gooding, died Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2004, at the Magic Valley Manor Assisted Living Center in Wendell.

Ciera Michelle Livira BUIH — Ciera Michelle Livira, 8, a resident of Buhl, Idaho, and daughter of Lori Johnson of Buhl and Cesar Livira of Wendell, died Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2004, at Magic Valley Regional Medical Center in Twin Falls, Idaho, as a result of an auto accident.

Arrangements will be made by Demaray's Wendell Chapel. Julianna Kudrna WENDELL — Julianna Kudrna, 68, a resident of Wendell, died Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2004. Arrangements will be made by Demaray's Wendell Chapel.

Victor Nolan TWIN FALLS — Victor Nolan, 81, of Twin Falls, died Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2004, at Magic Valley Regional Medical Center. Arrangements will be made by White Mortuary.

Charles L. Johnson, memorial service at noon today at the Rock Creek Community Church, 131 Grandview (Fahiff Funeral Chapel).

Thursday in the Jerome LDS 7th Ward Chapel, 50 E. 100 S., Jerome. Visitation from 6 to 8 p.m. today at Farnsworth Mortuary, 1343 S. Lincoln, Jerome, and one hour before the service at the church.

Warm Springs Ranch debate opens today

By Susan Bayley The Wood River Journal

KEETCHUM — The public can view the Ketchum Planning and Zoning Commission meets with Warm Springs Ranch developers at noon today in City Hall.

public question whether creating a residential community out of recreation property is the way to go.

Warm Springs Ranch developer Sun Valley Ventures has agreed to deed more than 30 acres to the Wood River Land Trust as a preserve where residents will be allowed to bicycle, hike, ski, watch birds and fish.

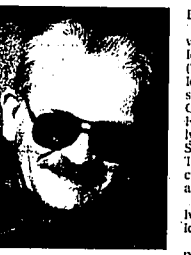
to view wildlife and 57 percent said they jogged.

Out of the 141 people surveyed, less than half said they played golf and 35 percent of those said they preferred Sun Valley Golf Course.

OBITUARIES

For obituary rates and information, call 735-3278 Monday through Saturday. Deadline is 4 p.m. for next-day publication. The e-mail address for obituaries is obits@magicvalley.com. Death notices are a free service and can be placed until 4 p.m. every day. To view or submit obituaries online, or to place a message in an individual online guestbook, go to www.magicvalley.com and click on "Obituaries."

Duane Edward Hanson, at age 62, of Twin Falls, passed away on Dec. 19, 2004, at his home following a long nine-year battle with cancer. Duane was born July 11, 1942, in Miles City, Mont., the son of Edward C. and Iva K. Sharrath Hanson. Duane moved to Kimberly, Idaho, in 1951 from Miles City, Mont., and became a member of the Kimberly Christian Church. He graduated from Kimberly High School in 1960. Duane married his high school sweetheart, Carolyn Faye Murray, on March 18, 1961, in Kimberly, Idaho. Of this union three boys were born, Terry Edward, Jeffrey Duane and Gregory Dean.



Canby, Ore. In 1996, he moved back to Twin Falls, Idaho, and worked for Moser Machine Shop until he retired due to illness. He enjoyed the outdoors and belonged to the Magic Valley Trail Machine Association for 16 years. He loved to ride his trail bike and helped clean trails in the North and South Hills. He loved camping and hunting with his wife and boys.

Buhl Chapter for 11 years. Duane is survived by his wife, Carolyn of Twin Falls, Idaho; his three sons Terry E. (Tina) Hanson of Twin Falls, Idaho; Jeffrey D. (Fahiff) Hanson of Hansen, Idaho; and Gregory D. Hanson of Twin Falls, Idaho; two sisters, Beverly (Bud) Huddleston and Sandy (Bill) Hickling, both of Twin Falls, Idaho; 14 grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. His parents, Edward C. and Iva K. Hanson of Kimberly, Idaho, preceded him in death. Friends may call from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 27, 2004, at Park's Magic Valley Funeral Home, 2551 Kimberly Road. A funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2004, at Park's Magic Valley Funeral Home, 2551 Kimberly Road, Twin Falls, Idaho. Burial will follow at Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery, Twin Falls, Idaho. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his memory to the American Cancer Society. The entire family wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to every nurse from Idaho Home Health and Hospice that took care of Duane during his illness. Words cannot be spoken on how much we appreciated their loving care towards him.

Bill would tighten rules for divorce

SAIT LAKE CITY (AP) — The legislative session hasn't even started yet, but 2005 may shape up as a year of the marriage bill at the Utah Legislature.

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State Rep. Peggy Wallace, R-West Jordan, says she will introduce legislation that would eliminate most no-fault divorces in Utah, saying most divorces should involve a bit of "shame."

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Republican Rep. Ben Ferry of Coriaine also has drafted a bill requiring couples to go into mediation after initial divorce papers are filed, saying the rule would save court costs, limit heated arguments and some couples to reconcile.

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Eventually, every case has to go before a judge," says Ferry, who has been elected House assistant majority whip. "But if couples can work out one hour with a mediator, then we save time." Last week, state Sen. Greg Bell drafted a bill that would allow some unmarried adults who live together but can't marry in Utah to sign a contract giving them some rights marriage provides. Wallace believes divorce should not be easy for couples with young children. Under her proposal, couples who have been married for more than 10 years, who have minor children together and where one partner protests the divorce could not split for "irreconcilable differences."

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MORNING BREAK

ACROSS

- 1 Social stratum
6 Stocking filler for naughty kids
10 Brit's carriage
14 Museum piece
15 Soprano Gluck
16 Capital of Italia
17 ___Saxon
18 Legal claim
19 Kimono sashes
20 Maneuver
21 Relish, e.g.
22 Type of load
25 Extinct bird
26 Fire feature
29 Jot down
33 ___ and Lovers"
36 Declare
38 Kurt Weill's ___ Lotte
39 ___ out (scrape by)
40 Shamrocks
42 "All Things Considered" stn.

12/22/04
MIGHT LASH CREW
ARIAS ESPY LEVIT
PENMANSHIP APED
BRAS NEPTUNE
ACCUSTOM ROTTEN
DOOR NAP LEEDS
EMIGRE CHAIR
NAN ENTAILS ONO
SPEND SHADOW
SCALE TAB CONE
AIMING MUTTERED
SCHEPTEP SUIT
HELP NIGHTGOWNS
ERIE EPEE ENACT
SIOAR SELL REDRIY

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

MIGHT LASH CREW
ARIAS ESPY LEVIT
PENMANSHIP APED
BRAS NEPTUNE
ACCUSTOM ROTTEN
DOOR NAP LEEDS
EMIGRE CHAIR
NAN ENTAILS ONO
SPEND SHADOW
SCALE TAB CONE
AIMING MUTTERED
SCHEPTEP SUIT
HELP NIGHTGOWNS
ERIE EPEE ENACT
SIOAR SELL REDRIY

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8 Change the law
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10 Publicize
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12 Dictator Idi
13 Sall swear
22 Fanzine subjects
24 Start a new hand
27 Mary Kay rival
28 Demon
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32 Justice Warren
33 Matched outfits
34 Gumbo veggie
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- 40 Conclude
41 Coarse file
44 Filling the hold
46 Bridge support
48 Not far away
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52 Greek marketplace
54 Blot
55 Lone Ranger's pal
56 Decree
57 Gibe
58 Sailor's direction
59 Den
60 Actor Neeson
61 Shade trees

Gift brightens town residents

ANTHON, Iowa (AP) — Home and business owners in this northwest Iowa town of 650 people were a little shocked at the Christmas gift they got from retired farmer Richard Hamann and his wife, Donna. The Hamanns doled out \$25,000 to pay the town's electricity bills — all due on Dec. 25.

Hamann, 75, sees the gift as returning a good deed. "The Lord has been very good to us and so have the people of this community, so I always thought we ought to be doing something in return if we could," he said Monday. Residents said they were surprised and grateful. "I just thought it was great," said Beulah Sands, 64, a clerk at a local convenience store. "I haven't talked to anyone who didn't appreciate it. It was a wonderful thing for him to do." Sands said the Hamanns' gift saved her more than \$50.

Man survives giant leap this day in 1977

This day in history: Has anyone ever jumped off the Empire State Building and survived? Yes. On Dec. 22, 1977, a despondent Thomas Helms jumped off the observation deck at the top of the Empire State Building, intending to kill himself. However, a gusty wind blew him back toward the building and he landed on a ledge a few stories below. Knocked unconscious, but otherwise uninjured, he laid there limply until an emergency crew brought him safely inside.



On a jigsaw puzzle piece, the sticky-out things are called nubs. The indentations that nubs fill are called wads. A general rule of thumb you can use before venturing out of a warm bed: the tighter your cat is curled around itself as it sleeps, the colder it is.

Grover Cleveland was the only president to marry in the White House. He was 49; his new wife was his 21-year-old ward, the daughter of his deceased law partner.

William Moulton Marston invented both the systolic blood pressure test and the lie detector. But that's not all. During his experiments, he became convinced: that women were more tireless and honest than men. Seeing how few strong role models there were for girls in the 1940s, he came up with the comic character, Wonder Woman.

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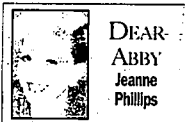
Thank You! The Burley High School Agricultural Science and Technology Department and FFA Chapter proudly presents our new "Precision Metal Cutting Production Band Saw." This acquisition was made possible by the generous support of these major grantors. (Totaling \$6,496.) Lex and Celta Kunau Fund, and J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation Education Fund in the Idaho Community Foundation. In addition we also received wonderful community support from these donors:

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Agtech Probiotic Fertilizer
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Western Seed
United Coop
Beta Seed

We would also like to acknowledge the much appreciated contributions and assistance received from: Julie Thomas, MidSnake Resource Conservation & Development Council. Air-Gas Company. Cassia County Joint School District #151. Members of the Burley FFA Advisory Committee. Lex Godfrey and Sam Condie, BHS Ag. Science & Technology Instructors.

Holiday greetings give cheer to U.S. troops

CONFIDENTIAL TO MY READERS: Although I know you're busy beyond belief preparing for the holidays, please take a minute to go to your computers and send greetings to our troops. This is the loneliest time of the year for these brave young men and women, many of whom are away from their families for the first time. Type in www.OperationDearAbby.net and let them know we care.



DEAR ABBY: I have been married for 10 years. I have always had fantasies about exposing my wife naked to other men. "Inez" is a deep sleeper, and in college, I exposed her countless times for my roommates to see. (I pretended to be asleep.) From the time we were married, I took pictures of her while she slept, including many extremely graphic close-ups. I posted a good number of them (including the close-ups) on Internet porn sites, making no attempt to blur her face, which would have ruined it for me. The thought of countless men seeing her excited me. I looked forward to reading the comments about her pictures. I saved each porn site photo spread of her into a file on my computer and viewed them often. Well, my wife found the file. We are now in marriage coun-

announcing a dinner on the same date the luncheon was scheduled. Our lunch date was canceled without consulting us. I suspect it was a maneuver to force us to attend the dinner party. We asked him to reschedule the lunch, told him the dinner party was too expensive, and asked if he would make the \$10 gift optional. Are we unreasonable, or is he?

—WONDERING IN SAN FRANCISCO
DEAR WONDERING: Wonder no more. He is. Please don't allow yourselves to be manipulated into spending more than you can afford on this anything but shy and retiring co-worker.

DEAR ABBY: How do I tell my boss that her incessant talking keeps me from getting my job done? I am currently a week behind because I was out sick for several days last week, and my boss won't stop talking and let me catch up. She isn't married and doesn't have many friends, so I know her need for friendship carries over to work — but it's starting to make me very stressed. Then again, she's my boss. How do I deal with this?

—FALLING BEHIND IN ALABAMA
DEAR FALLING BEHIND: Your boss may not be aware the extent to which you have fallen

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Teri Winterholler, whose husband is diabetic, substituted marshmallows for bananas as a topping for her yam dish to cut down on the amount of sugar. Winterholler says she will send most of her leftovers home with her guests.

By Loretta Burkhardt
Times-News writer

TWIN FALLS — For a skilled cook, putting on the spread — with all the trimmings — is a piece of cake. And in this land of plenty, leftovers are the second-best reason for fixing the lavish holiday full-meal deal.

For the rest of us, putting a meal together is work — and even the idea of dealing with uneaten entrees can prove problematic.

But it doesn't have to be that way, says Lanting's Rhea Lanting. While cooking is a learned art — and experience is the teacher — Lanting offers a simple recipe for taking care of leftover food.

And speaking from experience, the Twin Falls Extension Educator keeps her advice simple. "It's the safety thing first," Lanting said.

For Lanting, the food-protection factor is paramount, and she puts it to practice.

After preparing enough to satisfy 14 guests at her Thanksgiving dinner, she was careful to reserve enough energy to put away leftovers "immediately" after the meal was over.

But what to do with those carefully stored leftovers?

"As an educator, I always get asked 'Can I reheat the food?'" Depends how the leftovers were stored, and when the food was removed from the table and counters. Even when foods are carefully reheated, the safety remains an issue. Under some circumstances, "certain types of bacteria can form a heat-resistant toxin that cooking can't destroy," she said.

Turkey, again

Holiday leftovers don't have to be dull, but play it safe

One such example is *Staphylococcus aureus* — commonly referred to as staph.

As many as 75 million cases of foodborne illness occur in the U.S. each year, and the primary cause is "improperly handled food."

And while other factors can come into play, by and large, the food safety depends on timing.

Lanting's rule-of-thumb — two hours is the maximum time that perishable foods should be at room temperature "including the time the meal is on the table."

"To be on the safe side," it's best to begin refrigerating leftovers as soon as the feast is over.

And should there be any doubt about the food, her standard advice is simple.

"When in doubt, throw it out," Lanting said.

And more, "never" taste food that looks or smells strange to see if it's fit for consumption. "Just discard it," Lanting said.

And she's not alone with such food-safety ideas.

Health-conscience holiday hosts Mike and Teri Winterholler, agree that leftovers are only a treat

Try these recipes for the holidays.

See page C7

"when they've been taken care of" in a timely manner.

And with three grown children, they too speak from experience. And at the Winterholler residence, the leftover issue following their Christmas dinner "with about 10 guests" will be about the same as it was at their Thanksgiving get-together.

As then, "most of the food" will be sent home with guests.

Nevertheless, sending the bulk of the leftover dinner "out the door" was not always the norm for the couple. Meals changed for the Winterholler family earlier this year when they attended a health-fair clinic held at the College of Southern Idaho. While there, Mike — an audio/lighting technician in CSI's Theater Department — was alerted to the potential risk of diabetes.

Since that time, the kinds of goodies he still enjoys on special occasions are no longer tolerated

on a regular basis.

"Basically, we're watching what we eat" said Teri, a massage therapist.

The change includes a switch from white to whole-grain bread for her traditional stuffing "since it doesn't spike his glucose levels." For favorite dish that has seen a change is baked yams. She now subs the long-standing marshmallow topping with fruit.

And "portion-control" is also in operation.

"We've always eaten pretty healthily — but now we're watching the amounts."

And to eliminate temptations, she implements a perfect remedy. With the exception of turkey, "when there's something he shouldn't have — I send it home with family and friends," Teri said.

"I try to keep what we can use for sandwiches," she added.

Winterholler keeps a close watch on the amount of time the turkey is left without refrigeration. Although it's fun to continue snacking long after the sit-down part of the meal is over, turkey is not part of those counter-top pickings.

"I try to keep the turkey out less than 45 minutes after we're finished," she said.

Be that as it may, for another area cook, leftover turkey — for a sandwich or snack — fails to suffice.

And in a recent quest to bypass the bread, Linda Boyd devised what she considers to be the ultimate method for using up the leftovers.

What began as way to "avoid time in the kitchen," and to make more room in the refrigerator, rather than filling a lot of different small containers, Boyd turns her leftovers into a large casserole, an action she performs "immediately" after the holiday meal is finished.

In a deep glass pan, Boyd layers the leftover stuffing, then removes mashed potatoes spread on top. And that's only the beginning.

After cutting up the leftover bird, she adds the bite-sized pieces on top of the potatoes and then warms the gravy before pouring it on. Next she begins adding the yams, the cooked veggies, and whatever's left of the green-bean casserole.

For a finishing touch — before it's baked — she adds a layer of French onions.

When she serves her masterpiece, she serves it "with the leftover cranberry sauce," Boyd says.

"It's just a great way to clean up everything," said Boyd, who confesses she "really" doesn't like to cook.

Times-News writer Loretta Burkhardt can be reached at 735-3243, or write to her at lburkhardt@magicalvalley.com.

Mexican growers produce poinsettia crop worth millions

The Washington Post

MEXICO CITY — It's almost Christmas, so Angel Mendoza is in a hurry to load the last of his 40,000 poinsettia plants onto the barges that will float them from island greenhouses to mainland markets for holiday sales.

"We have Christmas traffic jams on the water," said Mendoza, 37, a fourth-generation horticulturist who spends all year tending the scarlet-leaved plants to healthy bloom. "They are beautiful. It's like working with art."

Poinsettias are the pride of Xochimilco, a district of meandering canals and tiny islands on the southern edge of the capital. It is one of Mexico's most picturesque tourist spots. Built on an ancient lake by the Aztecs five centuries ago, its name means "the place where the flowers grow."

In recent years, poinsettia cultivation in Mexico has blossomed from a small garden business into

a multimillion-dollar industry. In the 1950s, perhaps 20 families in Xochimilco grew poinsettias; now more than 1,000 families operate greenhouses nearly year-round. Other flowers are grown here, too, but beginning in August, nearly 250 acres of greenhouses are taken over by poinsettias, according to city officials.

The peak of poinsettia season is Christmas. In Mexico, the flowers are called "nochebuena," a reference to the informal Spanish term for Christmas Eve, and more homes are decorated for the holidays with poinsettias than Christmas trees.

They have become a symbol of Christmas," Mendoza said.

In early December, hundreds of thousands of plants are taken from their island hothouses, floated a short distance down the National Canal and then loaded into trucks to be shipped to markets. On busy days, as many as 50 barges, overflowing with the bright-red leafy plants, fill the Please see POINSETTIAS, Page C7



Angel Mendoza grows poinsettias in Xochimilco, a district of canals and tiny islands on the southern edge of Mexico City.

FOOD & HOME.

Gifts for the gardener? No worries

You've still got 60 hours or so before you need a gift for your favorite gardener. No rush. Here's a list of things he/she would most like. OK, they're things I'd like to find in my stocking, but we digress.



GREEN THUMBPRINTS
Cathy Walworth

• **Gloves.** Tough as they are, gloves wear out. Especially trying to garden in the rocks. No matter how careful we are, all gardeners wear gloves with the first finger tip missing.

• **Gaolskin gloves** can't be beat for working in the roses. They're always soft, yet tough enough to keep thorns from stabbing me. For slapping wet work, I like the rubberized gloves with tight banded cuffs to keep them on and the yuck out.

they slip right into a stocking. Or make your own. Good for X-number of holes dug, or a season of leaf-raking or two flats of petunias and the help to plant them come spring.

• **Vacation.** The best gardener's vacation you can dream up happens in Seattle in February. The Northwest Flower & Garden Show, which will feature 26 full-sized gardens, is scheduled for Feb. 9-13, 2005 at the Washington State Convention Center in downtown Seattle. Call 1-800-229-6311 or on the web at www.gardenshow.com for more information.

• **Garden sculpture.** Any size is good. Cement bunnies hiding between perennials provide tiny surprises, four-tier fountains

bring elegance.

• **Remedies.** Gardeners mess up their hands. Burt's Bees makes all manner of remedies. We get too much sun, risk insect stings, suffer from dry cracked skin and more. Somebody named Burt whipped up some pretty good concoctions to counteract all that. You'll find them at the garden center in yellow packaging.

• **Music to mulech by.** Get the CD player that says it's tough enough for joggers to bounce around. It's battery operated and doesn't skip when you move. Great for riding the lawn tractor, weeding, whatever. Include a few of his/her favorite recordings with this gift.

Those should get you moving in the right direction. However you celebrate this holiday season, I wish you peace, love, joy and hope now and throughout the coming year.

What's bugging your garden? Write to Cathy in care of this newspaper or e-mail her at: cwalworth@aol.com.

Seed Saver Kit may brighten a gardener's day

By Joel Lerner
The Washington Post

Here is a gift suggestion for your gardening friends and family. The holiday season is a great reason to get a gift for yourself, too.

• **Quite a practical item** for the avid gardener is the Seed Saver Kit. There are thousands of flowers that are excellent candidates to collect seed for sowing, or trading next year — short lived perennials and biennials such as gaillardia, black-eyed-Susan, verbena and columbine; annuals such as zinnia, impatiens, nasturtium and amaranth; trees such as fringe tree, crape myrtle, goldenrain tree and dogwood; shrubs such as clove, Virginia sweetcypress (tree), American cunymys and spirea.

This Seed Saver case can be carried everywhere you travel. If plants you admire have gone to seed, you can collect some on the spot. There are 10 airtight, glass-topped tins; glassine seed envelopes with labels, seed collection and storage bags; stakes for marking collection plants; seed desiccant; tweezers; sand; pencil seed tin labels and a simple reference guide for seed collecting and storing. All this is packed into a 5 1/4 by 6 1/2 inch

aluminum case, less than an inch thick. Available through Seeds of Change, www.seeds-of-change.com, 800-762-7333. Cost: \$25.

Note: There are some restrictions on interstate seed carrying, and it is sometimes illegal to transport seeds into the

United States from foreign countries or vice versa. The focus on seed transit is primarily because invasive exotic plants have become a sensitive issue. To research transportation of plants and seed material between states check the Web site www.aphis.usda.gov.

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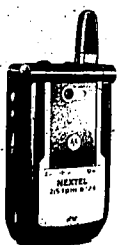


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FOOD & HOME

Taste the evolving New England cuisine

The Hartford Courant and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

It is ever-evolving, sometimes misunderstood, often romanticized, even ridiculed. But New England cuisine is as enduring and storied as Plymouth Rock. If it is not always in style, it is never out of style, kind of always simmering on America's back burner.

In the pantheon of American cuisine, New England cookery is first-order iconic.

Boston is baked beans; Maine is lobster; Vermont is maple syrup.

If there were such a thing as New England guacamole, it would be made with pumpkin, cod, cornmeal, cranberries, turkey, oysters and molasses. You could add the bird and an apple, or not.

But first: Are dishes like brown bread, Indian pudding and turkey with stuffing a cuisine? "I definitely," said Kathleen Fitzgerald, who with her husband, Keith Stavelly, has written "America's Founding Food: The Story of New England Cooking" (University of North Carolina Press, \$34.95), a history of the region's cooking from the days of first European settlement.

"Obviously that is something evolving and changing," she said. "We say in the book it is both an adaptation of English cuisine and of not only native foodstuffs and native agriculture, but actually in a number of instances, of Native American culinary practices."

Like all of American cuisine today, New England cookery evolved from what ingredients were at hand, from culinary heritage and from new influences.

Think of it as early fusion cooking with real staying power. New England cookbooks abound, and often remain in print for long periods. In 1985, the Mystic Seaport Museum Stores in Mystic published the "Christmas Memories Cookbook" (\$16.95), one of a half-dozen cookbooks the Seaport offers.

The holiday book is not solely a New England cookbook, but it has a strong New England presence, as evidenced by four pumpkin-pie recipes and, of course, roast turkey with stuffing. It is in its 11th printing.

"I don't think 20 years ago we would have anticipated that," said Michael O'Farrell, the Seaport's publicist.

Stavelly and Fitzgerald begin their new history with corn, a New World crop quickly embraced by the European settlers.

The white European settlers, they relate, did not always want to credit the Native Americans for a good idea, even for an incredibly useful and tasty grain. In corn, which, Fitzgerald and Stavelly says by the late 17th century barely mentioned by the settlers, even though they relied heavily upon it and had learned to cultivate it from the Indians.

Sandra-Oliver-of-Islesboro, Maine, publisher of the newsletter Food History News, said the early settlers adopted some of the Indian dishes they encountered, like succotash, but did so largely because those dishes looked like familiar English dishes.

"If we really had been learning from the Native Americans, we'd be eating acorns," she said.

Corn became a basic ingredient of "breads" and "puddings," including the New England classic Indian pudding. Stavelly and Fitzgerald note that the Indians called it succotash in a stew, which could be considered a super bland version of an Indian pudding. Over time, settlers created a heavily English-influenced dish with cornmeal, milk, molasses, eggs and butter and sometimes raisins or huckleberries.

Many of the most iconic New England dishes are, like clam chowder, comparatively simple dishes with long-ago roots.

It was in Hartford, Conn., that the first American cookbook was published — "American Cookery" by Amelia Simmons — and it stands today as a kind of beacon of simple New England cookery, if not always relevant to modern times. Most people will not need a recipe to make bacon from a pig carcass. Nor is the recipe for pigeon necessary. The passenger pigeon has been extinct for a century.

New England cooking never has been static, and today it is spiced by myriad ethnic and cultural influences. Stavelly and Fitzgerald note that eels were eaten eagerly two centuries ago but since have vanished from tables, although the eels still are found in New England rivers.

SPICED CRANBERRIES IN SHERRY

Makes 2 pints
2 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup water
2 slices whole cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves
Juice and grated rind of 1 lemon
16 ounces fresh cranberries
1/3 cup cream sherry

In a medium pan, combine all ingredients except cranberries and sherry. Simmer 5 minutes. Add cranberries and cook slowly until most of the skins pop. Remove from heat and stir in sherry. Cool and store in the refrigerator.

AUNT THELMA'S CORN PUDDING

Makes 6 servings
2 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 cup milk
1 16-ounce can cream-style corn
3 eggs, well beaten
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a saucepan over low heat, melt butter. Blend in flour and salt and pepper, and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Gradually stir in milk.
Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens. Remove from heat, and blend in corn. Mix in eggs, and into a greased 1-quart baking dish. Bake for 1 hour. Serve hot.

INDIAN PUDDING

Makes 8 servings
3 cups milk
1/2 cup cornmeal
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup molasses or honey
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon each: salt, cinnamon, ginger
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup raisins

Scald milk in a heavy saucepan. Add cornmeal all at once and heat vigorously with a whisk until smooth. Raise heat and, stirring constantly, boil for 1 minute. Reduce heat to low and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent scorching.

Remove from heat. Stir in butter until melted, then stir in molasses, sugar, nutmeg, salt, cinnamon and ginger. Stir in eggs and raisins.

Pour into a buttered baking dish. Set dish into a large pan filled with 1 inch of water. Bake in a 300-degree oven for 2 hours. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream, at room temperature with whipped cream or cold with heavy cream.

CREAM-OF-MUSSEL (BILLY BI) SOUP

6 servings
2 fresh thyme sprigs
1 small bunch of parsley
1 bay leaf
3 pounds small cultivated mussels (about 60)
2 cups dry white wine
3 shallots, finely chopped
1 cup heavy cream
egg yolks, optional (see note)
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
Freshly ground white pepper.
French bread

Place the thyme, parsley and bay leaf on a square of cheesecloth; tie together the corners of the cheesecloth to make a bouquet garni.
Wash the mussels. Sort

Please see NEW ENGLAND, Page C4



With the clam shack and the Joseph Conrad Tall Ship in the background, a bowl of New England Clam Chowder from the Seaman's Inn Restaurant at the Mystic Seaport Museum can be sampled by visitors.

Hartford Courant photo

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FOOD & HOME

Disguise — er, turn — deli dishes into 'homemade'

Knight Ridder Newspapers

Some people rough up the frosting on bakery cakes and try to pass them off as homemade. Shersh, What amateurs. With a smidgeon of creativity, the whole deli case can look like it came from your kitchen.

"Not that you'd want to lie to your family and friends this close to Christmas. Santa is watching."

But if the elves forgot to make a poltich dish for you to take to the office party, the family bash or a New Year's Eve blowout, we have some lightning-fast solutions — straight from the supermarket deli and bakery cases. Whether you claim them as yours is between you and the big guy.

When dressing up store-bought food, the goal is to make it not only look better, but also taste fresher. Green herbs are the most obvious flavor additive, but don't overlook flavored oils. In the pasta salad recipe that follows, a small amount of sesame oil completely erases the sticky, store-bought taste of the original Italian dressing.

The bland beige color of the pasta salad was vastly improved by the addition of a handful of snow peas, sliced green onions, halved grape tomatoes and chopped fresh parsley. In less than five minutes, the supermarket salad went from dull to delicious.

The broccoli-raisin salad sold in most supermarket delis is fine as is, but if you want to make a little go a long way — and disguise the fact that you purchased your contribution to the party — toss the salad in a food processor. About one quart of broccoli salad can be turned into a hot dip similar to the ubiquitous artichoke-crab dip, minus the work and expense.

The salad is processed until minced but still slightly chunky, mixed with mayonnaise and Parmesan cheese, and baked for 20 minutes. President Bush Senior may not like it, but we bet everyone else will.

Antipasto shrimp skewers are a flash, economical way to serve shrimp. Buy cooked, peeled shrimp and thread them on skewers with the ingredients in a deli antipasto salad. Wrap a

fresh basil leaf around each shrimp for a flavor boost, just one shrimp per skewer will do it. Miniature corn muffins are an hors d'oeuvre waiting to happen. The tiny muffins are sold in many supermarket bakeries. Split them in half, sandwich them with ham and a fancy mustard or chutney, and your work is done.

Bakery desserts are an easy target for makeover. The two we're suggesting both look gorgeous.

For the first, cut a bakery cheesecake into 1-inch squares, nestle the squares in mini foil baking cups, and top each one with a dollop of nondairy whipped topping and a dab of canned pie filling. Don't use real whipped cream, because it will wilt. The fake topping sold in the freezer case will hold up on a buffet table for hours.

Our second dessert is for those in a real hurry: Arrange store-bought Christmas cookies on a tray in the shape of a wreath, and place a bow at the bottom of the circle. You won't fool friends into thinking you made the cookies, but the arrangement is so clever that they'll forgive you.

Here are directions for our six foolers. And remember, only Santa knows if you're naughty or nice. It's no one else's business.

BETTER PASTA SALAD

Makes 8 servings
1 quart deli pasta salad without mayonnaise
1 1/2 cups snow peas
3 green onions, sliced
1/3 cup chopped, flat-leaf parsley
10 grape tomatoes, halved
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir well.

HOT BROCCOLI DIP

1 quart deli broccoli-raisin salad
1 teaspoon cider vinegar
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup mayonnaise
In a food processor, pulse broccoli salad until finely chopped but not pureed. Some lumps are OK. Transfer to a bowl and stir in remaining ingredients. Scrape into an impregnable casserole dish. Bake at 350 de-

grees until brown and bubbly, about 20 minutes.
Serve with crackers.

SHRIMP

ANTIPASTOSKEWERS
12 medium-large cooked and peeled shrimp
12 fresh basil leaves
1 pint deli antipasto salad
Wrap a basil leaf around a shrimp and thread it on a wood-on skewer, alternating with four or five dollops from the antipasto salad — olives, peppers, cubes of cheese, etc. Use one shrimp per skewer, ending each one with an olive.

HAM AND CORN BREAD BITES

Makes 12 hors d'oeuvres
12 miniature cornmeal muffins
1/2 pound ground sliced deli ham
Sweet and hot brown mustard
Cut muffins in half horizontally. Stack the ham slices. Using the bottom half of one muffin as a guide, cut circles from the ham. Layer the ham between the corn muffins and spread with mustard.

MINIATURE CHEESECAKES

Makes about 2 dozen
1 (9-inch) bakery cheesecake
Mini foil muffin cups
Nondairy whipped topping
Canned strawberry or cherry pie filling
Cut the cheesecake into 1-inch cubes and place in mini muffin cups. Top each with a teaspoon of whipped topping and one strawberry or cherry. Chill uncovered until serving time.

COOKIE WREATH

An assortment of bakery Christmas cookies
1 (12-inch) round tray
1 large red bow with streamers
Arrange cookies in the shape of a wreath on the tray, sticking at least two deep and varying the shape and size of the cookies throughout the wreath.
Place tray on buffet table and nestle bow at the bottom of the wreath.

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New England

Continued from C3

through them and throw out any dead ones. Combine the wine, shallots and bouquet garni in a 6-quart pot. Cover the pot, simmer for 5 minutes. Add the mussels, cover the pot, and turn the heat to high. Steam the mussels until they open, about 10 minutes. Let them cool slightly, scoop them out with a slotted spoon and remove the meat from the shells. Set aside the meat from the mussels. Remove and discard the bouquet garni.

If the liquid in the pot contains sand, strain it through a coffee filter, a triple layer of cheesecloth or a cloth napkin (triple fold to eliminate bleach or chemicals) or pour the liquid from one container to another, leaving behind sand each time.

Combine the heavy cream with the egg yolks; whisk to combine thoroughly. Bring the cooking liquid from the mussels to a simmer in a 2-quart pot. Whisk the simmering liquid into the cream/egg yolk mixture; pour the mixture into the pot. Place over medium heat; cook, stirring with a wooden spoon. Be sure to reach into the corners of the saucepan. Do not let the soup boil, or the egg yolks will curdle. The yolks thicken the soup very slightly, giving it a silky texture; don't wait for a dramatic thickening, or you're liable to curdle the soup. (A thermomometer will register 175 degrees when the soup is done.) Return

the mussels to the pot; let them heat through.

Add chopped chives; grind in fresh white pepper; then serve with slices of crusty French bread.

SEAFOOD CASSEROLE

4 servings
1 tablespoon butter
1 (16-ounce) unbleached all-purpose flour
2/3 cup fish stock or bottled clam juice
2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 pound shrimp, peeled
1/2 pound sea scallops, halved
1/2 pound haddock, or cod, cut into 1-inch cubes
6 to 8 ounces lobster meat, cut into serving pieces
1/3 cup freshly grated Monterey Jack cheese
1/2 cup Cracker Crumb Mixture (recipe)
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a small, nonreactive

saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Remove from the heat; whisk in the flour. Return the pan to the stove and cook for 2 minutes over medium heat, stirring constantly until the flour is cooked through. Remove from the heat; pour in the fish stock. Return the pan to the stove and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly until a light sauce forms, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the cream; cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until the sauce is the thickness you prefer. (This is a light, thin sauce, designed to baste the fish as it bakes.) Set the sauce aside.

Place shrimp, scallops and haddock in a buttered baking dish just large enough to hold them. Pour the sauce over the fish. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the dish from the oven; tilt the dish so that you can spoon up the cooking juices, and use them to baste the fish. Please see RECIPES, Page C5

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Laura's Cream Cheese Cookies

3/4	cup butter, softened	2	teaspoons baking powder
1	(3-ounce) package cream cheese, softened	1	teaspoon salt
3/4	cup sugar	1 1/2	teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4	cup firmly packed light brown sugar	1/4	cup pecan pieces, toasted
2	large eggs	2	tablespoons powdered sugar
2	cups all-purpose flour	1 1/2	tablespoons milk

Beat butter and 3 ounces cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy; gradually add sugars, beating until light and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating until blended after each addition.
Combine flour, baking powder, and salt; add to butter mixture, beating well. Stir in vanilla and pecans. Cover and chill 1 hour.
Drop dough by rounded tablespoons 2" apart onto impregnable baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are golden. Cool 2 minutes on baking sheets; remove to wire racks to cool.
Beat or whisk together softened cream cheese, powdered sugar, and milk until smooth. Drizzle glaze over cookies. Let stand 1 hour or until set. Yield: 3 1/2 dozen.

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FOOD & HOME

Survive your holiday party

Knight Ridder News Service

Planning a big party? Don't stress — it's not as hard as it looks.

To throw an affair that's fun and affordable, and distinctive in food and decor, consider the advice of three party experts who dished with us recently.

New York-based event designer and TV personality Bryan Rafanelli says it's all about "mini-madness," or turning full-sized food into hand-held delicacies.

"Jazz up an everyday concept, like a holiday picnic with hamburgers and hot dogs," suggests Mary Beth Winkworth, owner of Festivities party planning store in Birmingham, Mich.

When all else fails, fake them out, says home entertaining guru Korey Provencher, who says dressing up prepared, instant or restaurant foods with your own ingredients is both creative and quick.

Above all, all three say: Keep it simple.

Read further for more advice.

Think ahead

- Choose foods, like a pork or beef tenderloin, that can be cooked ahead of time yet taste good at room temperature.
- Choose foods that can be prepared days or weeks in advance and frozen.
- Think Provencher's fake-out food: Try steamed broccoli or green beans from a Chinese restaurant. At home add scallops and horseradish to the broccoli or candied nuts and dried cranberries to the green beans. Add truffles and champagne to microwaveable or instant mashed potatoes.
- Have groceries delivered.
- Don't turn down offers of help. Let guests bring something. "And I don't mean ice," Provencher says.
- Delegate responsibilities to family members. Let children pass or refill food trays.
- Serve appetizers rather than a sit-down meal.

On decor

- Take the time to bring out the fine china no matter what you're serving. "It gives a festive feel."
- Mix and match dishes and serving ware. Think of it as eclectic, not incomplete.
- Buy monogrammed silverware from flea markets. It's

cheap and unusual.

- Use wide-mouthed mixing bowls as vases. Float the tops of flowers in water. Try surrounding them with cloves or herbs.
- Use baskets and other containers to serve food or hold napkins and silverware.

- Place fresh fruit such as oranges, apples, lemons and limes around the house. It's a cheap and edible way to decorate.

- Buy candles from the dollar store. Be sure they're dripless to prevent messes. Load up on votives. "That's where you get the most bang for your buck," Winkworth says.

What's in

- Pomegranates, in food and drink.
- Mini foods and mini drinks.
- Ethnic foods, especially Latin, Asian and Mediterranean.

Guide for party hosts

No party host wants to run out of libations and look like a scrooge. But why overbuy?

On average, 20 people consume 10 drinks at a cocktail party and 40 drinks at a full dinner party. Here are some rules of

thumb to remember before stocking a bar at home:

- For liquor-based drinks: A 750 ml bottle will make about 16 cocktails.
- A liter bottle will make about 22 cocktails.
- A 1.5-liter bottle will make about 33 cocktails.

- For wine drinkers: Plan on five 750 ml bottles per 10 people (about 5 servings per bottle).

- For beer drinkers: Plan to have 5 six-packs covering 12-ounce cans for every 10 people.

- For a full bar: If you're splurging on a full bar, have vodka, rum, gin, Scotch, bourbon, blended whiskey, tequila and mixers such as orange juice, grapefruit juice, cranberry juice, tomato juice, pineapple juice, lemon or lime juice and carbonated beverages. Flavoring ingredients such as grenadine, sugar and simple syrup are also needed.

- The easiest choice for liquor drinks, if you don't want to play bartender all evening, is to hire someone to prepare the drinks or choose one cocktail, prepare it ahead of time and let guests serve themselves.

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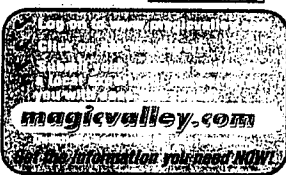
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FOOD & HOME

Bread brings warm scents into the home during the holidays

Chicago Tribune

HAM-FILLED BREAD

Preparation time: 1 hour/Cooking time: 45 minutes/Yield: 3 loaves, about 15 slices per loaf

1/2 cups milk
2 teaspoons sugar
1 package (2.25 ounce) active dry yeast
1 stick (1/2 cup) butter
3 eggs plus 2 beaten egg yolks
7 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 pounds baked ham, sliced
1/2 cups raisins
1 jar (10 ounces) pimiento-stuffed Spanish olives, drained, coarsely chopped
1 package (1 pound) smoked bacon, browned but not crisped
1. Heat 1 cup of the milk to lukewarm in a medium saucepan over medium heat; pour into large bowl of an electric mixer. Stir in sugar and yeast. Set aside until foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. Add butter mixture to the bowl. Whisk the 3 whole eggs lightly in medium bowl; add to the milk mixture. Stir in flour and salt; knead the dough with the mixer fitted with a dough hook until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Place the dough into a lightly oiled bowl; cover. Let rise in a warm place 45 minutes. (Dough may not double in size.)
3. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Punch the dough down; divide into three portions. Working with one portion at a time, roll the dough into 15-by-12-inch rectangles, about 1/4-inch thick. Place one third of the ham slices over the rectangle. Sprinkle a third each of the raisins and olives over the ham. Top with a third of the bacon slices. Tightly roll the dough up over the filling. Place loaf seam-side down on lightly greased baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough portions and filling ingredients.
4. Brush each loaf with beaten egg yolks. Bake until loaves sound hollow when tapped, about 45 minutes. Remove from pan; cool at least 1 hour. Slice.

ITALIAN

CHRISTMAS BREAD

Preparation time: 15 minutes/Rising time: 1 1/2 hours/Cooking time: 40 minutes/Yield: 3 small loaves, about 12 slices total

4 cups flour
1/2 cup each: golden raisins, dark raisins
1/4 cup each: chopped candied citron or other candied citrus peel, chopped pecans
2 packages (2.25 ounce each) active dry yeast
1/2 cup lukewarm water
1 stick (1/2 cup) butter, softened, plus 2 tablespoons butter, melted
4 eggs, beaten
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon each: salt, vanilla
Zest of half a lemon
1. Combine flour, raisins, candied citrus and pecans set aside. Dissolve yeast in warm water in bowl of electric mixer. Stir in the butter, eggs, sugar, salt, vanilla and zest. Add flour mixture; mix with a dough hook on medium speed to make a stiff dough, about 3 minutes. Knead dough on medium speed until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes.
2. Divide dough among three clean, well-greased empty 28-ounce cans. Brush the loaf tops with melted butter. Cover; let rise in warm place until impressions remain when you poke dough, about 1 1/2 hours.

3. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Bake until golden, 30-40 minutes. Remove from oven; cool bread in cans 15 minutes; remove from cans. Cool completely on wire rack.

LUCIA BUNS

Preparation time: 45 minutes/Rising time: 1 hour, 10 minutes/Yield: 30 rolls

1/2 stick (1/4 cup) plus 1 table-spoon butter
2 cups milk
1 1/2 small envelopes (3 1/2 teaspoons total) active dry yeast
1/4 teaspoon saffron threads
2 eggs
5 1/2-6 cups flour
3/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
Raisins
1 teaspoon water
1. Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Add milk; heat until lukewarm. Stir in yeast until completely dissolved. Pour into bowl of electric mixer; set aside.
2. Crush the saffron into a small bowl; mix in 2 tablespoons of the milk mixture. Pour the saffron mixture into remaining milk mixture in the mixing bowl. Add 1 of the eggs, 3 cups of the flour, sugar and salt; knead with the mixer fitted with dough hook

until dough comes together, about 5 minutes. Add enough of the remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, to make a smooth dough. Knead with mixer until smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes. Transfer the dough to a greased bowl; cover with cloth. Set aside to rise until almost double in size, about 40 minutes.
3. Punch down the dough; knead by hand briefly about 2 minutes. Divide dough into three pieces; roll out one of the pieces; cut it into 10 sections. Roll each section into a 10-inch rope; shape into the letter "S," placing a raisin in the middle of each swirl. Repeat with remaining 5 pieces of dough. Place the buns on a greased baking sheet; cover with a cloth. Let rise until almost double in size, about 30 minutes.
4. Heat oven to 450 degrees. Whisk remaining egg with 1 teaspoon water; brush over tops of buns. Bake until golden brown, 8-10 minutes.

POLISH SWEET BREAD WITH NUT FILLING

Preparation time: 50 minutes/Rising time: 1 1/2 hours/Cooking time: 40 minutes/Yield: 3 loaves, about 20 slices per loaf

4 cups flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 stick (1/2 cup) butter
2 small cakes (1 ounce each) fresh yeast or 1 large cake (2 ounces) fresh yeast
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup each, lukewarm: water, milk
2 eggs, beaten, at room temperature
Filling:
2 bags (8 ounces each) chopped walnuts, ground
1 jar (12 ounces) pineapple preserves
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup honey
1/2 stick butter, melted
1. Combine flour and salt in bowl of electric mixer. Cut butter into mixture until crumbly, using hands or a pastry blender; set aside.
2. Crumble yeast into sugar in a small bowl; add to flour mixture. Add water, milk and eggs to mixture. Knead with a dough hook or mixer on medium speed until smooth, adding more flour if needed, about 10 minutes. Place dough in a lightly greased large bowl; cover. Set aside to rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about 1 1/2 hours.
3. For filling, combine ground nuts, preserves, sugar, honey and melted butter until well

blended in a large bowl.
4. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Divide the dough into thirds. Roll out one third of the dough until very thin, about 20 inches square. Spread one-third of the filling over the dough. Roll tight-ly; place loaf seam-side down on a lightly greased baking sheet. Repeat with remaining thirds of dough and filling. Let loaves rise until puffy, about 1 hour. Bake loaves until golden, about 40 minutes.

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Use up your leftovers quickly with these creative recipes

Leftover turkey recipes from the National Turkey Federation and Clemson University:

TURKEY WALDORF SANDWICH

1 cup cooked turkey, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
 1/2 cup celery, sliced
 1 small Red Delicious apple, cored and cut into small cubes
 2 tablespoons walnuts, chopped
 1 tablespoon reduce-calorie mayonnaise
 1 tablespoon nonfat yogurt
 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
 4 lettuce leaves
 8 slices reduced-calorie raisin bread
 In medium-size bowl combine turkey, celery, apples, walnuts, mayonnaise, yogurt, nutmeg and cinnamon. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour or overnight to allow flavors to blend. To serve, arrange a lettuce leaf on a bread slice. Spoon 3/4 cup turkey mixture over lettuce leaf and top with another

bread slice. Repeat with remaining ingredients.
 *NOTE: Turkey mixture will keep up to four days in the refrigerator

ONE POT GOULASH

2 pounds turkey thighs (or necked boneless turkey roast)
 1 large onion, chopped
 1 can (10 1/3 ounces) condensed beef broth
 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
 1 can (8-ounce) tomato sauce
 2 tablespoons paprika
 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 2 cups uncooked medium noodles
 1 cup plain yogurt or sour cream
 Remove skin and bone from turkey; discard. Cut meat into 3/4-inch cubes. Put onion into a 3-quart round casserole. Cover with lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on high 2 to 3 minutes. Or use 2 cups cooked turkey. Add meat, broth and garlic to onions, re-cover. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Stir and re-

cover. Microwave on high for 5 minutes.
 Add tomato sauce, paprika, caraway seeds and pepper; stir well. Stir uncooked noodles into casserole so that all noodles are below the surface of the liquid. Re-cover and microwave on high for 6 minutes. Stir, re-cover. Microwave on high for 6 to 7 minutes. Stir in yogurt or sour cream. Cover and let stand 5 minutes before serving.

TURKEY AND WILD RICE BAKE

1 package (6 ounces) wild and white rice mix, uncooked
 2-1/3 cups water
 1 can (4 ounces) sliced mushrooms, drained
 1 can (14 ounces) whole artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
 1 jar (2 ounces) chopped pimento, drained
 2 cups cooked turkey, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
 In 2-quart casserole combine rice with seasoning packet,

water, mushrooms, artichokes, pimento and turkey. Cover and bake in 350 degree F Oven 1 hour and 15 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Top casserole with cheese and bake, uncovered, 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted and golden brown.

EAST COAST TURKEY CHOWDER

Serves 4
 1/2 cup chopped onion
 1 cup (1/4-inch) celery slices
 1 tablespoon oil
 2 cups turkey broth, or low-sodium chicken bouillon
 2-1/2 cups peeled, (3/4-inch) cubed potatoes
 1/2 Teaspoon salt
 1/4 Teaspoon white pepper
 Dash cayenne pepper
 2 cups (1/2-inch) cubed cooked turkey
 1/4 cup cornstarch
 2 cups skim milk
 In 3-quart saucepan, over medium-high heat, saute onion and celery in margarine until vegetables are tender-crisp.

Add broth, potatoes, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper; bring to boil.
 Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in turkey.

In medium bowl, combine cornstarch and milk. Stir into soup and cook until thickened

TURKEY CRANBERRY CROISSANT

Serves 6
 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
 1/4 cup orange marmalade

1/2 cup chopped pecans
 6 croissants, split
 1 pound cooked turkey, thinly sliced
 3/4 cup whole berry cranberry sauce
 6 red leaf lettuce leaves, washed and chilled
 In small bowl combine softened cream cheese, marmalade and pecans.
 Spread cream cheese mixture on both halves of croissants. Layer turkey, cranberry sauce and lettuce on bottom half of croissant.
 To serve, top with other half of croissant.



Notice of Request for Public Comment on Little Wood River Subbasin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Load

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) is seeking public comment on a draft assessment of water quality in the Little Wood River Subbasin.

Under the Clean Water Act, IDEQ is required to analyze state waters to determine whether they meet state water quality standards and if additional pollution controls are needed.

Based on a recent study of the physical, chemical, and biological conditions of the Little Wood River Subbasin, IDEQ is proposing to develop water quality improvement plans to control excessive sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and temperature in various impaired water bodies in the subbasin.

Public comment on the document will be accepted through 5 p.m. MST, Friday, January 21, 2004.

The draft assessment is available for review at DEQ's Twin Falls Regional Office, Gooding Public Library, Shoshone Public Library, Little Wood River District Library (Carey), Richfield District Library, and on DEQ's Web site in PDF format at www.ideq.idaho.gov/publiccomment.cfm.

Direct questions, comments, and requests to:

Jennifer Claire
 Water Quality Analyst
 Twin Falls Regional Office
 601 Poleline Rd., Suite #2
 Twin Falls, ID 83301
 Phone: (208) 736-2190
 Email: jclaire@ideq.idaho.gov

Poinsettias

Continued from C1

narrow waterway.
 Originally from Mexico, poinsettias were introduced to the United States in the 1820s by Joel Roberts Poinsett, who served as U.S. ambassador here. Poinsett was also America's secretary of war and a key reason the Smithsonian became the nation's museum. But in Mexico he is best known for taking a pretty but little-noticed roadside plant to the United States and spreading its fame.

Nearly two centuries later, poinsettias are the most popular indoor flower plant in the United States. "Even the up-and-coming orchid" ranks behind it, said Charles Nardozzi of the National Gardening Association, based in Vermont.

Because of longtime U.S. restrictions on soil imports from Mexico, the country cannot export potted poinsettia plants to the United States, cutting it off from an enormous potential market. Last year, American growers produced 68 million poinsettias.

But florists here note that the poinsettias' rising popularity in the United States has been a boon to sales in its native land.

Growers in Xochimilco produce 1.2 million poinsettias a year—the largest concentration in the nation, according to federal agricultural officials. Uziel Gonzalez Monzon, chief of economic development—for Xochimilco, said local growers cannot keep up with the rising national demand and aim to raise as many as 2 million plants next year.

Gonzalez said the poinsettia trade took off in the 1980s when growers found a way to mini-

mize the risk of financial ruin, which a single freezing night can bring to delicate flowers. Taking a leaf from California, where large numbers of Mexicans work growing poinsettias in greenhouses, Mexican growers started building them, too.

Mendoza, whose extended family owns and staffs 50 greenhouses, said his poinsettias are especially sturdy because of Xochimilco's "perfect altitude"—7,000 feet above sea level. Even in December, when the temperature swings from 40 degrees at night to 70 during the day, the poinsettia doesn't wilt or shrivel, he said. It usually survives for three months, and does not appear in curbside trash until February.

"What flower lasts that long?" asked Mendoza, who rings up \$40,000 in annual poinsettia sales.

Every day in December, thousands of buyers descend on Xochimilco's central outdoor market—which is on land—to buy poinsettias. Scores of vendors, including Mendoza's mother, sit behind a sea of red blossoms. Mendoza, whose family sells as many as 1,000 plants a day, said he aims for "intense color" and worries about "sad leaves."

With its colorful floating tableaux, Xochimilco is "spectacular this time of year," said Ciró Carraballo, a planning and preservation expert—from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which declared Xochimilco a World Heritage site in 1987.
 "Urban sprawl and pollution are threatening the system of canals," Carraballo is working on a project to protect it. Most

tourists, he said, never see the tranquil part of Xochimilco, where the age-old practice of raising flowers on islands continues. "Here, the tradition has not been lost," he said.
 Mendoza, who started work-

ing with poinsettias when he was 7 years old, said he has already taught his young sons how to stay in contact with nature. "I like my job," he said. "If I didn't, I wouldn't produce such pretty flowers."

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Jerome: 2718 S. Lincoln St (208) 644-8255 - Next to Wal-Mart

Twin Falls: Buzz Shop

Mountain States Wireless (2 Locations)

Authorized Edge Wireless Dealers:

Burley: S&W Drug

All Wireless Communications

Mountain States Wireless

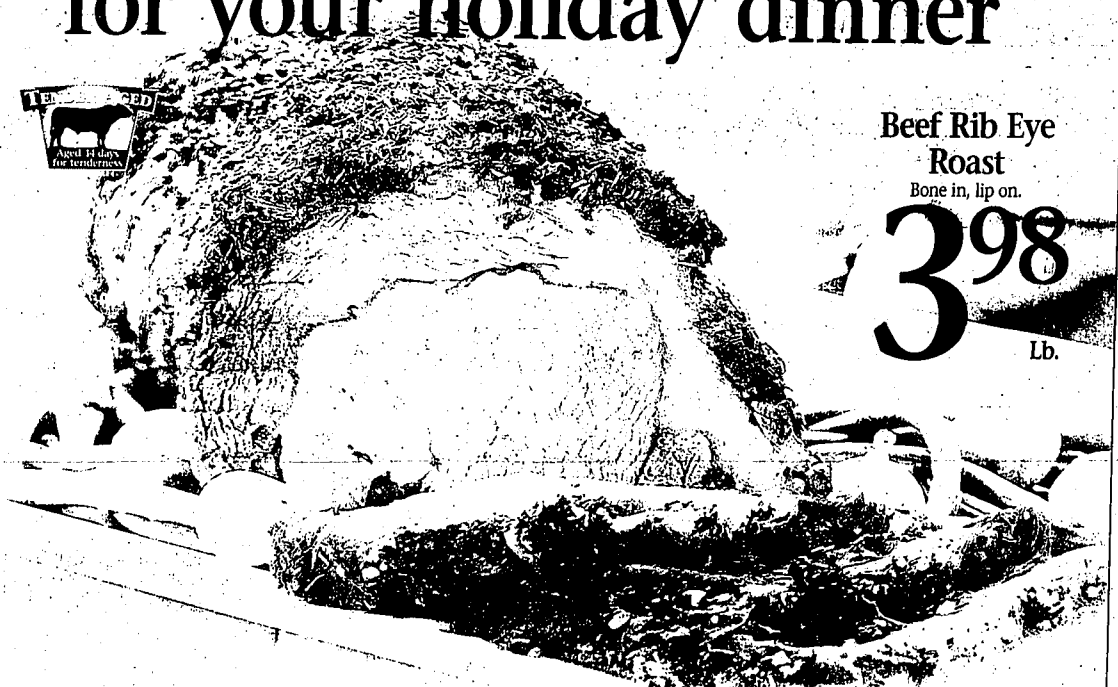
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FOOD & HOME

Ellsworth blends old with new

Ignore the garage, and the Ellsworth has the evocative symmetry of a colonial home. Careful scrutiny reveals that it's also missing the typical bookend chimneys. First-floor windows expand out in graceful bays, adding a contemporary flavor.

Inside, the plan blends elements of the traditional with the modern. Tradition is seen in the placement of dining, living and bedrooms. The well-separated formal gathering spaces sit across the entry from each other at the front of the house, and all three bedrooms are upstairs.

The rest of the floor plan is totally in sync with present-day needs and preferences. One spacious informal living space spans the entire rear. The family room, where high windows flank a gas fireplace, merges seamlessly with the bayed nook and generously sized kitchen. High windows flank the gas fireplace, and more natural light washes in through wide windows that fill much of the rear wall.

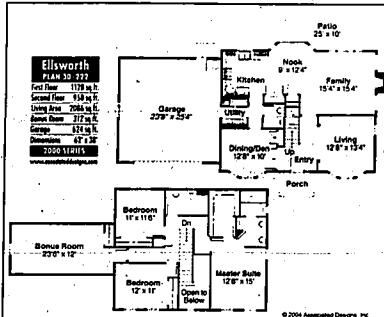
In the kitchen, lazy Susan shelving provides easy access to a corner cabinet, and plenty of extra storage space is available in the pantry and broom closet. Sliders in the nook offer direct patio access, handy for outdoor dining. A powder room is mere steps away, as are laundry appliances, located in a pass-through space that links with the garage. This room is outfitted with a counter, cabinets, and a deep sink.

Upstairs, the Ellsworth's master suite fills the right side.



Amenities include a large bathroom with dual vanity, privately enclosed shower and toilet, plus a huge walk-in closet, nearly the same size as the bathroom. Secondary bedrooms share a smaller bathroom. The hallway between them leads to a deep, skylit bonus room over the garage.

For a review plan, including scaled floor plans, elevations, section and artist's conception, send \$25 to Associated Designs, 1100 Jacobs Dr., Dept. W, Eugene, OR 97402. Please specify the Ellsworth 30-222 and include a return address when ordering. A catalog featuring more than 400 home plans is available for \$15. For more information, call (800) 634-0123, or visit our website at www.associateddesigns.com.



You get what you pay for in the door department

DEAR JIM: I need a new front door. Several neighbors have beautiful wood doors. I want an attractive door with glass like theirs, but I am afraid it may eventually warp and need repairs. What do you think?



SENSIBLE HOME
James Dunley

DEAR SANDY: If you install a top-quality wood front door, you won't have to worry about its becoming warped. A warped door is not only unattractive, but the air leakage around it will increase your utility bills. Around, it also creates chilly drafts and allows allergens and dust to get indoors.

Keep in mind though, even the best wood doors require a periodic inspection and they are not as maintenance-free as insulated steel and fiberglass doors. Wood is a natural material, so it may grow and shrink with seasonal changes in humidity and temperature. A good-quality finish on the door should seal the wood and minimize these changes.

Some doors are delivered pre-finished and other are finished at your home. Your regular inspection should be for scratches and nicks that might allow moisture to enter the wood. Seal any spots with a touch of urethane. Many top-quality wood doors are made of solid hardwood rails (horizontal sections) and stiles (vertical sections). If the climate conditions in your area are severe and have caused other front doors to warp, consider a door made of laminated wood, lumber or other engineered lumber. For stability, these consist of small pieces of wood-bonded-together-under-a-wood veneer.

Another option is a wood door with a foam insulator core. Solid wood is a fairly good natural insulator, but the foam core quadruples the overall insulation level. These designs also use two-piece rail and stile construction for greater stability

in any climate and weather conditions.

The type of decorative glass you install in the door will likely have a greater impact on its efficiency than the door construction or the foam insulation. Also, adding large decorative glass panels, such as leaded, stained, beveled, arched, etc., can almost double the cost of some doors. Triple-pane glass is best for all climates, and it is more difficult for a thief to break through it. The decorative pane is between the outer two for protection against accidental damages or degradation by the sun, air pollution, cleaning, etc. The wood you select (oak, maple, ash, birch, mahogany, hemlock, walnut, cherry) does not have a great impact on the durability of the door as long as you maintain it and keep the surface sealed.

Make your selection of the wood type based its appearance and your budget. If you prefer a stylish look, select one with an embossed metal (brass, copper, or pewter) skin.

Write for (instantly) download - www.dunley.com Update Bulletin #45 - buyers guide to high-quality wood entry door manufacturers listing construction-types, styles, glass-options, features, and finishing instructions. Please include \$3 and a business-size SASE, James Dunley Newspaper Name, 6506 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, Ohio 45244.

DEAR JIM: I have completed the trench around the foundation of my house for drainage pipe. It now has a thin layer of



Quality wood doors shouldn't warp, but aren't completely maintenance-free.

leaves in it. Do I have clean out all the leaves before I fill in some base gravel and install the pipe? —ALW.

DEAR AL: Installing perforated drainage pipe in a trench around the foundation is an excellent way to minimize water leakage problems. You can remove the leaves with a vacuum if you wish, but it probably is not necessary. Under the weight of the gravel and with the high moisture content in the drainage ditch, the leaves will rapidly decompose into loose soil. The gravel separates the holes in the pipe from the soil so it should not clog.

Product aims to keep cats out of Christmas trees

The Washington Post

A message to any cats out there who are thinking of climbing the Christmas tree this year: Fullgetdaabout.

Cats, as many owners will attest, rarely get caught up in the holiday spirit. They despise those high-ball cones that are forced to wear and a live tree shows up in the middle of the living room that they're supposed to ignore. A little rebelliousness is bound to set in. But this year, there's a product to foil feline defiance.

The new StayAway canister from Contech Electronics comes in **LAMPHOUSE THEATRE** 223 5th Ave. S. T.F. 736-8800

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Orpheum 103 Main Twin Falls
Blade: Trinity 7:00 - 9:20
Odyssey 6 (starting at \$495)
Loser 11:30 - 2:45 - 5:00 - 7:15 - 9:30
Sponglib 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30
Finding Neverland 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:15
Spongebob Movie 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00
Alexander 12:30 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00
Bridget Jones 2 12:30 - 2:45 - 5:00 - 7:15 - 9:30

Jerome 4 103 Main Twin Falls
Meet the Fockers 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
Lemony Snicket's 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
Ocean's 12 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
National Treasure 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:30
Twin 12 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
Ladder 49 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
Incredibles 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Polar Express 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Ocean's 12 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Shark Tale 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Flight of the Phoenix 11:30 - 1:00 - 4:00 - 6:30 - 9:15
Lemony Snicket's 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Meet the Fockers 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15
Christmas with the Kranks 12:15 - 2:30 - 4:45 - 7:00 - 9:15

Get into the outdoors
Every Thursday in the Outdoors section, The Times-News guides Magic Valley residents to recreational opportunities.

Your Musical Holiday List Is On Sale!!

Mics, Cables	Lamps, Stands	New & Used!
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Meet the Fockers

Robert De Niro Ben Stiller Dustin Hoffman Barbra Streisand

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Meet the Fockers

Robert De Niro Ben Stiller Dustin Hoffman Barbra Streisand

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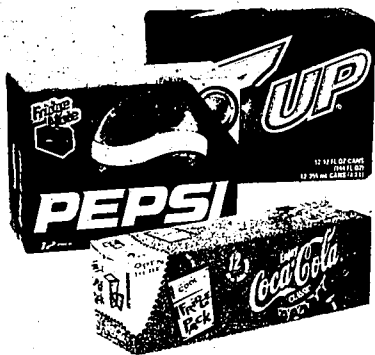
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3.99
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 lb.



Cooked and Peeled Shrimp
 5-40 oz. Available in 2 lb. pkts.
 at \$7.98 each
3.99
 lb.



Fresh U.S. No. 1 Russet Potatoes
 2 lb. Bag
67¢



Cuties California Clementines
 5 lb. Box
4.99



Fresh Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast
 Black Pepper, Marinated at the Butcher's Station
1.79
 lb.



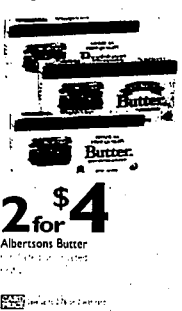
Fresh 8-Inch Pies
 Pumpkin, Apple or Dutch Apple
2.99



Fresh Raspberries, Blueberries or Blackberries
 4.4 lb. oz.
2 for \$5



Fresh Whole or Sliced Mushrooms
 8 oz.
2 for \$3



Albertsons Butter
2 for \$4



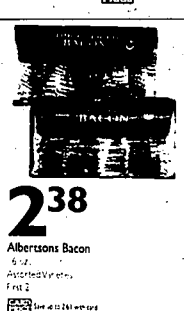
Dreyer's or essensia Ice Cream
 Soft Serve, 1/2 gallon
3 for \$9



Lay's Potato Chips
 3-2.4 oz. or New! New! New! Crispy! Crispy!
3 for \$5



Budweiser 18-pack or Coors 20-pack, 12 oz. Bottles or 2.0 L. or 1.8 L. cans
10.88



Albertsons Bacon
 6 oz.
2.38

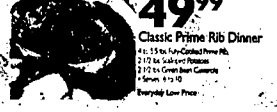


Fresh Holiday Centerpiece
19.99 & Up

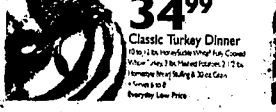
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 4 to 5 lbs. Prime Rib, 1/2 lb. Country Potatoes & 1/2 lb. Green Beans
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Classic Turkey Dinner
 12 to 14 lbs. Turkey, 1/2 lb. Country Potatoes & 1/2 lb. Green Beans
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Ultimate Turkey Dinner
 12 to 14 lbs. Turkey, 1/2 lb. Country Potatoes & 1/2 lb. Green Beans
49.99

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SPORTS

Shanahan may have worn out welcome

By Eddie Pells Associated Press writer DENVER — Just like many of the players they lead, successful NFL coaches have a most unfortunate flaw: They rarely know when it's time to go.

Like Shanahan has reached that point with the Denver Broncos. But sadly for the franchise, the city and, yes, even Shanahan himself, there is no one to give him the push.

Their 45-17 loss to Kansas City on Sunday, an embarrassing 4-0 blowout, dropped Denver to 8-6 and left the Broncos in jeopardy of missing the playoffs.

great schemes, then does little to counter the adjustments opposing coaches make. As a personnel man, Shanahan offered brilliant picking up Terrell Davis in the sixth round, turning Shannon Sharpe into a star and bringing out the brilliance in Rod Smith.

SCORES AND STATS

BASKETBALL

NBA All-time Eastern Conference Finals Division records table with columns for Team, W, L, Pct, and Finals appearances.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Western Conference Finals Division records table with columns for Team, W, L, Pct, and Finals appearances.

WHAT'S ON T.V.

Basketball

4:30 at Raptors, FSNW, 6 p.m. Missouri vs. Illinois, at St. Louis, ESPN2, 6 p.m. Grizzlies at Warriors, ESPN2, 8-10 (A-14) (H-20)

Monday's NBA Late Boxes

Monday's NBA Late Boxes table listing game times, networks, and box office information.

Area ski report

Biggest News — Max 10:15 hand snow on 12-22, 10-15 inches, 7 of 10. 10% snow, Weather: Clear, 10-20; Wind: 10-15; Sky: 10-20.

Monday's Football

Monday's Football table listing game times, networks, and scores.

Area ski report

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NBA Boxes

NBA Boxes table listing game times, networks, and box office information.

College Basketball Scores

College Basketball Scores table listing game results.

College Basketball Schedule

College Basketball Schedule table listing game times and locations.

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NFL

NFL table listing game times, networks, and scores.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

National Conference table listing game times, networks, and scores.

AFC

AFC table listing game times, networks, and scores.

NFL

NFL table listing game times, networks, and scores.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

National Conference table listing game times, networks, and scores.

AFC

AFC table listing game times, networks, and scores.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Dodgers pull out of Randy Johnson deal

NEW YORK — The Los Angeles Dodgers withdrew Tuesday from the proposed three-year, 10-player trade that would have sent Randy Johnson from the Arizona Diamondbacks to the New York Yankees.

UNLV for the NFL

The 41-year-old Cunningham pastor was awarded a degree in leisure studies after returning to complete the necessary college credits.

Petrino will now earn \$1.1 million a year

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville coach Bobby Petrino signed a new contract Tuesday that will pay him \$1.1 million a year, plus a \$100,000 bonus if the Cardinals win the national championship.

AP tells BCS to stop using its poll

NEW YORK — The Associated Press has told the Bowl Championship Series to stop using its college football poll to determine which teams play for the national title and in the most prestigious bowl games.

AP tells BCS to stop using its poll

NEW YORK — The Associated Press has told the Bowl Championship Series to stop using its college football poll to determine which teams play for the national title and in the most prestigious bowl games.

Memphis gives West contract extension

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis coach Tommy West agreed to a one-year contract extension after leading the Tigers to back-to-back bowl games for the first time in the program's history.

EAIGs must face playoffs without Owens

PHILADELPHIA — The parade is on hold. Those plane tickets to the Super Bowl are being double-checked to see if they're refundable.

GMAC Bowl foes enjoying revivals

MOBILE, Ala. — When DeAngelo Williams arrived at Memphis, the Tigers had just completed their seventh consecutive losing season and were about to endure No. 8.

Cunningham graduates from UNLV after 20 years

PHILADELPHIA — Randall Cunningham graduated from UNLV after 20 years as a coach and player.

Here's your chance: 450 Fiesta tickets released

SALT LAKE CITY — The Mountain West Conference and the Fiesta Bowl will release 450 tickets to the New Year's night game against Pittsburgh.

USA Today ESPN

USA Today ESPN table listing game times, networks, and scores.

USA Today ESPN

USA Today ESPN table listing game times, networks, and scores.

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USA Today ESPN

USA Today ESPN table listing game times, networks, and scores.

USA Today ESPN

USA Today ESPN table listing game times, networks, and scores.

COMICS

Classic Peanuts

By Charles M. Schulz



For Better or For Worse

By Lynn Johnston



Dilbert

By Scott Adams



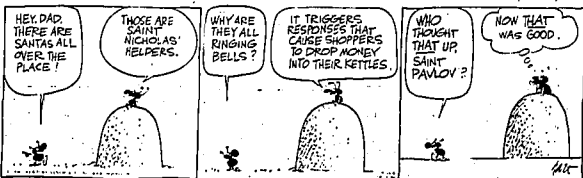
Blondie

By Dean Young & Stan Drake



B.C.

By Johnny Hart



Pickles

By Brian Crane



Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dennis the Menace

By Hank Ketchum



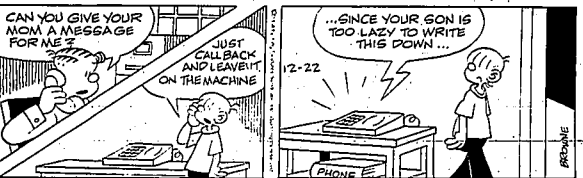
THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane



Hi and Lois

By Chance Brown



The Wizard of Id

By Brant Parker & Johnny Hart



Rose is Rose

By Pat Brady



Hagar the Horrible

By Chris Browne



Zits

By Jim Borgman and Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey

By Mort Walker



Luann

By Greg Evans



Frank and Ernest

By Bob Thaves



Strange Brew

By John Deering



Non Sequitur

By Wiley



The Born Loser

By Art Sansom & Chip



BRIEFLY IN MONEY

Parents can make payments online

TWIN FALLS — Parents can now make their child support payments online through the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Web site.

The new payment process is designed to reduce payment processing times and could reduce the state's risk of receiving bad checks, the state said in a statement Tuesday.

The system is available in both English and Spanish, and Idaho Child Support services customers can make credit card or debit card payments — for a nominal fee — through a secure payment server. The system records transactions automatically and also provides a payment history for the last five transactions.

"We are always looking for ways to make child support payments easier on parents," says Vickie Vanderover, who headed the project for the Department of Health and Welfare's Child Support Services. "This can be particularly helpful for parents who work long hours or travel a lot. Children depend on these payments for the necessities of life. By providing parents with options, we can be more successful in collecting child support money for them."

For more information on the system, visit the state of Idaho's Web site at <http://www.idaho.gov>.

Washington Federal declares dividend

BETHLEHEM — Seattle-based Washington Federal Inc. — parent of Washington Federal Savings — on Tuesday announced a quarterly cash dividend of \$21 cents per share.

The dividend will be payable January 14 to common stockholders of record on December 31. This is Washington Federal's 31st consecutive quarterly cash dividend.

Washington Federal Savings provides residential real estate loans, checking, money market accounts and certificates of deposit through 120 offices in eight states. The company reports \$1 billion in assets and \$4.3 billion in deposits as of Sept. 30.

Top execs at Fannie Mae are forced out

WASHINGTON — The chief executive and top financial officer at mortgage giant Fannie Mae have been forced out, congressional and industry sources said Tuesday, as the nation's second largest financial institution struggles with revelations of auditing improprieties.

Chief executive Franklin Dreyfus and chief financial officer Timothy Howard were forced to resign, according to congressional and industry sources who spoke on condition of anonymity, as federal officials intensified their investigations into revelations that the company will probably be forced to restate \$1 billion or more in earnings over the past four years.

A review by the Securities and Exchange Commission determined last week that Fannie Mae must restate earnings back to 2001 because it violated accounting rules for derivatives — financial instruments used to hedge against interest-rate swings — and for some prepaid loans.

Microsoft sells mag to Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Microsoft Corp. sold its popular Slate online magazine Tuesday to The Washington Post Co., a move that makes Slate's political commentary and quirky feature articles more broadly available across the Internet.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, though Slate editor Jacob Weisberg said the amount was a "very respectable, impressive price."

Microsoft has said Slate, which reaches about 2 million readers monthly, breaks even financially but isn't consistently profitable. Microsoft had sought a buyer since the summer.

compiled from staff and wire reports

By Renee Wells South Idaho Press

BURLEY — Bob Shepard doesn't want to be seen by the community as a "one-trick pony."

Shepard, Mini-Cassia's economic development director, is moving his office to the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce building after looking into relocating the office at the Burley-Loyburn Industrial Park.

"With development underway at the park, Shepard says he believes he needs to be near the facility to assist the city of Burley and The Beyer Company, the Salt Lake City-based company that has taken over



Bob Shepard

management of the site.

Shepard said plans to incorporate a small business incubator at the facility prompted his desire to be on site, but he told members of the Mini-Cassia Economic Development Commission this week there is also a need for him to have some distance from the park.

"There are pros and cons to my being located at the site," Shepard said. "One con is that there is a perception in the community that I am there to

benefit the industrial park and such is not the case. Jobs always have been, and still are, the number one priority."

By locating his office at the chamber building, Shepard said he will be close enough to the site to work with the Small Business Development Center when an incubator is established. The location will also mean that business entities not associated with the industrial site may be more comfortable working with him.

Shepard initially set up his office at the College of Southern Idaho's Mini-Cassia Center when he was hired in February to take the lead in the area's economic development efforts. The business incubator will

be located at the industrial park in the former cafeteria building. At least two others will have offices at the building as well, including the existing manager for Gossett Foods, which is in the process of building a \$20 million Swiss cheese factory in the park.

Shepard said he is currently working on obtaining funds to hire a part-time small business incubator specialist.

The commission also heard about urban renewal districts and intermodal commerce authorities as tools to attract new industry. Both involve property tax breaks and reinvestment of lease payments into infrastructure as incentives to new businesses.

Shepard encouraged local community leaders to consider urban renewal districts and asked Minidoka County Commissioner Mark Bingham to discuss his view of the districts.

Bingham told the commission he and his colleagues are concerned that urban renewal districts would reduce the taxable property off the tax rolls and create public-owned businesses that would compete with private enterprise.

Bingham said the commission has the idea of intermodal commerce authorities over urban renewal districts but have not made up their minds and will look at all options.

Dollar's fall a mixed bag in U.S.

Los Angeles Times

GLENDALE, Calif. — Walter Schreiner should be as sour as his krait. Thanks to the dollar's long slide against Europe's currency, the Glendale, Calif., dealer is continually forced to raise prices on his imported jams, dumplings and pickled cabbage.

"That ought to put a crimp in investor appetites," Schreiner says. "People accept higher prices, if it's an item they definitely want," he said.

"Doug Youngbladh, who runs a cooperative of 4,000 California almond growers, is thrilled that the dollar is expected to keep falling. That will make the nuts more competitive in foreign markets."



Walter Schreiner, a doll owner in Glendale, Calif., says sales haven't slowed despite rising prices for imported products. "People accept higher prices, if it's an item they definitely want."

Instead, he's worried. There's little supply of almonds, which means increased demand overseas will boost the price paid by U.S. consumers. That might permanently slake their appetite.

"You can't do it in Germany and lose in San Francisco," Youngbladh said.

As the almond executive and dell proprietor illustrate in their different ways, the falling dollar might not benefit the economy as much as the Bush administration hopes.

The administration has offered tepid support of a strong dollar but is widely described as quietly urging its fall. Its apparent hope is that an orderly devaluation will stimulate the economy by boosting exports and trimming imports.

But Schreiner, Youngbladh and others on the front lines of importing and exporting say the dollar's influence is often overstated.

The dollar has been declining for several years, with an especially pronounced drop of more than 20 percent against the euro.

Yet imports are still rising faster than exports. Many things Americans covet, such as computers, TV sets and name-brand clothes, are made in the United States anyway.

If the factories have fled, the farms remain. But even America's agricultural exports, which have made a positive contribu-

tion to its balance of trade for decades, will be roughly equal to its imports in 2005, thanks in part to a rising appetite for exotic foods, the government recently calculated.

"If we're looking for a weak dollar to be a silver bullet, to fix our deficits and make all of our businesses competitive again, we'll end up no better off than we were when the dollar was strong," said Al Lubrano, president of Technical Materials Inc., a Rhode Island specialty metals manufacturer.

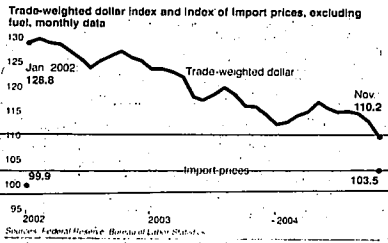
"It's possible of course that the latest dollar decline simply hasn't lasted long enough to have much effect. It also is possible that it is already making a difference — and that the trade deficit, monstrous as it is, would be even more out of whack without the 3-year-old decline."

But economists cite several reasons the effect will be muted, even if the greenback continues to fall.

Trade, they point out, is not nearly as simple as it once was. Many U.S. manufacturers import materials to make the products they intend to export, so a dollar fall helps and hurts. Furthermore, foreign economies from Japan to Europe are relatively feeble, so it's an open question how many

Muted impact

While the dollar has fallen about 16% on a trade-weighted basis in the last three years, the price of imports excluding fuel has risen only about 3.5%.



more American imports they can take.

As for the U.S. market, it's such a crucial one for many foreign companies that they will shave their profit margins rather than raise prices to stay competitive.

Moreover, the dollar's decline hasn't been consistent against all currencies. Although it's been hammered against the euro, the greenback is fixed

against the Chinese yuan. And China is the trading partner that counts the most these days, one with the best products for the lowest prices.

"The decline of the dollar will have more effect on who we import from than the amount we import," said Charles W. McMillion, chief economist at MGI Information Services in Washington. "Instead of importing

Experts list ways to make dollar's loss your gain

Knight Ridder News Service

DALLAS — Falling dollar, weak dollar, eroding dollar — even casual investors have probably noticed that they are hearing these phrases a lot late

in the U.S. The dollar is down about 30 percent against the euro since early 2002, and many economists believe it could drop even further. Small investors may be wondering if any of this affects their pocketbook — it does — and more specifically how they should play the currency issue to their advantage very carefully.

"Some people think they can predict currency swings, but it's just like trying to guess the direction of the stock market. It is very difficult," said Ray Mills, portfolio manager of the T. Rowe Price International Growth and Income fund in Baltimore.

A falling dollar, like falling rain, can be a mixed blessing. If the pace of the fall is slow and measured, a weaker dollar can benefit the economy. Otherwise, a weak currency could signal an approaching economic wreck.

"The first and most obvious impact of a weaker dollar is that it lowers the price we sell overseas (exports) and raises the price of what we buy from other countries (imports)."

Say a product made in the United States costs \$100 and in Japan sells for 10,000 yen. If the dollar weakens, that same \$100 product can be purchased for say 8,000 yen. It's cheaper for the Japanese consumer.

Conversely, foreign-made products are more expensive to Americans. An American shopper eventually will pay more for grapes from Chile, for example, if the dollar continues to fall.

Please see **FALL**, Page E2

Debit cards can have hidden pitfalls

Knight Ridder News Service

PHILADELPHIA — Debit cards are everywhere this holiday season — more popular for shoppers even than cash or credit cards, according to the National Retail Federation.

One reason consumers say they prefer debit cards is that they're spending their own funds, not money lent by a bank. With debit cards, they say they can't get into a hole, and don't have to pay extra for interest, late fees, or other annoying charges.

But that's not completely true. As some consumers have learned the hard way, debit cards come with their own pitfalls. Just ask Joel Spiller of Churchville, Pa., about his recent dispute with Wachovia Bank over his son Jeremy's account.

In one month this fall, Jeremy Spiller used his Visa Check card for 10 purchases and eight withdrawals, totaling less than \$250. In one month, he generated nearly \$140 in fees — almost all to Wachovia, and almost all for overdrafts that totaled less than \$12. In one case, Spiller apparently was charged \$31 for an

11-cent overdraft.

How does someone "overdraft" a debit-card account?

One answer is that Wachovia, like many banks, routinely lets debit transactions go through even if you don't have enough money in your account. Though consumer advocates complain that such practices generate steep fees — and suspend they're designed with that purpose in mind — Wachovia says it allows overdrafts as a courtesy.

"Most people don't want to be embarrassed when they're in the checkout line with a week's worth of groceries," says spokeswoman Barbara Nite. "They don't want to have to go home without them," or come up with another way to pay. Nor do they want to get caught, such as mortgage or rent payments, to bounce.

Wachovia and other banks offer ways to avoid its \$31 overdraft fee, though each carries its own complications.

One is to sign up for overdraft protection, which Wachovia offers through links to a savings account or to a credit card.

Under either plan, overdrafts

are still paid — you're still able to get your groceries, or withdraw beyond your available funds at a bank machine — and your overdrafts will still generate fees. But the cost drops from \$31 per overdraft to \$5 apiece.

Another approach is to ask the bank to set your overdraft limit to zero. If you do that, you'll never have to face a \$31 overdraft charge for buying a \$4 broom, as Spiller was.

But be careful about a side effect of that choice, at least at Wachovia: The bank also won't pay any checks if you don't have adequate available funds. As a result, your rent or mortgage payment could bounce.

Is there a middle ground — say, allowing overdrafts on checks but blocking them on debit-card use? Visa USA says that's up to its member banks, but Wachovia doesn't allow it. Still, Nite says Wachovia can sometimes warn customers before overdrafts occur.

Nite says Wachovia customers who use the bank's own ATMs are warned if a withdrawal will exceed their available balance. And online customers

Growing rural economy hinges on retaining small businesses

The Associated Press

LEWISTON — Economic development can conjure ideas of 500-employee call centers and 100-employee manufacturers moving to rural Idaho from fast-paced California cities.

In reality, a slight growth in businesses in the five counties of north-central Idaho is the result of a quieter form of economic development.

"I call it the twosies and threesies," said Jill Thomas-Jorgensen, regional director of the Idaho Small Business Development Center at Lewis-Clark State College.

Small businesses are hiring one or two employees that, without the glitz of a large enterprise moving in, have helped create jobs in the five-county region.

That doesn't necessarily equate to more jobs in the area. Last spring, Idaho Commerce and Labor reported Nez Perce County had lost more than 1,000 jobs in the previous year.

If a larger business closes and two small ones open, the total

number of jobs still may slump. But the jobs offered by small local businesses are more stable, noted Doug Tweedy, national director of regional labor economist for Idaho Commerce and Labor.

"Employers are really conservative when they are small," he said.

"They don't hire new employees without a plan and without confidence, Tweedy said, — and when they hire it's usually with the intent that the positions will be permanent. The growth of businesses on the Camas Prairie and the Clearwater valley may be partly credited to economic development specialists, he said.

"To fill in the gaps, these economic development specialists have helped not only nurture the small businesses, but have helped build buildings," Tweedy said.

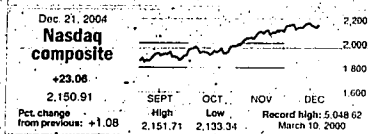
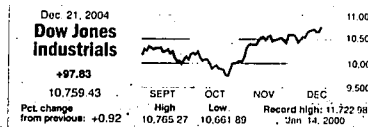
Specialists hired with money allocated by Commerce and Labor have lost more than the business incubators being built at Elk City and the Orofino

Please see **ECONOMY**, Page E3

MONEY

Dow rises to 3.5-year high Boise call center will add 400 jobs

NEW YORK (AP) — The stock market barreled higher Tuesday, sending the Dow Jones industrial average to its highest since 2001.



The good earnings news, along with the bid upgrade sent a positive tone for the market throughout the session.

Wall Street's revenue forecasts. The tech sector got a lift after Lehman Brothers upgraded Intel Corp. to "overweight," citing improved forecasts for spending in 2005.

"The company news that we've seen over the past few days" has been, on balance, positive, and that's giving investors the courage to buy," said Hugh Johnson, chief investment officer for First Albany Corp.

On the strength of Lehman's upgrade, Intel Corp. gained 79 cents to \$23.49, while Dividend Advanced Micro Devices Inc. slipped 11 cents to \$21.73.

Stocks have climbed steadily since the presidential election, with good economic data and positive profit forecasts for 2005 assuring investors of further gains.

Pharmaceutical stocks were mixed after a study found safety concerns with an over-the-counter pain reliever sold as Aleve.

The Dow rose 97.83, or 0.92 percent, to 10,759.43, its best close since Dec 13, 2001, surpassing the previous 2001 high of 10,737.70 on Feb. 11.

Bear Stearns reported a 22 percent jump in profits, well above analysts' forecasts, but its shares were off \$1.80 at \$102.70.

Broader stock indicators also made substantial gains. The Standard & Poor's 500 index was up 10.78, or 0.9 percent, at 1,205.43.

Pharmaceutical stocks were mixed after a study found safety concerns with an over-the-counter pain reliever sold as Aleve.

The Nasdaq composite index gained 23.06, or 1.08 percent, to 2,150.91.

BOISE — As many as 400 new jobs will be added to the EDS Corp. call center in Boise, the company announced.

The jobs — with starting pay between \$12 and \$15 per hour — are expected to inject nearly \$10 million a year into the local economy.

The call center will help support a secured intranet system for the United States Navy-Marine Corps. The intranet consolidates more than 1,000 independent Navy and Marine Corps computer networks at bases in the United States and overseas into one network.

Boise was chosen for the expansion because of its skilled work force and because EDS already has an office in the area, said Mike Koehler, the company's enterprise client executive.

EDS already employs about 500 people at its Boise call center.

About 7,500 people are employed by business transaction centers in the Boise area. Metro Chamber of Commerce vice president Shirly Hoyle said.

The centers provide services including technical support, billing and processing and credit card services.

"These are not outmoded cold-calling centers," he said. Idaho's chief economist, Mike Ferguson, said although the \$10 million payroll figure may seem relatively small when compared to the state's total personal income of \$36 billion, it's still an important addition to the area.

"It's all good from an economic standpoint," Ferguson said.

Although it can vary by industry, Ferguson said that when companies like EDS add new jobs to an area, the same number of jobs are created to support the basic daily needs of those new employees.

Businesses such as barber shops, supermarkets, flower shops and more all profit from new job expansion, Ferguson said.

Koehler said the Boise operation will be the third EDS call center set up to support the Navy-Marine Corps intranet.

"Our Norfolk and San Diego facilities are operating at capacity and cannot house the additional personnel needed to support a one-year-long NMCI network," Koehler said.

Currently, about 250,000 people use the network. That could grow to up to 455,000 users, he said.

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NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

Table with columns: Name, Div, Last, Chg. Lists various stocks like AIG, Amgen, and others with their respective prices and changes.

MARKET SUMMARY

Summary table for NYSE, AMEX, and NASDAQ. Includes columns for Most Active, Gainers, Losers, and Diaries.

NASDAQ NATIONAL MARKET

Table with columns: Name, Div, Last, Chg. Lists various NASDAQ stocks like AIG, Amgen, and others.

INDEXES

Table showing 52-week High, Low, Name, and YTD % change for various market indices.

STOCKS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Table listing local stocks with columns: Name, Div, PE, Last, Chg, YTD. Includes companies like Albertson, Albion, and others.

AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGE

Table listing American Stock Exchange stocks with columns: Name, Div, Last, Chg, YTD.

HOW TO READ THE MARKET REPORT

Here are the 525 most active stocks on the New York Stock Exchange, the 400 most active on the Nasdaq National Market and the 100 most active on the American Stock Exchange. Mutual funds are a 115-page listing. Stocks in bold changed 5 percent or more in price.

AMERICAN STOCK EXCHANGE

Company names listed alphabetically by the company's full name. (T.O.U.S. abbreviation). Company names made up of initials are listed at the beginning of each letter list.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
The following license conditions are part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license for the Lower Salmon Falls hydroelectric project owned and operated by Idaho Power Company.

Article 18. So far as is consistent with proper operation of the project, the Licensee shall allow the public access to a reasonable extent, to project waters and adjacent project lands owned by the Licensee for the purpose of public utilization of such lands and waters for navigation and for outdoor recreational purposes, including fishing and hunting.

Article 20. Project Operation. The Licensee shall at all times operate the project in a run-of-river mode for the protection of the aquatic resources and riparian vegetation of the Snake River in the project area.

Article 21. Stocking. The Licensee shall at all times minimize the fluctuation of the reservoir surface elevation by maintaining the project in a run-of-river mode for the protection of the aquatic resources and riparian vegetation of the Snake River in the project area.

Article 22. Dolman Rapids Minimum Flow. Commencing within 60 days of Commission approval of the Operational Compliance Monitoring Plan required by Article 403, the Licensee shall release at the upper diversion dam into the Dolman Rapids bypass reach a minimum flow of 200 cubic feet per second, or in-flow to the project reservoir, whichever is less, for the protection of invertebrate production.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The following license conditions are part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license for the Upper Salmon Falls hydroelectric project owned and operated by Idaho Power Company.

Article 18. So far as is consistent with proper operation of the project, the Licensee shall allow the public access to a reasonable extent, to project waters and adjacent project lands owned by the Licensee for the purpose of public utilization of such lands and waters for navigation and for outdoor recreational purposes, including fishing and hunting.

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Article 22. Dolman Rapids Minimum Flow. Commencing within 60 days of Commission approval of the Operational Compliance Monitoring Plan required by Article 403, the Licensee shall release at the upper diversion dam into the Dolman Rapids bypass reach a minimum flow of 200 cubic feet per second, or in-flow to the project reservoir, whichever is less, for the protection of invertebrate production.

EMPLOYMENT
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Of Wyoming has been awarded a major contract for Northern Nevada. We are looking for 5 experienced drivers willing to relocate to the Wells area.

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Owner/Operators lease your truck on us and pull our trailer. Earn 80% of gross revenue created by the truck. Top of the line equipment.

Table with 4 columns: Account, 2003-2004 Budget, Budget Salary & Benefits, 2003-2004 Actuals, and Actual Salary & Benefits. Includes sections for Revenue Receipts, Total Revenue & Transfers, Expenditures, and Total Expenditures & Transfers.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following license conditions are part of the...

Article 18, 30 for as is consistent with proper...

Article 401. Project Operation. The licensee shall operate the project in a run-of-river mode...

Run-of-river operation may be temporarily modified if required by operating emergencies beyond the control of the licensee...

Article 402. Minimum Falls Flow. Commencing within 60 days of the Commission approval...

This flow may be temporarily modified if required by operating emergencies beyond the control of the licensee...

Article 403. Middle Snake River (Shoshone Falls) Management Plan. The licensee shall file for license issuance...

(1) site-specific maps and detailed information showing schedules, costs, target species, control methods, performance standards...

(2) site-specific maps and detailed information showing schedules, costs, protection methods, grazing management, monitoring, and maintenance measures...

(3) a provision for review, consultation, and revision of the plan every 5 years throughout the license period...

The licensee shall update and finalize the Middle Snake River Land Management Plan after consultation with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality...

Article 410. Recreation Management Plan. Within one year of license issuance, the licensee shall file for Commission approval a Recreation Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance for implementation of recreation and management measures...

(1) monetary support for third party construction of the Shoshone Falls Park and viewing opportunities in Shoshone Falls Park;

(2) monetary support to the City of Twin Falls for development and maintenance of the Shoshone Falls/Dierkes Lake Complex;

(3) investment in recreational facility enhancements on the North Arm of the Snake River in the Shoshone Falls Recreation Area...

The licensee shall prepare the plan after consultation with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, South Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation Development Association (SCITRDA)...

EMPLOYMENT

TRUCK DRIVER. TOP GUN TRUCK DRIVING ACADEMY. Put Your Tax Return To Good Use This Year!

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DRIVERS. Tanker drivers needed for The Twin Falls area, hauling double trailers. Cleaning driveway. Circle A Construction 208-731-1045.

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Apply on line at www.dhr.idaho.gov or for more information please contact Kara E. Godwin at 737-5981 or Sharon White at 737-8903.

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Local delivery drivers needed. Class A CDL required. Firmly experienced required. Start \$11/hourly.

Apply in person at 1918 Fremont Road North, Wendell, Idaho. No phone calls please.

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Do-It-Yourself Ideas



North Pole Railroad. Made of schub plastic poles and white paint with black accents...

Photo: Canvas North Pole Railroad giftbook. Photo: Canvas Christmas Stockings giftbook.

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