



## There's some good news hidden in the trash pile

Older Americans, trying to make ends meet with their Social Security checks, had a little bit of good news a few weeks ago that was, unfortunately, overshadowed by Britney Spears' nasty doings, separations and divorces of Hollywood role models (that's an insult), rap singers that break the law almost out of habit but never seem to get any time in the clinker, notables with their new born babies who apparently, somewhere along the line, forgot the "m" word, as in "marriage," and sadly the litany goes on.

But in between all of those reports that deserve back burner status but for some reason we are told it is news (sure!!) was a real story. The Social Security Administration announced that the benefit increase for 2007 will be 3.3 percent. That's good news for the 53 million people who receive Social Security or Supplemental Security Income. The increases are automatic each year, based on the rise in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers*.

The 3.3 percent Cost-of-Living Adjustment, better known as COLA, begins with benefits that

nearly 49 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2007. Increased payments to more than 7 million Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries begin on Dec. 29.

Millions of retired Americans are trying to get by on Social Security alone. That can sometimes pose a problem when you consider Social Security checks vary from \$500 a month (maybe a little less) to around \$1,500 (maybe a little higher). So, any kind of an increase is appreciated.

How long can those depending on Social Security expect to receive checks? They are in no danger. The new baby boomers should be pretty safe, too. But the kids of the baby boomers might see changes when their time to retire comes along.

If the government would keep its hands out of the Social Security cookie jar, there would be no need for concern. But because Social Security seems to underwrite more stuff than you could ever imagine, it is easy to understand the concern for future beneficiaries.

But like they say, something is better than nothing. In 2007 that *something* will be a 3.3 percent increase. —Tom Dreiling



## Hangin' With Marge

Christmas tree

By Margaret Bucholtz



The Christmas tree that stands out most in my life is one that my mother decorated for our family. Times were hard and we didn't have the money to get a tree. Back in the early 50s, most trees sold from \$1 to about \$5. Even then there just wasn't enough money to buy one, so my mother found a small tree branch and wrapped it with cotton and hung little gold balls on it. Beside the little tree there was an old kerosene lamp and a Bible opened up to the birth of Christ.

As my brother and I sat in front of the old corner stove, we watched as the lamp cast shadows on the little gold balls, while our mother read to us from the chapter of Luke.

When I got married, once again money was not something we had but someone gave us one of those aluminum Christmas trees. That was the tree we used for years.

Finally the kids grew tired of that old tree and begged for us to buy a real tree like some of their friends had. We did that for a few years, but the trees were always the kind that had a few branches and they dried out fast. I got tired of vacuuming up pine needles for the rest of the year and I broke down and brought an artificial tree.

When the kids were all gone from home and I was taking care of my parents I decided that I needed an uplift and I went to the store and brought a real one.

I had read about the bags you laid on the floor and when Christmas was over you just pulled the bag over the tree and hence you had no pine needles for the rest of the year.

Along with that information, I found the way to keep your tree moist for the season. They said that if you buy your tree early and mixed up a mixture of syrup, water and I think some canned milk it would keep your tree.

First you had to saw off the stump

so it was a new cut, and also cut little strips in the trunk so the mixture could get throughout the branches. You needed sand in a bucket to place it in.

With the tree bought as soon as they hit the stores, I had Kurt help me cut the bottom and slice little slices into it and then we placed it in the sand. Carefully I mixed up the mixture and poured it into the sand. I spent lots of time decorating it and life was good. I couldn't wait to get home that weekend to see my tree and enjoy the lights and smell of a real tree.

By the second week I looked forward to seeing my tree! However that time when I got home the house smelled a little funny and I hurried up and washed up Kurt's dishes and emptied all the trash, but the smell was still there when I left on Monday to go back to my parents.

The third weekend I walked into the house and I almost gagged!

What in the world was going on at home?

Kurt had the dishes done, the trash was emptied and I decided we were out of propane and that had to be the reason for the smell.

As I walked into the living room it got stronger and then I stopped to see my beautiful tree and there it was, the most horrible smell I could ever remember.

That afternoon we took off the decorations, bagged the tree and hauled it off. The house became instantly better smelling and we headed out to get our old artificial tree and put it up.

The kids never even got to see the real tree and it was the last one I ever even tried to put up.

As for the mixture I guess it worked because you would throw the tree out before it had time to dry up!

## The American family values are questioned

Letter to the Editor: Subject: American "Family Values?"

The writer questions us to whether the following are true American "Family Values," or "insults to intellect."

- 1) Reprobate, philandering Bill Clinton as a White House occupant?
2) Pregnant, lesbian Mary Chenny as a White House example? (baby with two mommies?)
3) Anti-religion Elton John and male spouse as White House

-Letter to the Editor-

- 4) The "legalization of sodomy" in America by the U.S. Supreme Court?
5) The promotion of homosexuality as an "acceptable lifestyle" in America?

As it was in the days of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah, so goes America?? What think you??

Terry Rueb St. Francis

GOD SAYS Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:28

## The Saint Francis Herald

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## News From the Past

5 years ago - 2001 The first production of On Stage, Inc., was held Friday evening and Saturday afternoon at the Cheyenne Theatre. "The Taffetas - A Musical Journey Through the Fabulous Fifties." Performing Julie Wolters, Jenny Busse, Lila Whitmore and Talley Morrow. Seniors Lacie McArthur of St. Francis and Sara Hubbard of Cheylin were invited to play in the Northwest Kansas All-Star volleyball match. The Indian football team made it into the Final Four of the 2A playoffs by defeating Johnson in Regional play. The Indians were the

District 13 champions, and then defeated Wichita County in Bi-District play before meeting Johnson. Saintry is scheduled to meet Claflin next. Northwest Kansas League coaches honored the following Indian football players: Ty Long, Dustin Dunn, Darren Workman, Ryan Culwell, Carl Keller, Ben Swihart, Jeremiah Wiley, Darin Brown, Gabe Weeden, Dallas Walz, Travis Hilt and Marcus Dodd. The Cheyenne County Hospital Board agreed to spend the money from the sale of the house donated by Cyral Hoag to purchase an operating room table which would permit surgeons to take x-rays

through the table along with other necessary laparoscopic equipment. 25 years ago - 1981 The St. Francis Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8 miles northwest of St. Francis celebrated its 80th anniversary Sunday with a morning and afternoon observance. Members of the First Baptist Church announce that Rev. David Dunham has recently accepted their call to pastor the church. Members of the St. Francis Community High School junior class will present the class play "Boys and Ghouls Together."

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



Last Thursday, Dec. 7, marked the 65th Anniversary of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. In tribute to the "Greatest Generation," High Plains Public Radio played the popular music from that time. What music it was! This was the era of the Big Bands. Americans were listening to Benny Goodman, the Dorsey brothers and Glenn Miller and their orchestras. I know a little about this because it was the music my dad loved. In fact, Pap was quite the Jitterbugger. He would brag about how he had won several trophies in Jitterbug contests. However, while he was in the Navy in World War II, his parents moved and much of his childhood treasures remained in the attic. I'm sure that's where they ended up. I never saw Dad in action with a partner but he would do his signature Camel Walk for us kids

whenever we asked. He put his hands in his front pockets and began walking like his feet were touching scorching hot sand. While this went on he would shift his weight and bob his head. I share my Dad's build. In other words, McCormicks are not built for speed. But Paps sure had the moves. In theaters, starting Dec. 15, will be the movie "Charlotte's Web." This movie is a wonderful story for everyone to enjoy. I encourage you and your family to attend the movie. Charlotte's Web features the 4-H emblem multiple times and the themes portrayed speak directly to the great work that 4-H does in de-

veloping you — building friendships, commitment to goals and having fun! It stars Dakota Fanning as Fern, and the voices of Julia Roberts and 4-H alumnus Reba McEntire, as well as many other noteworthy actors. The organization of 4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

## Extension Notes

By Tye Faulkender In theaters, starting Dec. 15, will be the movie "Charlotte's Web." This movie is a wonderful story for everyone to enjoy. I encourage you and your family to attend the movie. Charlotte's Web features the 4-H emblem multiple times and the themes portrayed speak directly to the great work that 4-H does in de-

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