

Samantha Smith calls for youth exchange

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Monday, Dec. 26, 1983
Weather: Mostly zeroish
Tonight: 20% chance light snow
Tuesday: Cloudy
Wednesday: High 15 Low 3
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Airbag debate is rolling again

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Early retirement excites newsmen

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Miami is great in the winter but (from left) Gregg and Lori Reeves and Julie and Tim Brungardt were among the Cornhusker families who missed their children at Christmas time.

This year's Miami trip different Husker parents faced Christmas having to leave children back home

By Chuck Sinclair

MIAMI BEACH — It's the white Christmas most Nebraskans can only dream of.

White sandy beaches — not snow — supply the color. But there's something about this particular white Christmas in Miami that leaves a few of the University of Nebraska players and their wives feeling blue.

For people like Tim and Julie Brungardt, it's the first time they've both left 11-week-old Mark.

Mark and Lynn Schellen had to leave Jennifer, an 18-month-old bundle of joy, home this time after bringing her to Miami as a newborn last year.

Gregg and Lori Reeves left Melissa as an 8-month-old last year, but it's doubly hard this year with the addition of 18-month-old Mitchell at home.

Dave and Terri Bicker had to leave little Jimmy back in Nebraska, too.

For the first time, the Nebraska team came down two days before Christmas — and the decision of whether to bring their kids was not left up to them. For the first time, Coach Tom Osborne allowed no children to accompany the players' wives because the children might distract the players. The Orange Bowl boys for the players' wives' plane tickets and their hotel rooms, but no meals.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were difficult times for the parents away from their children, but all said they understood the fact that this year was different; a national championship is at stake.

"I talked about it with Mark (Schellen) and we both said if we couldn't have our kids along, we'd better win the national championship," Brungardt said.

"Christmas Eve was the hardest for me," Julie Brungardt said. "Christmas is so different this year."

"It really doesn't seem like Christmas," Tim added. "There's no snow, but I've never noticed it down here the past three years like I have this year... being married now and having a son."

Leaving Melissa was hard enough for the Reeves last year, and obviously the difficulty has been increased with Mitchell. "This year is harder for us because we have two kids to leave instead of one," Lori Reeves said. "Today (Christmas Day) was hard, especially since we didn't have anything scheduled to do."

The Reeves spent the day going to Mass, walking along the beach and playing basketball against each other.

The hardest part for Lori was when she found out Mitchell cried the day she left.

"He's Mommy's boy," Gregg said. "That was pretty hard on her."

It was much more difficult for the Schellens this year, after bringing Jennifer last year as an infant.

"I really wasn't bad last year," Mark said. "We would have brought her again this year if we could. But this is a once in a lifetime thing, and they wanted us to be able to concentrate on her."

"It's still the pits," Lynn Schellen said. "Seeing all the other little kids running around makes it tougher."

All of the parents celebrated an early Christmas with their children, and they admit the children probably won't remember missing this particular Christmas.

"She won't remember it," Lynn said of Jennifer. "But I will. I won't forget it. It's harder on the parents."

The Brungardts were trying to make the best of the situation, designating the time away as the honeymoon they never had.

But they, as well as the others, have been phoning home regularly to check on the well-being of their kids.

Lynn Schellen had to call twice Christmas Day because Jennifer was asleep the first time, and she didn't get to talk to her.

The pressure is on for the husbands to do everything they can in terms of making the trip without the kids worthwhile.

The wives agree that the answer is simple: Win the national championship.

Small arms fire fell on U.S. Marine positions at Beirut International Airport but no casualties were reported.

"An artillery battle is going on around us and we are catching some small arms fire, but we are not returning the fire," said Marine spokesman Maj. Dennis Brooks.

The battles first erupted Christmas Eve, shortly after French peace-keeping forces relinquished strategic positions around the Sabra and Chatila Palestinian refugee camps. The Lebanese army moved in to take control but met fierce resistance from the Shites.

Handreds of people were massacred at the two refugee camps in September 1982 by Christian militias.

Roads through the suburbs were almost deserted, with the few cars racing along the streets to get out of areas of shelling.

Monday's fighting severed a cease-fire declared at dusk Sunday to temporarily quiet battles that left at least 18 people dead. Two civilians and a Lebanese army soldier were reported killed Monday.

By mid-afternoon, Beirut radio reported another cease-fire had been declared but that it failed to take hold.

"The cease-fire agreement collapsed... It has been violated on all fronts," the radio said one hour after it was to have gone into effect.

Salpiter fire
About a dozen British troops guarding the cease-fire committee's building in a no-man's-land between the southern suburbs.

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Mercury breaks zero for first time in 8½ days

By Journal Writers and News Wire

For the first time in more than a week, temperatures in parts of Nebraska stayed above zero all night Sunday, according to the National Weather Service.

Lincoln wasn't one of those lucky areas, with an overnight low temperature of 7 degrees below zero. Lincoln's high temperature Sunday was 4 degrees above zero.

Temperatures over most of the state were cold, but not as extreme as during the previous seven nights. Other Nebraska cities with below-zero lows Sunday night included: Grand Island (4), Norfolk (5), North Platte (7), Omaha (5) and Valentine (10).

Temperatures in the Panhandle, however, held steady or rose slightly and were in the 10 to 15 above-zero range by early morning. Imperial had a low temperature of 1 degree and Scottsbluff didn't get any colder than 7 degrees.

The weather service referred to Sunday's weather as "almost springlike" in the west, with Kansas recording a state high of 12. Valentine began the day at 25 but reached 8 above by day's end.

Interstate 80 is four normal across the state, Manger said. Roads in the Lincoln and Omaha areas, along with Grand Island, North Platte, Sully and O'Neill, have normal winter driving conditions.

Extra time
Motorists should allow extra time, however, to reach their destinations. Many roads open to two lanes of traffic are extremely narrow, Manger said, and motorists should be warned that there is not much shoulder area on which to pull off if they should have trouble.

Lancaster County Engineer Don Thomas said a full shift of 25 graders, 12 trucks and more than 50 people worked all Christmas Day, putting 90 percent of the 1,400 miles of Lancaster County roads open to at least one lane.

The crew would continue to work until about noon Monday, opening the remaining 10 percent of the roads and widening others.

"Everybody should be able to get out" by noon, Thomas said Monday morning. His office received phone calls from anxious county residents "by the hundreds" Christmas morning, Thomas said. He said that the calls began tapering off by 10 a.m., when residents began seeing snowflakes out.

The arctic high pressure system that brought record cold to much of the country during the past few days is moving east and south, setting records even into Florida, according to the weather service. In Miami Beach, where the University of Nebraska football team is preparing to play in the Orange Bowl and thousands of Nebraska fans already have gone to escape the cold, Sunday's high was only 45 degrees.

Light snow
Winds over the northern Plains will be south to southwest and temperatures will moderate over the next day or so before another cold surge sets in, forecasters said.

Light snow fell in the Panhandle late Sunday night, ending by Monday morning. The weather service forecasts cloudy skies and a 20 percent chance of snow.

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Cold front moves into Deep South

By The Associated Press

Winter eased its icy hammerblow in the Midwest Saturday, but the thermometer still hit 3 below zero in Indianapolis as the cold Christmas sprawled southward, threatening Florida's \$2.5 billion citrus crop and disappointing beachgoers.

The death toll from the spell of cold weather passed 170 and the National Weather Service said at least 100 cities recorded their coldest Christmas Day on record. It was more of the same Monday, with record-breaking lows in 6 communities, most in the Southeast.

In Olton, Texas, a family of six apparently suffocated on Christmas Day

when they sealed their apartment against subzero temperatures and turned on a gas heater. Hundreds of travelers were marooned at makeshift shelters when wind-whipped snow paralyzed Midwest roads.

"I'm alive!"
"It was warm and safe, and I'm alive," said Jean Alvey of Columbus, Ohio, who spent Sunday at the Birmingham Army in northwest Indiana. Her car stalled Saturday night on Interstate 65 as she headed for Chicago to spend Christmas with her family.

In Chicago, the mercury dipped to 17 below zero, a record and 8 degrees below the norm.

See COLD on page 6

A little powder goes long way in battling city chimney fires

By Bill Kneifel

The next time you see a Lincoln firefighter scramble up a ladder to do battle with a potentially devastating chimney blaze, don't be surprised if all he is carrying is a baggie.

Like heavy canvas hose and high-pressure nozzles, plastic sandwich bags filled with old fire extinguisher powder have become standard equipment on all of the Capital City's fire engines this winter, according to Assistant Chief Dale Boettcher.

He said they have been used three or four times on chimney fires since Lincoln's 1983 fireplace and wood-burning stove season began, but the guys said they couldn't believe how effective they are.

Boettcher said the idea was picked up by a Lincoln firefighter who was visiting with a counterpart from Minnesota while attending school several weeks ago at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.

Boettcher said the Minnesota related that his department had experienced a lot of trouble with chimney fires, so some of the people in his department asked fire extinguisher companies if they could have the old soda-lime powder from the extinguishers when it periodically is replenished.

"He said, 'I don't know, as we decided to give it a try,'" said Boettcher. He said representatives of the five extinguisher firms he contacted "probably thought I was out of my second story when I asked for their old powder."

"But they went along with it, and the first time we tried it, the fire was coming out of the chimney and we dropped it in a bag and boom, it went," Boettcher said.

"You really don't need much and it doesn't cost us anything, so it has worked out pretty good," he said. Boettcher said that only about two



Lincoln firefighter Randi Van Horn displays some of the department's latest equipment for battling chimney blazes — plastic bags containing old fire extinguisher powder.

cups of powder are put in each plastic bag, which melts as soon as it is dropped into a burning chimney. That releases the dry chemical, which smothers the flames and smothers them.

He said that in out-of-control chimney fires, which is a bag can be dropped into a chimney because of its design, "we can open the (stove) door and tear a bag open and just let the dry powder into it to knock the fire down."

Boettcher said another advantage of the powder is that little or no damage is done to the stove or steel fireplace. He said serious cracking can occur when cold water from a fire hose hits an extremely overheated metal.

Fighting severs Beirut cease-fire

BEIRUT, Lebanon (UPI) — Lebanese army troops engaged Moslem rebels in a major battle Monday over control of strategic areas vacated by French peace-keepers on Beirut's southern outskirts. The army's U.S.-made tanks were pointed nearby for as an armistice at the city held by the Shiite Moslem militia, Amal.

Smoke billowed into the sky from buildings where thousands of residents sought refuge in makeshift bomb shelters from the spreading artillery duels and shelling.

The fighting was the worst since a Sept. 25 cease-fire between warring factions.

Two concentrations of at least 10 U.S.-made M-48 Lebanese army battle tanks waited in army-held Christian east Beirut for the signal to enter the battle in one another at the city held by the Shiite Moslem militia, Amal.

Lebanese army artillery fired from the hills overlooking Beirut and the sound of artillery, grenades and heavy machine-gun exchanges rolled across the city from the middle of the capital to the southern outskirts.

Calling Goodman's captivity in Syria a "war of tension," Jackson said Sunday in a telephone interview from Chicago that he would go to Syria next week after a briefing from the State Department Tuesday.

White House spokesman Mark Webbberg insisted Sunday that the administration is pressing for the release of U.S. Robert Goodman despite Jackson's allegations to the contrary. Goodman was shot down over Syrian-held territory in Lebanon Dec. 4.

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Jackson told to stay out of Syrian prisoner case

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The White House is signaling Democratic presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson to stay out of the case of a Navy hero shot down over Lebanon and being held by Syria.

White House spokesman Mark Webbberg insisted Sunday that the administration is pressing for the release of U.S. Robert Goodman despite Jackson's allegations to the contrary. Goodman was shot down over Syrian-held territory in Lebanon Dec. 4.

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