



Merry Christmas

THE SUN



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2003

50 CENTS

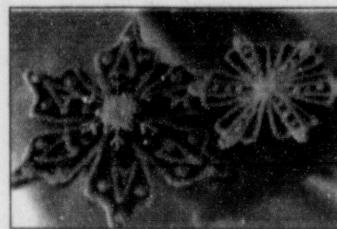
GOOD MORNING

Today's weather: High expected to hit 68 DETAILS/A12

IN QUOTES

"It's supposed to keep people out but it's locking people in, no question about it."

A Napa Valley priest, on border security that's keeping illegals from going home for holidays/A9



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Silver cookie decor may soon be memory in California/A5

YUMA

Yuma squadron's Harriers are back in the air/B1

SPORTS

Yuma Catholic basketball team leaves for East Coast tournament today/C1



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Mad cow fear infects U.S.

► Federal officials scramble to find origin of disease

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Federal officials raced on Wednesday to find out where a Washington state cow, apparently infected with mad cow disease, was born and may have been infected.

Even as the investigation continued, officials sought to reassure Americans about the safety

BIGGEST IMPORTERS OF U.S. BEEF CLOSE BORDERS/A2

► CANADIAN COW OWNER SYMPATHIZES WITH U.S. FARMER/A2

of the nation's food supply. That didn't stop several nations from banning U.S. beef, including

Japan, Taiwan and Mexico, the three largest importers.

Agriculture Department officials told a briefing that the cow joined the Washington State herd in October 2001 and was culled from other cows Dec. 9, after she became paralyzed, apparently as a result of calving.

But because the brain

SEE DISEASE/A12

► Loss of exports expected to increase domestic supply, drive down beef supplies

BY JOYCE LOBECK
SUN BUSINESS EDITOR

Loss of export markets for U.S. beef over fears of mad cow disease will impact Arizona, said a spokesman for the state's cattle industry.

The bans by Japan, Mexico and Korea, the three largest importers of U.S. beef, were to be expected with the announcement of a possible case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, commonly known as "mad cow disease") in a dairy cow in

Washington state, said Basilio "Basil" Aja, public relations director for the Arizona Cattlemen's Association.

"It's not unlike what the U.S. did with Canada," he said. But it has the potential to hurt the

SEE EXPORTS/A12

FROSTY THE MILKMAN?



Using 1,258 empty milk jugs and a few other accessories, Raymond Bird got into the holiday spirit by constructing this gigantic snowman. The approximately 12-foot high creation — which is guaranteed not to melt away — adorns the driveway of Raymond and his wife Edna's home at 2179 Del Sol Lane in Del Oro Mobile Estates. The Birds didn't actually drink all that milk to get the containers; they had help from neighbors who brought by their empty milk containers.

PHOTO BY CHARLES WHITEHOUSE/ THE SUN

No sleigh and eight tiny reindeer, just one robot landing on Mars

► European scientists hoping for successful Yule touchdown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DARMSTADT, Germany — European space officials on Wednesday tensely awaited the landing of their first probe on Mars today, sending final commands to prepare its accompanying mother ship to start orbiting the planet as the Beagle 2 probe plunged toward the surface.

Beagle 2, which separated on Friday from the larger Mars Express orbiter, was expected to enter the Martian atmosphere and land at about 3:45 a.m. Christmas morning — Mission Control time — using parachutes and gas bags to cushion the impact.

At about the same time, Mars Express will fire its main engine

for 34 minutes to slow it into orbit, a maneuver critical to the mission's success.

But controllers expected to wait several hours or even days to pick up the first signals from Beagle 2, if it survives the fiery 7½-minute plunge through the Martian atmosphere.

The 143-pound lander, shaped like an oversized wok, won't communicate until it can open its solar panels and charge its batteries using the sun's energy.

Confirmation that the Mars Express successfully entered orbit also won't come for several hours, until it emerges from the far side of the planet.

Mission controllers sent the last commands to Mars Express Wednesday morning, telling it to heat its fuel tanks and switch off

nonessential equipment so it won't interfere with the maneuver.

"From this point, the tension really starts to grow," flight director Michael McKay said in a statement. "We don't have a lot more to do except watch and wait."

The first chance to hear from Beagle 2 — named for the ship that carried naturalist Charles Darwin on his voyage of discovery in the 1830s — was to come this morning in Europe when the U.S. Mars Odyssey spacecraft, already orbiting the planet, has a chance to pick up and relay a signal.

On the Net:
Mars Express: www.esa.int/export/SPECIALS/Mars—Express/index.html

Mad cow disease looms again

The discovery of an apparent case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy — known as mad cow disease — in Washington state has sent officials scrambling to find the source of the infection while several nations have banned U.S. beef imports.

Mad cow disease

Generally transmitted through contaminated feed, a four-to-five year incubation period makes the disease very hard to track.

Symptoms in cows:

- Nervousness or aggression
- Abnormal posture
- Coordination problems
- Difficult walking
- Decreased milk production
- Severe muscle twitching
- Loss of weight despite regular appetite

Dangers to humans:

- Variant Creutzfeld-Jakob disease, a fatal brain disease in humans believed to be associated with mad cow disease
- The incubation period for the disease is likely years or decades
- No U.S. cases have ever been reported



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holidays lonely for Yumans with loved ones in Iraq

► Relatives 'coping the best we can'

BY MATT RIEHL
SUN STAFF WRITER

men in the Yuma-based 855th Military Police Company still in Iraq.

"We sure miss him," Tillson said.

D'Arcy Carll said it's been more of a struggle during the holidays, but "we're coping the

SEE HOLIDAYS/A12

Christmas in Baghdad comes amid celebration and fear

► Wary Iraqi Christians keep it low-key

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi children mobbed two American soldiers in Santa hats as they handed out stuffed animals Tuesday. Not far away, an Iraqi Christian woman sat in an otherwise empty church, praying for peace.

While U.S. troops, buoyed by

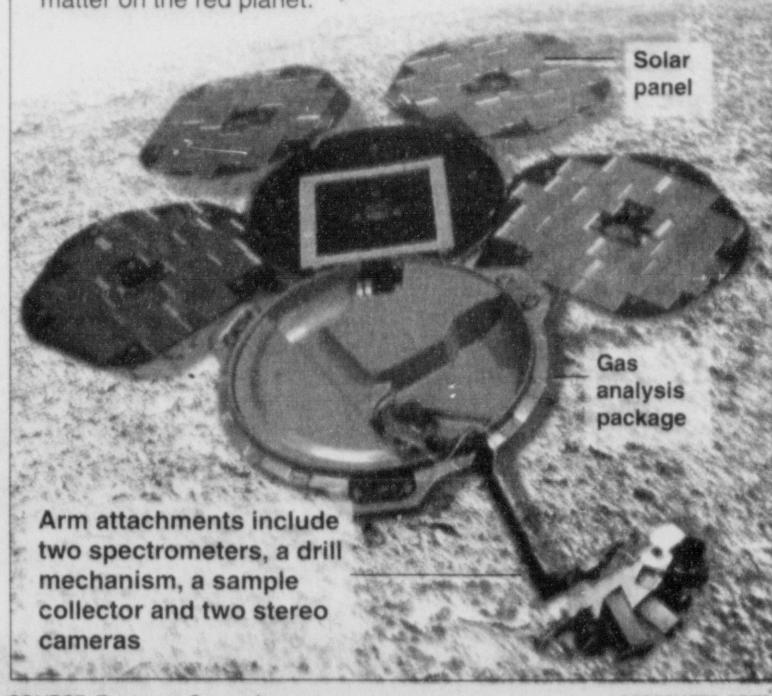
the capture of Saddam Hussein, geared up for big Christmas celebrations today, the small community of Iraqi Christians prepared for a low-key holiday, with many congregations postponing midnight services until daybreak because of the violence that still plagues the country.

The holiday brings mixed

SEE BAGHDAD/A12

Touching down on Mars

The European Space Agency's Beagle 2 lander was scheduled to parachute to the surface of Mars today, completing its seven month journey. Once there, it will unfurl its robotic arm and solar panels and will begin its search for evidence of water and organic matter on the red planet.



SOURCE: European Space Agency

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