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Where you turn.

WHAT HE SAID

'It was the worst Christmas Eve I've ever had.'

ROBERT SCHOFF of Iowa who became stuck headfirst in the opening to his septic tank. Read it on **A-6**.

Online

Today at
TULSAWORLD.COM

New online

Vote in a poll: Do you think electric power lines should be buried in older neighborhoods, even if it means higher utility bills?
www.tulsaworld.com/opinionpoll

From the blogs

Food Writer Natalie Mikles:



It's a little too early to talk New Year's resolutions. We still have about a week for leftover ham, cookies and those last pieces

of candy in the bottoms of our stockings.

My house is overrun with candy. Fancy chocolates, M&Ms, movie theater-size boxes: It's all there. My husband filled my stocking with movie passes and all of my favorite candies . . . gummy bears, raspberry/blackberries, Red Vines, Junior Mints. So all we need is a tub of buttered popcorn, and we're set. Diets are for January. The last days of December are for extra butter on your popcorn, real Cokes, twice-baked potatoes, ham and cheese omelettes and chocolate.

All of this said, beginning Jan. 1, you'll find a new, healthy recipe every day of the month in the Tulsa World.

OU Beat Writer Guerin Emig:



Jason Carter's four-year Oklahoma football career was marked by blocked punts, emergency secondary duty

and some of the best interviews any Sooner under Bob Stoops has ever given. You probably rooted for him for his first two endeavors. I liked him for that last one.

Anyway, it was good to read last week that the former Jenks Trojan is still in the neighborhood. He has signed with the Oklahoma City Yard Dawgz. I may take in my first arena football game just to see if Jason still packs his old interview punch.

Read the rest of these entries at
www.tulsaworld.com/blogs

Wednesday's top 10

The most popular stories read online in the last 24 hours:

- 1. Driver in fatal crash to be victim's pallbearer:** A Tulsa lawyer is facing a first-degree manslaughter complaint in connection with the death of his law partner.
- 2. A look at ORU's troubles:** The university has been besieged by controversy for nearly three months.
- 3. Toby Keith's mother, children, awarded \$2.8 million in fatal crash suit:** The 2001 collision killed Keith's father, H.K. Covel.
- 4. Baker's backers:** OU linebacker learns the hard way to take help when it's offered.
- 5. More homeless students identified in Oklahoma:** 8,200 Oklahoma students were identified as homeless.
- 6. Lawyer is killed; partner arrested:** Police say the crash near 21st and Sheridan happened during a car race.
- 7. McCain favored in the fall:** But Clinton and Huckabee are the first choices of Oklahoma voters in the party primaries.
- 8. Green's proposed changes for ORU include power-sharing:** In return for a \$62 million donation, Oral Roberts University's board of regents will be asked to share power.
- 9. OSU officials still have faith in Gundy:** Columnist Dave Sittler says Gundy has blackened both OSU's eyes by creating negative publicity.
- 10. Fire damages two Tulsa homes:** Investigators are looking into the causes.

PLAY BALL!



'With the professional players, scouts and coaches we have, this makes this a unique hitting clinic.'

Bill Springman

Former Union High School baseball coach who now works with the Minnesota Twins organization.

Youth get invitation to practice with major leaguers, coaches

By **LYNN JACOBSEN** | World Sports Writer

BROKEN ARROW — Young baseball players are invited to spend the holidays with the pros this year.

Bill Springman, former Union High School baseball coach now a hitting coordinator with the Minnesota Twins, is hosting the two-day camp at Versus Pro Baseball Academy.

The hitting camp runs from 9 a.m. to noon Thursday and Friday followed by the pitchers and catchers camp from 2-4 p.m. There is limited enrollment. If interested, call Versus at 254-8700 or online at versus-tulsa.com.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit Special Olympics of Oklahoma.

"With the professional players, scouts and coaches we have, this makes this a unique hitting clinic," Springman said. "Tulsa is unique in that it has a lot of professional people in both development and scouting in major league baseball. Our pitchers and catchers will also benefit from their knowledge."

Joining Springman on the staff is Texas Rangers hitting coordinator Mike Boulanger, Colorado Rockies scout Dave Holiday, Kansas City Royals coach Rusty Kuntz, Tampa Bay Devil Rays scout Brian Hickman, Texas Rangers scout Jay Eddings, and Chicago White Sox scout Clay Overcash, Texas Rangers Triple-A hitting coach Randy Whisler and other invited professional players, scouts and coaches.

"The coaches and scouts have a lot of fun doing this and the players and their parents will leave knowing they spent their money and time in a worthwhile event," Springman said. "Clay and I started this a couple of years ago and it's just grown."

Already, the camp has received 60 applicants but can easily hold 120.

"We hope to get a lot more kids because our ratio is one coach for six athletes," Springman said. "We also have several local professional athletes coming in. Former Broken Arrow outfielder Brandon Timm will be here to work. Former Union players now in college Jared Wondra (Louisville), Steve Ptak (Oklahoma State) and Gunner Glad (who signed with Kentucky and will join the Southeastern Conference school in August)."

Said Wondra, "When I was little I didn't have professional help like this. You get different aspects and

Softball clinic

Versus Pro Baseball Academy in Broken Arrow will also host an All-Skills Softball Clinic Saturday and Sunday. Coaches providing instruction for 9-hour training session include Mandy Shklar, Lori Castellano and Minnesota Twins strength coach Perry Castellano.

The camp is open to girls ages 8-18. To register call Versus at 254-8700.

coaching philosophies."

Added Glad, "There's a lot of one-on-one instruction from guys who know what they are talking about."

Overcash said the event is an excuse for the coaches and scouts to get together as well.

"It's a lot of fun and we all enjoy working together as a group," he said. "It's fun to see some of the kids come back that we taught and see them pass along their knowledge. It's just a great time."

Another key feature of the camp is the state-of-the-art Pro Batter Simulated Video Pitching Machine. Only four Major League organizations have the Pro Batter system.

"These systems cost around \$60,000 and they are great," Springman said. "We also have the Pro Mirror which breaks down the motions of pitchers, hitters and catchers. It's very unique."

Springman, who like many of the other coaches and scouts in the clinic make Tulsa their home during the off-season, see this as a way of giving back to a community ripe with young baseball talent.

A Pro/College Prospects Evaluation Camp is slated for Saturday from 3:30-5:30 p.m., also at Versus. Springman said the same scouts and coaches will also be in attendance at the Evaluation Camp in addition to coaches from every college in the state.

This camp is limited to 80 participants. Tuition is \$85 with lunch provided. Pre-registration is required. Call 254-8700 for more information.

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MIKE WYKE / Tulsa World

Clay Overcash, a scout with the Chicago White Sox, and Bill Springman, hitting instructor with the Minnesota Twins, are shown inside the computerized batting cages at Versus in Broken Arrow.

On tap

For a full list of community events, and to submit your event, go online to www.tulsaworld.com/calendar.

THURSDAY

Tournament of Champions

Some of the state's best boys' basketball teams will be at Expo Square Pavilion for the annual Tournament of Champions. The three-day event starts Thursday and includes two major college recruits, Rotnei Clarke of Verdigris and Keiton Page of Pawnee.

The tournament will have four games a day. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$5 for students. Thursday's schedule is: Stringtown vs. East Central at 2 p.m.; Verdigris vs. Oklahoma City Bishop McGuinness at 3:30 p.m.; Pawnee vs. Jenks at 7 p.m.; and Tahlequah Sequoyah vs. Bixby at 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

Music for applause

The quirk-pop band Elliott the Letter Ostrich brings wild lyrics and danceable, rocky beats. The band also can cast a spell, coaxing almost any audience to sing along about werewolves, vampires, knife fights and exploding whales.

Lo-fi, indie and punky . . . sing it with us: "You look good like black on a Cadillac, you look good like blood on a battle ax."

Watch them at 10 p.m. Friday at Soundpony, 409 N. Main St. The show is free.

www.tulsaworld.com/etlo



AP file

Central Florida Running Back Kevin Smith

SATURDAY

Will Sanders' record fall?

Central Florida's running back Kevin Smith needs 181 yards rushing in the Liberty Bowl to surpass the NCAA record of Barry Sanders, the Oklahoma State standout and NFL Hall of Famer, who set the record of 2,628 rushing yards in 1988. Smith and the Knights take on Mississippi State at 3:30 p.m. in a game televised by ESPN, cable channel 25.

Also scheduled is the Alamo Bowl, where Texas A&M faces Penn State.

SUNDAY

Records day

Home field during the playoffs is already clinched. However, when the Dallas Cowboys face Washington today, two players have personal milestones within reach. Jason Witten needs six catches to become only the second NFL tight end to hit 100, or to get nine and set the single-season record at the position. Marion Barber needs 19 yards to get to 1,000.

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