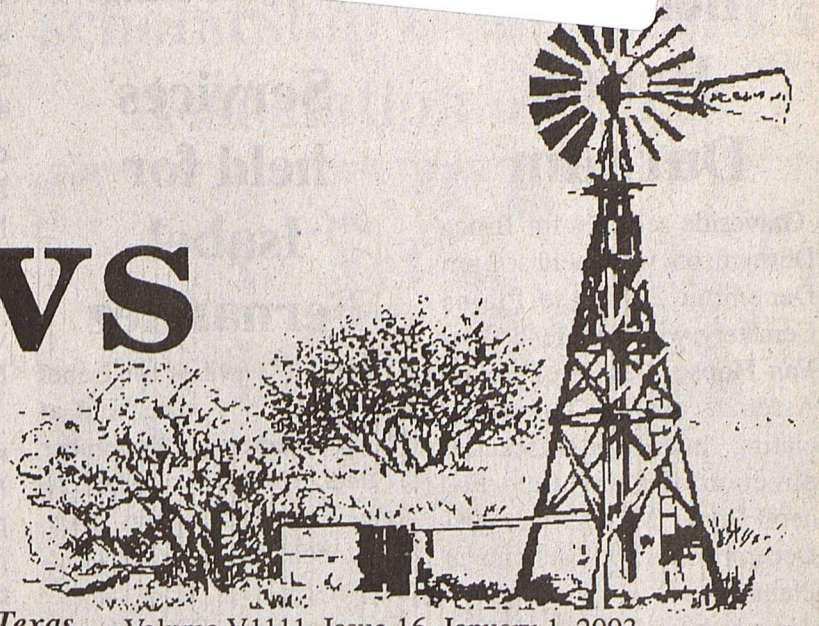


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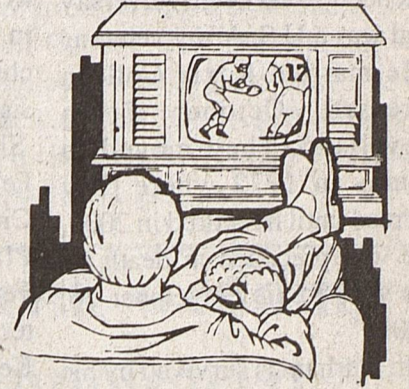


Published each Wednesday in the county seat of Yoakum County, Plains, Texas Volume V1111, Issue 16, January 1, 2003

Wishing One And All



A Happy New Year!



Election date set for hospital improvement bond issue

*** Editors Note ***
In the December 18 issue of CCN, we erroneously reported then planned certificates of obligation for the County Hospital improvement program would be in the amount of \$295,000. The correct amount should have read \$2,950,000. We regret the error.

In the December 30 session of Commissioners Court, County Clerk Debbie Rushing presented a letter to the court officially verifying 341 signatures on petitions presented to her office December 13. The letter stated, "The purpose of the petitions are to protest the issuance of certificates of obligation, unless the issuance is approved by an election ordered, held, and conducted in the manner provided for Bond Elections under Chapter 1251, Government Code."

The election will determine county voters approval or disapproval of issuance of \$2,950,000 in bonds for the planned expansion and improvements to the Yoakum County Hospital in Denver City. The election is slated for February 1, 2003. Rushing stated the U.S. Department of

Justice must formally approve the election.

If local voters approve the bond issue, the almost \$3 million would fund construction and equipment for a new hospital dialysis center, physical therapy center, expansion of the emergency room, new birthing rooms and a new meeting room. If approved by the voters, the Southwest Securities firm would manage the issuance and sale of the bonds. Official notices of the election will appear in future issues of CCN.

Other agenda items in the court session included Rick Dickson, Llano Estacado Drug Task Force, detailing preparation of a grant proposal to fund the Task Force. The grant would seek \$218,533 from the state, with county matching funds totaling \$74,854. The Task Force was originally organized to operate in Yoakum and Terry Counties, but recently Lynn County had requested to be included in the Force. All three counties will share the matching fund share of the grant proposal. The proposal was approved.

Turn To Page 2, BOND ELECTION

Annual Chamber Banquet Scheduled

The Plains Chamber of Commerce is finalizing plans for its 18th annual banquet on January 16 in the school cafeteria. Last year's banquet drew a possible record crowd, and Chamber members are hoping for a repeat success.

This year's guest speaker is Ronny Wall, a 1986 graduate of Plains High School, and the son of locals Dan and Linda Wall. Ronny had a distinguished high school record, achieved a two year scholarship at Rice University, transferred to Texas Tech, where he first earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, majoring in accounting in 1991, then returned to Tech's School of Law to graduate magna cum laude with his law degree in 1998. He is currently an Associate General Counsel at Texas Tech University.

The banquet dinner will be catered by Danny's Fins & Hens of Lubbock. All Chamber members, and the general public are urged to support the banquet with door prizes - last year a record number of prizes were distributed. Door prizes can be delivered to City Hall no later than the morning of January 17. Watch CCN for more details on the banquet - and PLAN TO BE THERE!

District and County Court cases

In District Court, Judge Kelly G. Moore presiding, Vicente Lasoya Perez had conditions of community supervision modified from a burglary of habitation cause. He must pay delinquencies of community supervision fees of \$276 and \$240 court appointed attorney fees by March 20, and \$20 per month on \$300 additional appointed attorney fees beginning February 4.

In County Court Kane Lee McClendon pled guilty to driving while license suspended. A 60 day jail sentence was suspended and probated six months. He was fined \$300, must pay \$300 court appointed attorney fees, \$210 court costs and \$25 time payment fee. Charges of false report to police officer and failure to appear were adjudicated. He must serve 24 hours community service and spend 72 hours in jail with credit for 7 days served. Investigating officer was Robert Shugart, DPS, and his attorney was Warren New.

Sergio Domingo Sandoval pled guilty to DWI, blood test .23. A 180 day jail sentence was suspended and probated 18 months. He was fined \$600, must pay 225 court costs and \$25 time payment fee. He must pay \$56 restitution to Yoakum

Turn To Page 2, COURT CASES

A REMINDER; Donations are still being accepted by Plains EMS at City Hall for the purchase of new radios for the EMS ambulances. A number of generous donations have been received, for which EMS volunteers are very grateful, but additional funds are needed. Please remember, these volunteers come to our aid when we need it... now we can assist them!

The sounds of Christmas



These youthful members of Sacred Heart Catholic Church braved a dark and cold Christmas eve to spread a bit of musical Christmas cheer with a medley of the seasonal songs.

Western High Plains growers OK program

Abilene - Cotton producers in the Western High Plains eradication zone voted overwhelmingly to continue boll weevil eradication efforts in the zone, passing a retention election by a 6 to 1 ratio.

Don Parrish of Plains, re-elected to be the zone's representative, said the vote shows the areas growers know they have benefitted from the eradication program. "If we didn't have the program, growers wouldn't have seen the yields they have. They wouldn't have made that top crop or had the yields with the boll weevil pressure we had two or three years ago."

Parrish expressed his appreciation to state legislators, especially local legislators such as Sen. Robert Duncan and Representatives Gary Walker, Delwin Jones and Carl Issett, for providing cost-share funding for eradication. "The program is mostly funded by farmers," he said, "but state cost-share funds have been tremendously important in getting us to this point."

The zone has seen a reduction of 99.9 percent in the number of weevils trapped in the zone since it began, said Charles Allen, program director for the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation. "This is a proven

program. We've had two zones reach functional eradication, and we're seeing the same kind of results in other zones as we've seen in the Western High Plains."

State law requires each active

eradication zone to vote on continuing its efforts every four years. Voters in the Western High Plains originally ap-

Turn To Page 2, BOLL WEEVILS

Spears retires from SPC after 36 years service



Members of the South Plains College Social Science Department recently honored their Chairman, Travis Spears, with a retirement party.

Spears, a native of Lovington New Mexico now living here with his wife Debbie (Rushing) Spears, joined the SPC faculty in 1967 after graduating from Eastern New Mexico University. He became department chairman in 1974.

While teaching government and history at the college for 36 years, Spears took an active interest in the public schools, serving on the Levelland ISD school board from 1979 to 1991. He served as the board president from 1987 to 1991.

Members of the social science department presented Spears with a plaque to commemorate his service.

Services held for Bruce Durham

Graveside services for Bruce Durham, 65, were held at 2 pm December 27 at the Plains Cemetery, with Reverend Cecil Van Hoose, Pastor of Plains Assembly of God Church officiating. Interment was under direction of Brownfield Funeral Home. Mr. Durham died December 25, 2002 at home in Plains.

He was born Feb 18, 1936 in Dunn, Texas. He moved to Levelland in 1942 where he graduated from high school. He attended Texas Tech University and was a U.S. Army veteran.

He married Roxie Colleen Gressett October 7 in Levelland. They moved to Plains in 1972 where they farmed until he retired in 2000. He was preceded in death by his wife Roxie November 26, 2001.

Mr. Durham is survived by his daughter Donna Colleen Rush-

ing, a son, Bobo Durham, both of Plains, 5 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Services held for Isabel Fernandez

Graveside services for Isabel Fernandez, 68, were held at Plains Cemetery on December 17 under direction of Mark A. Jones Funeral Directors. Mrs. Fernandez died in Lubock December 13.

She was born February 19, 1934 in Kennedy, Texas. She came to Plains in 1968, and retired from Johnnie's restaurant as a waitress. She was preceded in death by her husband, two children and her brothers and sisters.

She is survived by three sons, Felix G Fernandez of Salt Lake City, Salvador Fernandez of Plains, and Francisco F. Fernandez of Hondo; a daughter, Irene Fernandez of Staton, Kentucky; 6 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

From Page 1, COURT CASES

County Hospital. He will spend 72 hours in jail with credit for 33.5 hours served, attend weekly AA meetings, complete the DWI first offender program, surrender his license 90 days, and install an ignition interlock on any driven vehicle. Investigating officer was Sheriff Deputy Kenley Powell.

Ruby Lee Padilla pled guilty to assault causing bodily injury. A 90 day jail sentence was suspended 24 months. She must pay \$256 court costs and \$25 time payment fee, plus \$140 restitution to Texas DPS. Causes of less than two ounces marijuana and false report were adjudicated. She must serve 80 hours community service, and complete the TAIP outpatient program. Investigating officer was deputy Inoe Valdez.

Tyler McKenzie Colledr pled guilty to possession of less than two ounces marijuana. A 13 hour jail sentence had been met with 13 hours served. He was fined \$250 and must pay \$211 court costs and \$46 restitution to DPS. Investigating officer was Brad Taylor, DPS.

Fernando Gonzalez Contreras pled guilty to DWI, b.t. .253/.260, open container. A 120 day jail sentence was suspended and probated 18 months. He must pay court costs of \$226, \$600 fine and \$25 time payment fee. A Hockley County DWI cause was adjudicated. He will spend six days in jail with credit for two days, serve 24 hours community service, Attend weekly AA meetings and complete the DWI first offender program. Investigating officer was Deputy Kenley Powell, and Kirk Palmer was his attorney.

Waylon James Drinkard pled guilty to assault causes bodily injury to family member. He was sentenced to 180 days in jail, with credit for 130 days served. A failure to appear charge was dismissed. William Gardner, Denver City Police was investigating officer, and Paul Mansur was his attorney.

Fernando Guterrez Gonzalez pled guilty to DWI, b.t. .106/.110. He was fined \$600, must pay \$226 court costs and \$25 time payment fee. Theft and retaliation charges were adjudicated. He will serve 72 hours in jail with credit for 16 hours, serve 24 hours community service, attend weekly AA meetings and complete the DWI first offender program. Investigating officer was Deputy Inoe Valdez.

Aaron Joseph Valencia pled guilty to possession of less than two ounces marijuana. He was sentenced to adjudication of guilt deferred, must serve six months community supervision, must pay \$250 fine, \$211 court costs and \$140 restitution to DPS, serve 24 hours in jail with credit for 12 hours, complete the TAIP program and serve 24 hours community service. Investigating officer was Chris Malloy, DPS.

Eusebio Garcia Torres pled guilty to tampering with government records. A 30 day jail sentence was met with 46 days served, and he was held for the U.S. Border Patrol. Investigating officer was Brad Taylor, DPS.

Noe Mendez Gandara also pled guilty to tampering with government records. A 30 day jail sentence had been met with 33 days served. He will be held for the U.S. Border Patrol. Investigating officer was Brad Taylor, DPS.

Jessie Guadalupe Gandara pled guilty to a first DWI, b.t. .146/.150. He was fined \$600, and must pay \$226 court costs. His 30 day jail sentence had been met with 33 days served. He was also held for the U.S. Border Patrol. Investigating officer was Brad Taylor, DPS.

Jessie Torres Flores pled guilty to first DWI, b.t. .135/.152, open container. A 120 day jail sentence was suspended and probated 12 months. He must pay \$226 court costs and \$500 fine. He will attend weekly AA meetings, serve 72 hours in jail with credit for 12 hours, complete the DWI first offender program. Investigating officer was Brad Taylor, DPS.

Ronald Dewayne Fisher pled guilty to false report to a police officer. A 128 day jail sentence had been met with 128 days served. Paul Mansur was his attorney, and Deputy Inoe Valdez was investigating officer.

Saul Rojas Calderon pled guilty to a first DWI, b.t. .102/.099. A 120 day jail sentence was suspended and probated 12 months. He was fined \$500, must pay \$226 court costs and \$25 time payment fee, serve 72 hours in jail with credit for 18 hours, complete the DWI first offender program and attend weekly AA meetings. Brad Taylor, DPS, was investigating officer.

From Page 1, BOND ELECTION

Arlan Gentry, Yoakum County Extension Agent-Ag, reviewed the Extension Service projects and programs of 2002. He reported the 4-H youth program had a healthy increase in members, and participated in fashion and food shows, judging events, and produced two Gold Star winners. The county youth livestock show and sale will take place February 23, 24 and 25. Gentry said his office had been busy explaining to individual producers and group meetings new details of the government Farm Bill, and his review of local crop production and quality indicated surprisingly good yields and quality of cotton, peanuts and milo crops.

The court approved the donation of two old vehicles to the City of Plains. The vehicles were once used by the local volunteer fire department, and while old, were both in running condition. The City of Plains could sell the vehicles and use the sale funds to assist in the local EMS drive seeking donations to purchase new radio equipment for the two EMS ambulances.

In the December 30 session of Commissioners Court, bids were received on fuel for all county departments for the year 2003. Because of unusually close bids from both West Texas Gas and Eddins-Walcher, Judge Brewer made a motion to award the bid to one company for 6 months, and the

other company the second half of the year. A coin toss determined West Texas Gas would be the selling company through June, Eddins Walcher through the rest of 2003.

Bids were opened on gravel and asphalt for the four precincts and all county parks. R.E. Jones Gravel Company of Slaton was low bidder for gravel, while Koch Materials of Lubbock and Bridges Asphalt will furnish the different types of asphalt.

From Page 1, BOLL WEEVILS

proved beginning eradication in 1998, and activities began in the zone in the fall of 1999. Three other zones in the state previously passed retention elections, all by similar margins.

The Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation is a non-profit, grower initiated and funded organization dedicated to eliminating the cotton boll weevil from the state in the most cost effective and environmentally responsible manner possible.

TWDB authorizes bonds for rural water assistance

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) recently authorized the issuance, sale and delivery of up to \$25 million in water financial assistance bonds to be issued for the Rural Water Assistance Fund (RWAFF) program.

In 2001, the 77th Texas Legislature, through Seante Bill 2, recognized the special water needs of rural Texas, characterized by communities with small populations extended over large areas. To help meet rural needs for clean, dependable and affordable water, the lawmakers created the RWAFF and named the TWDB as program administrator. The RWAFF program, now in its second year, is designed to provide low interest loans to rural political subdivisions for water projects, including regionalization and outreach. The subdivisions may include nonprofit water supply corporations, water districts, or municipalities serving a population of up to 10,000, or that otherwise qualify for federal financing, or counties in which no urban area has a population exceeding 50,000. Aside from low interest loans, the statute also provides sales tax exemptions to non profit water supply or sewer service corporations for any project financed through RWAFF.

As no monies were appropriated by the 77th Legislature, the RWAFF program was initially funded with proceeds

from a private activity series of bonds sold by the TWDB earlier this year in the amount of \$25 million. To date, \$16,872,000 in commitments have been made, leaving \$7,657,599 available for future commitments. While additional monies are not needed today, projections indicate a strong future demand for the money due to the attractive interest rate (5.62%) and the ability to have a 40 year loan. It is possible the remaining proceeds from the first issue may be committed by time the second series is issued. Based on the Private Activity Bond program administered by the Texas Bond Review Board, the TWDB applied for an authorization of up to \$25 million in bonds October 2002 and will receive the reservation January 2, 2003. Rules require these bonds be sold and closed within 120 days of receipt, or May 2, 2003.

The TWDB recommended the selection of SWS Securities to serve as Senior Manager to begin preliminary work on the issuance of these bonds. This will allow TWDB to work with consultants to develop all documents and take actions necessary for the bonds issuance in order to recommend the sale at a later date. TWDB estimates the bonds will be considered for approval March 2003, sold in late March, with closing by the end of April 2003.

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Seeing Stars

When W.J. McDonald left \$1 million to the University of Texas to build an observatory, the university was as surprised as his family. UT didn't even have an astronomy department. The family contested the will, reasoning that no one in their right mind would spend a million dollars on a telescope.

But the courts ruled that McDonald could and did, according to Rebecca Johnson, press officer for the McDonald Observatory. More than 60 years later, the observatory boasts three major telescopes on Mt. Fowlkes and Mt. Locke in the Davis Mountains of West Texas. The observatory is a major tourist draw, attracting more than 120,000 visitors a year to Fort Davis and nearby communities. A joint venture of the University of Texas, Penn State University, Stanford and two German universities, the observatory is home to one of the world's largest telescopes, the Hobby-Eberly Telescopes (HET). The HET's 11 meter mirror provides one of Earth's



Hobby-Eberly telescope

best views of the heavens. While only 9.2 meters of the HET's mirror are usable, less than the 10 meters on two Keck telescopes in Hawaii, the telescope's unique design provides other benefits.

"HET is unique in that its cost is lower than most large telescopes," Johnson says. "Each Keck telescope cost about \$100 million. HET cost just \$16 million and is about the same size."

If you want to peek into the heavens, Fort Davis is the place to do it in Texas. Home to the McDonald Observatory and the Hobby-Eberly Telescope (HET), Fort Davis boasts the perfect environment for stargazing and serious astronomy. "The reason (the HET) is in Fort Davis is the mountains and the climate," says Rebecca Johnson of the McDonald Observatory. "In ground based astronomy, telescopes need a steady climate with little water vapor."

"Water vapor is tough on astronomers because it can 'jiggle' the light that comes through a telescope", Johnson says. "That's why Fort Davis and the Davis Mountains are ideal, if you move above more of the Earth's atmosphere, there's less water vapor to get in the way."

"If you are above it, you don't have to worry about it," Johnson says.

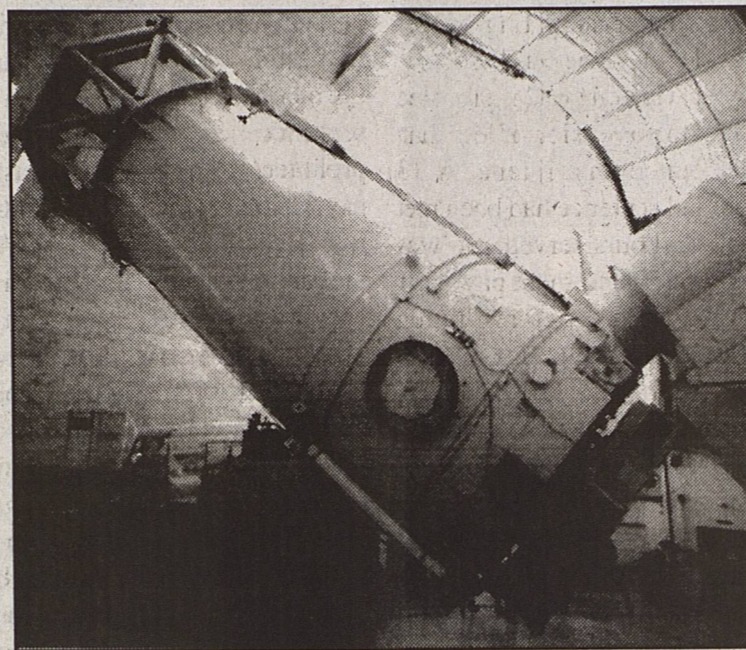
"Light is also important. The McDonald Observatory promotes 'dark Skies,' an attempt to keep light pollution as low as possible.

The nearby cities of Marfa and

Alpine have adopted municipal ordinances to promote dark skies, as have six of the seven counties surrounding the McDonald Observatory, according to Dr. Bill Wren, a public affairs officer for the observatory.

"The Texas Department of Transportation and subsequently all state funded lighting must conform to guidelines of the sort that we are promoting," Wren says.

"Those standards recommended that outdoor lighting avoid wasting light skyward, which makes light fixtures more cost efficient and cuts down on glare. That helps in-



Harlan J. Smith telescope

crease visibility," Wren says. Don Kass, the executive director of the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, says it's an easy sell.

"The way it really works is that a staff person goes to McDonald's (restaurant) and asks them not to light up the arches at night, and they

agree to do that," Kass says. "They ask folks to use lights that shine down rather than up, and in many cases will supply them. No rule or law for it exists here in Fort Davis, but everyone works to eliminate excess light. More than being told you have to do something, it's more like someone coming and making a simple request." And that leads to a darker, which is to say a brighter, future for the observatory.

"Any time you have something as one-of-a-kind as the McDonald Observatory, you can bring in a lot of people," Kass says. "It has a huge monetary impact on the community. There's the tourism, and they have a sizeable payroll that's infused into the community. We have no industry, no minerals

like gas, oil, gold or silver. There's always ranching, but with the current drought, that's not what it used to be. But from March to September, many of the places here are booked all the time, especially on weekends. It (the observatory) seems to be the principal reason people visit."

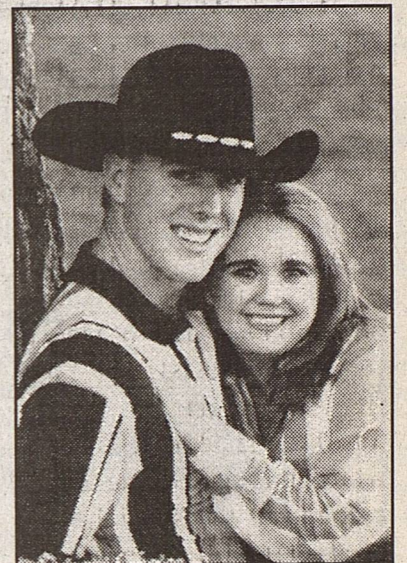
Lexi Warren awarded scholarship from Sheriff's Association of Texas



Alexis J. Warren, (Lexi) third from right, is shown with her parents Jerry and Teresa Howard receiving a \$500 check from Yoakum County Sheriff Don Corzine. The presentation was representing a scholarship awarded to Lexi by the Sheriff's Association of Texas. She is a student at West Texas A&M University at Canyon, and she currently maintains a 3.854 grade point average. She is a 2002 Plains High School graduate.

Engagement, wedding plans announced

Mr. & Mrs. H.A. Richardson of Plains are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Donita Richardson. The future bridegroom is Tyrel Tyson, son of Mr. & Mrs. V.E. (Cowboy) Tyson of Plains. The bride-elect is a graduate of Plains High School and currently attends Oceans Massage Therapy. The future bridegroom is also a Plains High graduate, and is employed in Denver City by Pro Log Wireline Service.



The couple will wed March 1, 2003 at the Denver City Church of Christ.

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Jess & Rita Mae Snodgrass
Jo Harbour
Melvin & Dawn Dearing
Harry, Dean & Donita Richardson

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Jr. High One Act Play tops again

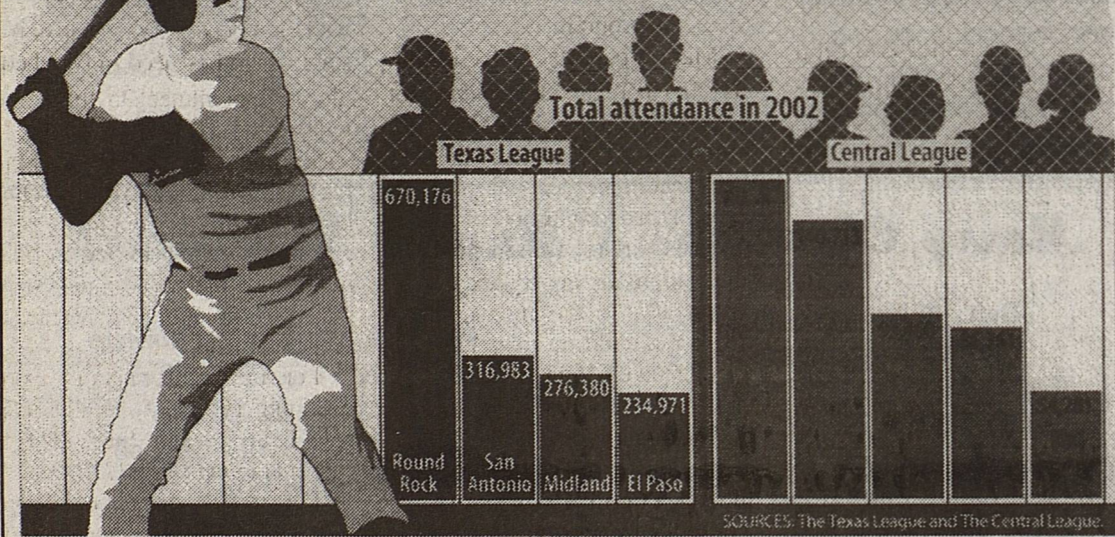


Cast & Crew members: First row, Nicole Culwell, Douglas Conway. Second row, Holden Welch, Kimber Williams, Holly Cotton. Third row, Amber Friesen, Lauren Hise, Katie Winn, Caitlin Carter, Angelica Mendoza. Fourth row, Lauren Davis, Steven Dominguez, Joani Bell. Landon Earnest not pictured.

For the fourth consecutive year, Plains Junior High One Act Play won first place honors in the District UIL competition. Other schools competing included Sundown 2nd, Farwell 3rd, and Hart and Smyer. The contest was held December 7 in the school auditorium. The students presented scenes from "I never saw another butterfly" by Celeste Raspanti. The scenes were from The Holocaust, 1942-1945. Directors of the play were Gary Davis and Paula Cullins. Members of the cast included Caitlin Carter, Joani Bell, Lauren Hise, Lauren Davis, Holly Cotton, Katie Winn, Douglas Conway, Landon Earnest, Holden Welch and Kimber Williams. Crew members were Angelica Mendoza, Nicole Culwell, Amber Friesen and Steven Dominguez. Caitlin Carter was named Best Actress. Joani Bell and Douglas Conway were in the All Star Cast. Receiving Honorable Mention were "The Youth of Terezin", portrayed by Lauren Hise, Lauren Davis, Holly Cotton and Katie Winn.

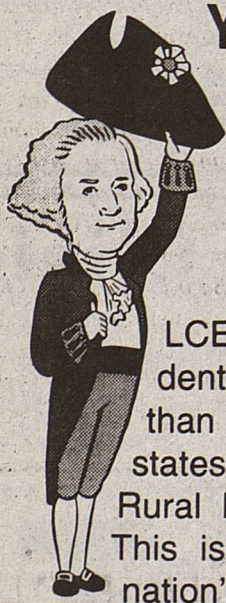
Got tickets?

There's seldom a bad seat in the house at a minor league baseball game, and Texas fans are grabbing up those seats. Thanks to affordable prices—the most expensive single-game ticket for either the Texas League or the Central League is \$9—more than 2 million people attended Texas minor-league baseball games in 2002.

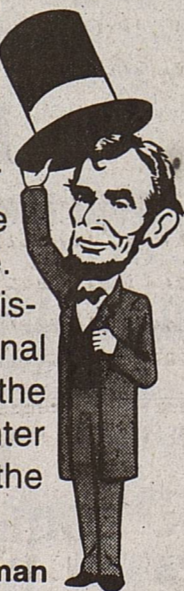


Hey High School Students!

Where will you be this summer?
You could be in Washington, D.C.,
Courtesy of
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Electric Cooperative, Inc.!



LCEC will be sending two local high school students on an all-expense-paid trip to join more than 1,400 high school students from 37 states in Washington, D.C. for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, June 12-24, 2003. This is the chance of a lifetime to tour our nation's capitol; visit personally with legislative leaders, and see where history has been made. The Government-in-Action Youth Tour includes visits to the Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Minting & Engraving, the Kennedy Center of Performing Arts, Mount Vernon, and all the National Monuments.



For more information contact Allan Brown or Annette Neyman at the Cooperative's Lovington office at 396-3631 or (800) 510-5232. You can now apply on line at www.leacountyelectric.coop! Applications are also available at your high school or any LCEC office. Applications due by February 14, 2003.

Capitol Comments by U. S. Senator

Kay Bailey Hutchison

God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it. I was reminded of that famous Daniel Webster quote by an insightful Texan who responded to my annual survey.

As the United States takes up the mantle of freedom around the globe, those words ring as true today as when they were uttered nearly two centuries ago. With 1.37 million active duty military personnel serving around the world and 1.28 million more waiting in the wings on standby and ready reserve, it is clear that our nation is poised to defend the liberty we love.

National defense has always been one of my top priorities. Not only because I believe our domestic system is the best in the world, but also because I understand the need to bolster diplomacy with military might.

As we are engaged in a global war on terror and tensions spark around the world, it is important for the United States military to maintain a strong, capable force. Four times in the past 15 years we have attempted to streamline our military through the appointment of a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission, chartered to recommend the elimination or realignment of unneeded bases.

To gauge your opinion on base closures, I posed the following question in my survey: The Pentagon has announced another round of military closures in 2005. Because a round of base closures riddled with mistakes could be more costly than no closures at all, I believe we need to have a good idea of force structure for the future before closing bases. What are your views?

I received many pointed replies to that question from civilians and military personnel alike. A full 40 percent of the responses I received agreed that the Pen-

tagon should be required to outline a 20 year military strategy before closure decisions are made. Twenty-seven percent of respondents felt the decision must consider the impact of closures on homeland security and local economies. The remainder were split evenly between closing no bases at all and going forward with the process.

One Texan from Winnie said, "Too much politics has been involved in closures; bases that are set up to do a job should not be closed and money then used to get another base ready to do the same job." I couldn't agree more. It has been my experience that there can be unintended consequences when we miscalculate future needs for military bases. First, I have seen bases closed and dismantled, only to later realize their missions have again become relevant to U.S. military operations. Second, I have not seen estimates ever come close to the true cost of closing a base. How can we best avoid the missteps of the last round of base closures?

The fate of Reese Air Force Base in Texas is an excellent example of a base closure that the commission said looked good on paper, but it turned out to be a costly mistake. Reese was one of the Air Forces premier sites for entry level pilot training, but an Air Force analyst decided there were adequate training facilities available elsewhere. Reese was closed. Today, the Air Force is experiencing a serious shortfall in training spaces for new pilots and is desperately trying to reestablish training sites on other bases. Everyone now agrees that Reese never should have been closed.

Another egregious example can be found in the 1995 BRAC decision to convey Fort Chaffee to the local community. The small, rural town of Barling,

Arkansas was charged with the impossible task of turning Fort Chaffee, pockmarked with more than 700 lead paint and asbestos-laden World War II-era buildings, into an economic asset for the community. It couldn't be done. The Pentagon may have saved money with the closure, but it saddled a small town with an expensive, environmentally hazardous burden. Similar closures have resulted in the same devastating impact all over the country. As incoming chair of the Senate Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe we must operate not only with our national security interests in mind but also with good business sense. Rather than waste millions of dollars on ill-fated closures, we should spend that money building better housing and more facilities for the men and women of the military, purchasing better technology and equipment, and paying our personnel for the difficult job we are asking them to do.

As we begin the 108th Congress, I will make it a top priority to ensure we carefully and thoughtfully assess troop strength and future military needs before closing bases. When the time is right, we must have a well defined, transparent process that is conducted fairly and in the open.

As we wage this war on terrorism we must heed the words of Daniel Webster because our liberty is at stake. We must support the President and give him the resources he needs to ensure victory in this great battle. And we must make sure that our men and women who proudly serve in the U.S. military have every tool and resource they need to win this war. Before we make any decisions to close another base, we must keep these objectives in mind.

ATTENTION

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS!

Lea County Electric Education Foundation is currently accepting applications for scholarships to be awarded for the Fall 2003 semester. The Scholarships are renewable up to 8 consecutive semesters, for a total of \$4,000.00!

Eligibility criteria are as follows:

Available only to active members (and immediate family) receiving service from LCEC.

Applicant must maintain a 2.50 GPA on a 4.00 scale and be considered a full-time student.

Applicant must submit two letters of reference (see application for important details) and demonstrate a coherent degree plan.

Applications must be received no later than February 14, 2003.

For more information contact Allan Brown or Annette Neyman at the Cooperative's Lovington office at 396-3631 or (800) 510-5232. You can now apply on line at www.leacountyelectric.coop! Applications are also available at your high school or any LCEC office.



Lifelines & Styles

Senior Citizens Corner

Our thanks to the two groups of pre-kindergarten children who came to present a program of Christmas carols for us. There were over seventy well behaved four year olds, accompanied by their teachers, who sang and smiled and made everyone glad to be a part of this joyous Christmas season.

The scene was of a full house enjoying a chicken strip luncheon together on the day we hosted the monthly pool tournament. Many comments were heard about how these folk look forward to the great lunches served each time they come to Denver City. We appreciate our competent staff for making this a time we are proud of.

Some of the staff members were also on hand to make the Christmas pot luck jamboree evening enjoyable for everyone. Over thirty braved the dark, chilly weather to make it a festive evening. We enjoyed listening to and joining in singing old songs, new songs, hymns, and Christmas carols played by the bands. Wanda Black and Arthur Hall were the lucky recipients of the Christmas gifts when the drawing occurred.

The list of recent visitors at the lunch hour includes the names of Mary Lou Parks, Zelma Jo Harbour, Loy Nevez, Chevy Diaz, Lydia Diaz, Jesus Yzaquirre, Howard and Heidi Carlson who were guest of the Johnsons. Jodi Sims joined us on Monday as a guest of her parents and Shasta Eastman came with Melba and Walter Gayle. We were glad to also welcome Shirley Mosser, who was in visiting Denver City last week from Monahans, and Mary Newman from Seminole. Drop by the office and pick up a copy of the ADVOCACY ALERT received this week so

you can learn about the FY03 budgets that are on the agenda when the 108th Congress convenes in January. It is important that you make yourself aware of the issues that will be voted on and, if possible, urge your congressmen to place a high priority on supporting in-home and community services for our nation's seniors and their family caregivers.

A new year is upon us! Did you know that celebration of the beginning of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays? The day did not always fall on January 1, however. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago on what is now March 23, but after Julius Caesar established the Julian calendar in 46 BC, it has been observed on January 1st. It has been celebrated by Western nations for only about the past 400 years. While popular resolutions today may include the promise to lose weight and quit smoking, the early Babylonians most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. The Rose Bowl football game was first played as part of the Tournament of Roses in 1902. The Roman chariot races replaced it the following year; however the football game returned in 1916 as the sports centerpiece of the festival.

To start this New Year, let me share two of my favorite Irish toasts: "May you live to be a hundred years with one extra year to repent," and "As you slide down the banisters of life, may the splinters never point the wrong way!" Thought for today: "Yesterday is history - Tomorrow is a mystery - Today is a gift - that's why it's called the present! We must live and savor every moment. This is not a dress rehearsal."

Robin Squyres Receives Diploma



Robin Squyres, a 1997 Plains graduate and daughter of Newell and Peggy Squyres, graduated with her Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Tarleton State University in Stephenville. 400 students in three separate ceremonies on Saturday, December 14th graduated. Robin received her diploma with the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences and her department, the College of Science and Technology.

The speaker was Dr. Kenneth Lee Peddicord, Associate Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations of The Texas A&M University System.

Pictured with Robin are her grandparents Mr. & Mrs. Fred Squyres of Wellington. Fred was a student at John Tarleton Jr. College in 1939 and 1940 before his National Guard unit was called to active duty. He enjoyed touring the campus.

Robin is employed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Fred worked for the Soil Conservation Service for 30 years, which has evolved into present day N.R.C.S.

Robin will train in the Weatherford office for a month and then in the Eastland office for several months, before receiving her permanent assignment. Her parents, brother Brett, sister Shannon and family, grandparents, aunt and cousins from Duncanville attended to celebrate with Robin on her special day.

UTPB Women's Soccer Players Earn All-American Bids

Two University of Texas of the Permian Basin women's soccer players were recently named Academic All-Americans.

Wendy Hernandez, a junior from Plains, and Jennifer Rich, a junior from Loraine, were both given the first award of its kind in UT-Permian Basin women's soccer history. Head Coach Dr. Jaime R. Aguila said he was pleased with his star player's honor.

"Besides being good soccer players, these two girls are just overall good people," Aguila said. "Unfortunately, neither of

them are coming back for me next year. Wendy is entering Texas Tech University, and Jennifer's work load as a math major here will keep her from playing next season."

Aguilar said despite no prior soccer experience, Hernandez and Rich both emerged as key starters on his team.

"Wendy has really come on as a great outside midfielder and Jennifer is a good defender," Aguilar said. "They were the only returning upperclassmen I had this year, and they showed a lot of leadership."

Medicaid benefits simplified

BY JOSÉ CAMACHO
Executive Director, Texas Association of Community Health Centers

In the last several years, the number of Texans without health insurance has grown to a shocking 23 percent of the population. Medicaid has long been an important social service assisting these low-income families. The recent sluggish economy has cost many Texans their jobs and their health insurance, leading more families than ever to qualify for Medicaid benefits.

Presently, more than 1.4 million children in Texas are enrolled in Medicaid and the number is growing daily. More than 300,000 enrollees made application in September alone. As these families enroll in the program and current families re-enroll, it is critical that they receive adequate education about the benefits and services available to them.

The Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC), with help from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), has created just such an educational tool in its newly released Health Care Orientation (HCO) Video. The video is the first user-friendly, comprehensive orientation to inform families of the benefits and proper utilization of health care services offered through the Medicaid program.

Many parents of children enrolled in Texas Medicaid do not adequately understand the health benefits available to their children. This uncertainty leads families to either improperly utilize available services or to forego making application for dependant coverage at all. In the end, a steady number of children are not receiving adequate - if any - health care and many more are dropping off the Medicaid rosters.

To make matters worse, a shortage of primary care providers willing to accept Medicaid causes an overutilization of emergency room services in non-emergency cases, which results in overcrowding in our state's already overburdened emergency rooms.

Medicaid can help preclude this unnecessary emergency room use by offering opportunities for families to develop long-term relationships with health care providers, including doctors and community health centers, that will provide the best possible care. Viewing this one-time Health Care Orientation Video informs families about how to go about building those relationships through Medicaid.

Keeping families out of the emergency rooms through educating them about proper utilization can save the Medicaid program

millions of dollars annually because primary care is much less costly than emergency care. And, in a year when the state is projecting a shortfall of \$448.7 million in the Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Programs, this new orientation couldn't come at a better time.

The video also satisfies a legislative orientation mandate. In 2001, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 43, which established a requirement for families with children on Medicaid to receive a health care orientation prior to qualifying for mail-in re-enrollment.

TACHC recognized that the health care orientation requirement could help many families understand the benefits and appropriate utilization of health care services offered through Medicaid but, unless it was easy to receive, it could also keep families from staying in the program.

All families either enrolling or applying for new coverage will be required to complete a health care orientation. Now, families can fulfill the orientation requirement by watching the video with trained personnel to answer their questions and to facilitate a better, more comprehensive understanding of the benefits available through Medicaid.

The video will be administered at TACHC member centers as well as other locations across the state. Families need only schedule an appointment to fulfill the requirement.

By providing families with the facts, Texas can provide better health care to children in the program and begin to reduce the number of uninsured children in the state through new Medicaid registrations.

For more information about obtaining an HCO, families can call Texas Health Steps TOLL FREE at (877) 847-8377.

For more information about becoming an HCO provider, contact Texas Health Steps at (512) 458-7745.

About José Camacho
As executive director and general counsel to TACHC, José Camacho is a legal health services veteran with more than 25 years of experience. Camacho joined TACHC in 1984 to lead the charge to expand access to high quality, economical primary and preventative health care for patients, the majority of whom are either uninsured or receive federal assistance. Prior to TACHC Camacho served as a hearing examiner for the Texas Air Control Board. Camacho is highly involved with the Texas state legislature, U.S. Congress and local community action groups.

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Wednesday Connections
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From The Hack

So how did you celebrate the coming of the New Year? Oh, I see, don't want your preacher to know, huh?

Ours was very uneventful. I fully intended to stay up till midnight, then put on some idiot looking hat, blow a little plastic horn, toss confetti in the air, drink a toast to the demise of 2002 and the entry of 2003, and sing Old Lang Syne while bussing the Bride. I did manage to buss the Bride goodnight, but it was much earlier than midnight.

I did a little informal research on New Year festivities around the world. Did you know in Ecuador, there is no New Year celebration? Instead, on December 31 they celebrate Ano Viejo, 'Old Year'. How quaint. In Iran, it's not New Year's eve or day - it's 'No Ruz', and I have no idea how that translates. But the Iranian women get to celebrate by cleaning their houses and kids get new clothes. There's no mention of

what the men do... it may be shameful. There's also no mention of them helping the wives with the cleaning.

In Denmark, young people herald the event by "Smashing in the New Year" by banging on friends and neighbors doors, and throwing broken pottery against them. Yeah, doesn't make any sense to me either.

In Thailand New Year is called Songkran, or Water Festival, and the major fun is in throwing water on someone. I just can't picture this becoming very popular here. They also buy birds and live fish, which they then turn loose, probably to the delight of the birds and fish.

This all sounds rather exotic, but stop and think what happens here New Year's Eve in New York City's Times Square. A gazillion screaming, freezing, drunk and stoned people are crammed into a space which is not quite large enough for a mere million, crammed tighter together than a cannery can cram sardines, screaming hysterically, elbowing one another in sensitive areas, guys undoubtedly groping any female within reach of their groper, probably a number of guys groping other willing gropees. I would wager at least a hundred grand in cash and credit cards fall prey to pick-

pockets during this orgy, all this taking place while the demented onlookers count down a huge, brilliantly lit glass bauble, in theory marking the exact moment the New Year starts at one second after midnight. According to God and my trusty Timex, the stupid thing has never been on time, however.

To answer your question, NO, I DID NOT watch this East Coast frenzy, haven't in many years. I figure the ball can slide down that pole without my witness, and I can be involved in something beneficial and practical - like sleeping and dreaming how to spend my lottery winnings.

Cheerfully stolen from the Levelland News-Press; Sally was driving home from a business trip to northern New Mexico when she saw an elderly Native American woman walking on the side of the road. As the trip was long and she was tired, she stopped by the woman and asked if she would like a ride.

They made small talk for awhile, when the older woman spotted a brown bag on the floor of the car.

"What's in the bag?" she asked. Sally replied, "It's a bottle of wine. I got it for my husband." The Indian woman was silent a moment, and then with the quiet wisdom of the elderly said, "Good trade."

Had an amusing family incident over the Holidays. My older sister Dana journeyed to

Durango, Colorado to visit her two daughters and a couple of grandsons. She called Christmas Eve to wish us well, and "because I HAVE to tell you what T. J. (her eldest grandson) said when we were asking him about Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem, baby Jesus and all that. When he was asked about his three visitors, he said, "Three Kings came to visit him, and they brought him Gold, Frankenstein and a Salmon!"

T.J., bless his heart, is a first grader, I think. Reminds me of my son in junior high. Because of his superior intelligence he was picked to be one of 14 holding up Merry Christmas placards - he was the M in Christmas. For seven eternal minutes, I stared, red faced, at "Merry ChristWas".

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Plains Independent School District intends to destroy records of students who have received special education services. **Records to be destroyed are for persons who received Special Education, including speech therapy services, prior to 1994 - 1995 school year.** These records are located at Plains ISD, (806) 456-7498, Box 479, Plains, Texas 79355. Legal parent / guardian or adult student with disabilities may request copies of these records at the school.

AVISO

Aviso esta dado que La Escuela de Plains tiene intencion de destruir documentos de estudiantes que recibieron servicio de Educacion Especial. **Documentos que deben ser destruidos son para personas que recibieron educacion especial, incluyendo servicios de terapia de lenguaje hasta el ano escolar 1994 - 1995.** Los unicos documentos que van estar destruidos son los que estan localizados en Plains ISD, (806) 456-7498, Box 479, Plains, Texas 79355.

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